# ADVISERS AND AGGREGATION IN FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING
## Supplementary Appendix
October 23, 2023

# Contents

# 1    Record Collection

## 1.1    Archival Record Collection

Records of the National Security Council were photographed from multiple sites around the United States.

- Truman: Truman Presidential Library (Independence, Missouri)
- Eisenhower: Eisenhower Presidential Library (Abilene, Kansas)
- Kennedy: See note below.
- Johnson: Johnson Presidential Library (Austin, Texas)
- Nixon: Nixon Presidential Library (Yorba Linda, California)
- Ford: Ford Presidential Library (Ann Arbor, Michigan)
- Carter: See note below.
- Reagan: See note below.
- Various supporting documents: National Archives II (College Park, Maryland)

NSC records for the Kennedy and Carter administrations were available for download from each presidential library's website. It was therefore not necessary to manually photograph document records from these administrations' meetings. Records for the Reagan administration come from a variety of sources. Approximately 27 records were available for download from the presidential library's site; others come from Saltoun-Ebin (2014).

## 1.2    FRUS Record Collection

All of our informal meeting records come from the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) collection. In October 2020, we scraped the FRUS collection from the State Department website, gathering a total of 139,847 documents. The following process was used to determine which documents would be included in the analysis:

1. Search for all FRUS documents' titles for any of the phrases in the list below:
    - memorandum of conference
    - memorandum of meeting

- memorandum of discussion

- minutes of meeting

- notes on meeting

- record

- conversation

2. Filter down to documents that use the word "president" in the text of document (to ensure that the president was president in the meeting).

3. Remove documents that include the name of a formal body (such as the National Security Council or Washington Special Acts Group) or mention a foreign leader or diplomat.

4. Have research assistants review remaining meeting records to remove any documents outside the desired scope conditions.

5. Check for and remove any duplicate meeting records that exist across different FRUS volumes.

This resulted in a final list of 1,894 informal meeting records. The formal NSC meetings collected via archives and informal meetings identified via *FRUS* together constitute an expansive record of US foreign policy deliberations. The set of records, however, is incomplete in the sense that it does not include all meetings in which presidents participated. Two factors most strongly shape the availability of meeting records: document selection and classification.

First, historians compiling *FRUS* volumes exercise discretion on which documents to include. FRUS volumes typically prioritize high-salience events and discussions over the more mundane elements of executive branch functions. The missing mundane documents, while inherently difficult to observe, are unlikely to skew the paper's core results. Given constraints on the president's time and attention, advisers are likely to assume a privileged role. Accordingly, we expect that, if anything, decisions surrounding lower salience policy issues would exhibit even more (less) adviser (leader) influence.

Second, some materials remain classified both at the time that historians compile FRUS volumes and when we collected archival materials. Classification affecting FRUS document inclusion is most vividly evident for the controversial initial FRUS volume on the 1954 covert action in Guatemala (McAllister et al., 2015). After a publicized dispute, a follow-up volume published

decades later filled in the patchy record. The facts that (1) extensive missingness due to classification on Guatemala prompted such a public outcry and (2) there has not been comparable public complaints for other volumes suggest that politicization of the declassification process is somewhat limited. The somewhat more difficult issue to address is the ongoing classification of NSC meetings that we were unable to collect from the archives. Missing NSC meetings are overwhelmingly from the Carter and Reagan administrations, the most recent two in our sample. This suggests missingness reflects the extended timeline for declassification as opposed to substantive considerations that might sway the relative influence of presidents versus advisers. As we note in the paper, work by Preston (2001) suggests that because Reagan and Carter were relatively inexperienced in foreign policy, they tended to delegate more to their advisers, such that we should expect their underrepresentation here should actually make it harder to find evidence in favor of our adviser model.

## 1.3   Meeting Statistics

Table A1 displays summary statistics on all meetings of the National Security Council included in our analysis. Table A2 displays summary statistics on all informal meetings included in our analysis.

**Table A1:** Coverage of NSC Records for Each Administration

| Admin. | Records | Mtgs | Speech Acts | Decisions | Conf. Adv. | Coop. Adv. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Truman | 125 | 128 | 3,114 | 77 | 66 | 11 |
| Eisenhower | 337 | 359 | 22,172 | 315 | 261 | 54 |
| Kennedy | 66 | 89 | 12,072 | 90 | 75 | 15 |
| Johnson | 72 | 75 | 1,463 | 26 | 21 | 5 |
| Nixon | 60 | 90 | 4,463 | 29 | 15 | 14 |
| Ford | 34 | 42 | 4,708 | 9 | 4 | 5 |
| Carter | 18 | 41 | 1,372 | 18 | 12 | 6 |
| Reagan | 79 | 153 | 2,961 | 63 | 45 | 18 |
| *Total* | 791 | 977 | 52,325 | 627 | 499 | 128 |

**Table A2:** Coverage of Informal Meeting Records for Each Administration

| Admin. | Records | Speech Acts | Decisions | Conf. Adv. | Coop. Adv. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Truman | 90 | 514 | 25 | 22 | 3 |
| Eisenhower | 552 | 5,708 | 102 | 68 | 34 |
| Kennedy | 184 | 2,924 | 34 | 25 | 9 |
| Johnson | 437 | 11,141 | 65 | 44 | 21 |
| Nixon | 393 | 27,497 | 46 | 28 | 18 |
| Ford | 204 | 3,572 | 47 | 16 | 31 |
| Carter | 30 | 770 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Reagan | 4 | 53 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Total* | 1,894 | 52,179 | 323 | 203 | 120 |

## 2    Meeting Record Segmentation

An important step in our analysis requires the conversion of raw meeting records into "speech acts," which are the uninterrupted strings of words spoken by a single individual during a meeting.

For meeting records that are in the form of transcripts, this task is relatively straightforward. Figure A1 displays one page from a meeting transcript during the Nixon administration. The document is formatted clearly so that each speech act and associated actor is clearly identified. We use our actor data to identify the full name of the individual based on titles or last names. The raw material on this page is converted into speech act data as reflected in Table A3.

The task is more complex for meeting records that are in the form of minutes. Figure A2 represents a page from an NSC meeting during the Eisenhower administration. As is clear from the image, paragraphs do not directly correspond to speech acts. We split these documents into speech acts by first identifying the use of key titles and last names. The light red rectangles in Figure A2 identify the relevant terms in the page. The text is then split at the sentence level according to these terms. We then use our actor data to identify the full name of each individual associated with a sentence or cluster of sentences, using either their last name or the title they held at the time.

Two adjustments are worth noting. First, we do not use information from introductory clauses to determine splits in the meeting records. For instance, the first sentence of the first full paragraph includes an introductory clause that mentions Dillon Anderson's comments (which were the subject of the previous paragraph of the meeting record). But it is clear from the full sentence that the speech act is attributed to President Eisenhower. In the infrequent cases where introductory clauses are used, they are discarded when identifying relevant record splits. Second, note that some splits using this procedure will divide statements made by the same person. The third full paragraph in Figure A2 begins with "The Secretary of State," and it then mentions "Secretary Dulles" in the fifth sentence. Secretary John Foster Dulles is the Secretary of State. As such, once all individuals are identified by name using our actor data, we reintegrate any sequential sentences that were originally divided but refer to the same person.

The automated segmentation process is far from perfect; a fair share of segments were not properly split due to various idiosyncratic reasons (such as the use of abbreviations to indicate

individuals' names; misspellings that fail to match with our list of actors; or cases where a speech act mentions only a last name, and the last name could be associated with more than one individual in the meeting). As such, we also manually reviewed all segmented data and made necessary corrections. Nonetheless, the automated process described above drastically reduced the overall workload necessary to produce the segmented data.

This process converts Figure A2 into speech act data reflected in Table A4.

**Figure A1:** Page of an NSC Meeting Record from September 12, 1969

The President: Do they want a settlement?

Mr. Habib: If they get what they want. And then a ceasefire ...

Mr. Kissinger: Also in your technical meetings, they were rigid.

Mr. Habib: We have put forward reasonable positions. The talks give us direct communications.

Secretary Rogers: Also, because our position is reasonable, they see it and the world sees it. Our image is much better.

Mr. Habib: Exactly. Our willingness to negotiate and settle is creditable.

Secretary Laird: This was true with the President's and Thieu's speech, not at Paris.

Secretary Rogers: Suppose they hit the cities, etc. Could we raid the North successfully? Would it mean much?

General Abrams: Any operation shorter than a couple of weeks would not be favorable.

The President: Suppose it was in new terms, with all targets open. One third of their supplies are in Haiphong.

General Abrams: In terms of their supplies, they have got lots and can get more. It would not be an overwhelming disaster, even if we knock out their powerplants.

The President: The dykes?

Mr. Kissinger: There is nothing that can hurt them?

General Abrams: They can carry on.

General Wheeler: There would be no fatal blow in seeking a no-holds - barred solution in a couple of weeks. Before the halt Haiphong was a

**Table A3:** Speech Act Data from Figure A1

| Speech Act | Name |
|---|---|
| The President: Do they want a settlement? | Richard Nixon |
| Mr. Habib: If they get what they want. And then a ceasefire... | Philip Habib |
| Mr. Kissinger: Also in your technical meetings they were rigid. | Henry Kissinger |
| Mr. Habib: We have put forward reasonable positions. The talks give us direct communications. | Philip Habib |
| Secretary Rogers: Also because our position is reasonable they see it and the world sees it. Our image is much better. | William Rogers |
| Mr. Habib: Exactly. Our willingness to negotiate and settle is creditable. | Philip Habib |
| Secretary Laird: This was true with the President's and Thieu's speech not at Paris. | Melvin Laird |
| Secretary Rogers: Suppose they hit the cities etc. Could we raid the North successfully? Would it mean much? | William Rogers |
| General Abrams: Any operation shorter than a couple of weeks would not be favorable. | Creighton Abrams |
| The President: Suppose it was in new terms with all targets open. One third of nor their supplies are in Haiphong. | Richard Nixon |
| General Abrams: In terms of their supplies they have got lots and can get more. It would not be an overwhelming disaster even if we knock out their powerplants. | Creighton Abrams |
| The President: The dykes? | Richard Nixon |
| Mr. Kissinger: There is nothing that can hurt them? | Henry Kissinger |
| General Abrams: They can carry on. | Creighton Abrams |
| General Wheeler: There would be no fatal blow through seeking a no-holds-barred solution in a couple of weeks. Before the halt Haiphong was | Earle Wheeler |

**Figure A2:** Page of an NSC Meeting Record from July 5, 1955 (*Note:* Terms indicating titles and last names are highlighted in light red.)
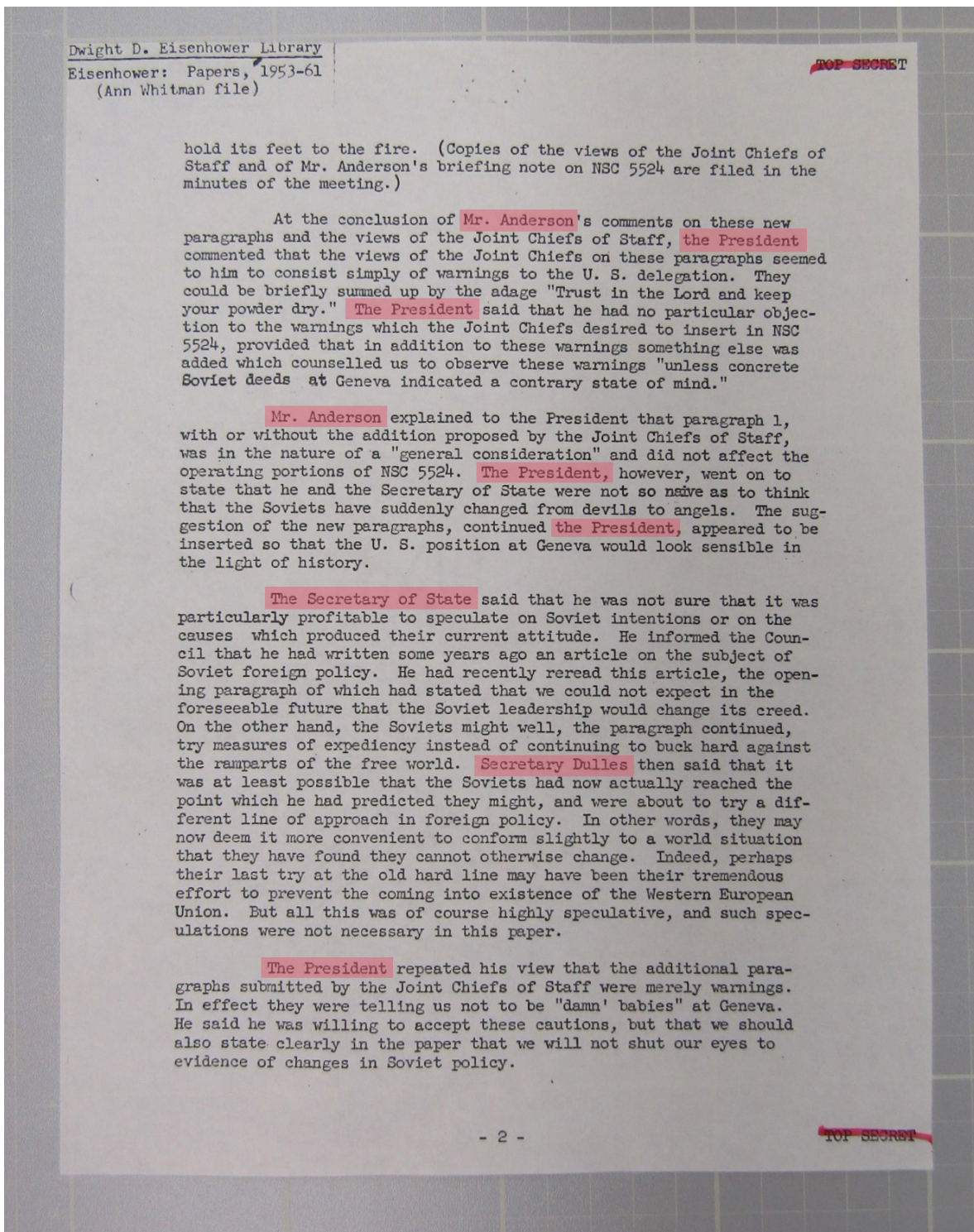
**Table A4:** Speech Act Data from Figure A2

| Speech Act | Name |
|---|---|
| (At the conclusion of Mr. Anderson's comments on these new paragraphs and the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) the President commented that the views of the Joint Chiefs on these paragraphs seemed to him to consist simply of warnings to the U. S. delegation. They could be briefly summed up by the adage Trust in the Lord and keep your powder dry. The President said that he had no particular objection to the warnings which the Joint Chiefs desired to insert in NSC 5524 provided that in addition to these warnings something else was added which counselled us to observe these warnings unless concrete Soviet deeds at Geneva indicated a contrary state of mind. | Dwight Eisenhower |
| Mr. Anderson explained to the President that paragraph 1 with or without the addition proposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff was in the nature of a general consideration and did not affect the operating portions of NSC 5524. | Dillon Anderson |
| The President however went on to state that he and the Secretary of State were not so naive as to think that the Soviets have suddenly changed from devils to angels. The suggestion of the new paragraphs continued the President appeared to be inserted so that the U. S. position at Geneva would look sensible in the light of history. | Dwight Eisenhower |
| The Secretary of State said that he was not sure that it was particularly profitable to speculate on Soviet intentions or on the causes which produced their current attitude. He informed the Council that he had written some years ago an article on the subject of Soviet foreign policy. He had recently reread this article the opening paragraph of which had stated that we could not expect in the foreseeable future that the Soviet leadership would change its creed. On the other hand the Soviets might well the paragraph continued try measures of expediency instead of continuing to buck hard against the ramparts of the free world. Secretary Dulles then said that it was at least possible that the Soviets had now actually reached the point which he had predicted they might and were about to try a different line of approach in foreign policy. In other words they may now deem it more convenient to conform slightly to a world situation that they have found they cannot otherwise change. Indeed perhaps their last try at the old hard line may have been their tremendous effort to prevent the coming into existence of the Western European Union. But all this was of course highly speculative and such speculations were not necessary in this paper. | John Dulles |
| The President repeated his view that the additional paragraphs submitted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff were merely warnings. In effect they were telling us not to be damn babies at Geneva. He said he was willing to accept these cautions but that we should also state clearly in the paper that we will not shut our eyes to evidence of changes in Soviet policy. | Dwight Eisenhower |

# 3  Methodology for Measuring Decision Outcomes

## 3.1  Coding Approach and Rationale

The goal for coding substantive decisions reached during meetings is to specify the target(s) of the decision and whether the decision is cooperative or conflictual. The task is therefore similar to coding event data (e.g., COPDAB or WEIS) but several unique features of our substantive area make existing approaches insufficient. First, decisions reached in a classified setting often do not generate a news report. We must look to the meeting itself, rather than the media, to discern decisions made and attribute them to the proper meeting session. Second, many decisions in NSC and informal meetings pertain to military planning. These include decisions to accelerate or halt arms programs or move forces to a region. It is worth noting that decision-makers do not always name the target of a policy decision. In such cases, coders looked for contextual information to discern the implicit target of the decision—often the Soviet Union. Third, decisions from meetings frequently involved a triangular relationship in which two actors were targets but in diametrically opposed ways. For instance, a decision to supply arms to Chinese Nationalists is coded as a cooperative act toward Chinese Nationalists and conflictual act toward Chinese Communists. Our coding scheme captures these triadic dynamics (Goldstein and Freeman, 1990).

## 3.2  Coding Typology

We code each decision target as *Adversary*, *Aligned*, or *Non-Aligned*. Examples of each would include the Soviet Union, United Kingdom, and Austria, respectively. The status of other targets varied depending on bilateral relations between it and the United States.

Decisions are ultimately coded as *Cooperative* or *Conflictual*. Given the broad categorization, each category subsumes numerous forms of decisions. Examples of *cooperative* decisions include material acts such as a providing military aid and verbal acts such as conveying agreement. Examples of *conflictual* decisions include material acts such as increasing military spending, imposing sanctions, or even using military force and verbal acts such as a making a threat or lodging a protest. Due to challenges that may arise in attempting to assign specific numerical values to each type of decision, we employ a count approach that aggregates up to the conflictual versus cooperative distinction. Moreover, the large presence of military planning decisions in our data does

not have a natural analogue in existing event coding scales, which further undercuts the validity of trying to apply those scales to our data.

As one expects, decisions toward adversaries are generally more conflictual than cooperative, though with heterogeneity across administrations.

## 3.3 Distribution of the Outcome Variable

Figure A3 illustrates the distribution of our two outcome variables of interest in the meeting-level analysis.

**Figure A3:** Distributions of Foreign Policy Decisions
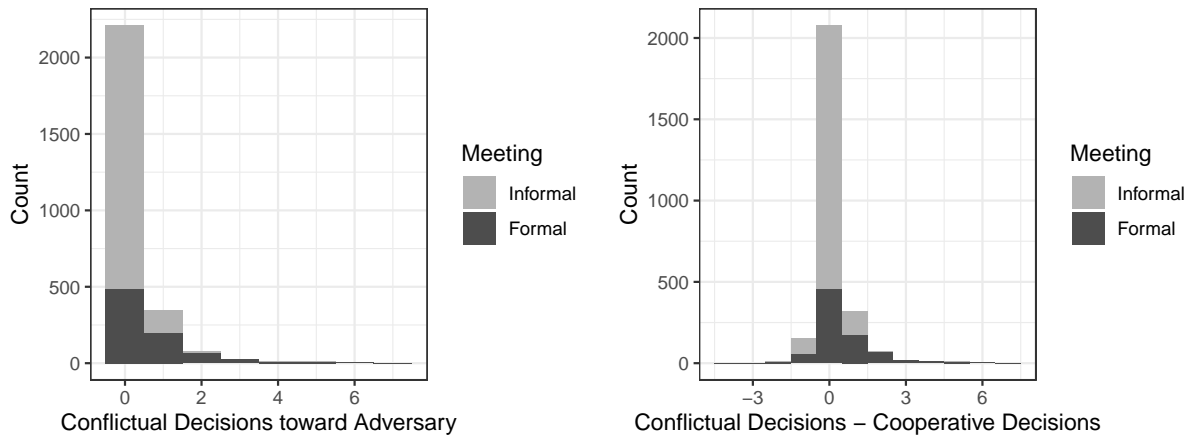
# 4 Methodology for Measuring Decision-Maker Hawkishness

## 4.1 Biographical Dataset on US Decision-Makers

Our analysis relies on data regarding 1,134 individuals who spoke at least once in a meeting in our collection of records. For each individual, we collected the following biographical information:

- First name
- Middle name
- Last name
- Gender
- Year of birth
- Highest education level
- Years of service in military
- Years of service in the State Department
- Years of service in intelligence
- Participation in WWII, Korean War, and/or Vietnam War
- Political party affiliation

As we note in the next section, these characteristics align with individual-level information from the Foreign Policy Leadership Project (FPLP) survey, which we use to train a model that is then applied to these biographical data to predict hawkishness for each individual.

We additionally logged data on all positions an individual held in the executive branch of the federal government between 1947 and 1988. This included:

- Position name
- Position start and end date
- Position level (in United States Order of Precedence)
- Position's bureaucratic affiliation

Codings for Henry Kissinger are shown in Table A5.

**Table A5:** Example Coding for Henry Kissinger

| | |
|---|---|
| *Position #1* | National Security Advisor |
| · *Start/End Dates* | 1/20/1969 to 11/3/1975 |
| · *Bureaucratic Affiliation* | National Security Council |
| *Position #2* | Secretary of State |
| · *Start/End Dates* | 9/22/1973 to 1/20/1977 |
| · *Bureaucratic Affiliation* | Department of State |
| *Gender* | Male |
| *Date of Birth* | 5/27/1923 |
| *Highest Education* | PhD |
| *Prior Experiences* | Military: Yes |
| | Diplomatic: Yes |
| *Party ID* | Republican |

## 4.2 Foreign Policy Leadership Project Survey

The following attributes of individuals were extracted from 2,119 responses to the 1976 Foreign Policy Leadership Project (FPLP) survey for use in our predictive model:

- Gender

- Birth decade

- Highest level of education

- Military service (binary; whether the respondent ever served in the military)

- Military officer (binary; whether the respondent was an active military officer)

- Foreign Service Officer (binary)

- Participation in WWII, Korean War, and/or Vietnam War

- Political party

As mentioned in the main text, our measure of each respondent's hawkishness is based on their responses to fifteen specific questions in the survey.[1] These fifteen questions, which were distributed over five separate sections of the survey, are reported below. Numbers in parentheses represent the item number as recorded in the original dataset containing all responses and do not reflect the actual item number in the survey itself.

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[1] We obtain these measures from the first wave of the FPLP survey since it is temporally the closest to our study period.

### 4.2.1 Survey Questions

"Turning to more general considerations, here is a list of possible foreign policy goals that the United States might have. Please indicate how much importance you think should be attached to each goal." (Very important, Somewhat important, Not important at all, Not sure)

- Containing Communism (#136)

"Somewhat more specifically, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the followings statements concerning America's role in the world." (Agree Strongly, Agree Somewhat, Disagree Somewhat, Disagree Strongly, No Opinion)

- There is nothing wrong with using the C.I.A. to try to undermine hostile governments. (#155)
- It is not in our interest to have better relations with the Soviet Union because we are getting less than we are giving to them. (#158)
- The U.S. should take all steps including the use of force to prevent the spread of Communism. (#160)

"This question asks you to indicate your position on certain foreign policy issues, and to state the extent to which your position was shaped by the experience in Vietnam. First indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement by checking one box in each row on the right." (Agree Strongly, Agree Somewhat, Disagree Somewhat, Disagree Strongly, No Opinion)

- There is considerable validity in the "domino theory" that when one nation falls to communism, others nearby will soon follow a similar path. (#218)
- Any communist victory is a defeat for America's national interest. (#225)
- The Soviet Union is generally expansionist rather than defensive in its foreign policy goals. (#234)
- Detente permits the USSR to pursue policies that promote rather than restrain conflict (#271)
- Rather than simply countering our opponent's thrusts, it is necessary to strike at the heart of the opponent's power. (#277)
- When force is used, military rather than political goals should determine its application. (#280)

"There has been quite a bit of discussion about the consequences of the Vietnam episode. Some of these are listed below. Please indicate your assessment of each statement by checking only one box for each item." (Agree Strongly, Agree Somewhat, Disagree Somewhat, Disagree Strongly, No Opinion)

- Communist nations have been encouraged to seek triumphs elsewhere as a result of Vietnam. (#309)
- The major assumptions of detente have been proven false by the events in Vietnam. (#310)

"Observers of American foreign policy have identified several factors that may have prevented the United States from achieving its goals in the Vietnam undertaking. In your judgment, how important were the reasons listed below in America's inability to achieve all of its goals? Please indicate your assessment by checking only one box in each row. (Very important, Moderately important, Slightly important, Not at all important, Not sure)

- The United States fought with a "no win" approach. (#327)
- The use of American air power was restricted. (#329)
- Insufficient attention was paid to advice from the military. (#332)

### 4.3 Predictive Model Descriptive Statistics

We generate predicted measures of actor hawkishness using a boosted linear regression model. The prediction process begins by first randomly splitting the FPLP data into two samples: one representing 70% of the data, and the other being the remaining 30%. Broadly speaking, the 70% sample is used to train the model, and the other 30%, called the test set, is used to measure the model's predictive performance on data that was not used in any way to create the original model itself.

The boosted linear regression model features a hyperparameter regarding the number of boosting iterations that should be applied to a model (*mstop*). We test four different potential values of *mstop*: 150, 250, 350, and 450. In order to determine which value of *mstop* is "best," we rely on five-fold cross-validation. We take our 70% sample of the FPLP data and split it once again into five equally apportioned subsamples. Four of the subsamples are deemed the training set, while the remaining fifth subsample is considered the validation set. The linear model is fit to the training set using the predetermined values of *mstop* iterations of boosting, and then these models are used to generate predictions for the validation set. The predictions are compared to the known actual outcome values of interest in the validation set to produce a measure of out-of-sample performance. This process is done five times so that each of the subsamples is used as a validation set; the average performance across all five folds is the model's overall performance for the given dataset and *mstop* iterations. Once this process is repeated for all values of *mstop*, the model with the best overall performance is chosen as the model used to predict hawkishness for our own actor dataset. This optimal model is applied to the original test set to produce a final set of statistics regarding the model's out-of-sample performance.

Below, we report some descriptive statistics on the final boosted linear model used to predict actor hawkishness.

#### 4.3.1 Estimated Effects of Predictors

Table A6 reports the distribution of estimated coefficients across the 1,000 bootstrapped models of hawkishness. Recall that these coefficients reflect the estimated impact of each of these predictors on the hawkishness of a FPLP survey respondent. The table shows that several forms of higher

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education, as well as being a Democrat (when the survey was administered in 1976) are consistently associated with lower levels of hawkishness. Meanwhile, being a military officer or Republican (when the survey was administered in 1976) are tied to being more hawkish.

**Table A6:** Distribution of Estimated Coefficients across 1,000 Bootstrapped Models of Hawkishness.

| Predictor | 2.5%ile | Mean | 97.5%ile |
|-----------|---------|------|----------|
| Born 1910-1919 | -0.048 | -0.021 | -0.002 |
| Born 1920-1929 | -0.033 | -0.009 | 0.012 |
| Born 1930-1939 | -0.031 | -0.008 | 0.007 |
| Born on/after 1940 | 0.005 | 0.024 | 0.047 |
| Male | -0.026 | 0.003 | 0.030 |
| College Graduate | -0.040 | -0.012 | 0.021 |
| Law Degree | -0.057 | -0.024 | 0.008 |
| MA | -0.097 | -0.062 | -0.025 |
| MBA | -0.069 | -0.014 | 0.043 |
| MD | -0.117 | -0.054 | -0.004 |
| PhD | -0.124 | -0.093 | -0.058 |
| WWII | -0.019 | 0.002 | 0.022 |
| Korean War | -0.004 | 0.021 | 0.049 |
| Vietnam War | 0.002 | 0.030 | 0.070 |
| Foreign Service Officer | -0.081 | -0.007 | 0.051 |
| Military Officer | 0.110 | 0.153 | 0.191 |
| Military Service | -0.018 | 0.005 | 0.024 |
| Democratic | -0.116 | -0.093 | -0.072 |
| Republican | 0.070 | 0.091 | 0.111 |

**Figure A4:** Actual Versus Predicted Values of Hawkishness for FPLP Respondents.
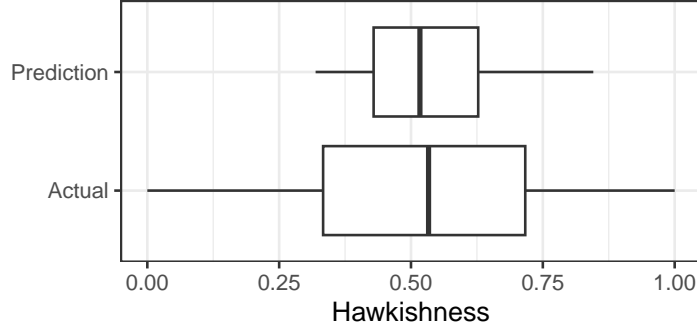


### 4.3.2 Prediction Error

To what extent do the bootstrapped models of hawkishness accurately predict an individual's hawkishness? We assess this by analyzing the models' out-of-sample performance. Each supervised model is trained on a random bootstrapped sample of 70% of the FPLP dataset; out-of-sample performance is then measured by applying this model to the held-out 30% of the survey data, for which actual levels of hawkishness (measured using the 15 questions listed below) are known. Any and all predictions of hawkishness for each FPLP survey respondent across the 1,000 bootstrapped iterations are averaged and then compared to the actual value of hawkishness.

Figure A4 illustrates the distribution of predicted hawkishness for FPLP survey respondents compared to the distribution of their actual hawkishness according to their responses. It is clear that the supervised model does not generate predictions that are as extreme as reality. Indeed, the predictions appear to be a compressed version of actual values.

Figure A5 provides more context by plotting each respondent's hawkishness measure to their prediction error. The model makes larger errors when individuals have more extreme measures of dovishness or hawkishness. Ardent hawks are underestimated, while ardent doves are overestimated. The Pearson correlation between respondents' predicted and actual hawkishness is 0.53. This value is quite strong given the task at hand and indicates that, despite the compression of the hawkishness scale, predicted values generally align in their ordering compared to actual ones.

**Figure A5:** Actual Hawkishness Versus Prediction Error for FPLP Respondents.
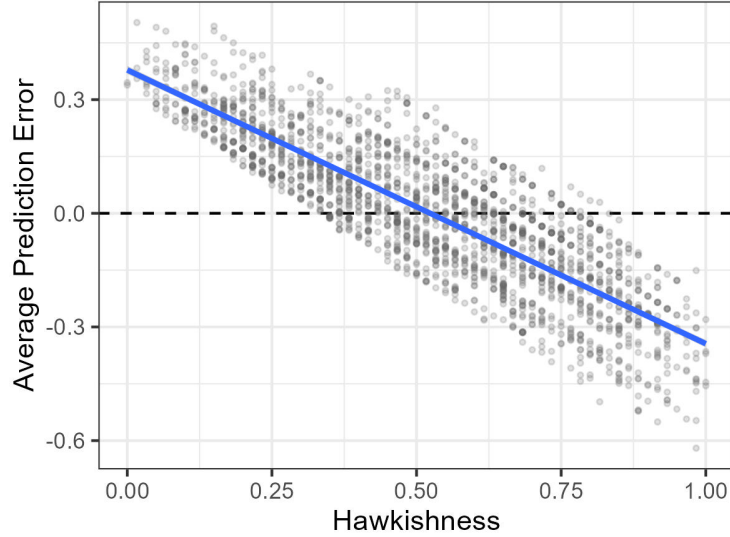


**Table A7:** Table A7: Out-of-Sample Performance Metrics for Two Linear Models.

| Model | RMSE | $R^2$ | MAE | MAESD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boosted linear | 0.1993 | 0.2806 | 0.1629 | 0.1149 |
| OLS | 0.1994 | 0.2800 | 0.1627 | 0.1153 |

## 4.4   Comparison to OLS Model

We impute measures of hawkishness using a boosted linear regression model. A linear model is necessary to make our adjustments to the estimated coefficients for hawkishness according to party (using data from Jeong 2018). One may wonder how our boosted linear regression model compares to a more straightforward ordinary least squares (OLS) model. Table A7 reports metrics regarding out-of-sample performance for the two linear models. The models are extremely similar in performance. However, we opt to use the boosted linear model, as it features barely lower RMSE, slightly higher $R^2$, and mildly smaller standard errors for mean absolute error. Appendix §5.4 shows that our main findings are unaffected by whether we use hawkishness measures based on the boosted linear regression model or the OLS model.

## 4.5 Comparison of Decision-Makers and FPLP Respondents

Table A8 provides a comparison of the mean values of all variables used to predict individual-level hawkishness. Note that all variables listed in the table are binary. In contrast to the average FPLP survey respondent, our set of decision-makers tend to be older, more likely to have gone to law school, less likely to have earned a PhD, more likely to be a foreign service officer, less likely to be a military officer, and somewhat less likely to be a Democrat. Imbalance between these two datasets is not material to whether the predictive model is effectively fitting the training data. As such, most of these differences should have no bearing on the effectiveness of our predictive model or the nature of the actual predictions it generates for our own actor dataset.

One exception to this rule is if our training data does not offer enough information to estimate a predictor's effect — and that predictor is relevant in the dataset for which we want to generate predictions. The FPLP data feature very few foreign service officers (FSOs) and individuals born before 1910, while our actor dataset has a substantial number of people who fit those two categories. The scant number of FSOs and those born prior to 1910 may impact our ability to find a consistent or systematic estimate of either trait on an individual's hawkishness, since there are limited data to train a model on these features. The lack of statistical significance for FSOs in Table A6 may perhaps reflect this.[2] This may mean that the effect of being an FSO or being born before 1910 is not fully accounted for in our predicted hawkishness measures. If we assume that FSOs would tend to be less hawkish (much as we suspect and find that military officers are systematically more hawkish), then this means that our hawkishness variable could be slightly biased upward for actors working in the State Department. We have no strong ex ante expectations about whether being born before 1910 should be associated with being hawkish or dovish, so we are less certain about what impact this may have on our predictions for actors born in this earlier period. The relatively mild or non-existent association with birth decade in Table A6 suggests that the lack of data on pre-1910 individuals should not unduly impact our measures.

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[2] "Born before 1910" was used as a baseline category for age and is therefore not reported on Table A6.

**Table A8:** Comparison of Mean Values across Decision-Maker Dataset and the FPLP Survey.

| Predictor | Actor Mean | FPLP Mean |
|---|---|---|
| Born before 1910 | 0.426 | 0.028 |
| Born 1910-1919 | 0.239 | 0.249 |
| Born 1920-1929 | 0.176 | 0.115 |
| Born 1930-1939 | 0.086 | 0.204 |
| Born on/after 1940 | 0.073 | 0.403 |
| Male | 0.987 | 0.903 |
| College Graduate | 0.296 | 0.365 |
| Law Degree | 0.246 | 0.084 |
| MA | 0.125 | 0.162 |
| MBA | 0.006 | 0.022 |
| MD | 0.001 | 0.026 |
| PhD | 0.146 | 0.261 |
| WWII | 0.359 | 0.331 |
| Korean War | 0.058 | 0.085 |
| Vietnam War | 0.036 | 0.236 |
| Foreign Service Officer | 0.276 | 0.008 |
| Military Officer | 0.120 | 0.209 |
| Military Service | 0.611 | 0.671 |
| Democratic | 0.208 | 0.370 |
| Republican | 0.254 | 0.275 |

## 4.6 Hawkishness and Temporal Heterogeneity

In our predictive model of hawkishness, we introduce an adjustment for party affiliation, as existing scholarship notes that the relationship between party and hawkishness changed over the course of the Cold War (e.g., Fordham, 2007). Democrats went from being more hawkish to more dovish, while Republicans did the opposite, leading to partisan positions that are more broadly familiar to us today. If we ignored this shift, our measures would underestimate the hawkishness of Truman-era Democrats and overestimate the hawkishness of Eisenhower-era Republicans. To address this issue, we make temporal adjustments to our hawkishness measure that compensate for the shift in party platforms. Specifically, we use longitudinal measures of partisan hawkishness assembled by Jeong (2018) to make time-conditional adjustments to the estimated coefficients for hawkishness of senior meeting participants. For each individual, we ascertain the administration in which they served, the position that they held, and their partisan affiliation. If the individual is a Democrat or Republican and was a senior official (working at the deputy secretary level or higher), we adjust their hawkishness measure using Jeong's partisan hawkishness data. Our adjustment used data from the midpoint year of the administration in which the individual served. For individuals with no known party affiliation, we use the raw prediction from the boosted linear model.

This hawkishness adjustment raises the question of whether other adjustments might be necessary if there were similar reasons why the relationship between hawkishness and the other biographical characteristics — such as age, gender, education, or organizational affiliation — might changed over the course of time. While we have strong theoretical reasons to expect the association between partisanship and foreign policy preferences changes markedly over the Cold War (even going so far as to reverse in sign), we do not have similarly strong theoretical expectations about time trends in the effects of these other biographical characteristics.

In the case of age and gender, we note that much of the existing literature on underpinning *why* older, male individuals skew more hawkish emphasize time-invariant factors such as neurobiological processes (e.g., McDermott et al., 2009; McDermott, 2014). In the case of gender, the point is also somewhat moot given the fact that the advisers in our dataset were almost exclusively male for the entire period. A more plausible scenario might be that the relationship between education and hawkishness changed over time, but we are again unaware of any existing study that has directly

demonstrated this empirically.

A final possibility is that organizational affiliation, particularly military status, might be associated with more hawkish attitudes during some periods, but not in others. Two points are worth noting, however. First, the bulk of the literature on civil-military relations tends to emphasize that hawkish dispositions tend to cluster in military organizations across a wide variety of contexts (Posen, 1984; Snyder, 1989). Surveys of military organizations from the 1970s (Etheredge, 1978), 1990s (Feaver and Gelpi, 2011), and 2000s (Jost, Meshkin and Schub, 2022) tend to yield similar findings. Second, the existing literature emphasizes that there are important cohort effects to serving in particular military conflicts (e.g., World War II as opposed to the Vietnam War). One of the benefits of the FPLP, however, is that it includes these characteristics — such that we are accounting for the cohort effects of different generations of military officers within our sample.

# 5 Full Results and Robustness Checks

In this section, we provide full results from our primary analysis, and then we conduct a series of robustness checks that uphold and further contextualize the validity of our main findings.

## 5.1 Full Results

Table 3 in the main text reports the results of fully-specified models. Tables A9 and A10 below supply results for these models, as well as bivariate specifications. Figure A6 illustrates the magnitude and statistical significance of the central hawkishness measures. All results in the remainder of this document will report both the sparse and full versions of models.

**Figure A6:** Summary of Three Models of Trait Aggregation
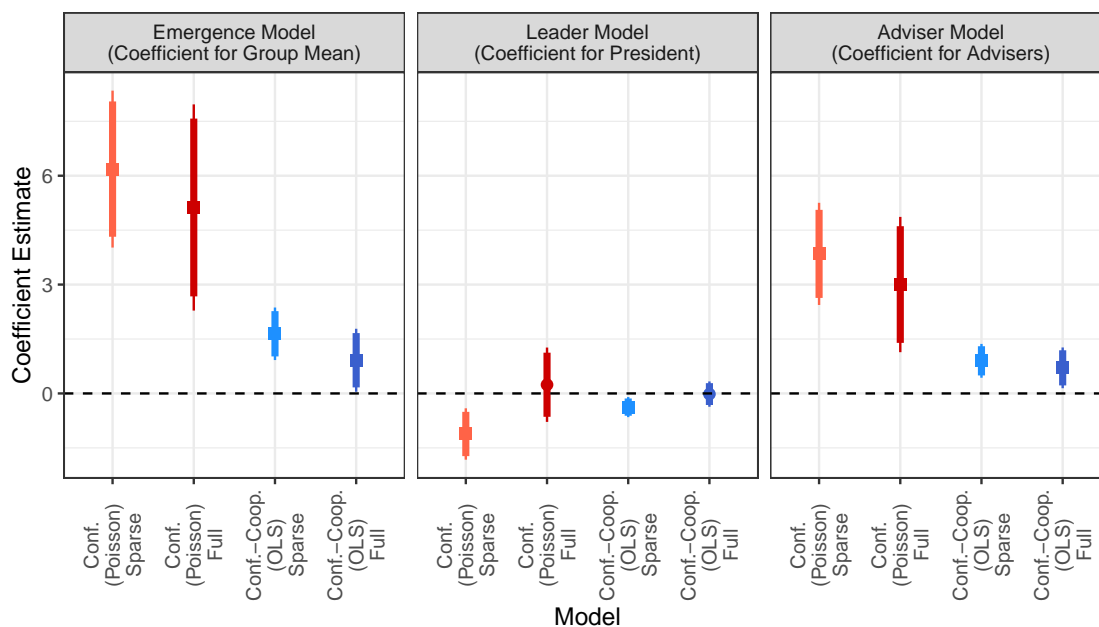


*Note:* Coefficient plots corresponding to main findings, corresponding to four models on each table. Thicker and smaller bands represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals respectively. Square points indicate 95% statistical significance.

**Table A9:** Effect of Mean Participant Hawkishness and President's Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions

| | *Emergence Model* | | | | *Leader Model* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | *Poisson* | | *OLS* | | *Poisson* | | *OLS* | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Mean Hawkishness | 6.183*** | 5.101*** | 1.644*** | 0.881** | | | | |
| | (1.103) | (1.450) | (0.369) | (0.443) | | | | |
| President's Hawkishness | | | | | −1.118*** | 0.218 | −0.377*** | −0.020 |
| | | | | | (0.361) | (0.522) | (0.141) | (0.178) |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.011 | | 0.022*** | | 0.032 | | 0.025*** |
| | | (0.021) | | (0.008) | | (0.020) | | (0.007) |
| Defense | | 0.195*** | | 0.066*** | | 0.113*** | | 0.052*** |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.022) | | (0.044) | | (0.019) |
| Intelligence | | 0.315*** | | 0.135*** | | 0.295*** | | 0.141*** |
| | | (0.100) | | (0.041) | | (0.095) | | (0.037) |
| Military | | −0.009 | | 0.060** | | 0.057 | | 0.069*** |
| | | (0.064) | | (0.030) | | (0.056) | | (0.023) |
| State | | 0.044 | | 0.001 | | 0.004 | | 0.004 |
| | | (0.054) | | (0.021) | | (0.051) | | (0.019) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.094* | | 0.005 | | 0.076* | | 0.006 |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.016) | | (0.046) | | (0.014) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.140*** | | −0.066*** | | −0.121*** | | −0.074*** |
| | | (0.054) | | (0.020) | | (0.047) | | (0.017) |
| Military Experience | | 0.161* | | −0.053** | | 0.234*** | | −0.008 |
| | | (0.084) | | (0.025) | | (0.077) | | (0.019) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.394* | | −0.107 | | 0.062 | | −0.050 |
| | | (0.232) | | (0.078) | | (0.150) | | (0.041) |
| US CINC | | 5.433** | | 2.839*** | | 2.844*** | | 0.910*** |
| | | (2.355) | | (0.917) | | (1.063) | | (0.319) |
| Formal | 1.472*** | 0.655*** | 0.357*** | 0.114** | 1.782*** | 0.797*** | 0.429*** | 0.179*** |
| | (0.091) | (0.136) | (0.034) | (0.051) | (0.083) | (0.129) | (0.031) | (0.045) |
| Constant | −5.566*** | −7.056*** | −0.828*** | −1.180*** | −1.695*** | −4.339*** | 0.227*** | −0.215 |
| | (0.646) | (1.205) | (0.218) | (0.410) | (0.186) | (0.650) | (0.070) | (0.187) |
| Administration FEs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

**Table A10:** Effect of Adviser Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions

| | Adviser Model | | | | Advisers + Admin. FEs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | 3.846*** | 2.983*** | 0.898*** | 0.692** | 4.408*** | 3.125*** | 0.948*** | 0.673** |
| | (0.718) | (0.951) | (0.238) | (0.287) | (0.841) | (1.066) | (0.277) | (0.316) |
| President's Hawkishness | −1.721*** | −0.692 | −0.545*** | −0.126 | | | | |
| | (0.371) | (0.598) | (0.148) | (0.223) | | | | |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.039* | | 0.027*** | | 0.018 | | 0.024*** |
| | | (0.020) | | (0.008) | | (0.021) | | (0.008) |
| Defense | | 0.134*** | | 0.048** | | 0.183*** | | 0.065*** |
| | | (0.044) | | (0.022) | | (0.048) | | (0.022) |
| Intelligence | | 0.321*** | | 0.142*** | | 0.310*** | | 0.138*** |
| | | (0.097) | | (0.042) | | (0.099) | | (0.042) |
| Military | | 0.032 | | 0.065** | | 0.045 | | 0.068** |
| | | (0.056) | | (0.027) | | (0.060) | | (0.028) |
| State | | 0.042 | | 0.007 | | 0.030 | | 0.001 |
| | | (0.052) | | (0.021) | | (0.054) | | (0.022) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.061 | | −0.011 | | 0.095** | | 0.003 |
| | | (0.046) | | (0.016) | | (0.048) | | (0.016) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.141*** | | −0.063*** | | −0.134** | | −0.065*** |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.019) | | (0.054) | | (0.020) |
| Military Experience | | 0.140* | | −0.052** | | 0.109 | | −0.066*** |
| | | (0.083) | | (0.024) | | (0.088) | | (0.026) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | 0.009 | | 0.002 | | −0.380 | | −0.115 |
| | | (0.151) | | (0.046) | | (0.233) | | (0.079) |
| US CINC | | 2.297** | | 1.235*** | | 5.766** | | 2.897*** |
| | | (1.088) | | (0.365) | | (2.365) | | (0.931) |
| Formal | 1.660*** | 0.791*** | 0.403*** | 0.128** | 1.553*** | 0.691*** | 0.385*** | 0.120** |
| | (0.085) | (0.131) | (0.032) | (0.051) | (0.089) | (0.137) | (0.034) | (0.052) |
| Constant | −3.360*** | −4.938*** | −0.144 | −0.578*** | −4.574*** | −5.911*** | −0.420** | −1.026*** |
| | (0.369) | (0.689) | (0.123) | (0.218) | (0.506) | (1.082) | (0.165) | (0.371) |
| Administration FEs | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

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## 5.2 Disaggregating Results by Meeting Type

As noted, our main analysis includes both formal NSC meetings as well as informal gatherings, as national security decisions were made in both contexts. Yet we may also believe that differences exist in the dynamics of these separate settings. We can explore potential differences by replicating the previous analysis after disaggregating these two meeting types.

Tables A11 and A12 present full statistical results from regressions that only use data from informal meetings. Figure A7 displays the corresponding coefficient plots. Tables A13 and A14 present full statistical results from regressions that only use data from informal meetings. Figure A8 displays the corresponding coefficient plots.

In our pool of formal NSC meetings, there are 69 records where the president was not in attendance. While we would expect the president to be apprised of all developments in these meetings and for advisers to still feel the president's influence in formal NSC meetings where he is not present, some may be concerned that meetings without the president may operate differently. Our analysis of formal meetings therefore includes an additional control variable which indicates whether the president was in attendance.

The results illustrate that the influence of advisers is stronger and more statistically significant in formal meetings compared to informal gatherings.

These findings enhance our understanding of foreign policy decision-making in critical ways. First, we find that advisers matter more in foreign policy decision-making than work that focuses only on leaders at the expense of advisers might suggest. We also find very little evidence for — and considerable evidence against — the emergence model, which suggests that group-level properties cannot be reduced to the hawkishness of members that comprise it. We do not rule out the possibility that our analysis omits certain group-level characteristics that may also be shaping policy choices. Nonetheless, we find that hawkishness at the individual level aggregates in foreign policy decision-making groups in sensible ways: the average level of hawkishness in a group is informative and becomes more informative when one takes into account how much people participate in the decision reached, even though our measure of hawkishness is obtained independently of the decisions these dispositions are being used to explain.

**Figure A7:** Summary of Three Models of Trait Aggregation, Using Formal Meetings
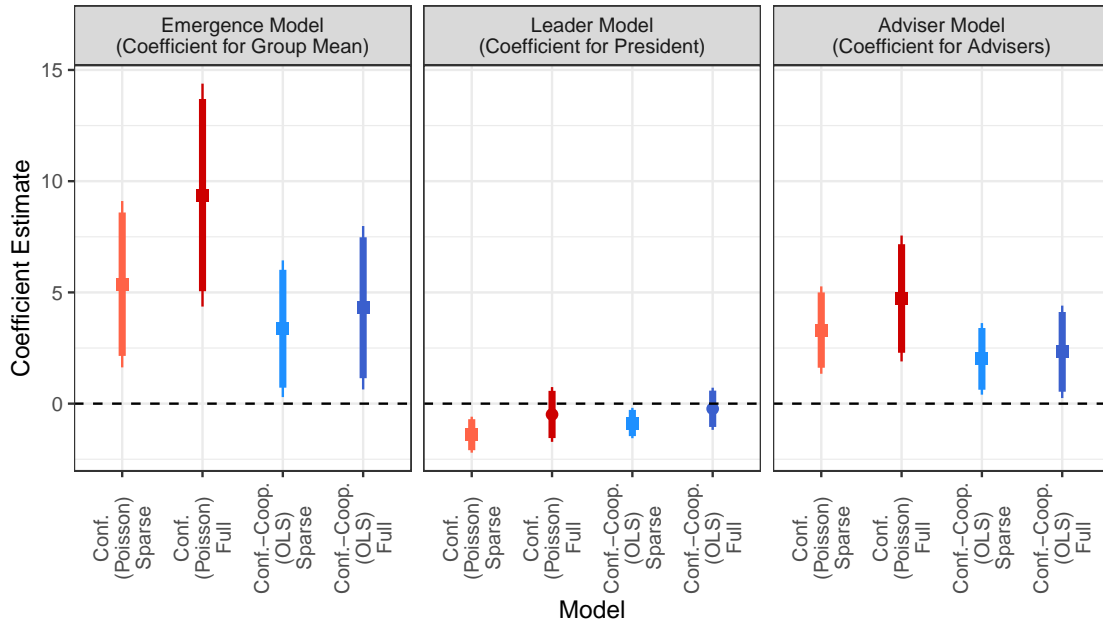


*Note:* Coefficient plots corresponding to main findings, corresponding to four models on each table. Thicker and smaller bands represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals respectively. Square points indicate 95% statistical significance.

**Figure A8:** Summary of Three Models of Trait Aggregation, Using Informal Meetings
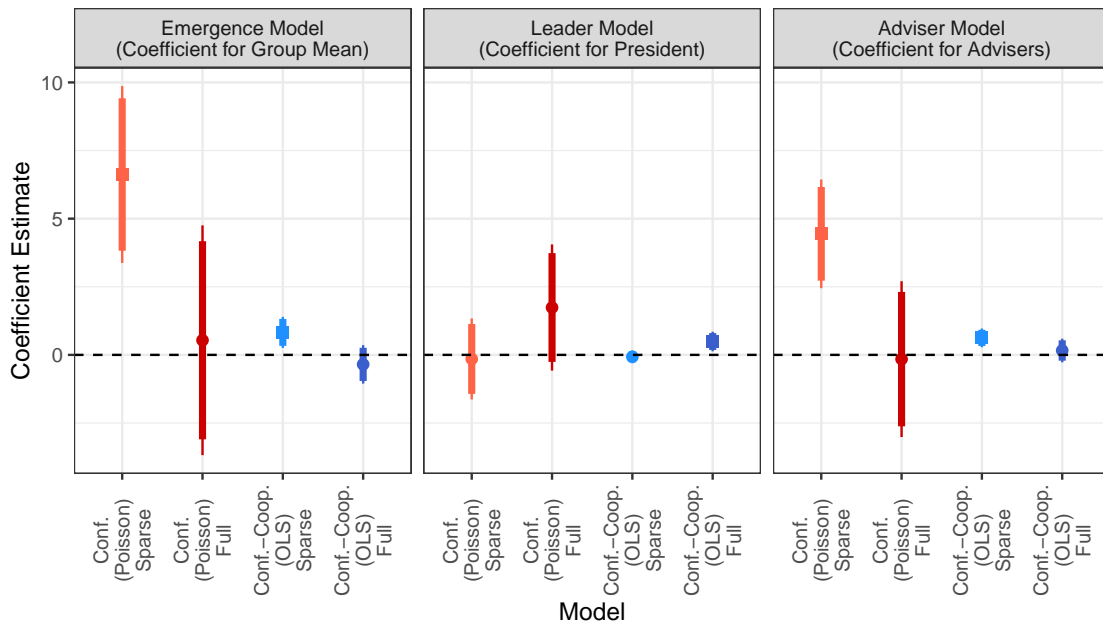


*Note:* Coefficient plots corresponding to main findings, corresponding to four models on each table. Thicker and smaller bands represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals respectively. Square points indicate 95% statistical significance.

**Table A11:** Effect of Mean Participant Hawkishness and President's Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Using Formal Meetings

| | Emergence Model | | | | Leader Model | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Mean Hawkishness | 5.369*** | 9.392*** | 3.367** | 4.299** | | | | |
| | (1.907) | (2.556) | (1.568) | (1.873) | | | | |
| President's Hawkishness | | | | | −1.396*** | −0.496 | −0.871** | −0.232 |
| | | | | | (0.412) | (0.627) | (0.348) | (0.482) |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.065** | | 0.038* | | 0.092*** | | 0.054** |
| | | (0.026) | | (0.021) | | (0.025) | | (0.021) |
| Defense | | 0.129** | | 0.077 | | 0.033 | | 0.032 |
| | | (0.057) | | (0.048) | | (0.054) | | (0.046) |
| Intelligence | | 0.169 | | 0.108 | | 0.162 | | 0.130 |
| | | (0.118) | | (0.097) | | (0.111) | | (0.095) |
| Military | | −0.135* | | −0.043 | | −0.071 | | −0.003 |
| | | (0.081) | | (0.069) | | (0.070) | | (0.063) |
| State | | −0.056 | | −0.001 | | −0.063 | | −0.011 |
| | | (0.065) | | (0.056) | | (0.060) | | (0.053) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.080 | | 0.014 | | 0.045 | | −0.003 |
| | | (0.063) | | (0.045) | | (0.059) | | (0.043) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.096 | | −0.015 | | −0.128** | | −0.046 |
| | | (0.076) | | (0.052) | | (0.056) | | (0.043) |
| Military Experience | | −0.049 | | −0.073 | | 0.105 | | −0.025 |
| | | (0.132) | | (0.096) | | (0.124) | | (0.088) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.568* | | −0.309 | | −0.008 | | −0.003 |
| | | (0.302) | | (0.221) | | (0.210) | | (0.144) |
| US CINC | | 7.693*** | | 5.975*** | | 2.993** | | 2.326** |
| | | (2.939) | | (2.263) | | (1.361) | | (1.009) |
| President Attendance | | −0.149 | | −0.059 | | 0.084 | | 0.054 |
| | | (0.239) | | (0.178) | | (0.225) | | (0.169) |
| Constant | −3.714*** | −8.416*** | −1.474 | −3.688*** | 0.220 | −2.593*** | 0.902*** | −0.567 |
| | (1.108) | (1.836) | (0.896) | (1.372) | (0.203) | (0.963) | (0.177) | (0.677) |
| Administration FEs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 791 | 791 | 791 | 791 | 791 | 791 | 791 | 791 |

$^*p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

**Table A12:** Effect of Adviser Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Using Formal Meetings

| | Adviser Model | | | | Advisers + Admin. FEs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | 3.307*** | 4.718*** | 2.012** | 2.310** | 5.720*** | 6.387*** | 3.377*** | 3.380** |
| | (1.002) | (1.439) | (0.821) | (1.059) | (1.473) | (1.812) | (1.227) | (1.380) |
| President's Hawkishness | −1.914*** | −2.031** | −1.230*** | −1.084* | | | | |
| | (0.434) | (0.789) | (0.373) | (0.611) | | | | |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.097*** | | 0.055*** | | 0.067*** | | 0.040* |
| | | (0.025) | | (0.021) | | (0.026) | | (0.021) |
| Defense | | 0.057 | | 0.046 | | 0.123** | | 0.077 |
| | | (0.054) | | (0.047) | | (0.056) | | (0.048) |
| Intelligence | | 0.203* | | 0.145 | | 0.150 | | 0.107 |
| | | (0.112) | | (0.096) | | (0.118) | | (0.097) |
| Military | | −0.083 | | −0.010 | | −0.058 | | −0.006 |
| | | (0.071) | | (0.063) | | (0.075) | | (0.065) |
| State | | −0.014 | | 0.017 | | −0.057 | | −0.002 |
| | | (0.062) | | (0.054) | | (0.065) | | (0.056) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.028 | | −0.018 | | 0.072 | | 0.003 |
| | | (0.060) | | (0.044) | | (0.063) | | (0.045) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.183*** | | −0.070 | | −0.110 | | −0.022 |
| | | (0.059) | | (0.044) | | (0.075) | | (0.052) |
| Military Experience | | −0.036 | | −0.101 | | −0.110 | | −0.125 |
| | | (0.131) | | (0.096) | | (0.136) | | (0.100) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.156 | | −0.090 | | −0.503* | | −0.314 |
| | | (0.216) | | (0.148) | | (0.304) | | (0.222) |
| US CINC | | 1.807 | | 1.737* | | 8.227*** | | 6.138*** |
| | | (1.435) | | (1.039) | | (2.955) | | (2.268) |
| President Attendance | | 0.062 | | 0.064 | | −0.124 | | −0.031 |
| | | (0.223) | | (0.169) | | (0.243) | | (0.178) |
| Constant | −1.314** | −3.225*** | −0.001 | −0.765 | −3.919*** | −6.731*** | −1.473** | −3.019** |
| | (0.510) | (1.012) | (0.415) | (0.701) | (0.863) | (1.571) | (0.702) | (1.182) |
| Administration FEs | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 787 | 787 | 787 | 787 | 787 | 787 | 787 | 787 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

**Table A13:** Effect of Mean Participant Hawkishness and President's Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Using Informal Meetings

| | Emergence Model | | | | Leader Model | | | |
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean Hawkishness | 6.620*** | 0.330 | 0.826*** | −0.380 | | | | |
| | (1.655) | (2.170) | (0.291) | (0.360) | | | | |
| President's Hawkishness | | | | | −0.149 | 1.646 | −0.070 | 0.481*** |
| | | | | | (0.759) | (1.186) | (0.118) | (0.184) |
| No. of Attendees | | −0.204*** | | −0.004 | | −0.232*** | | −0.006 |
| | | (0.066) | | (0.007) | | (0.064) | | (0.007) |
| Defense | | 0.469*** | | 0.065*** | | 0.508*** | | 0.067*** |
| | | (0.137) | | (0.024) | | (0.132) | | (0.024) |
| Intelligence | | 0.921*** | | 0.153*** | | 0.967*** | | 0.144*** |
| | | (0.220) | | (0.038) | | (0.214) | | (0.038) |
| Military | | 0.441*** | | 0.132*** | | 0.406*** | | 0.109*** |
| | | (0.139) | | (0.028) | | (0.119) | | (0.024) |
| State | | 0.304** | | 0.010 | | 0.299** | | 0.003 |
| | | (0.127) | | (0.019) | | (0.123) | | (0.018) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.027 | | −0.006 | | 0.054 | | −0.001 |
| | | (0.086) | | (0.013) | | (0.079) | | (0.013) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.174 | | −0.037** | | −0.208** | | −0.038** |
| | | (0.110) | | (0.019) | | (0.103) | | (0.018) |
| Military Experience | | 0.249* | | −0.011 | | 0.350*** | | 0.0001 |
| | | (0.141) | | (0.021) | | (0.126) | | (0.017) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | 0.307 | | 0.081 | | −0.109 | | 0.061 |
| | | (0.471) | | (0.065) | | (0.268) | | (0.040) |
| US CINC | | −4.701 | | −1.327 | | 0.211 | | 0.593* |
| | | (5.446) | | (0.849) | | (1.972) | | (0.317) |
| Constant | −5.506*** | −2.339 | −0.294 | 0.581 | −2.161*** | −4.285*** | 0.078 | −0.544** |
| | (1.056) | (2.402) | (0.185) | (0.379) | (0.374) | (1.615) | (0.059) | (0.232) |
| Administration FEs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 1,894 | 1,894 | 1,894 | 1,894 | 1,894 | 1,894 | 1,894 | 1,894 |

*$p < 0.1$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$

**Table A14:** Effect of Adviser Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Using Informal Meetings

| | Adviser Model | | | | Advisers + Admin. FEs | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | 4.442*** | −0.254 | 0.624*** | 0.150 | 3.523*** | −1.366 | 0.525*** | −0.083 |
| | (1.018) | (1.464) | (0.175) | (0.221) | (1.094) | (1.566) | (0.196) | (0.237) |
| President's Hawkishness | −0.830 | 1.597 | −0.180 | 0.433** | | | | |
| | (0.756) | (1.248) | (0.124) | (0.199) | | | | |
| No. of Attendees | | −0.226*** | | −0.005 | | −0.205*** | | −0.003 |
| | | (0.065) | | (0.007) | | (0.065) | | (0.007) |
| Defense | | 0.490*** | | 0.068*** | | 0.426*** | | 0.064*** |
| | | (0.133) | | (0.024) | | (0.135) | | (0.024) |
| Intelligence | | 0.971*** | | 0.146*** | | 0.930*** | | 0.153*** |
| | | (0.214) | | (0.038) | | (0.220) | | (0.038) |
| Military | | 0.404*** | | 0.104*** | | 0.485*** | | 0.122*** |
| | | (0.122) | | (0.025) | | (0.134) | | (0.027) |
| State | | 0.283** | | 0.005 | | 0.271** | | 0.011 |
| | | (0.126) | | (0.019) | | (0.128) | | (0.019) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.056 | | −0.003 | | 0.041 | | −0.008 |
| | | (0.081) | | (0.013) | | (0.086) | | (0.013) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.212** | | −0.037** | | −0.180 | | −0.037** |
| | | (0.104) | | (0.018) | | (0.110) | | (0.019) |
| Military Experience | | 0.355** | | −0.005 | | 0.283* | | −0.012 |
| | | (0.139) | | (0.019) | | (0.145) | | (0.022) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.141 | | 0.060 | | 0.370 | | 0.079 |
| | | (0.270) | | (0.041) | | (0.472) | | (0.066) |
| US CINC | | 0.440 | | 0.590* | | −4.689 | | −1.363 |
| | | (2.024) | | (0.333) | | (5.464) | | (0.870) |
| Constant | −4.098*** | −4.128** | −0.183* | −0.579** | −3.442*** | −1.532 | −0.081 | 0.429 |
| | (0.592) | (1.660) | (0.095) | (0.239) | (0.698) | (2.262) | (0.126) | (0.349) |
| Administration FEs | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 1,863 | 1,863 | 1,863 | 1,863 | 1,863 | 1,863 | 1,863 | 1,863 |

$^*p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

## 5.3 Propagating Uncertainty of Hawkishness Measures

The hawkishness measures used in our core analysis are constructed through a bootstrap process, described in subsection 2.2 of the main text. The bootstrapping process producees 1,000 predictions of each actor's hawkishness based on different sets of training data. Our paper calculates the mean value of hawkishness for each observation across these 1,000 observations, and this mean is our key variable. While this approach is relatively efficient and does account for potential variation across all bootstrap iterations, it does not fully propagate the uncertainty inherent to our estimates through our primary analysis. To what extent could the wider array of predicted measures of hawkishness from our bootstrapping process potentially impact our findings?

To address this question, we go back to our 1,000 bootstrap iterations. For each iteration, we take the predicted measures of hawkishness for each of our actor-years and construct meeting-level data necessary for our main analysis. We then run our series of Poisson and OLS models on this meeting-level data, producing a coefficient estimate and associated standard error for each variable. This process is performed 1,000 times (once for each dataset produced from each bootstrap iteration).

Tables A15 and A16 report the average coefficient estimates and standard errors across all 1,000 iterations of each model; Figure A9 illustrates the coefficients for relevant measures of hawkishness. The vast majority of our primary findings, and particularly those related to the adviser model, remain unchanged even when performing a more computationally-intensive form of analysis that explicitly propagates the uncertainty of our hawkishness measures.

**Figure A9:** Summary of Three Models of Trait Aggregation, Propagating Uncertainty from Bootstrapping
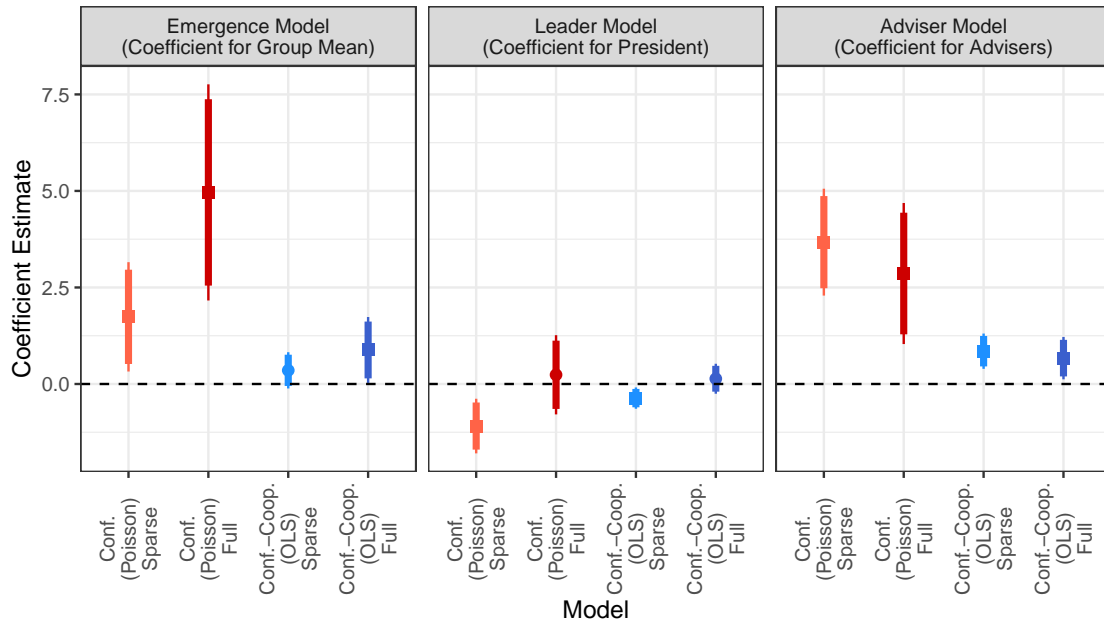


*Note:* Coefficient plots corresponding to main findings, corresponding to four models on each table. Thicker and smaller bands represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals respectively. Square points indicate 95% statistical significance.

**Table A15:** Effect of Mean Participant Hawkishness and President's Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Propagating Uncertainty from Bootstrapping

| | Emergence Model | | | | Leader Model | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Mean Hawkishness | 1.739** | 4.938*** | 0.354 | 0.848* | | | | |
| | (0.722) | (1.429) | (0.240) | (0.436) | | | | |
| President's Hawkishness | | | | | −1.090*** | 0.216 | −0.366*** | 0.133 |
| | | | | | (0.361) | (0.523) | (0.141) | (0.198) |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.011 | | 0.022*** | | 0.032 | | 0.024*** |
| | | (0.021) | | (0.008) | | (0.020) | | (0.008) |
| Defense | | 0.194*** | | 0.066*** | | 0.113*** | | 0.041* |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.022) | | (0.044) | | (0.021) |
| Intelligence | | 0.315*** | | 0.135*** | | 0.295*** | | 0.138*** |
| | | (0.100) | | (0.041) | | (0.095) | | (0.041) |
| Military | | −0.006 | | 0.061** | | 0.057 | | 0.077*** |
| | | (0.064) | | (0.030) | | (0.056) | | (0.026) |
| State | | 0.043 | | 0.0005 | | 0.004 | | −0.004 |
| | | (0.054) | | (0.021) | | (0.051) | | (0.021) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.095** | | 0.005 | | 0.076* | | −0.004 |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.016) | | (0.046) | | (0.015) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.140*** | | −0.066*** | | −0.121*** | | −0.061*** |
| | | (0.054) | | (0.020) | | (0.047) | | (0.019) |
| Military Experience | | 0.162* | | −0.053** | | 0.233*** | | −0.027 |
| | | (0.084) | | (0.025) | | (0.077) | | (0.022) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.391* | | −0.107 | | 0.060 | | 0.008 |
| | | (0.232) | | (0.078) | | (0.149) | | (0.045) |
| US CINC | | 5.448** | | 2.838*** | | 2.840*** | | 1.358*** |
| | | (2.356) | | (0.918) | | (1.065) | | (0.356) |
| Formal | 1.712*** | 0.656*** | 0.412*** | 0.114** | 1.780*** | 0.797*** | 0.429*** | 0.122** |
| | (0.087) | (0.136) | (0.032) | (0.051) | (0.083) | (0.129) | (0.031) | (0.050) |
| Constant | −3.110*** | −4.997*** | −0.133 | −0.687** | −1.709*** | −4.334*** | 0.221*** | −0.461** |
| | (0.373) | (0.931) | (0.121) | (0.300) | (0.186) | (0.649) | (0.070) | (0.208) |
| Administration FEs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 |

$^*p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

**Table A16:** Effect of Adviser Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Propagating Uncertainty from Bootstrapping

| | Adviser Model | | | | Advisers + Admin. FEs | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | *Poisson* | | *OLS* | | *Poisson* | | *OLS* | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | 3.674*** | 2.843*** | 0.849*** | 0.656** | 4.202*** | 2.973*** | 0.892*** | 0.637** |
| | (0.706) | (0.932) | (0.233) | (0.280) | (0.829) | (1.044) | (0.271) | (0.308) |
| President's Hawkishness | −1.674*** | −0.643 | −0.526*** | −0.114 | | | | |
| | (0.372) | (0.596) | (0.148) | (0.222) | | | | |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.038* | | 0.027*** | | 0.017 | | 0.023*** |
| | | (0.020) | | (0.008) | | (0.021) | | (0.008) |
| Defense | | 0.134*** | | 0.047** | | 0.182*** | | 0.065*** |
| | | (0.044) | | (0.022) | | (0.048) | | (0.022) |
| Intelligence | | 0.320*** | | 0.142*** | | 0.310*** | | 0.137*** |
| | | (0.097) | | (0.042) | | (0.099) | | (0.042) |
| Military | | 0.033 | | 0.066** | | 0.047 | | 0.069** |
| | | (0.056) | | (0.027) | | (0.060) | | (0.028) |
| State | | 0.040 | | 0.006 | | 0.029 | | 0.001 |
| | | (0.052) | | (0.021) | | (0.054) | | (0.022) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.062 | | −0.010 | | 0.096** | | 0.004 |
| | | (0.046) | | (0.016) | | (0.048) | | (0.016) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.140*** | | −0.062*** | | −0.134** | | −0.065*** |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.019) | | (0.054) | | (0.020) |
| Military Experience | | 0.145* | | −0.051** | | 0.112 | | −0.066** |
| | | (0.083) | | (0.024) | | (0.087) | | (0.026) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | 0.010 | | 0.001 | | −0.378 | | −0.114 |
| | | (0.151) | | (0.046) | | (0.233) | | (0.079) |
| US CINC | | 2.324** | | 1.243*** | | 5.766** | | 2.895*** |
| | | (1.090) | | (0.366) | | (2.366) | | (0.931) |
| Formal | 1.664*** | 0.790*** | 0.404*** | 0.128** | 1.555*** | 0.691*** | 0.385*** | 0.120** |
| | (0.085) | (0.131) | (0.032) | (0.051) | (0.089) | (0.137) | (0.034) | (0.052) |
| Constant | −3.294*** | −4.910*** | −0.128 | −0.570*** | −3.886*** | −4.057*** | −0.434*** | −0.549** |
| | (0.364) | (0.688) | (0.121) | (0.218) | (0.445) | (0.834) | (0.152) | (0.274) |
| Administration FEs | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

## 5.4   Using an OLS Predictive Model

In Appendix §4.4, we addressed why we chose to use a boosted linear regression model to produce hawkishness measures instead of an ordinary least squares (OLS) model. Tables A17 and A18, summarized in Figure A10, replicate our analysis using the hawkishness measures generated with an OLS model. The results are very similar to what we report in our main findings.

**Figure A10:** Summary of Three Models of Trait Aggregation, Using OLS Supervised Learning Model
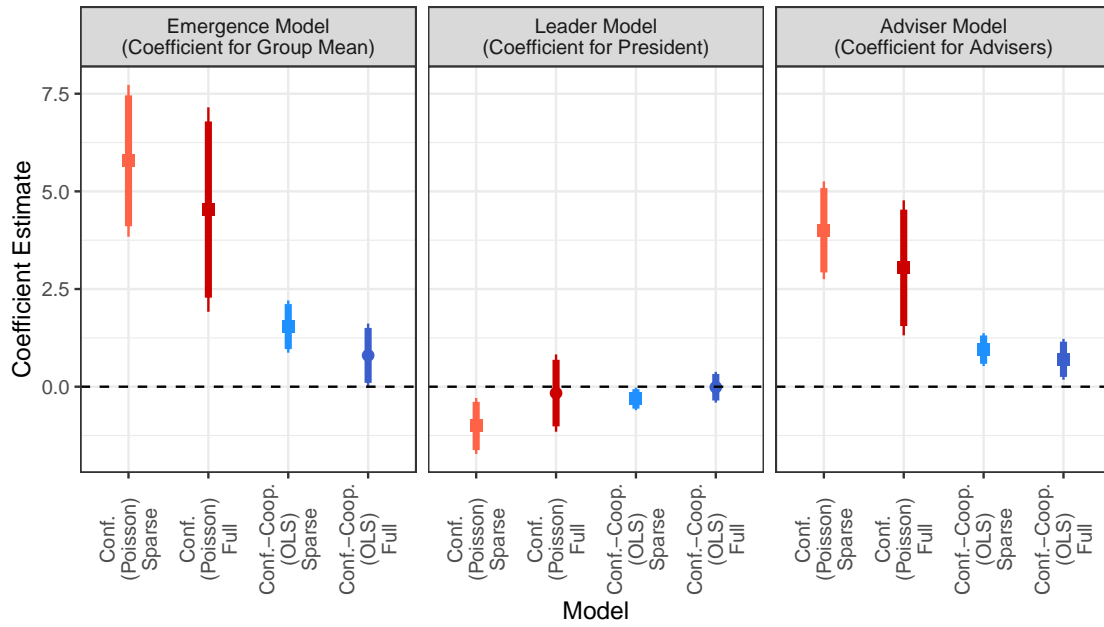


*Note:* Coefficient plots corresponding to main findings, corresponding to four models on each table. Thicker and smaller bands represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals respectively. Square points indicate 95% statistical significance.

**Table A17:** Effect of Mean Participant Hawkishness and President's Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Using OLS Supervised Learning Model

| | Emergence Model | | | | Leader Model | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Mean Hawkishness | 5.782*** | 4.510*** | 1.539*** | 0.763* | | | | |
| | (0.991) | (1.335) | (0.341) | (0.417) | | | | |
| President's Hawkishness | | | | | −1.005*** | −0.180 | −0.312** | −0.013 |
| | | | | | (0.365) | (0.503) | (0.147) | (0.200) |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.011 | | 0.022*** | | 0.031 | | 0.025*** |
| | | (0.021) | | (0.008) | | (0.020) | | (0.008) |
| Defense | | 0.195*** | | 0.066*** | | 0.116*** | | 0.041* |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.022) | | (0.044) | | (0.021) |
| Intelligence | | 0.306*** | | 0.133*** | | 0.298*** | | 0.137*** |
| | | (0.100) | | (0.041) | | (0.095) | | (0.041) |
| Military | | −0.012 | | 0.060** | | 0.055 | | 0.078*** |
| | | (0.065) | | (0.030) | | (0.056) | | (0.026) |
| State | | 0.040 | | 0.0004 | | 0.006 | | −0.004 |
| | | (0.054) | | (0.021) | | (0.051) | | (0.021) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.093* | | 0.005 | | 0.080* | | −0.004 |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.016) | | (0.046) | | (0.015) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.134** | | −0.064*** | | −0.132*** | | −0.062*** |
| | | (0.054) | | (0.020) | | (0.047) | | (0.019) |
| Military Experience | | 0.161* | | −0.053** | | 0.230*** | | −0.030 |
| | | (0.084) | | (0.025) | | (0.077) | | (0.022) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.397* | | −0.105 | | 0.003 | | −0.009 |
| | | (0.232) | | (0.078) | | (0.150) | | (0.046) |
| US CINC | | 5.199** | | 2.796*** | | 2.623*** | | 1.286*** |
| | | (2.362) | | (0.918) | | (1.018) | | (0.339) |
| Formal | 1.472*** | 0.661*** | 0.357*** | 0.115** | 1.789*** | 0.823*** | 0.431*** | 0.132*** |
| | (0.090) | (0.136) | (0.034) | (0.051) | (0.083) | (0.129) | (0.031) | (0.050) |
| Constant | −5.525*** | −6.790*** | −0.819*** | −1.129*** | −1.742*** | −3.967*** | 0.198*** | −0.329* |
| | (0.616) | (1.176) | (0.213) | (0.406) | (0.191) | (0.615) | (0.074) | (0.199) |
| Administration FEs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

**Table A18:** Effect of Adviser Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Using OLS Supervised Learning Model

| | Adviser Model | | | | Advisers + Admin. FEs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | 4.004*** | 3.026*** | 0.949*** | 0.685** | 4.028*** | 2.851*** | 0.868*** | 0.577** |
| | (0.639) | (0.882) | (0.214) | (0.267) | (0.755) | (0.978) | (0.252) | (0.290) |
| President's Hawkishness | −1.509*** | −1.018* | −0.458*** | −0.258 | | | | |
| | (0.364) | (0.562) | (0.152) | (0.221) | | | | |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.040** | | 0.027*** | | 0.019 | | 0.024*** |
| | | (0.020) | | (0.008) | | (0.021) | | (0.008) |
| Defense | | 0.139*** | | 0.049** | | 0.182*** | | 0.065*** |
| | | (0.045) | | (0.022) | | (0.048) | | (0.022) |
| Intelligence | | 0.317*** | | 0.138*** | | 0.303*** | | 0.135*** |
| | | (0.096) | | (0.042) | | (0.099) | | (0.042) |
| Military | | 0.022 | | 0.063** | | 0.041 | | 0.068** |
| | | (0.057) | | (0.027) | | (0.060) | | (0.028) |
| State | | 0.044 | | 0.007 | | 0.028 | | 0.001 |
| | | (0.052) | | (0.021) | | (0.054) | | (0.022) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.063 | | −0.011 | | 0.095** | | 0.003 |
| | | (0.046) | | (0.016) | | (0.048) | | (0.016) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.148*** | | −0.062*** | | −0.132** | | −0.064*** |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.019) | | (0.054) | | (0.020) |
| Military Experience | | 0.130 | | −0.057** | | 0.108 | | −0.066** |
| | | (0.083) | | (0.024) | | (0.088) | | (0.026) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.068 | | −0.020 | | −0.379 | | −0.112 |
| | | (0.151) | | (0.047) | | (0.233) | | (0.079) |
| US CINC | | 1.800* | | 1.126*** | | 5.598** | | 2.846*** |
| | | (1.052) | | (0.352) | | (2.369) | | (0.931) |
| Formal | 1.651*** | 0.824*** | 0.399*** | 0.140*** | 1.560*** | 0.695*** | 0.385*** | 0.121** |
| | (0.085) | (0.131) | (0.032) | (0.051) | (0.089) | (0.137) | (0.034) | (0.052) |
| Constant | −3.594*** | −4.546*** | −0.221* | −0.437** | −4.467*** | −5.784*** | −0.396** | −0.977*** |
| | (0.359) | (0.647) | (0.122) | (0.208) | (0.478) | (1.063) | (0.158) | (0.365) |
| Administration FEs | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

## 5.5 Removing Bureaucratic Affiliations

One may be concerned that our predicted measures of hawkishness are primarily dictated by an individual's bureaucratic position rather than any of their other personal attributes. As an additional robustness check to address this possibility, we remove variables capturing whether a FPLP survey respondent is currently a member of the military or a foreign service officer. Consequently, our predictions of NSC actors' hawkishness also does not take into consideration whether the individual is a member of the military or in the State Department; predictions are made based on all other factors.

Tables A19 and A20, as well as Figure A11, indicate that our main results are generally upheld with this revised measure, though some coefficients for advisers lose statistical significance in the fully specified models. The correlation between our original hawkishness measure and that produced without incorporating information on bureaucratic affiliation is 0.954. This reinforces that adviser preferences come from more than simply their institutional role.

**Figure A11:** Summary of Three Models of Trait Aggregation, Removing Bureaucratic Affiliation from Supervised Learning Model
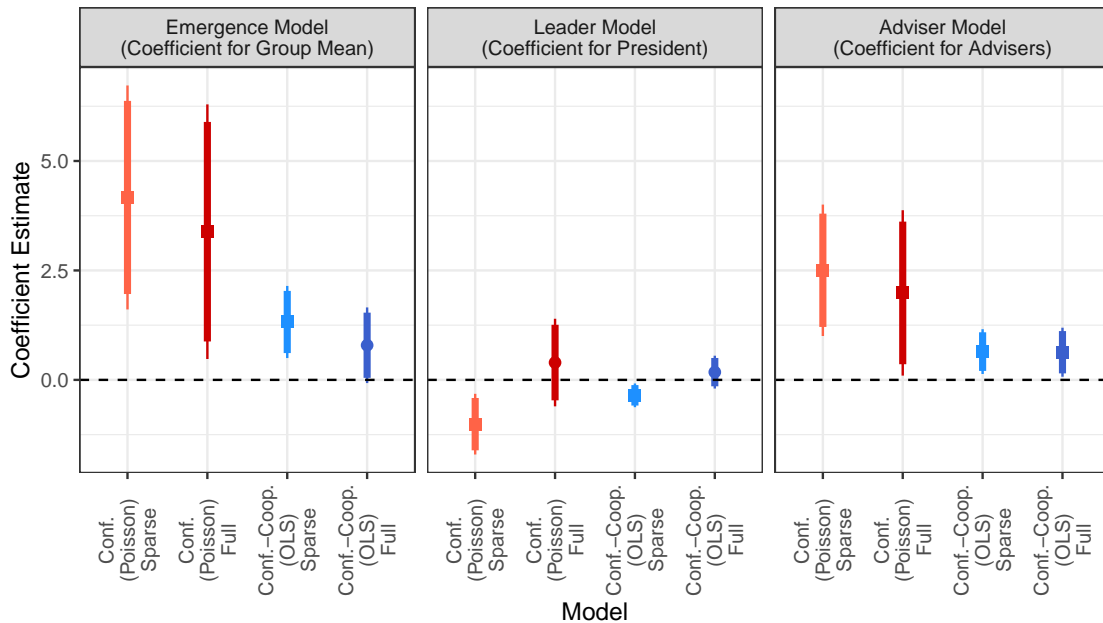


*Note:* Coefficient plots corresponding to main findings, corresponding to four models on each table. Thicker and smaller bands represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals respectively. Square points indicate 95% statistical significance.

**Table A19:** Effect of Mean Participant Hawkishness and President's Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Removing Bureaucratic Affiliation from Supervised Learning Model

| | Emergence Model | | | | Leader Model | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Mean Hawkishness | 4.167*** | 3.360** | 1.323*** | 0.760* | | | | |
| | (1.305) | (1.485) | (0.420) | (0.441) | | | | |
| President's Hawkishness | | | | | −1.011*** | 0.373 | −0.353** | 0.173 |
| | | | | | (0.354) | (0.510) | (0.138) | (0.191) |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.007 | | 0.021*** | | 0.032 | | 0.024*** |
| | | (0.021) | | (0.008) | | (0.020) | | (0.008) |
| Defense | | 0.181*** | | 0.064*** | | 0.113*** | | 0.041* |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.022) | | (0.044) | | (0.021) |
| Intelligence | | 0.304*** | | 0.134*** | | 0.293*** | | 0.138*** |
| | | (0.100) | | (0.041) | | (0.096) | | (0.041) |
| Military | | 0.072 | | 0.079*** | | 0.058 | | 0.077*** |
| | | (0.058) | | (0.027) | | (0.056) | | (0.026) |
| State | | 0.027 | | −0.002 | | 0.004 | | −0.003 |
| | | (0.054) | | (0.021) | | (0.051) | | (0.021) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.102** | | 0.006 | | 0.075* | | −0.005 |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.016) | | (0.046) | | (0.015) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.137** | | −0.066*** | | −0.117** | | −0.061*** |
| | | (0.054) | | (0.020) | | (0.047) | | (0.019) |
| Military Experience | | 0.177** | | −0.052** | | 0.235*** | | −0.026 |
| | | (0.084) | | (0.025) | | (0.077) | | (0.022) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.369 | | −0.106 | | 0.083 | | 0.013 |
| | | (0.232) | | (0.078) | | (0.148) | | (0.045) |
| US CINC | | 5.600** | | 2.845*** | | 2.965*** | | 1.386*** |
| | | (2.360) | | (0.918) | | (1.066) | | (0.355) |
| Formal | 1.526*** | 0.669*** | 0.372*** | 0.114** | 1.783*** | 0.785*** | 0.430*** | 0.119** |
| | (0.091) | (0.136) | (0.034) | (0.051) | (0.083) | (0.130) | (0.031) | (0.050) |
| Constant | −4.434*** | −6.198*** | −0.650*** | −1.119*** | −1.735*** | −4.494*** | 0.219*** | −0.501** |
| | (0.753) | (1.225) | (0.248) | (0.411) | (0.186) | (0.647) | (0.071) | (0.205) |
| Administration FEs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

**Table A20:** Effect of Adviser Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Removing Bureaucratic Affiliation from Supervised Learning Model

| | Adviser Model | | | | Advisers + Admin. FEs | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | 2.503*** | 1.975** | 0.646** | 0.621** | 3.231*** | 2.010* | 0.750** | 0.620* |
| | (0.766) | (0.963) | (0.261) | (0.286) | (1.019) | (1.159) | (0.315) | (0.324) |
| President's Hawkishness | −1.544*** | −0.227 | −0.505*** | −0.059 | | | | |
| | (0.385) | (0.586) | (0.150) | (0.216) | | | | |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.033* | | 0.026*** | | 0.012 | | 0.023*** |
| | | (0.020) | | (0.008) | | (0.021) | | (0.008) |
| Defense | | 0.126*** | | 0.045** | | 0.174*** | | 0.063*** |
| | | (0.044) | | (0.022) | | (0.048) | | (0.022) |
| Intelligence | | 0.314*** | | 0.141*** | | 0.307*** | | 0.136*** |
| | | (0.097) | | (0.042) | | (0.099) | | (0.042) |
| Military | | 0.068 | | 0.082*** | | 0.085 | | 0.084*** |
| | | (0.056) | | (0.026) | | (0.058) | | (0.027) |
| State | | 0.029 | | 0.005 | | 0.018 | | −0.001 |
| | | (0.053) | | (0.021) | | (0.054) | | (0.021) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.066 | | −0.010 | | 0.102** | | 0.004 |
| | | (0.046) | | (0.016) | | (0.048) | | (0.016) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.131*** | | −0.062*** | | −0.131** | | −0.065*** |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.019) | | (0.054) | | (0.020) |
| Military Experience | | 0.182** | | −0.047** | | 0.146* | | −0.063** |
| | | (0.082) | | (0.024) | | (0.087) | | (0.025) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | 0.052 | | 0.008 | | −0.362 | | −0.113 |
| | | (0.150) | | (0.045) | | (0.233) | | (0.079) |
| US CINC | | 2.782*** | | 1.307*** | | 5.833** | | 2.904*** |
| | | (1.075) | | (0.364) | | (2.364) | | (0.931) |
| Formal | 1.698*** | 0.763*** | 0.413*** | 0.121** | 1.551*** | 0.676*** | 0.388*** | 0.118** |
| | (0.086) | (0.131) | (0.032) | (0.051) | (0.089) | (0.137) | (0.034) | (0.052) |
| Constant | −2.731*** | −4.944*** | −0.031 | −0.615*** | −3.886*** | −5.405*** | −0.308* | −1.007*** |
| | (0.362) | (0.696) | (0.126) | (0.217) | (0.595) | (1.112) | (0.186) | (0.374) |
| Administration FEs | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

## 5.6 Removing the Soviet Union

One may be concerned that our results are primarily driven by Cold War dynamics — in which hawkishness might be understood less as a universal disposition, and more specific to the US-Soviet relationship. We can partially address this by replicating our analysis after removing all decisions involving the Soviet Union. Note that the original data contains 702 conflictual decisions and 248 cooperative decisions. Once we remove any decisions that were coded as involving the Soviet Union, we are left with 272 conflictual decisions and 84 cooperative decisions. This highlights the reality that many of the NSC's decisions over the period of investigation were indeed about the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, Tables A21 and A22, as well as Figure A12, show that our Poisson models maintain the same findings remain even when only analyzing decisions targeted at all other countries. Most of the OLS models do not produce significant findings for hawkishness, suggesting that US-Soviet relations may have had more of an impact on willingness to cooperate.

**Figure A12:** Summary of Three Models of Trait Aggregation, Removing Decisions Involving the USSR
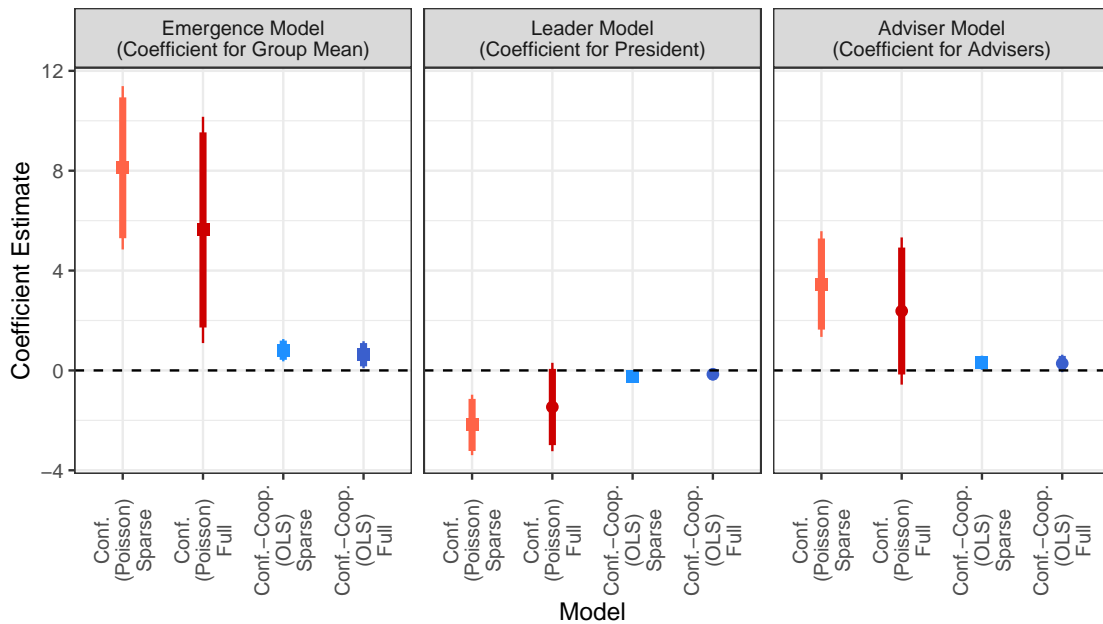


*Note:* Coefficient plots corresponding to main findings, corresponding to four models on each table. Thicker and smaller bands represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals respectively. Square points indicate 95% statistical significance.

**Table A21:** Effect of Mean Participant Hawkishness and President's Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Removing Decisions Involving the USSR

| | *Emergence Model* | | | | *Leader Model* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | *Poisson* | | *OLS* | | *Poisson* | | *OLS* | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Mean Hawkishness | 8.117*** | 5.516** | 0.810*** | 0.603** | | | | |
| | (1.669) | (2.320) | (0.228) | (0.276) | | | | |
| President's Hawkishness | | | | | −2.183*** | −1.547* | −0.260*** | −0.159 |
| | | | | | (0.617) | (0.900) | (0.086) | (0.123) |
| No. of Attendees | | −0.079** | | −0.002 | | −0.047 | | −0.0003 |
| | | (0.039) | | (0.005) | | (0.036) | | (0.005) |
| Defense | | 0.209** | | 0.015 | | 0.081 | | 0.003 |
| | | (0.093) | | (0.014) | | (0.080) | | (0.013) |
| Intelligence | | 0.571*** | | 0.084*** | | 0.493*** | | 0.084*** |
| | | (0.162) | | (0.026) | | (0.156) | | (0.026) |
| Military | | 0.017 | | 0.013 | | 0.099 | | 0.030* |
| | | (0.110) | | (0.019) | | (0.096) | | (0.016) |
| State | | 0.199** | | 0.019 | | 0.125 | | 0.017 |
| | | (0.087) | | (0.013) | | (0.081) | | (0.013) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.095 | | 0.001 | | 0.073 | | −0.004 |
| | | (0.078) | | (0.010) | | (0.073) | | (0.010) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.101 | | −0.013 | | −0.039 | | −0.007 |
| | | (0.078) | | (0.012) | | (0.071) | | (0.012) |
| Military Experience | | 0.282** | | 0.006 | | 0.363*** | | 0.010 |
| | | (0.130) | | (0.015) | | (0.120) | | (0.013) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −1.469*** | | −0.131*** | | −0.518** | | −0.040 |
| | | (0.404) | | (0.048) | | (0.241) | | (0.028) |
| US CINC | | 3.754 | | 1.318** | | 0.122 | | 0.234 |
| | | (4.092) | | (0.572) | | (1.709) | | (0.221) |
| Formal | 0.960*** | 0.269 | 0.101*** | 0.027 | 1.153*** | 0.394** | 0.120*** | 0.037 |
| | (0.137) | (0.206) | (0.021) | (0.032) | (0.122) | (0.191) | (0.019) | (0.031) |
| Constant | −7.612*** | −7.098*** | −0.464*** | −0.637** | −1.735*** | −3.152*** | 0.162*** | 0.042 |
| | (1.000) | (1.995) | (0.134) | (0.255) | (0.303) | (1.047) | (0.043) | (0.130) |
| Administration FEs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

**Table A22:** Effect of Adviser Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Removing Decisions Involving the USSR

| | Adviser Model | | | | Advisers + Admin. FEs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | 3.460*** | 2.319 | 0.306** | 0.269 | 5.130*** | 2.439 | 0.483*** | 0.323 |
| | (1.080) | (1.508) | (0.146) | (0.178) | (1.209) | (1.670) | (0.171) | (0.197) |
| President's Hawkishness | −2.687*** | −2.326** | −0.320*** | −0.268* | | | | |
| | (0.625) | (1.021) | (0.090) | (0.139) | | | | |
| No. of Attendees | | −0.038 | | 0.001 | | −0.074* | | −0.002 |
| | | (0.036) | | (0.005) | | (0.039) | | (0.005) |
| Defense | | 0.100 | | 0.005 | | 0.183** | | 0.013 |
| | | (0.081) | | (0.013) | | (0.092) | | (0.014) |
| Intelligence | | 0.509*** | | 0.085*** | | 0.583*** | | 0.086*** |
| | | (0.157) | | (0.026) | | (0.161) | | (0.026) |
| Military | | 0.069 | | 0.025 | | 0.084 | | 0.022 |
| | | (0.098) | | (0.017) | | (0.104) | | (0.018) |
| State | | 0.156* | | 0.021 | | 0.179** | | 0.018 |
| | | (0.084) | | (0.013) | | (0.087) | | (0.013) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.060 | | −0.006 | | 0.107 | | 0.002 |
| | | (0.073) | | (0.010) | | (0.078) | | (0.010) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.046 | | −0.008 | | −0.106 | | −0.013 |
| | | (0.072) | | (0.012) | | (0.079) | | (0.012) |
| Military Experience | | 0.286** | | −0.0001 | | 0.269* | | 0.0003 |
| | | (0.132) | | (0.015) | | (0.138) | | (0.016) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.543** | | −0.043 | | −1.445*** | | −0.134*** |
| | | (0.243) | | (0.029) | | (0.407) | | (0.049) |
| US CINC | | −0.424 | | 0.183 | | 4.056 | | 1.340** |
| | | (1.755) | | (0.227) | | (4.113) | | (0.580) |
| Formal | 1.047*** | 0.393** | 0.112*** | 0.042 | 1.089*** | 0.301 | 0.116*** | 0.033 |
| | (0.126) | (0.192) | (0.020) | (0.032) | (0.133) | (0.206) | (0.021) | (0.033) |
| Constant | −3.250*** | −3.574*** | 0.037 | 0.003 | −5.910*** | −5.473*** | −0.274*** | −0.463** |
| | (0.571) | (1.104) | (0.075) | (0.136) | (0.746) | (1.819) | (0.102) | (0.231) |
| Administration FEs | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

## 5.7 Negative Binomial

The analysis in the main text focuses both on the number of conflictual decisions made in a meeting, as well as the ratio between the number of conflictual and cooperative decisions made in a meeting. For the former, the analysis in the main text relies on Poisson regression models in which the outcome of interest is a count variable. The variable itself does not feature a prominent amount of overdispersion; the mean value across all meetings is 0.261, while the variance is 0.490. However, dispersion tests suggest that a negative binomial model may still be appropriate to account for overdispersion.

Tables A23 and A24 therefore replicate the Poisson models in the main text but instead rely on negative binomial models. Figure A13 illustrates the corresponding coefficient plots. All results are consistent with the findings from simpler Poisson models.

**Figure A13:** Summary of Three Models of Trait Aggregation, Using Negative Binomial Models
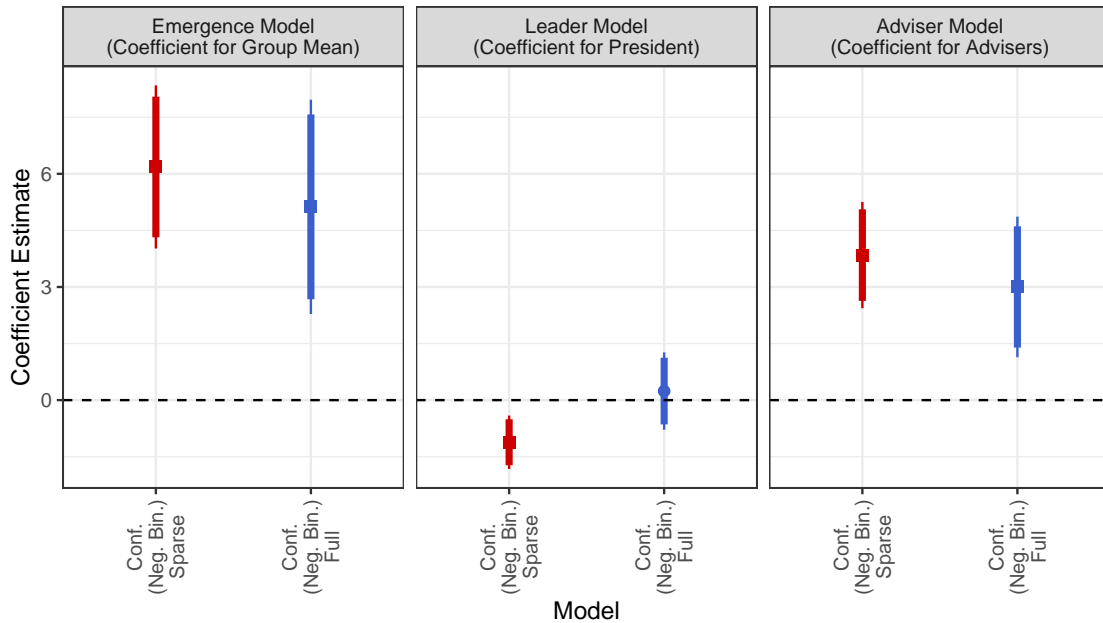


*Note:* Coefficient plots corresponding to main findings, corresponding to four models on each table. Thicker and smaller bands represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals respectively. Square points indicate 95% statistical significance.

**Table A23:** Effect of Mean Participant Hawkishness and President's Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Using Negative Binomial Models

| | Emergence Model | | Leader Model | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Mean Hawkishness | 6.718*** | 4.847*** | | |
| | (1.281) | (1.607) | | |
| President's Hawkishness | | | −1.008** | 0.737 |
| | | | (0.452) | (0.615) |
| No. of Attendees | | −0.001 | | 0.018 |
| | | (0.025) | | (0.024) |
| Defense | | 0.244*** | | 0.159*** |
| | | (0.058) | | (0.054) |
| Intelligence | | 0.317*** | | 0.307*** |
| | | (0.120) | | (0.118) |
| Military | | 0.033 | | 0.095 |
| | | (0.077) | | (0.069) |
| State | | 0.067 | | 0.016 |
| | | (0.064) | | (0.062) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.090* | | 0.075 |
| | | (0.054) | | (0.052) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.139** | | −0.125** |
| | | (0.062) | | (0.056) |
| Military Experience | | 0.153* | | 0.251*** |
| | | (0.093) | | (0.086) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.268 | | 0.128 |
| | | (0.263) | | (0.170) |
| US CINC | | 5.272* | | 2.728** |
| | | (2.723) | | (1.222) |
| Formal | 1.444*** | 0.629*** | 1.778*** | 0.755*** |
| | (0.104) | (0.153) | (0.096) | (0.149) |
| Constant | −5.824*** | −7.029*** | −1.747*** | −4.785*** |
| | (0.752) | (1.367) | (0.229) | (0.747) |
| Administration FEs | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 | 2,685 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

**Table A24:** Effect of Adviser Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Using Negative Binomial Models

| | Adviser Model | | Advisers + Admin. FEs | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | 4.007*** | 2.838*** | 4.531*** | 2.660** |
| | (0.846) | (1.067) | (0.971) | (1.184) |
| President's Hawkishness | −1.656*** | −0.206 | | |
| | (0.463) | (0.699) | | |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.025 | | 0.007 |
| | | (0.024) | | (0.025) |
| Defense | | 0.184*** | | 0.228*** |
| | | (0.055) | | (0.058) |
| Intelligence | | 0.330*** | | 0.320*** |
| | | (0.119) | | (0.120) |
| Military | | 0.064 | | 0.089 |
| | | (0.070) | | (0.072) |
| State | | 0.053 | | 0.049 |
| | | (0.064) | | (0.064) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.060 | | 0.095* |
| | | (0.053) | | (0.054) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.142** | | −0.137** |
| | | (0.057) | | (0.062) |
| Military Experience | | 0.160* | | 0.107 |
| | | (0.093) | | (0.097) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | 0.075 | | −0.260 |
| | | (0.171) | | (0.265) |
| US CINC | | 2.147* | | 5.574** |
| | | (1.244) | | (2.734) |
| Formal | 1.655*** | 0.747*** | 1.525*** | 0.652*** |
| | (0.098) | (0.151) | (0.102) | (0.155) |
| Constant | −3.474*** | −5.294*** | −4.575*** | −5.759*** |
| | (0.437) | (0.786) | (0.583) | (1.229) |
| Administration FEs | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

## 5.8   Time-Unit Replication Analysis

One may be concerned that the unit of analysis in our main text — the individual meeting — could introduce issues of selection effects, as the timing of, attendance at, and participation in meetings are likely not random.

To address this concern, it may be appropriate to consider an alternate research design that tracks propensity to engage in conflictual behavior over equally spaced periods of time, using measures of hawkishness that are created based on the characteristics of key actors regardless of their actual participation in decision-making meetings. Evidence of a positive relationship between conflictual behavior and the hawkishness of important decision-making elites using this approach would bolster confidence in our main finding.

We performed this robustness check by creating monthly-level data of conflictual activity and hawkishness. Conflictual activity is measured using militarized interstate dispute (MID) onsets in a given month that involved the United States. We limit our analysis to MIDs that feature a hostility level of 3 or higher.[3] To capture hawkishness, we calculate the mean hawkishness of the NSC principals (President, Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Director of Central Intelligence, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs) serving in office each month.

Table A25 (which is a duplicate of Table 5 in the main text but is provided here for convenience) displays the results of two Poisson models that regress new MIDs (hostility level 3 and above) featuring the US on the mean hawkishness of NSC principals at the monthly level. We include several control variables included in analysis of US presidents by Dafoe and Caughey (2016), which are meant to capture structural and political conditions that may influence decisions regarding conflict. Since the original measures in the Dafoe and Caughey (2016) article are at the leader level, we create analogous versions of these measures at the monthly level. We continue to find a positive and statistically significant relationship between conflictual activity and key decision-makers' hawkishness.

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[3]Note that we do not use our conflictual decision variable, since these are explicitly linked to individual meetings.

**Table A25:** Effect of NSC Principals' Hawkishness on MIDs, Using Monthly Data

| | Dependent variable: | |
|---|---|---|
| | Onset of MIDs involving US | |
| | (1) | (2) |
| Advisers' hawkishness | 7.545** | 11.549** |
| | (2.933) | (4.847) |
| President's hawkishness | −4.022** | −3.834 |
| | (1.737) | (2.872) |
| War ongoing | | −0.362** |
| | | (0.155) |
| Deaths per capita in last war (logged) | | 0.141 |
| | | (0.110) |
| Months since last war (logged) | | 0.278 |
| | | (0.196) |
| Victory in last war | | −1.241 |
| | | (0.774) |
| MID challenges to US in last 5 years | | −0.036 |
| | | (0.049) |
| Average MID outcome in last 5 years | | −53.824 |
| | | (34.128) |
| Economic recession | | −0.182 |
| | | (0.216) |
| Unified government | | 0.449* |
| | | (0.273) |
| US material capabilities | | −3.823 |
| | | (6.630) |
| President's tenure (logged months) | | −0.018 |
| | | (0.090) |
| Constant | −3.111*** | −3.762 |
| | (0.857) | (3.000) |
| Observations | 501 | 501 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$. Outcome variable is the number of US MIDs beginning in a given month. Advisers' hawkishness reflects average hawkishness score of the most senior advisers in the administration in a given month.

### 5.8.1 Propagating Uncertainty of Hawkishness Measures in Time-Unit Analysis

In Appendix §5.3, we explain how our main analysis does not fully propagate the uncertainty inherent to our predicted measures of hawkishness. We next consider whether the uncertainty in our hawkishness measures would affect the strength of our time-unit analysis.

We once again return to our 1,000 bootstrap iterations. For each iteration, we take the predicted measures of hawkishness for each of our actor-years and construct monthly-level data. We then run our regression models on this monthly data, producing a coefficient estimate and associated standard error for each variable. This process is performed 1,000 times (once for each monthly level dataset produced from each bootstrap iteration).

Table A26 reports the average estimated coefficient and standard error for each variable in each model across all 1,000 iterations. Results are highly similar to those in Table A25.

## 5.9 Statutory Members Only

One may be concerned that the president shapes the outcomes of policy discussions by choosing which specific advisers attend a meeting. To address this potential selection issue, we replicate our meeting-level analysis after recalculating our measures of adviser hawkishness, proportion of attendees according to bureaucratic affiliation, and levels of diplomatic/intelligence/military experience using only information on statutory members of the NSC, who are ostensibly required to be at all meetings. These include the president, the vice president, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, Director of Central Intelligence, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the National Security Advisor. We limit this analysis to only formal NSC meetings, where statutory regulations govern the participation of these foreign policy advisers. Tables A27 and A28, which are visually summarized by Figure A14, show that our results remain robust.

**Table A26:** Effect of NSC Principals' Hawkishness on MIDs, Using Monthly Data, Propagating Uncertainty from Bootstrapping

|  | Dependent variable: | |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Onset of MIDs involving US | |
|  | (1) | (2) |
| Advisers' hawkishness | 7.091** | 10.998** |
|  | (2.886) | (4.721) |
| President's hawkishness | −3.762** | −3.513 |
|  | (1.722) | (2.807) |
| War ongoing |  | −0.365** |
|  |  | (0.156) |
| Deaths per capita in last war (logged) |  | 0.139 |
|  |  | (0.110) |
| Months since last war (logged) |  | 0.280 |
|  |  | (0.196) |
| Victory in last war |  | −1.235 |
|  |  | (0.776) |
| MID challenges to US in last 5 years |  | −0.034 |
|  |  | (0.049) |
| Average MID outcome in last 5 years |  | −54.768 |
|  |  | (34.173) |
| Economic recession |  | −0.179 |
|  |  | (0.215) |
| Unified government |  | 0.433 |
|  |  | (0.271) |
| US material capabilities |  | −3.604 |
|  |  | (6.622) |
| President's tenure (logged months) |  | −0.019 |
|  |  | (0.090) |
| Constant | −2.998*** | −3.698 |
|  | (0.842) | (3.008) |
| Observations | 501 | 501 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$. Outcome variable is the number of US MIDs beginning in a given month. Advisers' hawkishness reflects average hawkishness score of the most senior advisers in the administration in a given month.

**Figure A14:** Summary of Three Models of Trait Aggregation, Using Only Statutory NSC Members in Formal Meetings
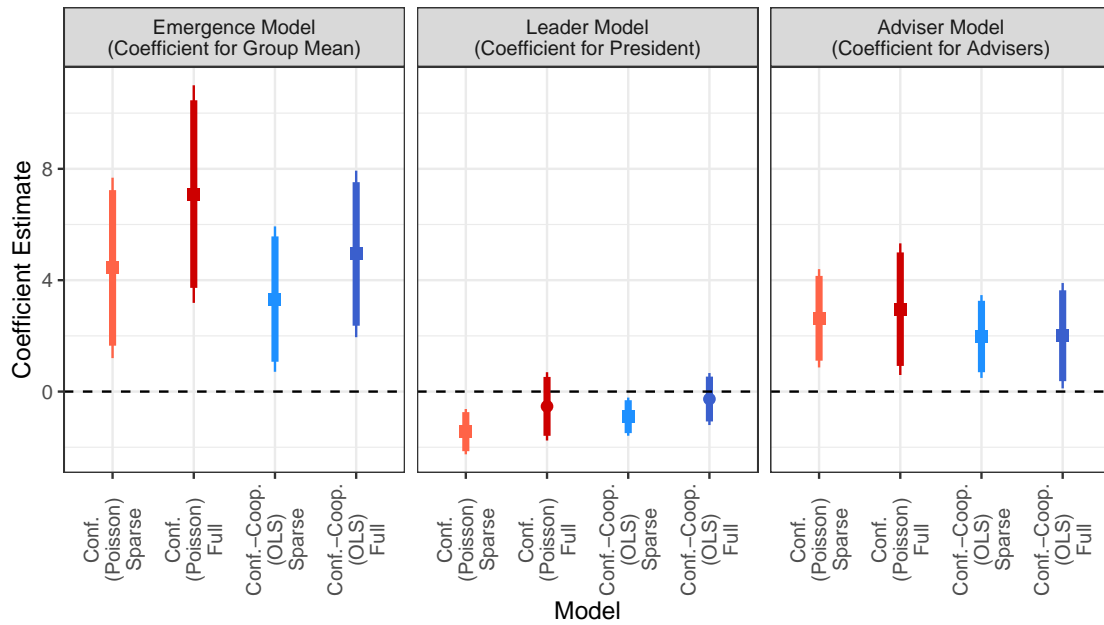


*Note:* Coefficient plots corresponding to main findings, corresponding to four models on each table. Thicker and smaller bands represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals respectively. Square points indicate 95% statistical significance.

**Table A27:** Effect of Mean Participant Hawkishness and President's Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Using Only Statutory NSC Members in Formal Meetings

| | Emergence Model | | | | Leader Model | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Mean Hawkishness | 4.454*** | 7.124*** | 3.335** | 4.953*** | | | | |
| | (1.654) | (1.994) | (1.332) | (1.525) | | | | |
| President's Hawkishness | | | | | −1.440*** | −0.543 | −0.901** | −0.273 |
| | | | | | (0.415) | (0.624) | (0.350) | (0.475) |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.062** | | 0.038* | | 0.096*** | | 0.056*** |
| | | (0.026) | | (0.021) | | (0.025) | | (0.021) |
| Defense | | 0.129** | | 0.085* | | 0.021 | | 0.024 |
| | | (0.057) | | (0.047) | | (0.052) | | (0.045) |
| Intelligence | | 0.189 | | 0.143 | | 0.160 | | 0.128 |
| | | (0.117) | | (0.097) | | (0.110) | | (0.095) |
| Military | | −0.074 | | −0.039 | | −0.079 | | −0.010 |
| | | (0.077) | | (0.065) | | (0.071) | | (0.063) |
| State | | −0.060 | | −0.003 | | −0.066 | | −0.013 |
| | | (0.065) | | (0.055) | | (0.060) | | (0.052) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.077 | | 0.009 | | 0.049 | | −0.0004 |
| | | (0.062) | | (0.044) | | (0.059) | | (0.043) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.128* | | −0.036 | | −0.122** | | −0.042 |
| | | (0.076) | | (0.052) | | (0.056) | | (0.042) |
| Military Experience | | −0.103 | | −0.112 | | 0.101 | | −0.026 |
| | | (0.135) | | (0.097) | | (0.125) | | (0.089) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.592** | | −0.372* | | 0.020 | | 0.009 |
| | | (0.296) | | (0.215) | | (0.208) | | (0.143) |
| US CINC | | 8.133*** | | 6.227*** | | 3.008** | | 2.286** |
| | | (2.875) | | (2.207) | | (1.372) | | (1.005) |
| Constant | −3.418*** | −7.459*** | −1.626** | −4.227*** | 0.238 | −2.567*** | 0.914*** | −0.528 |
| | (1.037) | (1.658) | (0.826) | (1.254) | (0.204) | (0.965) | (0.178) | (0.666) |
| Administration FEs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 788 | 788 | 788 | 788 | 788 | 788 | 788 | 788 |

*$p < 0.1$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$

**Table A28:** Effect of Adviser Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Using Only Statutory NSC Members in Formal Meetings

| | Adviser Model | | | | Advisers + Admin. FEs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | 2.632*** | 2.958** | 1.980*** | 1.978** | 4.265*** | 4.204*** | 2.961*** | 3.190*** |
| | (0.901) | (1.200) | (0.759) | (0.959) | (1.199) | (1.407) | (1.022) | (1.127) |
| President's Hawkishness | −2.308*** | −2.080** | −1.609*** | −1.396** | | | | |
| | (0.499) | (0.860) | (0.433) | (0.704) | | | | |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.098*** | | 0.057*** | | 0.061** | | 0.037* |
| | | (0.025) | | (0.021) | | (0.026) | | (0.021) |
| Defense | | 0.037 | | 0.036 | | 0.116** | | 0.074 |
| | | (0.052) | | (0.046) | | (0.056) | | (0.047) |
| Intelligence | | 0.207* | | 0.167* | | 0.185 | | 0.144 |
| | | (0.112) | | (0.097) | | (0.117) | | (0.098) |
| Military | | −0.079 | | −0.012 | | −0.028 | | −0.003 |
| | | (0.072) | | (0.064) | | (0.076) | | (0.065) |
| State | | −0.038 | | 0.005 | | −0.064 | | −0.008 |
| | | (0.061) | | (0.054) | | (0.064) | | (0.056) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.034 | | −0.009 | | 0.077 | | 0.009 |
| | | (0.060) | | (0.045) | | (0.063) | | (0.046) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.164*** | | −0.071 | | −0.130* | | −0.038 |
| | | (0.058) | | (0.044) | | (0.076) | | (0.053) |
| Military Experience | | 0.010 | | −0.090 | | −0.130 | | −0.138 |
| | | (0.133) | | (0.100) | | (0.142) | | (0.104) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.100 | | −0.086 | | −0.528* | | −0.351 |
| | | (0.215) | | (0.150) | | (0.296) | | (0.217) |
| US CINC | | 1.708 | | 1.280 | | 7.903*** | | 5.841*** |
| | | (1.474) | | (1.104) | | (2.901) | | (2.233) |
| Constant | −0.766* | −2.509** | 0.193 | −0.371 | −3.309*** | −5.560*** | −1.403** | −2.936*** |
| | (0.409) | (0.996) | (0.340) | (0.692) | (0.757) | (1.465) | (0.637) | (1.111) |
| Administration FEs | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 775 | 775 | 775 | 775 | 775 | 775 | 775 | 775 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

## 5.10 Crisis Period Analysis

The analysis in the main text examines the effects of advisers on foreign policy decisions by coding all of the substantive decisions made in these meetings along a continuum from conflictual to cooperative. This allows us to avoid the aggregation bias that ensues when we study foreign policy decision-making by only focusing on major uses of force. At the same time, however, one might wonder whether this more comprehensive analysis also exacerbates the importance of advisers, who might be less influential in high stakes crisis situations. We consider this unlikely — if anything, leaders should presumably have more reason to turn to advisers in high-stakes crises, not less — but we test this empirically by turning to the International Crisis Behavior dataset to identify crisis periods for the United States. Of the 2,685 total meetings in our dataset, 895 (33%) occur during crisis periods. In Table A29, we replicate the adviser models (Models 5 through 8) in the main text but include an interaction term between advisers' hawkishness and whether a meeting takes place during a crisis period. The interaction term is statistically significant and negative in Models 1 and 3, potentially suggesting that advisers are not as influential in generating conflictual foreign policy decisions during times of crisis. However, the magnitude of this interaction effect continues to be outweighed by the first-order effect of advisers. The interaction bears no significance in the three other models. Overall, these findings suggest weak evidence that advisers matter significantly less during crises.

**Table A29:** Effect of Adviser Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Including Interaction Term for Crisis Periods

| | Adviser Model | | Advisers + Admin. FEs | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conf | Conf. − Coop. | Conf. | Conf. − Coop. |
| | Poisson | OLS | Poisson | OLS |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | 4.848*** | 0.706** | 4.405*** | 0.637* |
| | (1.151) | (0.324) | (1.256) | (0.357) |
| Crisis | 2.617*** | 0.125 | 2.133*** | 0.091 |
| | (0.782) | (0.235) | (0.791) | (0.238) |
| Advisers × Crisis | −4.267*** | −0.033 | −3.317** | 0.051 |
| | (1.456) | (0.455) | (1.478) | (0.461) |
| President's Hawkishness | −0.685 | −0.073 | | |
| | (0.607) | (0.223) | | |
| No. of Attendees | 0.035* | 0.027*** | 0.012 | 0.023*** |
| | (0.020) | (0.008) | (0.021) | (0.008) |
| Defense | 0.120*** | 0.044** | 0.175*** | 0.063*** |
| | (0.045) | (0.022) | (0.049) | (0.022) |
| Intelligence | 0.323*** | 0.142*** | 0.310*** | 0.136*** |
| | (0.098) | (0.042) | (0.101) | (0.042) |
| Military | 0.026 | 0.063** | 0.048 | 0.068** |
| | (0.057) | (0.027) | (0.060) | (0.028) |
| State | 0.055 | 0.010 | 0.046 | 0.004 |
| | (0.053) | (0.021) | (0.054) | (0.022) |
| Diplomatic Experience | 0.048 | −0.014 | 0.088* | 0.001 |
| | (0.047) | (0.016) | (0.048) | (0.016) |
| Intelligence Experience | −0.129*** | −0.061*** | −0.120** | −0.064*** |
| | (0.048) | (0.019) | (0.054) | (0.020) |
| Military Experience | 0.147* | −0.052** | 0.103 | −0.070*** |
| | (0.083) | (0.024) | (0.088) | (0.026) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | −0.024 | 0.014 | −0.356 | −0.081 |
| | (0.156) | (0.046) | (0.234) | (0.079) |
| US CINC | 2.113* | 1.120*** | 5.839** | 3.089*** |
| | (1.110) | (0.367) | (2.389) | (0.930) |
| Formal | 0.807*** | 0.133*** | 0.700*** | 0.124** |
| | (0.132) | (0.051) | (0.138) | (0.052) |
| Constant | −5.953*** | −0.635*** | −6.735*** | −1.145*** |
| | (0.775) | (0.233) | (1.136) | (0.382) |
| Administration FEs | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 |

$^*p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

### 5.11 Adviser Experience and Dispositional Distance Analysis

The adviser model advanced in the paper suggests that adviser predispositions shape leader decisions by affecting the information, analysis and policy recommendations advisers offer leaders during deliberations. The ill-structured nature of foreign policy problems means leaders turn to advisers for counsel, and the kind of counsel advisers supply depends on advisers' dispositions, such that leaders who surround themselves with a team of hawks will end up making different decisions than those who have a more diverse advisory team.

In this respect, our argument intersects with recent work by Saunders (2017, 2018), which also studies the interplay between leaders and advisers. Saunders' interests are somewhat different than our own, focusing on the *quality* of foreign policy decision rather than merely their substance, the aggregation of biases rather than the aggregation of traits,[4] emphasizing a causal mechanism of advisory influence rooted in domestic politics rather than deliberation, and reputations rather than dispositions. Nonetheless, two interesting points of dialog emerge. One concerns the potential role of experience. Saunders argues that relatively inexperienced leaders are less equipped to monitor their advisers, resulting in suboptimal policy choices. One potential implication of this argument would be that when the balance of experience favors leaders rather than advisers, advisers' predispositions should exert less of an effect on the foreign policy decisions, since more experienced leaders should be more likely to get their way.

We test this proposition by calculating the average number of years of foreign policy experience that advisers in each meeting had prior to the meeting, in either military, diplomatic, or intelligence roles. We then compare this average to the amount of experience possessed by the president. We then can calculate (Leader Experience - Average Adviser Experience) and call this the *leader-adviser experience gap*.[5]

Table A30 replicates the adviser model results from the main text, but includes an interaction term between advisers' hawkishness and the adviser-leader experience gap. The individual terms

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[4]On the distinction between the aggregation of cognitive biases and trait aggregation, see Kertzer et al. (2022). Trait aggregation concerns the mapping between the distribution of traits among group members and the group's behavior (e.g., if a group has two extroverted members and one introverted member, how extraverted is the group's behavior?), whereas the aggregation of biases concerns whether cognitive biases that appear at the individual level also hold at the collective level.

[5]Meetings without the President in attendance are excluded from this analysis.

are scaled in order to reduce multicollinearity between them and their interaction term.[6] It is worth noting that the president's hawkishness measure introduces some multicollinearity issues in Models 1 and 2 regardless of scaling, so the standard errors are somewhat inflated. As such, Models 3 and 4 revisit the adviser model after removing measures of the president's hawkishness. The results suggest that the experience gap does not significantly moderate the effects of adviser traits: hawkish advisers are not significantly less able to push foreign policy decisions in a more conflictual direction when serving a more experienced leader than when serving a less experienced one.

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[6]The correlation between the experience gap and the interaction is 0.994. This correlation drops to 0.106 when using scaled variables.

**Table A30:** Effect of Adviser Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Including Interaction Term for Leader-Adviser Experience Gap

| | *Adviser Model* | | *Adviser Model − Admin. FEs* | | *Advisers + Admin. FEs* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conf | Conf. − Coop. | Conf. | Conf. − Coop. | Conf | Conf. − Coop. |
| | *Poisson* | *OLS* | *Poisson* | *OLS* | *Poisson* | *OLS* |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | 0.123* | 0.036* | 0.162*** | 0.045** | 0.206*** | 0.042* |
| | (0.069) | (0.020) | (0.061) | (0.018) | (0.079) | (0.022) |
| Experience Gap | 0.136* | 0.039* | 0.080 | 0.026 | 0.295 | 0.009 |
| | (0.079) | (0.023) | (0.063) | (0.020) | (0.216) | (0.055) |
| Advisers × Exp. Gap | 0.057 | 0.017 | 0.032 | 0.012 | 0.034 | 0.016 |
| | (0.063) | (0.017) | (0.058) | (0.017) | (0.062) | (0.017) |
| President's Hawkishness | 1.084 | 0.333 | | | | |
| | (0.907) | (0.277) | | | | |
| No. of Attendees | 0.015 | 0.021*** | 0.021 | 0.023*** | −0.009 | 0.020** |
| | (0.022) | (0.008) | (0.021) | (0.008) | (0.025) | (0.009) |
| Defense | 0.228*** | 0.093*** | 0.231*** | 0.094*** | 0.267*** | 0.105*** |
| | (0.050) | (0.024) | (0.050) | (0.024) | (0.053) | (0.025) |
| Intelligence | 0.325*** | 0.136*** | 0.326*** | 0.136*** | 0.294*** | 0.136*** |
| | (0.102) | (0.043) | (0.102) | (0.043) | (0.105) | (0.044) |
| Military | 0.013 | 0.065** | −0.006 | 0.057** | 0.014 | 0.053* |
| | (0.063) | (0.030) | (0.061) | (0.029) | (0.066) | (0.030) |
| State | 0.056 | 0.010 | 0.061 | 0.012 | 0.034 | 0.005 |
| | (0.054) | (0.022) | (0.054) | (0.022) | (0.055) | (0.022) |
| Diplomatic Experience | 0.067 | −0.011 | 0.060 | −0.013 | 0.096* | −0.004 |
| | (0.051) | (0.017) | (0.050) | (0.017) | (0.054) | (0.018) |
| Intelligence Experience | −0.160*** | −0.063*** | −0.168*** | −0.065*** | −0.130** | −0.067*** |
| | (0.051) | (0.020) | (0.050) | (0.020) | (0.057) | (0.021) |
| Military Experience | 0.246*** | −0.042 | 0.212** | −0.052** | 0.285** | −0.052 |
| | (0.094) | (0.026) | (0.089) | (0.025) | (0.118) | (0.034) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | −0.008 | 0.009 | −0.081 | −0.016 | −0.524** | −0.128 |
| | (0.157) | (0.047) | (0.144) | (0.042) | (0.255) | (0.083) |
| US CINC | 2.147* | 1.265*** | 1.820 | 1.167*** | 5.424** | 2.854*** |
| | (1.135) | (0.394) | (1.108) | (0.386) | (2.556) | (0.962) |
| Formal | 0.727*** | 0.104** | 0.772*** | 0.118** | 0.614*** | 0.090* |
| | (0.138) | (0.052) | (0.133) | (0.051) | (0.143) | (0.054) |
| Constant | −4.547*** | −0.509** | −3.706*** | −0.248** | −4.201*** | −0.645* |
| | (0.843) | (0.250) | (0.465) | (0.123) | (1.041) | (0.351) |
| Administration FEs | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,543 | 2,543 | 2,543 | 2,543 | 2,543 | 2,543 |

$^{*}p < 0.1; ^{**}p < 0.05; ^{***}p < 0.01$

Another point of dialog concerns the dispositional distance between leaders and advisers. Here, the existing literature suggests competing predictions. Kertzer, Rathbun and Rathbun (2020) proposes a theory of motivated reasoning in foreign policy, in which actors update the most in response to information they already agree with. If advisers are providing recommendations or perspectives consistent with their dispositions, this suggests leaders should respond the most to advisers whose dispositions match their own: hawks should pay the most attention to hawkish advisers, and doves should be the most sensitive to dovish advisers. This would imply a significant positive interaction between leader and adviser hawkishness.[7] In contrast, Saunders (2018) offers an important theory of the domestic politics of foreign policy in which leaders with reputations for dovishness have political incentives to care the most about the recommendations from their most hawkish advisers (and leaders with hawkish reputations are the most sensitive to their most dovish advisers). If we presume reputations for hawkishness or dovishness are at least partially rooted in actual hawkish or dovish policy preferences themselves, this implies a significant negative interaction between leader and adviser hawkishness.[8]

Table A31 replicates the analysis from the main text, but including an interaction term between leader and adviser hawkishness. The hawkishness variables are scaled in order to reduce multicollinearity between these individual measures and the interaction term.[9] We fail to find evidence that the effect of adviser traits on foreign policy behavior varies as a function of the leader's own level of hawkishness. We see this as further evidence in support of our theoretical model, which suggests that in deliberative contexts, leaders' need for counsel means that hawkish and dovish advisers can influence hawkish and dovish leaders alike.

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[7]Of course, it is possible that advisers go against type and provide recommendations contrary to their dispositions (e.g., Mattes and Weeks, 2019; Kreps, Saunders and Schultz, 2018); in section 3.2 of the main paper, we show that even though advisers have the ability to go against type, on average, hawkish advisers are still more likely to make hawkish policy recommendations than doves are (which presumably is what allows hawks to maintain hawkish reputations in the first place!). See Kertzer and Brooks, 2021).

[8]We also test the effect of dispositional gaps using a model that interacts the president's political party and adviser hawkishness, in case leader reputation stems from party affiliation rather than policy preference. The results of this alternative specification remain similar.

[9]The correlation between the president's hawkishness and the interaction is 0.898. This correlation drops to 0.310 when using scaled variables.

**Table A31:** Effect of Interaction between Adviser Hawkishness and Leader Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflict | | Conflict − Cooperation | |
| | *Poisson* | | *OLS* | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | 0.406*** | 0.188*** | 0.105*** | 0.044** |
| | (0.038) | (0.061) | (0.015) | (0.018) |
| President's Hawkishness | −0.215*** | −0.099 | −0.058*** | −0.009 |
| | (0.047) | (0.070) | (0.016) | (0.023) |
| Adv. Hawk. × Pres. Hawk. | 0.050 | 0.039 | 0.002 | −0.008 |
| | (0.038) | (0.047) | (0.015) | (0.015) |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.038* | | 0.027*** |
| | | (0.020) | | (0.008) |
| Defense | | 0.140*** | | 0.047** |
| | | (0.045) | | (0.022) |
| Intelligence | | 0.320*** | | 0.142*** |
| | | (0.097) | | (0.042) |
| Military | | 0.035 | | 0.064** |
| | | (0.056) | | (0.027) |
| State | | 0.045 | | 0.006 |
| | | (0.052) | | (0.021) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.059 | | −0.010 |
| | | (0.046) | | (0.016) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.140*** | | −0.063*** |
| | | (0.048) | | (0.019) |
| Military Experience | | 0.135 | | −0.052** |
| | | (0.082) | | (0.024) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.007 | | 0.005 |
| | | (0.153) | | (0.046) |
| US CINC | | 2.249** | | 1.258*** |
| | | (1.088) | | (0.367) |
| Formal | | 0.789*** | | 0.131** |
| | | (0.131) | | (0.051) |
| Constant | −1.427*** | −3.700*** | 0.171*** | −0.291** |
| | (0.043) | (0.509) | (0.015) | (0.141) |
| Administration FEs | | | | |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 2,650 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

# 6 Discussion of Leader Results

Our central proposition in this paper is that predispositions of advisers affect a state's foreign policy behavior. We believe this finding in itself makes a valuable contribution, regardless of whether leader predispositions exert similar effects on foreign policy behavior in parallel to advisers.

Nevertheless, one of the striking findings reported in the main text is that we find more support for adviser-centric models than leader-centric ones: groups that feature higher deliberation participation by hawkish advisers during group interactions were much more likely to choose conflictual foreign policies, whereas leader-level hawkishness never displayed a significant positive association with the conflictual nature of the group's decision.

One point to note from the outset is that these results are not an artifact of high correlation between leader and adviser hawkishness, which could hypothetically produce unstable and highly inflated results. The correlation between leader hawkishness and advisers' overall hawkishness (weighted by speech acts) at the meeting level is 0.276.

Moreover, an analysis of variance inflation factors (VIFs) across all models that include both leader and adviser hawkishness do not provide any evidence of concerning multicollinearity involving the hawkishness measures. Table A32 reports VIFs across all eight models in Table 3 in the main text. (Note that in Models 5 through 8, we report $\text{GVIF}^{1/(2*Df)}$ to account for administration fixed effects, which are a categorical variable.) All of these statistics are well within a reasonable range that does not introduce concerns about multicollinearity.

**Table A32:** Variance Inflation Factors for Key Covariates

| | Emergence Model | | Leader Model | | Adviser Model | | Advisers + Admin. FEs | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conf | Conf. − Coop. | Conf. | Conf. − Coop. | Conf | Conf. − Coop. | Conf. | Conf. − Coop. |
| | Poisson | OLS | Poisson | OLS | Poisson | OLS | Poisson | OLS |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| Pres. Hawkishness | 1.148 | 1.859 | 1.155 | 1.788 | | | | |
| Adv. Hawkishness | 1.098 | 2.809 | 1.083 | 2.640 | 1.311 | 1.570 | 1.258 | 1.478 |
| Admin. FEs | | | | | 1.046 | 1.495 | 1.042 | 1.489 |

In the discussion below, we show that our results replicate with measures of presidential hawkishness derived from an expert survey, and also obtain similar results using replications and extensions of Yarhi-Milo (2018), Horowitz, Stam and Ellis (2015) and Carter and Smith (2020), all of which display null or negative effects between presidential hawkishness and US conflict initiation

— such that out findings are actually consistent with theirs. We then present a number of potential explanations for these results.

## 6.1 Expert Survey Results

To show the leader-level results are not an artifact of our measure of hawkishness, we also fielded an expert survey, where we asked 14 prominent political scientists and historians who had published work on Cold War-era US foreign policy to score Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Ford in terms of their hawkishness on a 1-to-4 scale, where 1 represents the least hawkish, while 4 represents the most hawkish.[10] We took the responses of all 14 experts and calculated an average score for each president, to produce an alternative measure of presidential hawkishness we can use to replicate the results in the main text.[11]

Table A33 replicates the analysis from the paper, but utilizing our expert codings for presidential hawkishness instead. Across all relevant models, we continue to see either statistically significant and negative coefficients for president's hawkishness or coefficients without any statistical significance. Figure A15 visually reinforces this point.

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[10]For other examples of expert surveys in political science, see Braumoeller (2013) and Yarhi-Milo (2018). Our expert survey, which contains no personally identifying information, was declared exempt by the Institutional Review Board of [blinded for peer review]. Respondents, who were political scientists and historians who had published work on Cold War-era US foreign policy, were assured anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.

[11]One expert did not provide a score for President Ford. Ford's average score is therefore based on 13 responses. Note that we do not have expert codings of Carter or Reagan, which results in the omission of 131 meetings, or 5% of all meetings in the main paper.

**Table A33:** Effect of President's Hawkishness on Foreign Policy Decisions, Using Expert Codings

| | Leader Model | | | | Adviser Model | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | | Conflictual Decisions | | Conflictual − Cooperative | |
| | Poisson | | OLS | | Poisson | | OLS | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
| President's Hawkishness | −0.360*** | −0.309*** | −0.042* | −0.020 | −0.326*** | −0.318*** | −0.035 | −0.025 |
| | (0.078) | (0.108) | (0.024) | (0.029) | (0.079) | (0.108) | (0.025) | (0.029) |
| Advisers' Hawkishness (Acts) | | | | | 3.389*** | 2.237** | 0.710*** | 0.542* |
| | | | | | (0.776) | (0.982) | (0.242) | (0.285) |
| No. of Attendees | | 0.025 | | 0.024*** | | 0.032 | | 0.026*** |
| | | (0.021) | | (0.008) | | (0.022) | | (0.008) |
| Defense | | 0.136*** | | 0.042* | | 0.147*** | | 0.047** |
| | | (0.046) | | (0.021) | | (0.046) | | (0.022) |
| Intelligence | | 0.354*** | | 0.162*** | | 0.354*** | | 0.164*** |
| | | (0.100) | | (0.042) | | (0.100) | | (0.043) |
| Military | | 0.096* | | 0.076*** | | 0.068 | | 0.064** |
| | | (0.058) | | (0.026) | | (0.060) | | (0.027) |
| State | | 0.035 | | −0.008 | | 0.055 | | 0.001 |
| | | (0.055) | | (0.021) | | (0.055) | | (0.022) |
| Diplomatic Experience | | 0.099** | | −0.002 | | 0.077 | | −0.009 |
| | | (0.049) | | (0.016) | | (0.050) | | (0.016) |
| Intelligence Experience | | −0.114** | | −0.063*** | | −0.101** | | −0.060*** |
| | | (0.049) | | (0.019) | | (0.050) | | (0.020) |
| Military Experience | | 0.113 | | −0.035 | | 0.066 | | −0.050** |
| | | (0.082) | | (0.023) | | (0.085) | | (0.024) |
| 5-Year MID Challenges | | −0.087 | | −0.043 | | −0.016 | | −0.017 |
| | | (0.133) | | (0.040) | | (0.138) | | (0.044) |
| US CINC | | 5.185*** | | 1.559*** | | 4.886*** | | 1.541*** |
| | | (1.174) | | (0.375) | | (1.180) | | (0.383) |
| Formal | 1.699*** | 0.645*** | 0.432*** | 0.107** | 1.606*** | 0.611*** | 0.414*** | 0.103* |
| | (0.086) | (0.134) | (0.032) | (0.052) | (0.087) | (0.135) | (0.033) | (0.052) |
| Constant | −1.313*** | −3.331*** | 0.154** | −0.254* | −3.123*** | −4.395*** | −0.221 | −0.520*** |
| | (0.203) | (0.544) | (0.065) | (0.137) | (0.466) | (0.721) | (0.143) | (0.197) |
| Administration FEs | | | | | | | | |
| Agenda Items | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,554 | 2,554 | 2,554 | 2,554 | 2,521 | 2,521 | 2,521 | 2,521 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

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**Figure A15:** Summary of Two Models of Trait Aggregation, Using Expert Codings
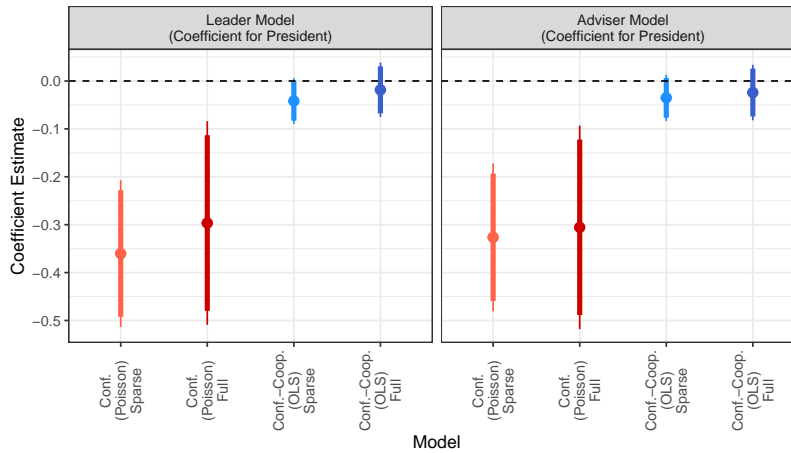


*Note:* Coefficient plots corresponding to main findings, corresponding to four models on each table. Thicker and smaller bands represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals respectively. Square points indicate 95% statistical significance.

## 6.2 Consistency with Existing Findings on US Presidential Hawkishness

Importantly, our findings regarding leader hawkishness are consistent with previous studies of American foreign policy. By this, we do not mean to suggest that the existing literature has found the leader predispositions *in general* do not matter. The main text provides an overview of the many findings that support various ways that leaders might affect policy outcomes. However, most of the literature that directly examines American foreign policy does not specifically examine the president's *hawkishness*, but rather other traits like honor culture (Dafoe and Caughey, 2016), personality traits (Gallagher and Allen, 2014; Harden, 2021), self-monitoring (Yarhi-Milo, 2018), or general beliefs about intervention or nuclear weapons (Saunders, 2011; Whitlark, 2017). Our findings regarding leader hawkishness do not, of course, undermine the validity of these other pathways by which leaders might matter.

Nonetheless, while a growing literature focuses on the importance of leader-level characteristics in IR more generally, the findings of the leader literature on the effects of leader-level hawkishness on foreign policy behavior in the United States is mixed. Much of the existing quantitative research on hawkishness in foreign policy is at the party- rather than leader-level (e.g., Palmer, London and Regan, 2004; Koch and Cranmer, 2007; Foster, 2008; Clare, 2014; Williams, 2014; Heffington, 2018; Bertoli, Dafoe and Trager, 2019). One of the few exceptions is Yarhi-Milo (2018): while her

analysis is primarily concerned with whether high/low self-monitoring leaders are more/less prone to militarized disputes, it also includes a control variable for presidential hawkishness, estimated using a WordScore analysis of presidential speeches.

Interestingly, while Yarhi-Milo's measurement strategy is different from ours, the models yield results quite similar to our own.[12] Specifically, Yarhi-Milo finds a *negative* and weakly significant ($p < 0.1$) relationship between presidential hawkishness and militarized dispute involvement and a negative and insignificant statistical relationship between presidential hawkishness and militarized dispute initiation. That is, both the direction and strength of presidential hawkishness as a predictor of conflictual behavior in Yarhi-Milo (2018) match our findings. Yarhi-Milo also includes a second proxy for hawkishness by coding the president's party affiliation (Republicans as hawks; Democrats as doves). This approach finds that neither the relationship between presidential hawkishness and militarized dispute involvement nor the relationship between presidential hawkishness and militarized dispute initiation are statistically significant.

One might wonder whether congruence of these results is simply a coincidence. To explore this possibility, we replicate and extend two foundational cross-national studies that have shown how leader dispositions affect interstate conflict — Horowitz and Stam (2014) and Carter and Smith (2020) — but subset them to the United States. Our approach here is akin to Potter (2007) and Johnston (2012), who point out that patterns that hold in the aggregate in cross-national models may not hold in specific, theoretically important, subsets of states. We choose these studies because their approach is similar in spirit to our own: estimating hawkishness at a distance by coding biographical characteristics of an individual's background and experience.[13] We discuss each in turn.

### 6.2.1 Horowitz and Stam (2014)

The first study we replicate is Horowitz and Stam (2014). Built upon the Archigos leader dataset (Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza, 2009), Horowitz and Stam code numerous leader characteristics, including military experience — both with and without exposure to conflict — which

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[12]Yarhi-Milo's results are reported in Table 4.5 of the original book (89-90).

[13]We chose not to replicate existing studies that were not directly concerned with hawkishness (e.g., Croco, 2011; Colgan and Weeks, 2015; Dafoe and Caughey, 2016; McManus, 2019; Fuhrmann, 2020) or not directly concerned with conflictual foreign policy (e.g., Fuhrmann and Horowitz, 2015).

they argue affects a leader's dispositions. Specifically, they posit that leaders with non-combat military experience should be more likely to be hawkish but that leader exposure to combat may temper this propensity to support interstate violence. In the full cross-national analysis, Horowitz and Stam find that leaders with military experience but without accompanying combat experience (i.e., more hawkish leaders) are indeed more likely to initiate militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) and interstate wars, while those with military and combat experience (i.e., less hawkish leaders) are not.

The original dataset has 11,525 leader-year observations, of which 2,175 involve MID initiation. The US-only subset has 180 president-year observations, of which 109 feature MID initiation. The dataset used to analyze wars has 11,807 leader-year observations, of which 114 experience war initiation. The US-only subset has 128 president-year observations and five war initiations.

Table A34 replicates Models 1 and 2 as reported on Table 2 of the original article (Horowitz and Stam, 2014, 543-544). Models 1 and 3 in this table are bivariate versions of the analysis and are provided for informational purposes only. Models 2 and 4 in this present table are direct replications of the "MID model" and "war model" by Horowitz and Stam. Note that several variables in the original analyses are dropped because of lack of variation in the US-only data.

The fully-specified models yield findings generally consistent with our own leader models. In Model 2, there is a *negative* and statistically insignificant relationship between leaders with non-combat military experience (i.e., hawkish presidents) and MIDs. With respect to war initiation, Model 4 produces a similar and statistically significant result: presidents who have served in the military but had no combat experience are less likely to initiate conflicts. In short, the US-specific coefficients in both Model 2 and Model 4 are in the opposite direction of Horowitz and Stam's cross-national results but consistent with our own. However, the war initiation finding should be interpreted with caution given that only five war initiations exist in the data. Of five US presidents that had military experience but no combat experience (Chester A. Arthur, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush), only one — George W. Bush — initiated a war during his time in office.

**Table A34:** Replication of Models in Table 1 of Horowitz and Stam (2014), Only US Presidents

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | MID initiation | | War initiation | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Military service, no combat | 1.161 | −0.127 | 0.907 | −20.827*** |
| | (0.756) | (0.613) | (1.482) | (1.715) |
| Military service, combat | 0.419 | 0.132 | 1.138 | 0.285 |
| | (0.598) | (0.583) | (1.195) | (1.104) |
| Leader age | | 0.016 | | 0.033 |
| | | (0.035) | | (0.073) |
| Material capabilities | | −10.176*** | | −26.553 |
| | | (3.741) | | (16.261) |
| Tau B with system leader | | 0.781 | | −2.093 |
| | | (0.486) | | (1.421) |
| Time in office | | 0.144 | | 0.922* |
| | | (0.230) | | (0.515) |
| Five-year MID challenge lag | | −0.134 | | −16.645*** |
| | | (0.450) | | (1.408) |
| Constant | 0.056 | 1.010 | −3.951*** | 0.583 |
| | (0.497) | (1.935) | (0.929) | (5.421) |
| Observations | 180 | 178 | 128 | 126 |
| Peace Year Splines | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Clustered SEs (leaders) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Only US Leaders | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

### 6.2.2 Carter and Smith (2020)

The second study we extended is Carter and Smith (2020), which creates a measure of leaders' latent willingness to use force. Using a Bayesian latent variable framework, Carter and Smith create four models that each produce an estimated of hawkishness for all state leaders between 1875 and 2004. These four measures are referred to as M1, M2, M3, and M4. In the original analysis, Carter and Smith showed that the four measures of leaders' latent hawkishness outperform military experience (as in Horowitz and Stam) in predicting the the initiation of ICB crises, militarized interstate disputes (MIDs), and severe MIDs.[14]

For our purposes, however, we are interested in whether these four measures of latent hawkishness predict conflictual foreign policy when subset to the United States. Since the original text in Carter and Smith does not directly address this question, we conduct two analyses similar in spirit to our replication of Horowitz and Stam in Section 6.2.1 above. Specifically, we subset the four measures of latent hawkishness to US presidents, combined these measures with the control variables used by Horowitz and Stam, and then examine whether they predict the initiation of MIDs, severe MIDs, and interstate war.

The results are again generally consistent with the findings in our leader models. First, Table A35 shows that two of the latent hawkishness measures display a *negative* and statistically significant relationship with MID initiation, whereas two are positive and not statistically significant. Second, Table A36 reports an analysis of severe MID initiation. The coefficients of all four measures of latent hawkishness are negative and not statistically significant. Third, Table A37 shows that there are negative and statistically significant relationships between each latent hawkishness measure and war initiation.

Finally, Table A38 replicates the original analysis in Table 2 of Carter and Smith (2020) — which compares the predictive performance of the models based on M1, M2, M3, and M4 data with a model based on prior military service — but only using observations from the United States. Compared to the original table, the US-centric models do not perform very differently from one

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[14]Each of these models is compared to a baseline in which the universe of ICB crises, MIDs, and severe MIDs are predicted using the leader's prior military service. Carter and Smith suggest that M2 exhibits the highest performance in predicting both ICB crises and severe MIDs. That said, Table 2 in the original text (1357) presents Vuong statistics which show that almost every single model based on the latent measures outperforms the prior military experience model.

another. Only two models (using M3 and M4 to predict ICB initiation) perform better than the prior military model, and only at the 90% level.

In sum, similar to our replication of the analysis in Horowitz and Stam, we find that latent presidential hawkishness does not predict US conflict behavior in ways consistent with cross-national models. Instead, the results are consistent with our finding that presidential hawkishness exhibits only a modest — and, if anything, inverse — relationship with conflictual behavior in American foreign policy. These findings thus suggest that the weak relationship we obtain between presidential hawkishness and US foreign policy behavior is unlikely to be an artifact of our measures, and actually reflects a broader pattern in the existing literature that appears to have gone unappreciated. In the discussion below, we present a number of potential explanations for this finding.

## 6.3  Leader Constraints

One set of explanations might emphasize the usual constraints that might "box" leaders in — either from above by the pressures of the international system, or from below by the vice grip of bureaucratic politics (Jervis, 2013). In the American context, the US national security bureaucracy may exert unusually high influence over foreign policy (Jost, 2024), constraining American presidents to an extent that is less the case in other contexts. Yet other research has found evidence of the importance of leader-level factors in American foreign policy (e.g., Larson, 1985; Saunders, 2011; Yarhi-Milo, 2018), suggesting that the usual constraints of the international system and bureaucratic politics are insufficient by themselves to explain our pattern of results.

## 6.4  Measurement of Hawkishness

A second set of potential explanations stem from our measurement strategy for the explanatory variable. For instance, one explanation relates to the difficulties of accurately measuring hawkishness at a distance — though it is unclear why this would plague leader-level hawkishness measures but not adviser-level hawkishness ones, which display results consistent with theoretical expectations. Given that there are only eight presidents but hundreds of advisers, it is possible that measurement error is more pronounced in the leader models than adviser-centric models.

Yet as noted in section 6.1, we replicate our results using the expert survey, the results of which (in Appendix §6.1) similarly show a weak or negative effect for presidential hawkishness.

**Table A35:** Extension of Carter and Smith (2020): MID Initiation, Only US Presidents

|  | *Dependent variable:* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | MID initiation | | | | |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Military | −0.057 | | | | |
|  | (0.617) | | | | |
| M1 | | 0.628 | | | |
|  | | (0.731) | | | |
| M2 | | | 0.241 | | |
|  | | | (0.632) | | |
| M3 | | | | −1.191** | |
|  | | | | (0.585) | |
| M4 | | | | | −1.196** |
|  | | | | | (0.568) |
| Prior war win | 0.243 | −0.356 | −0.021 | 0.441 | 0.448 |
|  | (0.569) | (0.731) | (0.672) | (0.363) | (0.363) |
| Leader age | 0.014 | 0.004 | 0.007 | 0.033 | 0.037 |
|  | (0.030) | (0.029) | (0.032) | (0.029) | (0.030) |
| Material capabilities | −10.212*** | −9.218*** | −9.710*** | −8.134** | −8.160** |
|  | (3.443) | (3.219) | (3.215) | (3.191) | (3.180) |
| Tau B with system leader | 0.791** | 0.707* | 0.762** | 0.822** | 0.806** |
|  | (0.366) | (0.367) | (0.361) | (0.365) | (0.366) |
| Time in office | 0.128 | 0.133 | 0.142 | 0.164 | 0.151 |
|  | (0.210) | (0.208) | (0.209) | (0.214) | (0.214) |
| Five-year MID challenge lag | −0.103 | −0.128 | −0.104 | −0.061 | −0.078 |
|  | (0.429) | (0.430) | (0.429) | (0.436) | (0.436) |
| Constant | 1.061 | 1.701 | 1.446 | 0.700 | 0.472 |
|  | (1.490) | (1.647) | (1.761) | (1.502) | (1.521) |
| Observations | 178 | 178 | 178 | 178 | 178 |
| Peace Year Splines | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Only US Presidents | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

**Table A36:** Extension of Carter and Smith (2020): Severe MID Initiation, Only US Presidents

| | Dependent variable: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Severe MID initiation | | | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Military | −0.052 | | | | |
| | (0.930) | | | | |
| M1 | | −0.548 | | | |
| | | (1.014) | | | |
| M2 | | | −0.637 | | |
| | | | (0.926) | | |
| M3 | | | | −0.910 | |
| | | | | (0.899) | |
| M4 | | | | | −0.913 |
| | | | | | (0.870) |
| Prior war win | 0.548 | 0.976 | 1.073 | 0.740 | 0.748 |
| | (0.787) | (1.001) | (0.970) | (0.567) | (0.567) |
| Leader age | −0.024 | −0.016 | −0.006 | −0.013 | −0.008 |
| | (0.044) | (0.043) | (0.048) | (0.042) | (0.044) |
| Material capabilities | 1.629 | 1.128 | 0.974 | 3.435 | 3.411 |
| | (4.443) | (4.256) | (4.252) | (4.555) | (4.531) |
| Tau B with system leader | 0.044 | 0.095 | 0.071 | 0.096 | 0.078 |
| | (0.515) | (0.517) | (0.508) | (0.522) | (0.519) |
| Time in office | 0.012 | 0.012 | −0.020 | 0.050 | 0.035 |
| | (0.307) | (0.299) | (0.305) | (0.306) | (0.306) |
| Five-year MID challenge lag | 1.983* | 1.989* | 1.959* | 2.046* | 2.026* |
| | (1.094) | (1.091) | (1.090) | (1.104) | (1.102) |
| Constant | −2.995 | −3.569 | −4.062 | −3.276 | −3.488 |
| | (2.251) | (2.482) | (2.759) | (2.234) | (2.278) |
| Observations | 178 | 178 | 178 | 178 | 178 |
| Peace Year Splines | No | No | No | No | No |
| Only US Presidents | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

$^*p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

**Table A37:** Extension of Carter and Smith (2020): Interstate War, Only US Presidents

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | initiation | | | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Military | −17.773*** | | | | |
| | (1.694) | | | | |
| M1 | | −276.014*** | | | |
| | | (93.262) | | | |
| M2 | | | −23.892** | | |
| | | | (9.846) | | |
| M3 | | | | −10.699*** | |
| | | | | (2.651) | |
| M4 | | | | | −11.153*** |
| | | | | | (2.459) |
| Prior war win | 18.719*** | 267.652*** | 27.308** | 4.272*** | 4.713*** |
| | (1.081) | (89.740) | (10.648) | (1.592) | (1.656) |
| Leader age | 0.033 | −0.087 | 0.307*** | 0.188*** | 0.256*** |
| | (0.044) | (0.068) | (0.109) | (0.058) | (0.065) |
| Material capabilities | −13.930 | −42.495*** | −6.438 | −13.965 | −13.934 |
| | (11.909) | (15.271) | (13.621) | (14.728) | (15.902) |
| Tau B with system leader | 0.523 | 1.452 | −0.647 | 2.267 | 2.167* |
| | (1.226) | (0.928) | (1.178) | (1.390) | (1.264) |
| Time in office | 0.296 | 1.996*** | 0.355 | 0.689 | 0.534 |
| | (0.559) | (0.566) | (0.701) | (0.568) | (0.605) |
| Five-year MID challenge lag | −16.581*** | −16.917*** | −17.538*** | −17.557*** | −17.438*** |
| | (0.843) | (0.617) | (0.865) | (0.764) | (0.685) |
| Constant | −3.474 | −134.039*** | −34.495*** | −6.525*** | −10.307*** |
| | (2.603) | (44.404) | (11.699) | (2.442) | (2.850) |
| Observations | 126 | 126 | 126 | 126 | 126 |
| Peace Year Splines | No | No | No | No | No |
| Clustered SEs (leaders) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Only US Presidents | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

**Table A38:** Replication of Table 2 in Carter and Smith (2020) Using Only Observations from the United States

| Panel A: ICB initiation | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Military | M1 | M2 | M3 |
| Military | - | - | - | - |
| M1 | 0.78 | | | |
| M2 | 0.99 | −0.03 | | |
| M3 | 1.37$^\dagger$ | 1.16 | 1.11 | |
| M4 | 1.41$^\dagger$ | 1.15 | 1.13 | −0.40 |
| Panel B: MID initiation | | | | |
| | Military | M1 | M2 | M3 |
| Military | - | - | - | - |
| M1 | 0.25 | | | |
| M2 | 0.79 | 1.03 | | |
| M3 | 0.14 | 0.08 | −0.04 | |
| M4 | 0.17 | 0.11 | −0.01 | 0.62 |
| Panel C: Severe MID initiation | | | | |
| | Military | M1 | M2 | M3 |
| Military | - | - | - | - |
| M1 | 0.33 | | | |
| M2 | 0.59 | 0.54 | | |
| M3 | 0.41 | 0.32 | 0.25 | |
| M4 | 0.40 | 0.31 | 0.24 | −0.20 |

$^\dagger p < 0.1$;$^* p < 0.05$;$^{**} p < 0.01$

Our negative results for leader hawkishness is largely driven by Dwight Eisenhower, who our measure codes as relatively dovish but whose administration nonetheless made a substantial number of conflictual decisions. We therefore carried out a number of supplementary tests. First, we administered the expert survey described above to rate the hawkishness of the presidents in our sample. Consistent with our boosted GLM measure, the average expert rating characterizes Eisenhower as comparatively dovish (two on a four-point scale). Second, given the high variance of Eisenhower's hawkishness score in the expert survey, we performed an additional robustness check in which we removed Eisenhower from our analysis. When we do so, the estimated coefficient of leader hawkishness loses statistical significance and there is no meaningful relationship associated with the leader model. Third, we reran the leader model with the neural net measure of presidential hawkishness (which codes Eisenhower as comparatively hawkish) and found similarly null results. Collectively, these robustness checks suggest that our weak leader-level findings are not an artifact of our hawkishness measure.

As discussed in the main text, however, we took a number of steps to ensure that that our measures of leader hawkishness were generally consistent with expert consensus (when one existed) and that our results were not an artifact of one particular measurement strategy or leader.

A third set of explanations are rooted in the strategic choice literature, which emphasizes the challenges in studying strategic interactions with observational data (Signorino, 1999). If leader hawkishness is observable, adversaries should take it into account and adjust their behavior accordingly (Smith, 1996; Foster, 2008; Clark, Fordham and Nordstrom, 2011). As a result, we may be more likely to observe conflict when dovish leaders are in power than when hawkish ones, because the former can be strategically targeted, whereas adversaries will avoid provocative acts when the latter are in charge. Yet if this is the case, it is unclear why foreign observers take leader hawkishness into account but not adviser hawkishness, which at least for top-level advisers, should be at least partially observable to adversary decision-makers. US foreign policy analysts routinely look at the advisers leaders surround themselves with to gain insights into their potential foreign policy decisions — the foundational line of inquiry for the Kremlinologists who studied the elite politics of the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Another explanation rooted in strategic choice points to the importance of leaders' incentive structures. A number of theoretical models in IR argue that leaders face political incentives to go "against type" (e.g., Schultz, 2005; Kreps, Saunders and Schultz, 2018; Mattes and Weeks, 2019; Kertzer and Brooks, 2021), such that leaders' domestic or international incentives may trump their foreign policy dispositions (Saunders, 2022). If hawks are sometimes more likely to "bring the olive branch," this might exert a countervailing effect in the opposite direction of the leader's hawkishness. At the same time, the bureaucratic politics literature suggests that the bureaucratic incentives of advisers should typically trump predispositions like hawkishness — Miles' Law, which holds that where you stand depends on where you sit (Marsh, 2014). As such, it is unclear why leader incentives override predispositions but adviser incentives do not, suggesting that these strategic choice explanations are at best incomplete.

## 6.5  Measurement of the Dependent Variable

Another potential explanation focuses on the operationalization of our outcome measure, which encompasses a wider range of foreign policy behaviors than those in much of the existing literature

on leaders, many of which focus strictly on high-level conflictual decisions in militarized interstate disputes. Our analysis instead includes a broader range of conflictual and cooperative policies national security groups might choose. As discussed in the main text, this includes other important behaviors such as military threats, troop deployments, military spending, economic restrictions, withholding aid, arms control, or diplomatic engagement. It is possible that leaders are more influential in deciding to use military force, whereas advisers are influential across a broad range of national security decisions. If true, this would suggest an important — and overlooked — scope condition on the the study of leaders that political scientists should be careful to emphasize, at least within American foreign policy. It would also reinforce the importance of concerns about truncation bias in IR (Mitchell and Moore, 2002). At the same time, however, analysis in Appendix §5.8 shows our results are robust to a more restrictive unit of analysis that only focuses on militarized interstate disputes, suggesting our fine-grained measure of the dependent variable is unlikely to explain the relatively weak effects of leader-level hawkishness here.

## 6.6  Institutional Context

A fifth explanation, which we find the most persuasive, suggests that whether leader hawkishness matters depends on the institutional setting. Specifically, leaders may *less* influential in formal, institutionalized settings — such as a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC). In the US system, this might be because the National Security Act of 1947 mandates certain cabinet members to serve on the NSC, although presidents have historically used policies and directives to shape the other attendees. Advisers might also be better positioned to persuade leaders in formal meetings with an established agenda for which they can mobilize bureaucratic resources to prepare — although past research also emphasizes that advisers may provide more candid information in informal settings. In contrast, leaders might be *more* influential in informal settings — such as a small, ad hoc meetings — over which they exert more control.

Importantly, supplementary analysis in Section 5.2 shows that our leader-level results are stronger in informal meetings than formal ones. This means that leader effects might be partially masked in the analysis presented in the main text, which pools formal and informal meetings. If true, this suggests another important scope condition to the study of leaders in political science.

# 7 Probing the Deliberation Mechanism

## 7.1 Seeking Counsel and Expressing Dissent

Drawing upon coding methodologies from studying deliberation elsewhere in political science (e.g., Parthasarathy, Rao and Palaniswamy, 2019), we developed a coding scheme to identify speech acts that exhibited *seeking counsel*, defined as a textual indication that the speaker requested input from another meeting participant. These might be instances in which the speaker sought clarification regarding an idea another speaker already expressed or asked another participant to introduce new ideas, information, or recommendations into the discussion. Examples of textual indicators of information search category included: "inquired," "asked," "request for advice," "raised the question," and "called on." For instance, while deliberating armed conflict in the Congo during an NSC Executive Committee meeting on December 17, 1962, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy queried Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maxwell Taylor about bargaining leverage afforded by different military strategies — while President Kennedy called on UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson for more information.

The second characteristic coded by the research assistant was *dissent*, defined as a textual indication that the speaker disagreed with an idea another meeting participants had expressed. In some cases, advisers directly identified their dissent by using terms such as "disagreed" or "objected." For example, in a January 1958 meeting, National Security Advisor Gordon Gray stated that he "did not agree" with data provided by the Treasury Department regarding homeland defense. In many other cases, however, dissent could only be discerned in the context of the meeting — but was nevertheless evident because a meeting participant offered an argument that contradicted those provided by others.[15]

Figure A16 plots deliberation patterns by administration. While seeking counsel and expressing dissent are generally consistent across administrations, the Johnson and Nixon administration exhibit comparatively lower levels of dissent. This descriptive finding is consistent with past work on presidential decision-making, which document how Johnson (Logevall, 1999, Chapter 12) and Nixon (McDermott, 2007, Chapter 6) restricted policy debates between advisers.

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[15]This context-specificity is why we use human coding for this analysis rather than an automated content approach.

**Figure A16:** Deliberation Patterns across Administrations
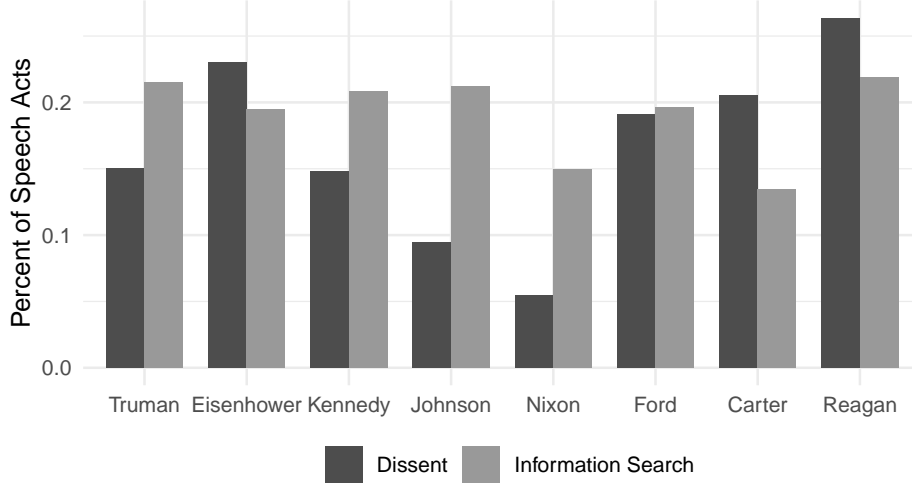
## 7.2 Dictionary Approach to Speaker Topics

Table A39 displays the full set of terms used to count the prevalence of key topics of interest in our study. We generated an initial list of terms based on our substantive familiarity with how speakers addressed each topic within the corpus. Beyond capturing the topic of interest, we selected terms that could best differentiate between the topics. For instance, we selected active terms for *military violence* (e.g., attack, invade) while opting for era-relevant weapons for *military balance* (e.g., carrier, missile). We refined term lists through an iterative process that examined high scoring texts and dropping or adding terms to improve topic coherence. As is evident, the words are all stemmed. Counts of these stemmed terms are performed on stemmed versions of the original speech act texts. These counts are then divided by the total number of words in a text in order to produce a measure of the *proportion* of words associated with a topic.

In order to ensure that the analysis is not unduly affected by extremely short speech acts (where a single word from a topic could dramatically change the proportion), we take two additional measures. First, we aggregate speech acts to the meeting-adviser level, where all speech acts made by a single person in an individual meeting are combined into a single text. This converts our speech act data, which has 104,504 speech acts, into a dataset of 14,814 clusters of speech acts made by advisers in individual meetings. Second, we filter this dataset down to only observations with at least 50 words. This shrinks the dataset to 11,609 observations. Note, however, that these 11,609 observations account for 100,089 speech acts, which represent almost 96% of the original

**Table A39:** Key Terms for Dictionary Approach to Identifying Key Speaker Topics

| Topic | Terms |
|---|---|
| Military violence | attack, bomb, fight, invad, strik, deploy, offens, retali, retaliatori, counterforc, escal |
| International threats | aggress, aggressor, anxieti, belliger, compet, enemi, hostil, risk, threat, war |
| Military balance | atom, bomber, capabl, carrier, cruis, fighter, icbm, mirv, missil, nuclear, satellit, silo, submarin, tank |
| Diplomacy | diplomaci, diplomat, forum, meet, negoti, peac, summit, talk, treati |
| Adversary interests | castro, china, communism, communist, khrushchev, mao, moscow, prc, soviet, stalin, ussr, vietnam |

**Table A40:** Descriptive Statistics for Topic Propensities

| Topic | Min. | Q1 | Med. | Mean | Q3 | Max. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Military violence | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.002 | 0.003 | 0.071 |
| International threat | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.003 | 0.005 | 0.082 |
| Military balance | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.003 | 0.002 | 0.094 |
| Diplomacy | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.002 | 0.004 | 0.007 | 0.071 |
| Adversary interests | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.002 | 0.006 | 0.009 | 0.091 |

data.

Table A40 reports the distribution of the five topic proportions. It is not surprising that these values are quite low and close to zero.

Table A41 displays results for regressions that use speech acts aggregated at the adviser-meeting level as the unit of analysis. We regress the prevalence of the five key topics on the hawkishness of the individual responsible for the associated speech acts. These models include two important control variables: whether the speech acts were made in a formal meeting, and whether the speech acts were recorded in the form of a transcript. We may expect topics raised to differ slightly depending on whether discussions take place in an official NSC meeting or a less formal environment. Further, we may believe that speech acts which are recorded in the form of transcripts are distinct from speech acts in the form of meeting minutes. The former is more spontaneous and could be made of shorter utterances, while the latter is a summary written after the fact and could thus be longer. Even with the inclusion of these controls, we see quite consistent evidence that advisers provide information that leans into topics which are consistent with their predispositions.

**Table A41:** Speaker Hawkishness and Speech Act Content

|  | Dependent variable: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Violence | Threat | Balance | Diplomacy | Adversary |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Speaker Hawkishness | 0.0024*** | 0.0030*** | 0.0038*** | −0.0033*** | −0.0047*** |
|  | (0.0006) | (0.0006) | (0.0008) | (0.0007) | (0.0010) |
| Formal | 0.0009*** | 0.0008*** | 0.0027*** | −0.0015*** | 0.0032*** |
|  | (0.0001) | (0.0001) | (0.0002) | (0.0001) | (0.0002) |
| Transcript | 0.0014*** | −0.0002 | 0.0001 | 0.00004 | −0.0010*** |
|  | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0003) |
| Eisenhower | 0.0007* | 0.0001 | 0.0011** | −0.0033*** | −0.0008 |
|  | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.0005) | (0.0005) | (0.0006) |
| Kennedy | −0.0003 | −0.0008* | 0.0035*** | −0.0023*** | −0.00001 |
|  | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.0006) | (0.0005) | (0.0007) |
| Johnson | 0.0043*** | 0.0006 | 0.0002 | −0.0022*** | 0.0026*** |
|  | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.0005) | (0.0005) | (0.0007) |
| Nixon | 0.0015*** | −0.0009** | 0.0022*** | −0.0021*** | 0.0003 |
|  | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.0005) | (0.0005) | (0.0007) |
| Ford | 0.0009** | −0.0005 | 0.0015*** | −0.0015*** | 0.0012* |
|  | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.0005) | (0.0005) | (0.0007) |
| Carter | −0.0009** | −0.0006 | −0.0008 | 0.00002 | −0.0009 |
|  | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.0006) | (0.0005) | (0.0007) |
| Reagan | 0.0003 | −0.0007 | −0.0020*** | −0.0030*** | −0.0030*** |
|  | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.0006) | (0.0005) | (0.0007) |
| Constant | −0.0010** | 0.0015*** | −0.0014** | 0.0095*** | 0.0071*** |
|  | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.0006) | (0.0005) | (0.0007) |
| Observations | 11,307 | 11,307 | 11,307 | 11,307 | 11,307 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

## 7.3 President's Hawkishness and Topic Prevalence

One may be concerned that our findings, which indicate that hawkish advisers talk more about issues of military violence and international threats (and also that dovish advisers talk more about diplomacy and adversary interests), are driven by a president's strategic decisions about who attends the meetings. Perhaps a more hawkish (dovish) president simply invites more hawkish (dovish) individuals to the meetings, which results in more speech acts that are related to hawkish (dovish) topics.

To examine this possibility, we analyze the relationship between the president's hawkishness and the prevalence of topics discussed in the meetings that they oversee. We take our adviser-meeting data and calculate the average prevalence of each topic for each meeting. These calculations only use data on advisers; all observations reflecting presidents are omitted. These data are then analyzed using a series of regressions similar to those used in the main text. Because the president's hawkishness is the independent variable, administration fixed effects are taken out of the models.

Table A42 reports the results of these regressions. We see that more hawkish presidents tend to oversee meetings that have less discussion involving military violence, international threats, or adversary interests. Equivalently, more dovish presidents are more likely to have meetings that involve these three topics. The findings for military violence and international threat go against what we would expect to see if presidents simply chose advisers that were likely to discuss topics that hew toward the president's interests. The result for adversary interests does align with a potential story where hawkish (dovish) presidents hear less (more) from their advisers about a topic that is associated with being dovish. Nonetheless, the overall findings in Table A42 do not indicate a systematic attempt by leaders to only hear about topics that align with their underlying degree of hawkishness.

**Table A42:** President's Hawkishness and Speech Act Content

| | Dependent variable: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Violence | Threat | Balance | Diplomacy | Adversary |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| President's Hawkishness | −0.0066*** | −0.0029*** | −0.0020* | 0.0017 | −0.0054*** |
| | (0.0009) | (0.0008) | (0.0011) | (0.0013) | (0.0015) |
| Formal | 0.0009*** | 0.0010*** | 0.0024*** | −0.0017*** | 0.0028*** |
| | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0003) | (0.0003) |
| Transcript | 0.0019*** | −0.00004 | 0.0003 | 0.0004 | 0.0005 |
| | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0003) | (0.0003) |
| Constant | 0.0044*** | 0.0039*** | 0.0024*** | 0.0046*** | 0.0072*** |
| | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.0005) | (0.0006) | (0.0007) |
| Observations | 2,584 | 2,584 | 2,584 | 2,584 | 2,584 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

## 7.4 Propagating Uncertainty of Hawkishness Measures in Topic Analysis

In Appendix §5.3, we explain how our main analysis does not fully propagate the uncertainty inherent to our predicted measures of hawkishness. Here, we investigate whether the uncertainty of our hawkishness measures has any bearing on our findings regarding the substance of advisers' counsel.

We replicate the analysis shown in Appendix §7.2 (and visually summarized by Figure 6 in the main text). However, we now run this analysis on each of the 1,000 bootstrapped iterations of our hawkishness data, and we collect the coefficient estimates and standard errors from each of the models that is run.

Table A43 reports the average estimated coefficient and standard error for each variable in each model across all 1,000 iterations. Results are highly similar to those in Table A41 in Appendix §7.2 and Figure 6 in the main text.

**Table A43:** Hawkishness and Speech Act Content, Propagating Uncertainty from Bootstrapping

|  | *Dependent variable:* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Violence | Threat | Balance | Diplomacy | Adversary |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Speaker Hawkishness | 0.002*** | 0.003*** | 0.004*** | −0.003*** | −0.004*** |
|  | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Formal | 0.001*** | 0.001*** | 0.003*** | −0.001*** | 0.003*** |
|  | (0.0001) | (0.0001) | (0.0002) | (0.0001) | (0.0002) |
| Transcript | 0.001*** | −0.000 | 0.0001 | 0.0000 | −0.001*** |
|  | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0003) |
| Eisenhower | 0.0004** | 0.001*** | 0.003*** | −0.000 | 0.002*** |
|  | (0.0002) | (0.0002) | (0.0003) | (0.0002) | (0.0003) |
| Kennedy | 0.001*** | −0.000 | 0.004*** | 0.001*** | 0.003*** |
|  | (0.0003) | (0.0003) | (0.0003) | (0.0003) | (0.0004) |
| Johnson | 0.004*** | 0.001*** | 0.002*** | 0.001*** | 0.006*** |
|  | (0.0003) | (0.0003) | (0.0003) | (0.0003) | (0.0004) |
| Nixon | 0.001** | 0.0002 | 0.003*** | 0.002*** | 0.004*** |
|  | (0.0003) | (0.0003) | (0.0004) | (0.0003) | (0.0005) |
| Ford | −0.001* | −0.000 | 0.005*** | 0.001* | 0.003*** |
|  | (0.0003) | (0.0003) | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.001) |
| Carter | −0.000 | 0.001 | 0.002*** | 0.003*** | 0.003*** |
|  | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| Reagan | −0.001*** | 0.0001 | 0.001*** | 0.003*** | 0.002*** |
|  | (0.0003) | (0.0003) | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.001) |
| Constant | −0.001 | 0.001** | −0.003*** | 0.006*** | 0.004*** |
|  | (0.0004) | (0.0004) | (0.001) | (0.0005) | (0.001) |
| Observations | 11,307 | 11,307 | 11,307 | 11,307 | 11,307 |

*p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

## 7.5 Topic Model Approach to Speaker Topics

While the main text uses a straightforward dictionary-based approach to test whether hawkish and dovish advisers exhibit different speech patterns on these topics, an alternative approach would be to utilize topic modeling. To that end, we employ a semi-supervised text analysis method called the keyword-assisted topic model (keyATM) (Eshima, Imai and Sasaki, 2023). Keyword-assisted topic models have all of the strengths of traditional topic models — an automated content analysis method that represents text as a mixture of semantically interpretable topics. Crucially, keyATM also allows researchers to specify conceptual topics of interest by providing a set of keywords, while remaining agnostic on other topics in the corpus. The fitted model then assigns topic propensities to each unit of text (in our case, all speech acts at the adviser-meeting level).

### 7.5.1 Keywords

Table A44 enumerates all keywords provided to search for our five primary topics.[16]

**Table A44:** Supplied Keywords for KeyATM Topics

| Topic | Terms |
| --- | --- |
| Military violence | attack, bomb, fight, invad, strik, deploy, offens, retali, retaliatori, counterforc, escal |
| International threats | aggress, aggressor, anxieti, belliger, compet, enemi, hostil, risk, threat, war |
| Military balance | atom, bomber, capabl, carrier, cruis, fighter, icbm, mirv, missil, nuclear, satellit, silo, submarin, tank |
| Diplomacy | diplomaci, diplomat, forum, meet, negoti, peac, summit, talk, treati |
| Adversary interests | castro, china, communism, communist, khrushchev, mao, moscow, prc, soviet, stalin, ussr, vietnam |

Our keyATM model sought to identify these five topics but also allowed for 30 additional topics that the model would independently and inductively identify. Tables A45 and A46 list the most frequent terms that were associated with the 35 topics in the model. Words with "[X]" beside them represent terms that were included in that category in Table A44, while words with "[Letter]" represent terms that were associated with one of the five pre-defined topics but also showed up as common terms for other topics.

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[16]This table of keywords is identical to the dictionary of terms we used in our main analysis; see Table A39.

**Table A45:** Most Frequent Terms for All KeyATM Topics (Part 1)

| Topic | Most Frequent Terms |
|---|---|
| Military violence (V) | general, secretari, vietnam [A], will, mcnamara, north, bomb [X], south, rusk, vietnames, attack [X], wheeler, hanoi, militari, forc, said, troop, air, can, men |
| International threat (T) | presid, secretari, state, said, unit, point, militari, forc, problem, war [X], use, agre, might, view, action, must, general, admir, time, nation |
| Military balance (B) | missil [X], soviet [A], secretari, will, test, limit, agreement, system, capabl [X], program, weapon, number, option, can, year, nuclear [X], mirv [X], us, forc, submarin [X] |
| Diplomacy (D) | kissing, go, think, get, will, presid, say, can, want, now, us, just, talk [X], thing, said, well, one, right, know, give |
| Adversary (A) | mr, dull, soviet [X], communist [X], govern, point, situat, state, countri, said, report, china [X], new, chines, might, also, indic, now, continu, polici |
| Other_1 | oil, million, countri, year, price, develop, food, product, world, aid, program, increas, market, import, econom, foreign, need, industri, compani, export |
| Other_2 | roger, turkey, turk, greek, turkish, cyprus, will, greec, nato, jfk, speaker, can, move, secretari, govern, uh, want, habib, problem, word |
| Other_3 | shelter, defens, program, governor, stockpil, attack [V], civil, said, warn, peterson, studi, general, plan, hoegh, reloc, feder, antarctica, fallout, fcda, time |
| Other_4 | said, french, herter, mr, secretari, nato, de, presid, meet [D], german, gaull, british, germani, franc, nuclear [B], discuss, thought, propos, minist, europ |
| Other_5 | presid, said, ask, thought, meet [D], discuss, state, general, whether, depart, intellig, peopl, inform, report, need, group, make, might, problem, suggest |
| Other_6 | secretari, said, forc, mr, defens, general, air, gate, mcelroy, militari, armi, program, budget, felt, servic, oper, requir, depart, thought, addit |
| Other_7 | soviet [A], secretari, will, europ, nato, european, german, forc, alli, laird, treati [D], issu, berlin, germani, rumsfeld, problem, western, must, posit, us |
| Other_8 | cuba, cuban, mr, bundi, said, latin, clement, lbj, action, herter, dominican, oa, take, american, republ, will, america, deputi, pres, sugar |
| Other_9 | trade, secretari, control, soviet [A], list, item, polici, bloc, said, export, british, countri, alli, commerc, posit, embargo, issu, agre, negoti [D], week |
| Other_10 | mr, council, state, secretari, report, said, depart, general, admir, nsc, strauss, staff, presid, recommend, propos, secur, view, point, suggest, lovett |

*Notes:* [X] indicates a supplied keyword for that topic; [Letter] indicates a keyword for a predefined topic.

**Table A46:** Most Frequent Terms for All KeyATM Topics (Part 2)

| Topic | Most Frequent Terms |
|---|---|
| Other_11 | presid, ford, senat, will, schlesing, want, get, can, go, congress, think, committe, like, bill, ask, need, budget, henri, billion, see |
| Other_12 | unclear, think, note, go, cuba, well, say, get, missil [B], ship, can, soviet [A], just, now, one, yeah, take, thing, right, cuban |
| Other_13 | presid, mr, ambassador, said, johnson, ask, secretari, test, rusk, mccone, agre, ball, discuss, propos, question, harriman, bundi, treati [D], talk [D], statement |
| Other_14 | said, british, secretari, israel, canal, egypt, hoover, isra, sec, french, un, nasser, arab, resolut, egyptian, pres, suez, might, ask, thought |
| Other_15 | secretari, wilson, humphrey, program, said, stassen, governor, defens, state, council, depart, unit, presid, point, year, present, secur, nation, satellit [B], cost |
| Other_16 | israel, will, isra, kissing, soviet [A], arab, east, want, settlement, vanc, move, us, pakistan, brzezinski, union, dr, sadat, middl, posit, egypt |
| Other_17 | will, shultz, weinberg, secretari, option, soviet [A], alli, pipelin, need, can, issu, econom, japanes, credit, trade, go, european, technolog, sanction, control |
| Other_18 | general, korea, forc, korean, admir, rok, said, rhee, south, ship, divis, bradley, chief, north, vessel, armistic, aircraft, air, line, joint |
| Other_19 | presid, vice, senat, congress, jackson, agnew, ask, said, whether, peopl, rockefel, leader, congression, amend, inquir, will, presus, act, must, bill |
| Other_20 | haig, africa, congo, will, haldeman, african, need, forc, south, adoula, support, us, militari, un, tshomb, belgian, squadron, ambassador, can, also |
| Other_21 | russel, jone, ship, can, island, will, american, use, time, oper, diem, get, schlesing, colbi, hour, connal, marin, agent, aircraft, forc |
| Other_22 | secretari, smith, acheson, said, mr, propos, lovett, british, general, marshal, depart, state, agre, felt, now, agreement, blockad, negoti [D], french, issu |
| Other_23 | nixon, yeah, unclear, know, right, well, go, thing, think, got, just, mean, say, now, see, henri, want, get, point, hell |
| Other_24 | mr, assist, dillon, program, countri, said, budget, militari, secretari, year, anderson, aid, million, econom, stan, billion, increas, fund, problem, expenditur |
| Other_25 | latin, mann, america, american, said, panama, scowcroft, canal, mr, brazil, countri, secretari, econom, chile, will, loan, mexico, support, bank, panamanian |
| Other_26 | mr, cutler, council, paragraph, gray, nsc, plan, board, polici, report, brief, meet [D], propos, general, defens, point, state, call, suggest, paper |
| Other_27 | lao, mr, forc, communist [A], souvanna, general, situat, phoumi, govern, militari, french, vietnam [A], thailand, said, diem, action, pathet, support, laotian, thai |
| Other_28 | presid, said, secretari, ask, india, ambassador, un, us, pakistan, agre, indian, rusk, discuss, whether, thought, question, get, go, meet [D], might |
| Other_29 | dull, mr, iraq, iran, nasser, east, arab, said, secretari, middl, situat, allen, jordan, state, oil, isra, israel, action, syria, british |
| Other_30 | dr, mr, state, flem, report, committe, said, propos, program, recommend, council, depart, secur, indic, governor, agenc, made, plan, studi, intern |

*Note:* [Letter] indicates a keyword for a predefined topic.

### 7.5.2 Topic Validation

In order to ensure that our keyATM produced reasonable results, we performed a validation test. For each of our five primary topics of interest, we identified the 70 adviser-meeting texts which the keyATM determined had the highest propensities for the topic. This produced a pool of 350 total adviser-meeting texts. In order to help with the qualitative coding which was to come, we focus only on texts of at least 100 words in length. This reduces our validation data to 239 observations.

These 239 total texts were given to a research assistant, who was provided qualitative information about the five topics and the keyATM, and tasked with attempting to identify which of the five key topics each text primarily reflected.

Table A47 shows the correspondence between the research assistant's determined topics and the actual topics. Overall accuracy is 72% (171 out of 239 are coded correctly). Table A48 reports more detailed metrics for each topic. Performance is quite good overall, especially given in mind that the coding task involves five classes rather than just two. The "Threat" topic exhibits the least effective performance; texts that the keyATM classifies as strong examples of threat tended to be coded as instances of diplomacy or violence; quite a few texts which reflected adversary interests were coded by the research assistant as examples of threat. Given that threats are often discussed in the context of the other topics (e.g., an adviser discussing how to write a diplomatic statement responding to a perceived threat, or an adviser describing the threats posed by an adversary's military vessels), such miscodings involving threats are not surprising. The last two rows of Table A48 reports the overall performance metrics if any adviser-meeting texts deemed to reflect threat are removed. The second-to-last row reports statistics if all texts that the keyATM identified as exhibiting the threat topic are removed; the final row reports statistics if all texts that the research assistant identified as exhibiting the threat topic are removed. Across both variations, we see that overall predictive performance markedly improves, particularly in accuracy and the F1 score.

Overall, these results lend substantial credence to the keyATM's ability to identify our primary topics of interest.

**Table A47:** Comparison of Hand-Coded Topics with Topics Extracted from KeyATM

|  |  | Actual | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Violence | Threat | Balance | Diplomacy | Adversary |
|  | Violence | 29 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
|  | Threat | 9 | 13 | 3 | 2 | 14 |
| **Predicted** | Balance | 4 | 3 | 44 | 0 | 0 |
|  | Diplomacy | 0 | 9 | 9 | 53 | 3 |
|  | Adversary | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 32 |

**Table A48:** Performance Metrics for Hand-Coded Topics

| Topic | Accuracy | Precision | Recall | Specificity | F1 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Violence | 0.904 | 0.763 | 0.674 | 0.954 | 0.716 | 43 |
| Threat | 0.803 | 0.317 | 0.406 | 0.865 | 0.356 | 32 |
| Balance | 0.921 | 0.863 | 0.786 | 0.962 | 0.822 | 56 |
| Diplomacy | 0.887 | 0.716 | 0.898 | 0.883 | 0.797 | 59 |
| Adversary | 0.916 | 0.914 | 0.653 | 0.984 | 0.762 | 49 |
| Overall | 0.715 | 0.746 | 0.715 | 0.933 | 0.722 | 239 |
| Overall (no actual "Threat") | 0.763 | 0.891 | 0.763 | 0.963 | 0.816 | 207 |
| Overall (no guessed "Threat") | 0.798 | 0.807 | 0.798 | 0.932 | 0.840 | 198 |

### 7.5.3 Counsel Congruence with Predispositions

Table A49 displays results for regressions using topics as measured by our keyATM (instead of the dictionary-based approach). This replicates Table A41 in Appendix §7.2. Figure A17 below replicates Figure 6 in the main manuscript, except using the topic propensities drawn from our keyATM. We see that the vast majority of our results are unchanged. The one exception exists for military balance, which appears to not bear any strong relationship with advisers being hawkish or dovish.

**Table A49:** Hawkishness and Speech Act Content

| | Violence | Threat | Balance | Diplomacy | Adversary |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Dependent variable:* | | | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Speaker Hawkishness | 0.195*** | 0.082*** | −0.015 | −0.189*** | −0.181*** |
| | (0.014) | (0.020) | (0.015) | (0.017) | (0.017) |
| Formal | −0.014*** | 0.046*** | 0.047*** | −0.110*** | 0.012*** |
| | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Transcript | 0.063*** | −0.096*** | −0.004 | 0.166*** | −0.063*** |
| | (0.004) | (0.005) | (0.004) | (0.005) | (0.004) |
| Eisenhower | 0.004 | 0.007 | 0.032*** | −0.018*** | 0.047*** |
| | (0.005) | (0.007) | (0.005) | (0.006) | (0.006) |
| Kennedy | 0.018*** | −0.084*** | 0.054*** | −0.032*** | 0.005 |
| | (0.006) | (0.008) | (0.006) | (0.007) | (0.007) |
| Johnson | 0.260*** | −0.109*** | 0.038*** | −0.002 | 0.012 |
| | (0.006) | (0.008) | (0.006) | (0.007) | (0.007) |
| Nixon | 0.003 | −0.131*** | 0.105*** | 0.167*** | 0.009 |
| | (0.006) | (0.009) | (0.007) | (0.008) | (0.008) |
| Ford | −0.042*** | −0.120*** | 0.171*** | 0.086*** | 0.014 |
| | (0.007) | (0.010) | (0.008) | (0.009) | (0.009) |
| Carter | 0.008 | −0.125*** | 0.101*** | 0.014 | 0.030** |
| | (0.009) | (0.014) | (0.010) | (0.012) | (0.012) |
| Reagan | −0.042*** | −0.121*** | 0.089*** | 0.044*** | 0.064*** |
| | (0.007) | (0.010) | (0.007) | (0.009) | (0.008) |
| Constant | −0.088*** | 0.228*** | −0.023** | 0.240*** | 0.222*** |
| | (0.009) | (0.013) | (0.010) | (0.011) | (0.011) |
| Observations | 11,307 | 11,307 | 11,307 | 11,307 | 11,307 |

$^{*}p < 0.1$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{***}p < 0.01$

*Notes:* OLS regression with the adviser-meeting as the unit of analysis. Hawkishness scores are from the boosted linear approach and outcome scores are topic proportions from the keyATM analysis.

**Figure A17:** Effect of Speaker Hawkishness on Topic Proportions in Meeting-Adviser Speech Acts, Using KeyATM Model
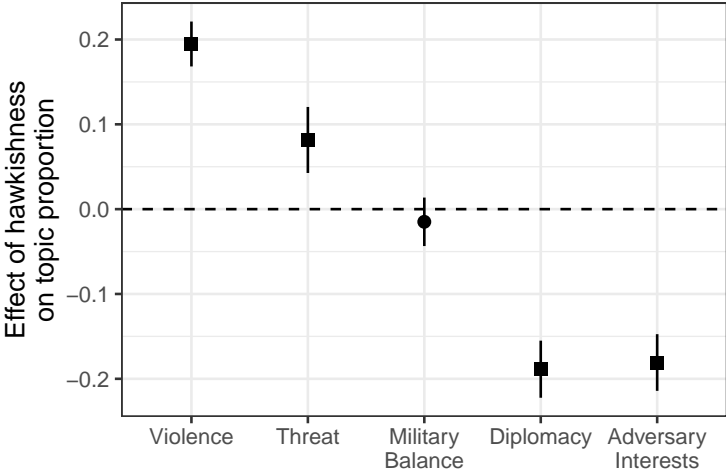


*Note:* Plot shows marginal effect of moving from the least to most hawkish speaker within a fixed administration. Bands represent 95% confidence intervals. Square points indicate 95% statistical significance.

# 8  Agenda Items and Hawkishness

Table A50 displays the distribution of agenda items that were mentioned in at least one speech act in each meeting. Table A51 presents the results of OLS regressions that analyze the relationship between the topics discussed in each meeting and the average hawkishness of participants in the meeting. Model 1 combines all meetings, while Models 2 and 3 split the data into formal and informal meetings respectively. All models include year fixed effects. Several topics appear to have a meaningful association with higher average hawkishness of individuals in a meeting. We therefore control for agenda items in our main analyses.

**Table A50:** Distribution of Agenda Items Across All Meetings

| Agenda Item | No | Yes |
|---|---|---|
| USSR | 2,468 | 217 |
| Asia | 2,221 | 464 |
| Middle East | 2,321 | 364 |
| Economy | 2,459 | 226 |
| Europe | 2,307 | 378 |
| International Institutions | 2,648 | 37 |
| Intelligence | 2,611 | 74 |
| Strategic Forces | 2,496 | 189 |
| Americas | 2,431 | 254 |
| Defense | 2,426 | 259 |
| Diplomacy | 2,586 | 99 |
| Organization | 2,615 | 70 |
| Vietnam | 2,280 | 405 |
| Policy | 2,531 | 154 |
| China | 2,594 | 91 |
| Africa | 2,586 | 99 |
| Latin America | 2,669 | 16 |
| Arms Control | 2,555 | 130 |
| North Africa | 2,684 | 1 |
| Other | 2,653 | 32 |

**Table A51:** OLS Regressions on the Relationship Between Meeting Topics and Average Hawkishness of Meeting Participants

|  | *Dependent variable:* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Mean Hawkishness | | |
|  | All | Formal | Informal |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| USSR | 0.006** | −0.003 | 0.016 |
|  | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.011) |
| Asia | 0.010*** | 0.010*** | 0.015 |
|  | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.011) |
| Middle East | −0.001 | −0.003 | 0.005 |
|  | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.011) |
| Economy | −0.001 | −0.003 | 0.014 |
|  | (0.007) | (0.005) | (0.019) |
| Other | 0.002 | −0.005** | 0.009 |
|  | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.011) |
| Europe | 0.003 | 0.001 | 0.010 |
|  | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.011) |
| International Institutions | 0.003 | −0.008 | 0.012 |
|  | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.013) |
| Intelligence | 0.003 | −0.002 | 0.018 |
|  | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.013) |
| Strategic Forces | 0.014*** | 0.001 | 0.024** |
|  | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.012) |
| Americas | 0.003 | 0.0003 | 0.012 |
|  | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.011) |
| Defense | 0.016*** | 0.005** | 0.025** |
|  | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.012) |
| Diplomacy | −0.001 | −0.002 | 0.005 |
|  | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.012) |
| Organization | 0.012*** | −0.013*** | 0.033*** |
|  | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.012) |
| Vietnam | 0.016*** | 0.006 | 0.024** |
|  | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.011) |
| Policy | 0.027*** | −0.001 | 0.047 |
|  | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.039) |
| China | 0.001 | −0.011*** | 0.010 |
|  | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.012) |
| Africa | 0.001 | −0.002 | −0.00001 |
|  | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.012) |
| Latin America | 0.003 | 0.013 | 0.005 |
|  | (0.009) | (0.016) | (0.015) |
| Arms Control | 0.005 | −0.002 | 0.016 |
|  | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.012) |
| North Africa | −0.024 | −0.017 |  |
|  | (0.036) | (0.024) |  |
| Formal | 0.013*** |  |  |
|  | (0.002) |  |  |
| Constant | 0.488*** | 0.510*** | 0.537*** |
|  | (0.020) | (0.013) | (0.024) |
| Year FEs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Observations | 2,685 | 791 | 1,894 |

*p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

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