

SUPPLEMENTAL APPENDIX

Do External Threats Increase Bipartisanship in the United States? An Experimental Test in the Shadow of China's Rise

Eddy S. F. Yeung Weifang Xu

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A Sample Characteristics

We partnered with PureSpectrum and used quota sampling to match the demographic benchmarks from the U.S. national adult population census. PureSpectrum is a multi-source sampling platform that uses a patented technology to screen out respondents that have shown their lack of credibility, reliability, or consistency through online behavior. In addition, it preempts respondents from taking the same survey multiple times by adopting advanced device fingerprinting and fraud prevention methods. Additional description of PureSpectrum's data quality is available at <https://www.purespectrum.com/data-quality>.

The resulting sample is thus high-quality and has generated many publications in social sciences. Recent examples that use PureSpectrum include the following:

- Baum, Matthew A., James N. Druckman, Matthew D. Simonson, Jennifer Lin, and Roy H. Perlis. 2024. "The Political Consequences of Depression: How Conspiracy Beliefs, Participatory Inclinations, and Depression Affect Support for Political Violence." *American Journal of Political Science* 68(2): 575–94.
- Lacombe, Matthew J., Matthew D. Simonson, Jon Green, and James N. Druckman. 2022. "Social Disruption, Gun Buying, and Anti-System Beliefs." *Perspectives on Politics*. doi: 10.1017/S1537592722003322
- Green, Jon, James N. Druckman, Matthew A. Baum, David Lazer, Katherine Ognyanova, Matthew D. Simonson, Jennifer Lin, Mauricio Santillana, and Roy H. Perlis. 2022. "Using General Messages to Persuade on a Politicized Scientific Issue." *British Journal of Political Science* 53(2): 698–706.
- Green, Jon, James N. Druckman, Matthew A. Baum, Katherine Ognyanova, Matthew D. Simonson, Roy H. Perlis, and David Lazer. 2023. "Media Use and Vaccine Resistance." *PNAS Nexus* 2(5): pgad146.
- Robertson, Ronald E., Jon Green, Damian J. Ruck, Katherine Ognyanova, Christo Wilson, and David Lazer. 2023. "Users Choose to Engage with More Partisan News Than They Are Exposed to on Google Search." *Nature* 618: 342–48.

Table S1 shows that the sample demographics ($N = 4,006$, before the removal of Independents) closely match the demographic characteristics of the U.S. adult population.

Table S1. Sample Demographics in Comparison with Census Benchmarks

		Benchmark	Sample
SEX	Male	49.0%	46.2%
	Female	51.0%	53.8%
AGE	18–29	20.2%	18.3%
	30–39	17.5%	19.0%
	40–49	15.9%	15.7%
	50–59	16.3%	15.6%
	60–69	15.5%	16.9%
	70+	14.5%	14.5%
RACE	White	69.2%	71.2%
	Black or African American	13.4%	14.0%
	Hispanic or Latino	8.9%	6.8%
	Other	8.5%	7.9%

Note: Benchmarks are based on the adult population. Sex and age are calculated from Table S0101 of the 2021 American Community Survey (<https://data.census.gov/table?q=S0101&tid=ACSST1Y2021.S0101>). Race figures are calculated from the 2022 CES.

B Survey Instrument

This appendix first displays our full survey, followed by comparing and contrasting our instrument with that of Myrick (2021).

B.1 Questionnaire

Our survey consists of four parts: (1) demographic characteristics, (2) dispositional characteristics, (3) threat primes, and (4) outcome measures. The first three are separated by several unrelated questions in between that are neither used nor preregistered in our analysis. The following survey instrument shows the variables we preregistered and the flow of our survey.

Part I: Demographic Characteristics

age: What is your age?

- 18–29
- 30–39
- 40–49
- 50–59
- 60–69
- 70 or above

sex: What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

race: Which of the following do you consider to be your primary racial or ethnic group?

- White
- Black or African American
- Asian American
- Hispanic

- Native American
- Other

educ: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- 4-year college degree
- Advanced degree

Part II: Dispositional Characteristics

pid_1: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Other

pid_2r: [Display if pid_1 = "Republican"] Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

- Strong
- Not very strong

pid_2d: [Display if pid_1 = "Democrat"] Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

- Strong
- Not very strong

pid_2i: [Display if pid_1 = “Republican”] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?

- Closer to the Republican party
- Closer to the Democratic party
- Neither

ideo: Now, we would like to learn more about your political ideology. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

- Extremely liberal
- Liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Moderate; middle of the road
- Slightly conservative
- Conservative
- Extremely conservative

nationalism: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “People should support their own country even if what it does is wrong.”

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

patriotism: Are you proud to be an American citizen?

- Very proud
- Rather proud

- Rather not proud
- Not proud at all

nat_id: If someone said something bad about the American people, how strongly would you feel it is as if they said something bad about you?

- Not strongly at all
- Not too strongly
- Somewhat strongly
- Very strongly
- Extremely strongly

coop_int: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Respondents see a grid with the following options: “Strongly disagree,” “Somewhat disagree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Somewhat agree,” “Strongly agree.”]

- The U.S. needs to cooperate more with the United Nations
- It is essential for the U.S. to work with other nations to solve problems such as overpopulation, hunger, and pollution
- Promoting and defending human rights in other countries is of utmost importance
- It is important for countries to comply with international law

Part III: Threat Primes

intro_T1 / intro_T2 / intro_T3: [Display if the respondent is randomly assigned to the Biden / Trump / Nonpartisan treatment group] On the next page, you will read statements based on real intelligence reports from [the **Biden administration** / the **Trump administration** / **non-partisan experts**]. Please read this information carefully. You will be able to press the next button after spending 20 seconds on the report.

threat_prime_T1 / threat_prime_T2 / threat_prime_T3: [Display if the respondent is randomly assigned to the Biden / Trump / Nonpartisan treatment group] Intelligence reports from [the Biden

administration / the Trump administration / non-partisan experts] warned that the risk of conflict between the United States and China is higher than any time since the end of the Cold War. According to these reports, President Biden and his cabinet officials said that:

- China is aggressively pursuing its goal of building a world-class military that will enable it to project power globally and offset U.S. military superiority.
- China is using intelligence services to steal information and has become the top threat to U.S. technological competitiveness.
- China is actively using subsidies and trade policy to give its firms a competitive advantage.

threat_reinforce_T1 / threat_reinforce_T2 / threat_reinforce_T3: [Display if the respondent is randomly assigned to the Biden / Trump / Nonpartisan treatment group] In a few sentences, tell us what you think about this report from [the Biden administration / the Trump administration / non-partisan experts]. A copy of the report is below for your reference.

Part IV: Outcome Measures

foreign_policy: Would you support or oppose the following U.S. policies? [Respondents see a grid with the following options: “Strongly oppose,” “Somewhat oppose,” “Neither support nor oppose,” “Somewhat support,” “Strongly support.”]

- Expand U.S. military spending
- Restrict the exchange of scientific research between the U.S. and China
- Significantly reduce trade between the U.S. and China, even if this leads to greater costs for American consumers
- Offer financial support to U.S. companies that are in strategic industries (e.g., energy, telecommunications)

china_threat: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “China poses a threat to the United States.”

- Strongly disagree

- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

affpol_FT: We'd like to get your feelings about some groups in American society. Rate the following groups between 0 and 100.

- Ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorably toward that group.
- Ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorably toward that group.
- You would rate the group at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward that group.

Please move the sliders to your desired ratings.

- Democrats [slider from 0 to 100]
- Republicans [slider from 0 to 100]

affpol_trust_dem: How much of the time do you think you can trust the Democratic Party to do what is right for the country?

- Almost never
- Once in a while
- About half the time
- Most of the time
- Almost always

affpol_trust_gop: How much of the time do you think you can trust the Republican Party to do what is right for the country?

- Almost never
- Once in a while
- About half the time
- Most of the time
- Almost always

affpol_dist_1: [Display if the respondent is a strong, not very strong, or lean Republican / Democrat] How comfortable are you having close personal friends who are \$OUTPARTISANS [Democrats / Republicans]?

- Not at all comfortable
- Not too comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Extremely comfortable

affpol_dist_2: [Display if the respondent is a strong, not very strong, or lean Republican / Democrat] How comfortable are you having neighbors on your street who are \$OUTPARTISANS [Democrats / Republicans]?

- Not at all comfortable
- Not too comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Extremely comfortable

affpol_dist_3: [Display if the respondent is a strong, not very strong, or lean Republican / Democrat] Suppose a son or daughter of yours was getting married. How would you feel if he or she married a supporter of the \$OUTPARTY [Democratic Party / Republican Party]?

- Not at all upset
- Not too upset

- Somewhat upset
- Extremely upset

affpol_trait: [Display if the respondent is a strong, not very strong, or lean Republican / Democrat]

Below, we've given a list of words that some people might use to describe individuals. For each item, please indicate how well you think it applies to \$OUTPARTISANS [Democrats / Republicans]. [Respondents see a grid with the following options: "Not at all well," "Not too well," "Somewhat well," "Very well," "Extremely well."]

- Patriotic
- Intelligent
- Honest
- Open-minded
- Generous
- Hypocritical
- Selfish
- Mean

B.2 Comparison with Myrick (2021)

While our experiment builds on Myrick (2021), it differs in several aspects (Table S2).

First, the content and wording of our threat primes are largely consistent with but slightly different from those adopted by Myrick. We replace the original prime on cybersecurity (see Table S2) with a new prime about China's aggressive economic policy on firm subsidies and international trade because the latter is more frequently highlighted by real-world discourse by both President Biden and President Trump. The changes also allow us to make factual statements in our treatments, which require that *both* the Biden administration *and* the Trump administration mentioned the three bullet points we show to our treated respondents in recent intelligence reports.

Second, our measures of foreign policy preferences are different from Myrick's. While Myrick measured respondents' views on how acceptable or unacceptable it is for the U.S. government to

take aggressive actions against China (Table S2), we tap the concept of preference polarization by measuring more specific foreign policies in response to China threat. This measurement approach ensures that our list of foreign policies has a clear mapping onto the three bullet points we show to our treated respondents. On the one hand, the policies about expanding U.S. military spending and restricting scientific exchange correspond to the first and second bullet points. On the other hand, the policies about reducing US–China trade and offering industry subsidy map directly onto the third bullet point.

Third, our measures of affective polarization expand the empirical scope in Myrick’s experiment. While Myrick used the feeling thermometer item to measure affective polarization among Republicans and Democrats in the sample (Table S2), we take several steps further by not only fielding the same question in our survey but also adding three extra measures of affective polarization. These measures—outparty trait ratings, outparty trust ratings, and outparty social distance—are all validated and widely used in the American politics literature (Levendusky 2023). Existing scholarship has shown that they are conceptually and empirically distinct from the feeling thermometer item (Druckman and Levendusky 2019). Thus, it is theoretically possible that while external threats can reduce affective polarization by improving outparty trait ratings, trust ratings, and/or social distance, an experiment that operationalizes affective polarization by solely relying on the feeling thermometer item—as in Myrick’s important contribution—will fail to capture the potential depolarization dynamics. Incorporating additional measures, therefore, allows us to investigate the treatment effects on affective polarization more comprehensively, compared to an alternative approach that uses the feeling thermometer item to capture only one specific dimension of affective polarization.

Table S2. Comparing Our Experimental Design with Myrick’s (2021)

Design Feature	Myrick’s Experiment	Our Experiment (see Appendix B.1)
<i>Control</i>	Respondents directly move to the outcomes	Same as Myrick
<i>Treatment</i>	<p>Introduction: On the next page, you will read statements based on a real, recent report from [non-partisan experts / the Trump administration] called the “Worldwide Threat Assessment.” Please read this information carefully.</p> <p>Prime: A recent report from [non-partisan experts / the Trump administration] says that the risk of conflict between the United States and China is higher than any time since the end of the Cold War. According to the report, [experts / President Trump and his cabinet officials] say that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China is aggressively expanding its economic and military influence, as well as its nuclear capabilities. • China is using intelligence services to steal information and spy on U.S. citizens. • China has the ability to launch cyber attacks that can disrupt critical infrastructure — such as electric grids or natural gas pipelines — in the United States. 	<p>Introduction: intro_T1 / intro_T2 / intro_T3</p> <p>Prime: threat_prime_T1 / threat_prime_T2 / threat_prime_T3</p>
<i>Outcomes</i>	<p>Policy preferences: In your opinion, how acceptable or unacceptable is it for the United States government to take the following actions? [1 = Very Unacceptable; 5 = Very Acceptable]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in diplomacy (directly talk with foreign leaders) with China • Impose economic sanctions (financial or trade restrictions designed to hurt a country’s economy) against China • Use covert action to secretly influence China’s politics • Threaten military force against China • Use military force against China <p>Party affect: We’d also like to get your feelings about some groups in American society. Rate the following groups between 0 and 100. Ratings from 50-100 mean that you feel favorably toward the group; ratings from 0-50 degrees mean that you don’t feel favorably towards the group and that you don’t care too much for that group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democrats • Republicans <p>China threat: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: China poses a threat to the United States? [1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree]</p>	<p>Policy preferences: foreign_policy</p> <p>Party affect: affpol_FT / affpol_trust_dem / affpol_trust_gop / affpol_dist_1 / affpol_dist_2 / affpol_dist_3 / affpol_trait</p> <p>China threat: china_threat (same as Myrick)</p>

Note: Myrick includes additional outcome measures on whether respondents consider China to be a friend or an enemy of the U.S. and whether they agree that China poses an opportunity for cooperation with the U.S. These measures, however, are not important features of the design; the analysis and conclusion in Myrick (2021) do not hinge on these measures. Therefore, we omit them from our design.

C Additional Analysis of Preference Polarization

To formally test whether the treatments converged Democrats' and Republicans' attitudes toward aggressive U.S. foreign policy, we use OLS to estimate the following preregistered equation:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Biden}_i + \beta_2 \text{Trump}_i + \beta_3 \text{NP}_i + \text{Democrat}_i(\gamma_0 + \gamma_1 \text{Biden}_i + \gamma_2 \text{Trump}_i + \gamma_3 \text{NP}_i) + \lambda \Phi_i + \varepsilon_i, \quad (1)$$

where i is a respondent who identified as a Democrat or a Republican. Y_i is the outcome variable of interest and Φ_i is a vector of pretreatment measures of individual characteristics, including age (6 steps), sex (female or male), race (white or not), education (5 steps), income (5 steps), self-reported ideology (7 steps), nationalism (5-point), patriotism (4-point), national identity (5-point), and cooperative internationalism.¹ The dummy variables Biden_i , Trump_i , and NP_i indicate treatment assignment to the Biden, Trump, and nonpartisan conditions, respectively. Democrat_i indicates a self-reported Democrat, including leaners. The baseline is thus Republicans in the control group. The standard errors, ε_i , are heteroskedasticity-consistent. Under this specification, γ_0 is the baseline preference polarization between Democrats and Republicans (holding other sociodemographic variables and political predispositions constant). The estimands of interest, γ_1 , γ_2 , and γ_3 , are differences-in-CATEs by partisanship. Table S3 shows the regression estimates corresponding to equation (1), both with and without the preregistered covariates.

1. Cooperative internationalism, according to Kertzer, Rathbun, and Rathbun (2020, 100), “is an orientation toward international affairs that stresses concern for others abroad with whom one should work toward common goals.” Our measure of cooperative internationalism draws on Kertzer et al. (2014), Kertzer, Rathbun, and Rathbun (2020), and Powers et al. (2022). The citations are as follows:

- Kertzer, Joshua D., Kathleen E. Powers, Brian C. Rathbun, and Ravi Iyer. 2014. “Moral Support: How Moral Values Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes.” *The Journal of Politics* 76(3): 825–40.
- Kertzer, Joshua D., Brian C. Rathbun, and Nina Srinivasan Rathbun. 2020. “The Price of Peace: Motivated Reasoning and Costly Signaling in International Relations.” *International Organization* 74(1): 95–118.
- Powers, Kathleen E., Joshua D. Kertzer, Deborah J. Brooks, and Stephen G. Brooks. 2022. “What’s Fair in International Politics? Equity, Equality, and Foreign Policy Attitudes.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 66(2): 217–45.

Table S3. OLS Regression Corresponding to Equation (1)

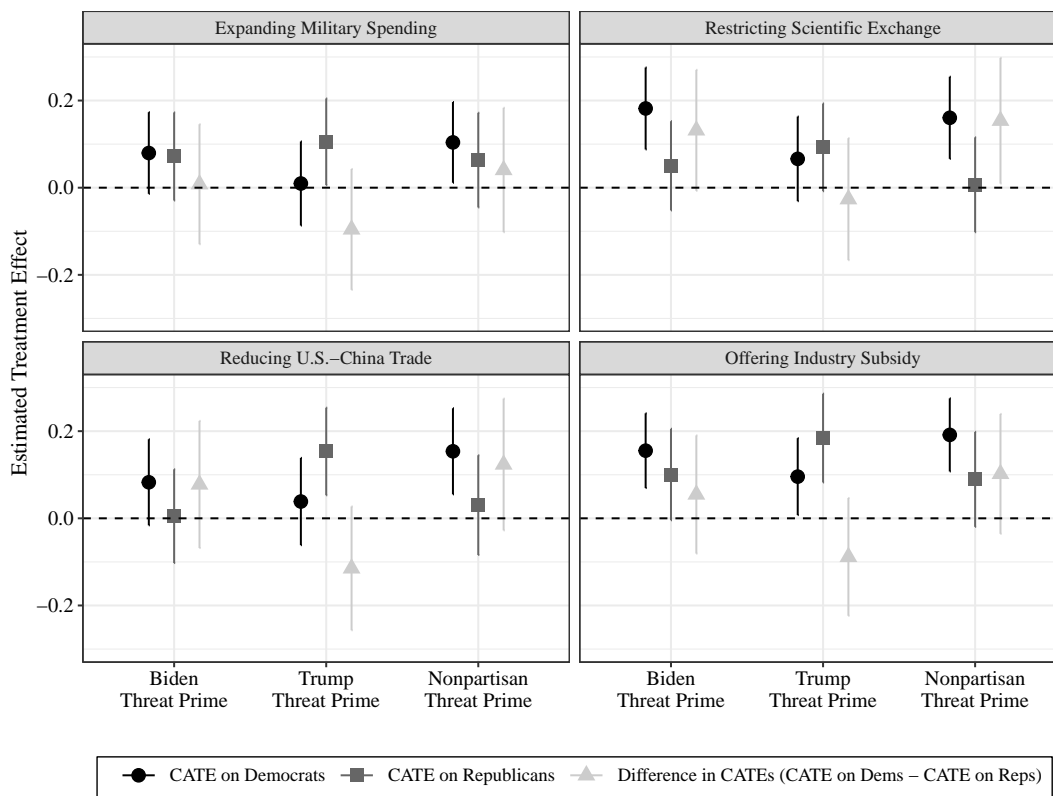
	Dependent Variable: 5-Point Support for the U.S. Foreign Policy							
	Military Spending	Scientific Exchange	Trade Reduction	Industry Subsidy	Industry Subsidy			
β_0 : Constant	2.68*** (0.07)	1.13*** (0.18)	2.84*** (0.07)	1.48*** (0.18)	2.61*** (0.06)	1.11*** (0.18)	2.51*** (0.06)	1.21*** (0.17)
β_1 : Biden Threat Prime	0.16 (0.09)	0.18* (0.08)	0.03 (0.09)	0.05 (0.09)	0.03 (0.09)	0.06 (0.09)	0.17* (0.08)	0.20* (0.08)
β_2 : Trump Threat Prime	0.21* (0.09)	0.23** (0.08)	0.10 (0.09)	0.13 (0.08)	0.20* (0.09)	0.21** (0.08)	0.27*** (0.08)	0.31*** (0.08)
β_3 : Nonpartisan Threat Prime	0.12 (0.10)	0.19* (0.09)	0.02 (0.10)	0.06 (0.09)	0.03 (0.10)	0.07 (0.09)	0.14 (0.09)	0.19* (0.08)
γ_0 : Democrat	-0.40*** (0.09)	-0.10 (0.09)	-0.49*** (0.09)	-0.28** (0.09)	-0.40*** (0.08)	-0.14 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.08)	-0.00 (0.08)
γ_1 : Biden Threat Prime \times Democrat	-0.02 (0.12)	-0.06 (0.11)	0.29* (0.12)	0.24* (0.11)	0.15 (0.12)	0.12 (0.11)	0.04 (0.11)	-0.00 (0.11)
γ_2 : Trump Threat Prime \times Democrat	-0.13 (0.12)	-0.20 (0.11)	0.09 (0.12)	0.02 (0.11)	-0.07 (0.12)	-0.12 (0.11)	-0.05 (0.11)	-0.14 (0.11)
γ_3 : Nonpartisan Threat Prime \times Democrat	0.07 (0.13)	-0.03 (0.12)	0.25 (0.13)	0.18 (0.12)	0.26* (0.13)	0.21 (0.12)	0.23 (0.12)	0.15 (0.11)
Covariates Included?	\times	\checkmark	\times	\checkmark	\times	\checkmark	\times	\checkmark
Number of Respondents	3,334	3,332	3,334	3,332	3,334	3,332	3,334	3,332
RMSE	1.26	1.13	1.24	1.15	1.25	1.17	1.14	1.06

Note: Entries are OLS estimates with robust standard errors in parentheses. All significance tests are two-tailed with the following notations:
 *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

In addition, we re-estimate Equation (1) by using an alternative measure of policy preferences. Particularly, we transform Y_i from a 5-point variable to a 3-point variable, such that 1 indicates that respondent i either strongly or somewhat supported the assertive foreign policy, -1 indicates that he or she either strongly or somewhat opposed the policy, and 0 indicates that he or she neither supported nor opposed the policy. Compared to our preregistered measure of policy preferences, this alternative operationalization strips out preference intensity but zeroes in on preference directionality. In other words, it captures *whether*—rather than to what extent—the respondent has a hawkish or dovish stance on China. The re-analysis is meaningful because one may argue that defining polarization as Democrats’ and Republicans’ hawkish or dovish stance on China—rather than the degree of hawkishness or dovishness against China—is politically more relevant: real-world politics may be more concerned about changing the balance between hawks and doves in each party; the “different shades” of hawkishness or dovishness between partisan groups may also matter but to a lesser degree.

Figure S1 shows the new estimates based on this alternative measure of policy preferences. The empirical pattern is nearly identical to Figure 2 as presented in the main text. Therefore, our conclusions about preference polarization remain.

Figure S1. Conditional Average Treatment Effects and Differences-in-CATEs for Democrats’ and Republicans’ US Foreign Policy Preferences from an Alternative Operationalization



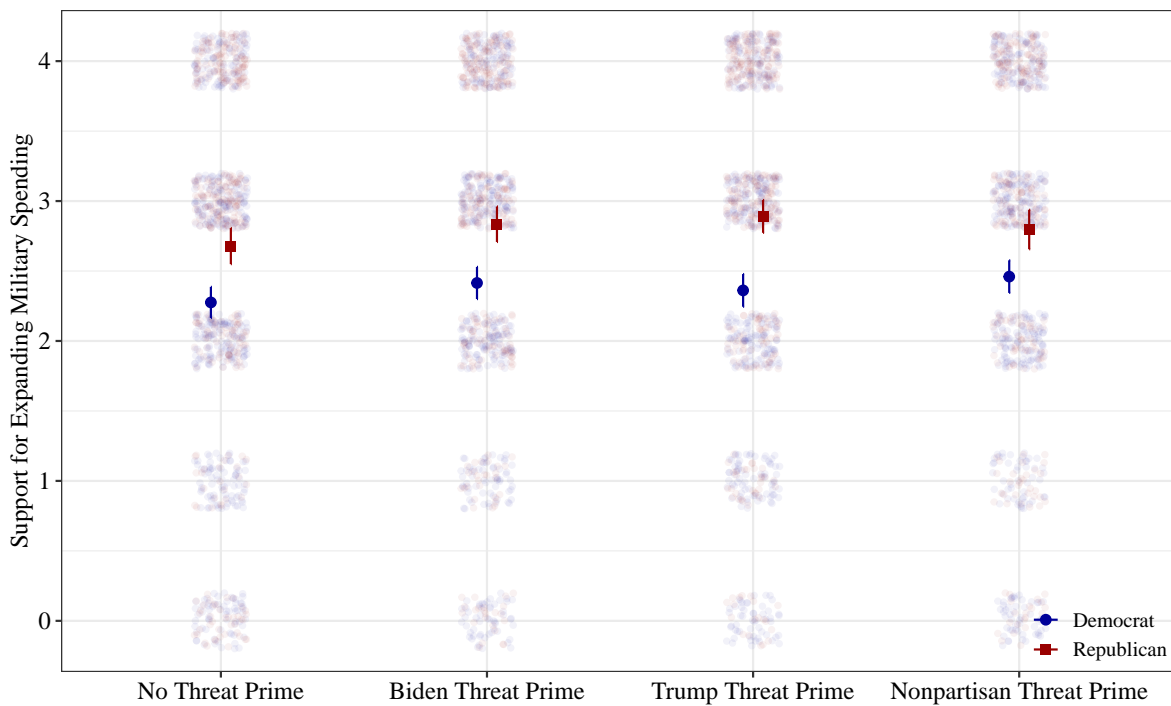
Note: CATEs refer to the average treatment effects conditional on a respondent characteristic, which is partisanship in this case. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

D Additional Analysis of Foreign Policy Preferences

D.1 Foreign Policy Preferences by Partisanship and Experimental Condition

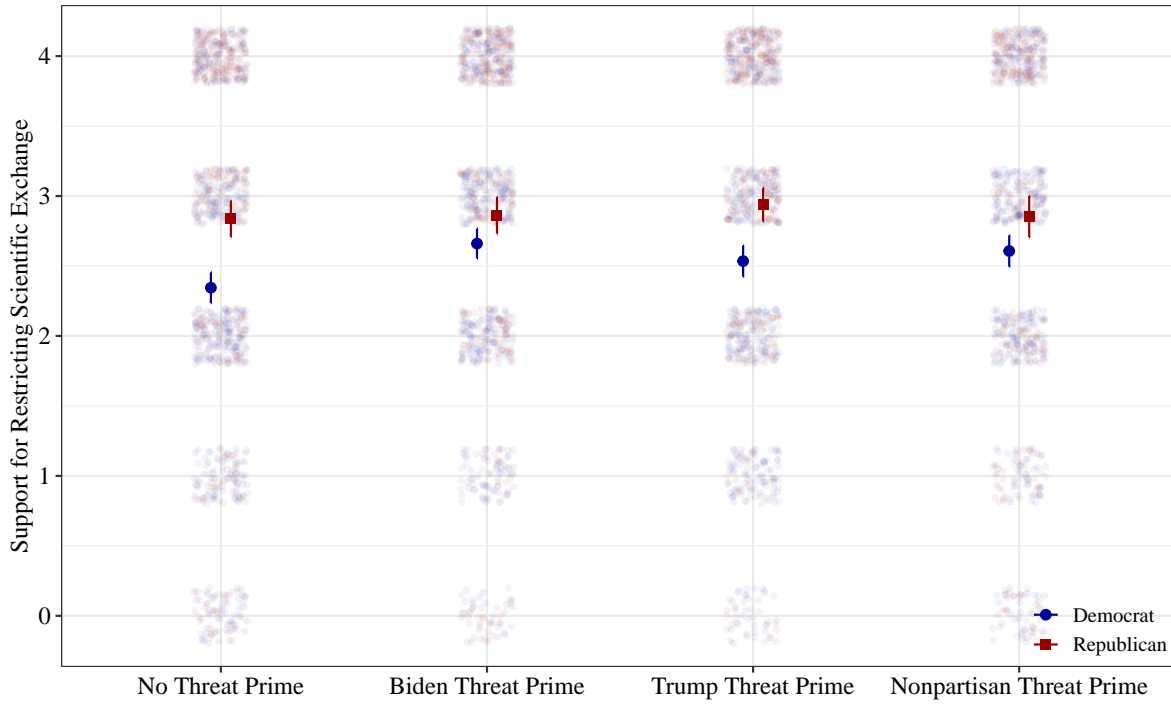
Figures S2–S5 show the distributions of foreign policy preferences among the respondents according to their partisanship and experimental conditions, along with subgroup means and confidence intervals.

Figure S2. Mean and Distribution of Preferences for Expanding Military Spending by Partisanship and Experimental Condition



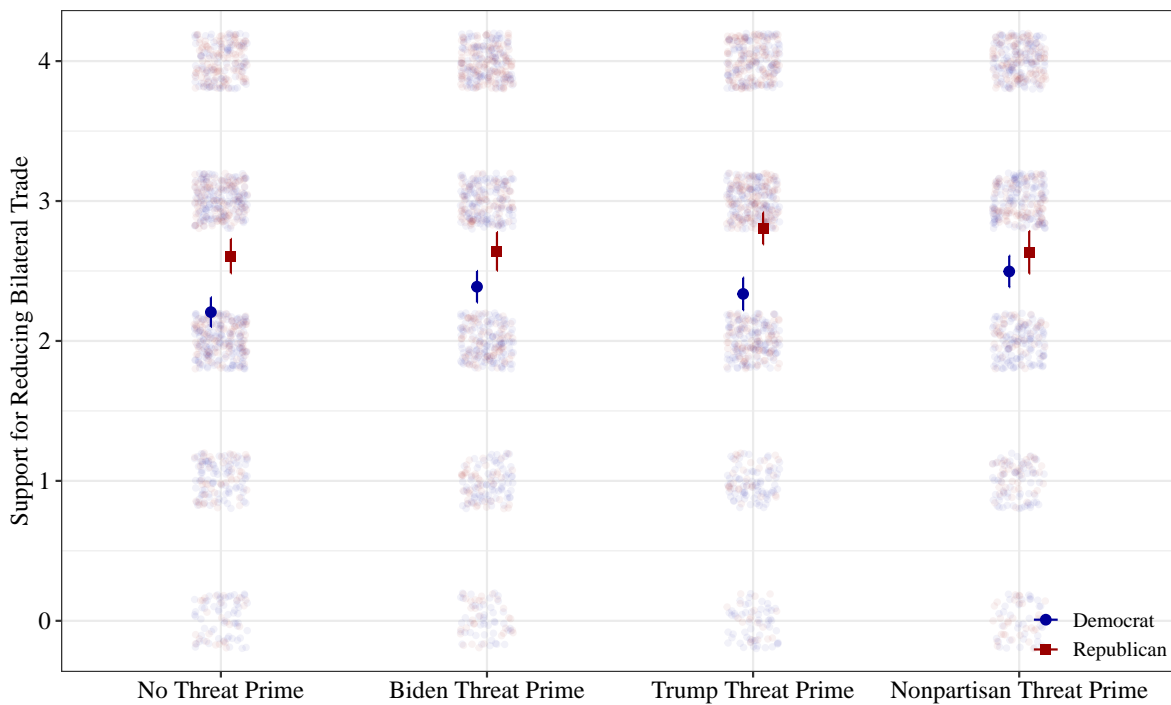
Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S3. Mean and Distribution of Preferences for Restricting Scientific Exchange by Partisanship and Experimental Condition

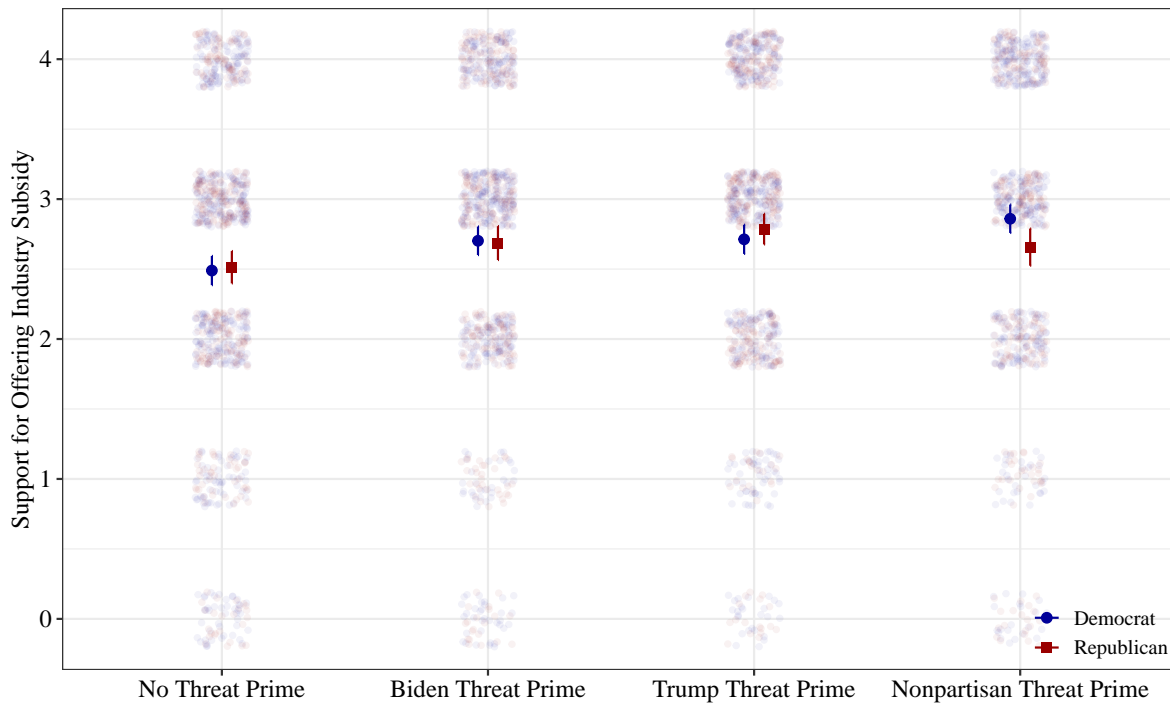


Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S4. Mean and Distribution of Preferences for Reducing US–China Trade by Partisanship and Experimental Condition



Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S5. Mean and Distribution of Preferences for Offering Industry Subsidy by Partisanship and Experimental Condition

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

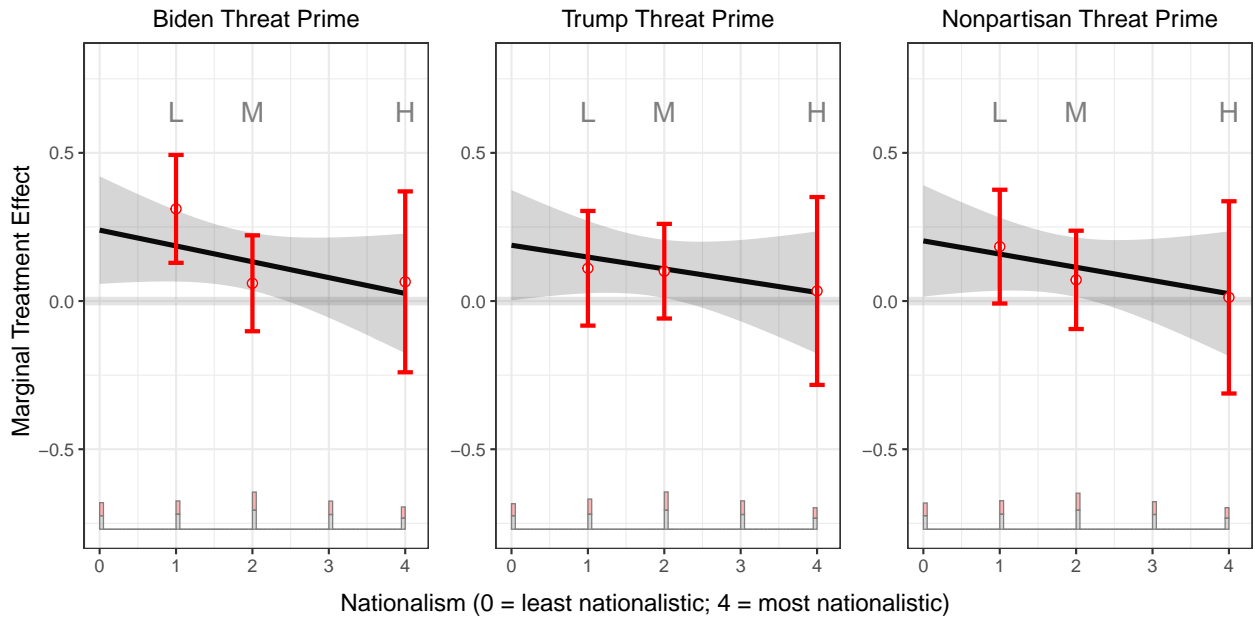
D.2 Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Foreign Policy Preferences

Figures S6–S13 show whether and how nationalism and cooperative internationalism, two individual predispositions that have been found to predict hawkish attitudes (e.g., Herrmann, Isernia, and Segatti 2009;² Kertzer, Rathbun, and Rathbun 2020), moderate individual preferences for assertive foreign policy against China. Both variables were measured cleanly pretreatment. In estimating the heterogeneous treatment effects we control for Φ_i in Equation (1), where appropriate. We adopt the binning estimator proposed by Hainmueller, Mummolo, and Xu (2019).³ This exploratory analysis does not suggest strong evidence that nationalism and cooperative internationalism played an important role in moderating the treatment effects on foreign policy preferences.

2. Herrmann, Richard K., Pierangelo Isernia, and Paolo Segatti. 2009. “Attachment to the Nation and International Relations: Dimensions of Identity and Their Relationship to War and Peace.” *Political Psychology* 30(5): 721–54.

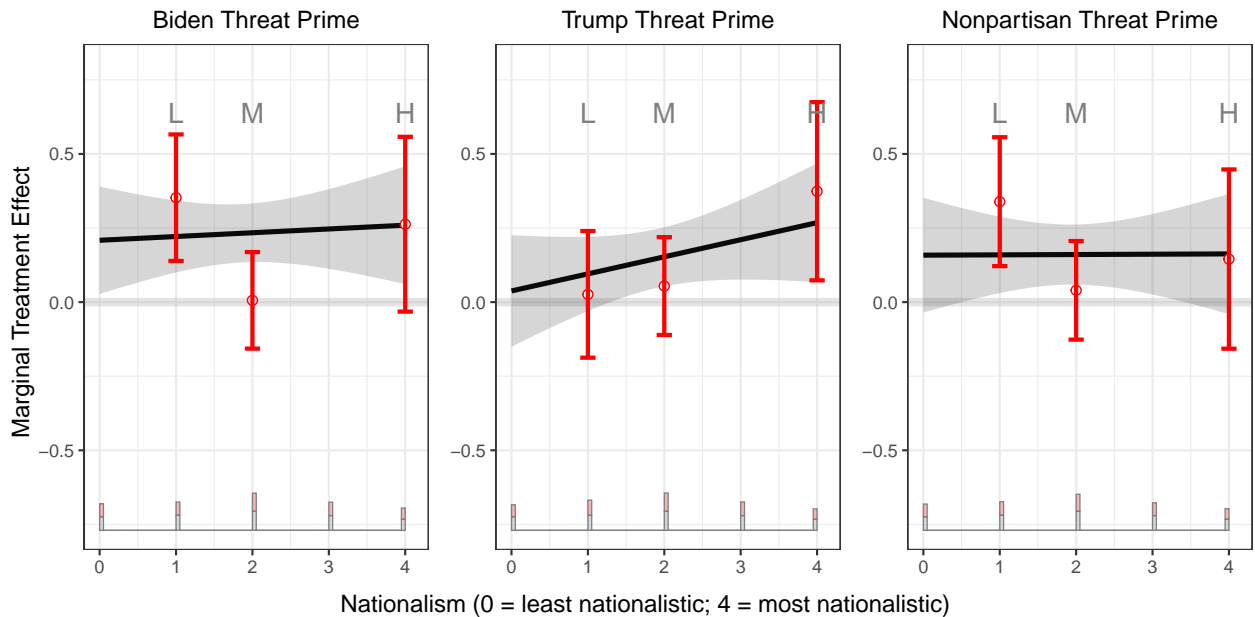
3. Hainmueller, Jens, Jonathan Mummolo, and Yiqing Xu. 2019. “How Much Should We Trust Estimates from Multiplicative Interaction Models? Simple Tools to Improve Empirical Practice.” *Political Analysis* 27(2): 163–92.

Figure S6. Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Support for Expanding Military Spending by Nationalism



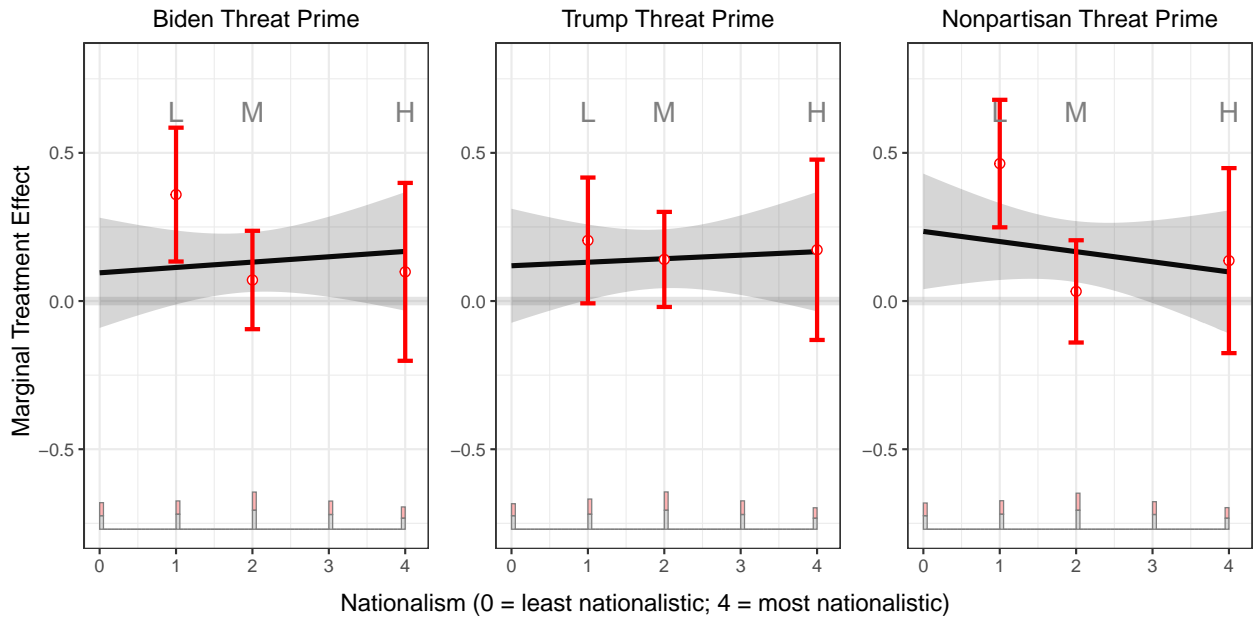
Note: Shaded areas and error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S7. Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Support for Restricting Scientific Exchange by Nationalism



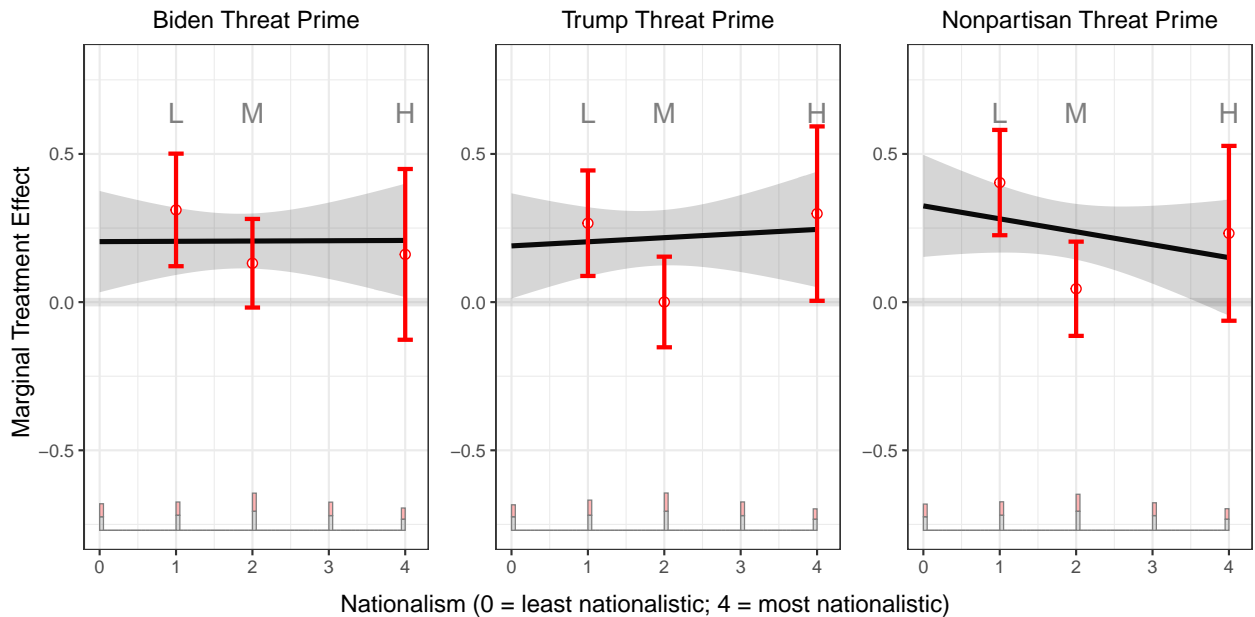
Note: Shaded areas and error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S8. Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Support for Reducing US–China Trade by Nationalism



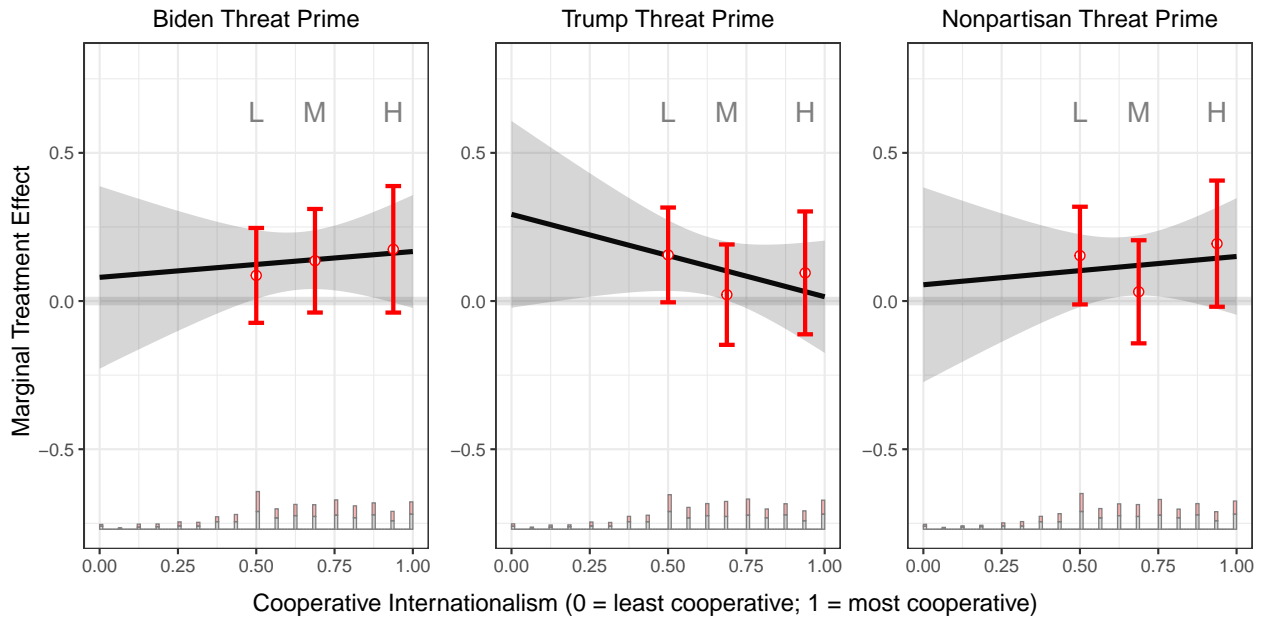
Note: Shaded areas and error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S9. Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Support for Offering Industry Subsidy by Nationalism



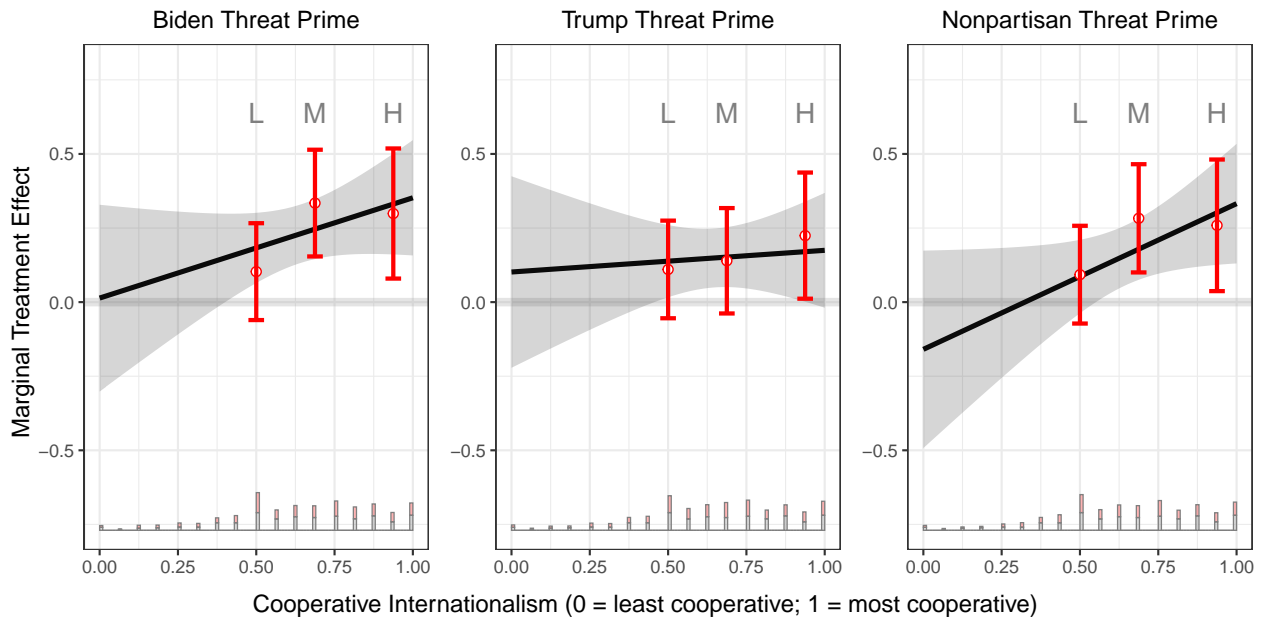
Note: Shaded areas and error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S10. Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Support for Expanding Military Spending by Cooperative Internationalism



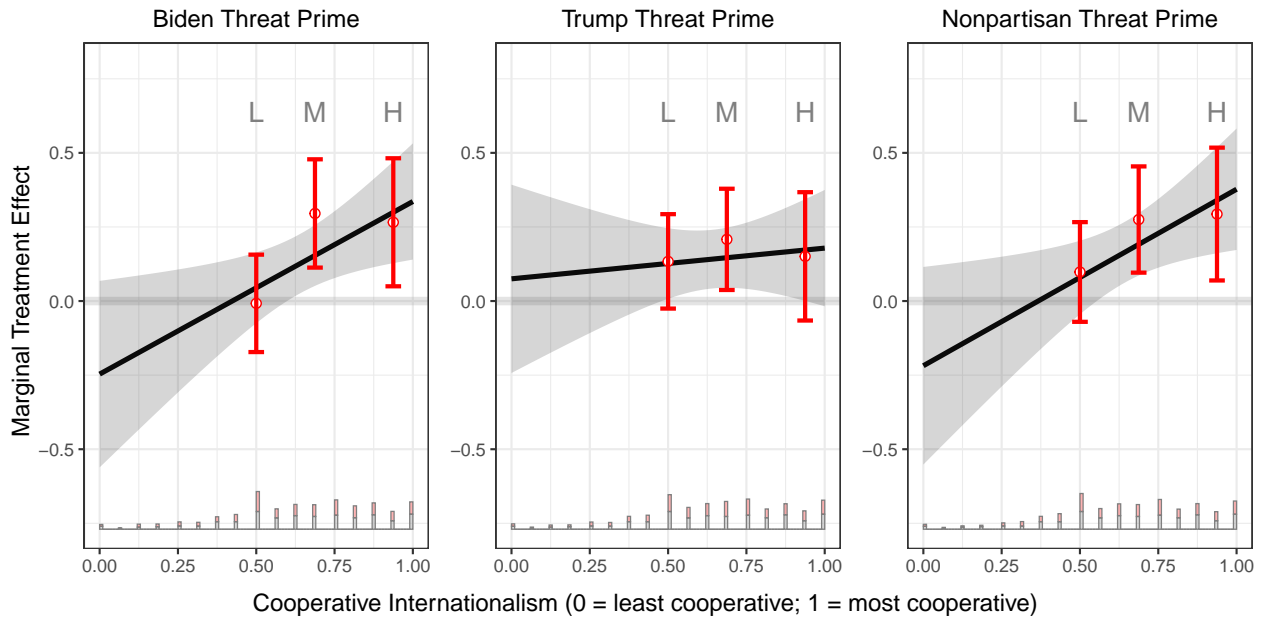
Note: Shaded areas and error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S11. Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Support for Restricting Scientific Exchange by Cooperative Internationalism



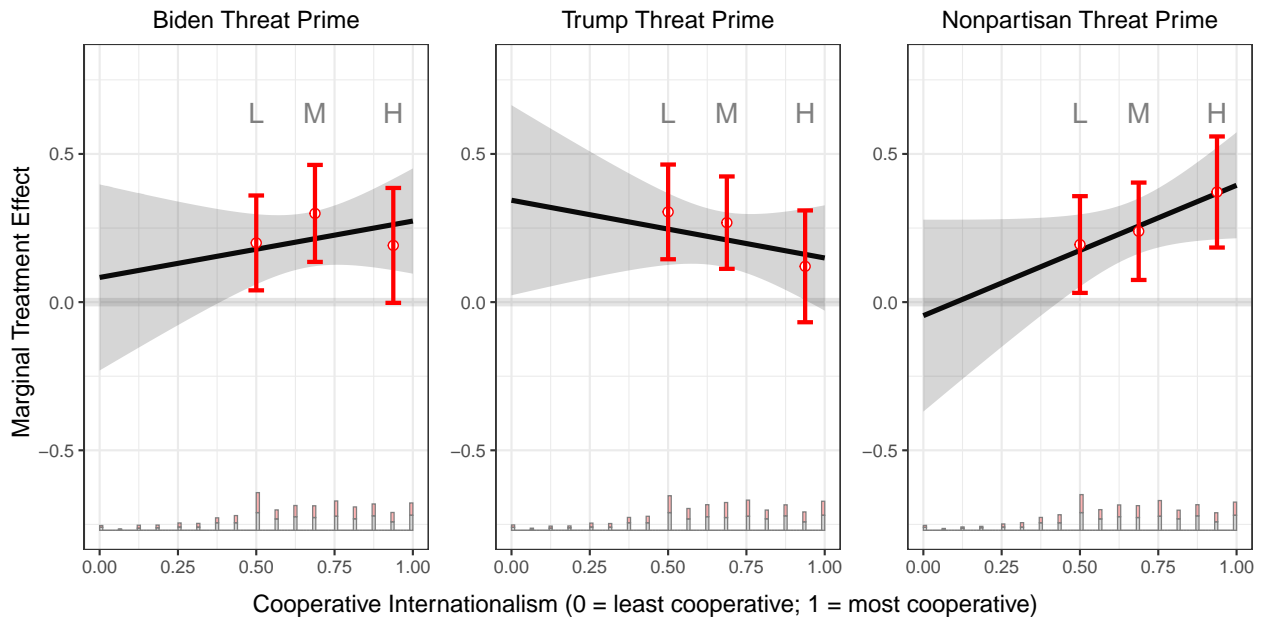
Note: Shaded areas and error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S12. Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Support for Reducing US–China Trade by Cooperative Internationalism



Note: Shaded areas and error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S13. Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Support for Offering Industry Subsidy by Cooperative Internationalism



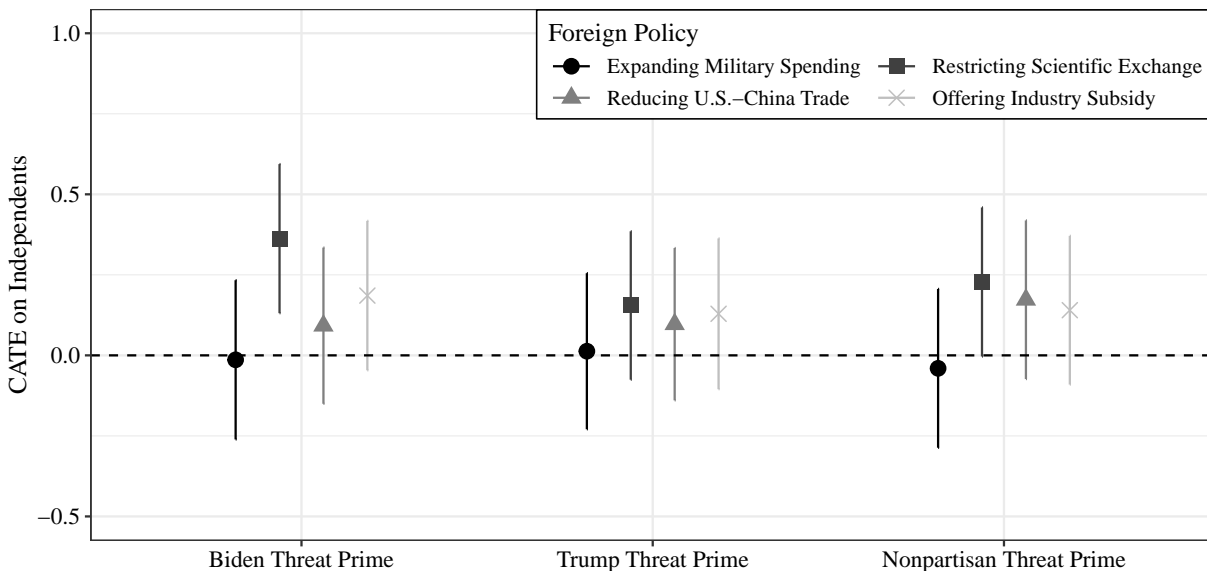
Note: Shaded areas and error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

E Conditional Average Treatment Effects on Independents

Although we did not preregister to include Independents in our analysis, we analyze the conditional average treatment effects (CATEs) on Independents for completeness. Nevertheless, we caution against inferring too much from our results here because the analysis is not well-powered. The sample size of Independents for each group is as follows: 156 in the control group, 164 in the Biden threat prime treatment group, 155 in the Trump threat prime treatment group, and 196 in the nonpartisan threat prime treatment group.

Figure S14 shows the CATEs for Independents' foreign policy preferences. The coefficient directions and sizes for three policies—restricting scientific exchange, reducing US–China trade, and Offering industry subsidy—were consistent with those among Democrats and Republicans (see Figure 1). But most of the estimates are statistically insignificant at the conventional threshold, likely due to the relatively small sample size. Interestingly, Independents' preference for expanding military spending did not appear to change upon exposure to threat primes. This empirical pattern differs from that among Democrats and Republicans (see the first panel in Figure 2).

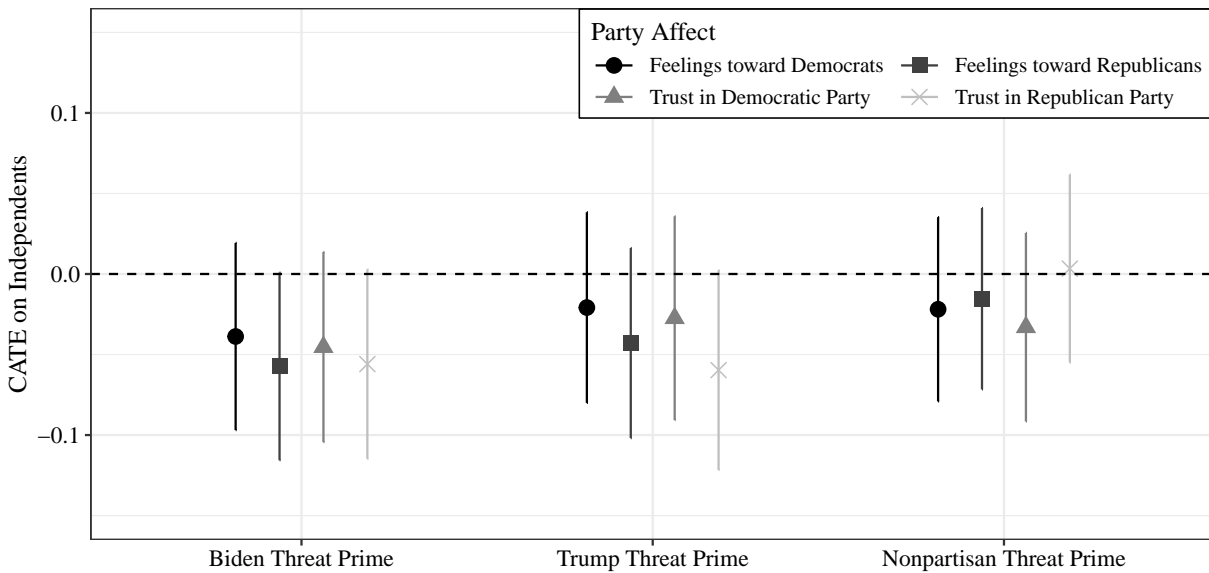
Figure S14. Conditional Average Treatment Effects for Independents' Foreign Policy Preferences



Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S15 shows the CATEs for Independents' party affect. None of the treatment conditions appeared to improve Independents' affect toward Democrats or Republicans.

Figure S15. Conditional Average Treatment Effects for Independents' toward Democrats and Republicans



Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

F Analysis of Threat Perceptions of China

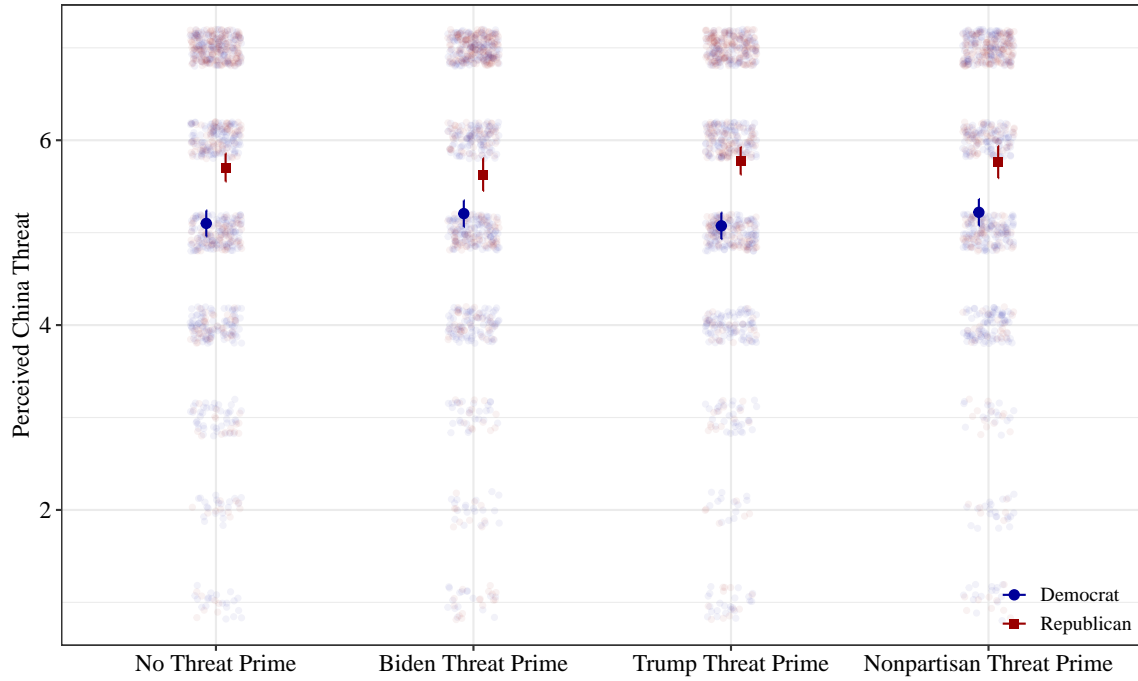
This appendix analyzes whether and how our experimental manipulation shaped respondents' threat perceptions of China. To measure threat perceptions, we asked: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? 'China poses a threat to the United States.'" The answer options ranged from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 7 ("Strongly agree"). As we document in Table S2, we directly draw this measure from Myrick (2021). Using this measure, Myrick found the following:

When the threat is communicated by nonpartisan experts, Republicans and Democrats converge in their perceptions of China. [...] However, communicating the same threat but attributing it to President Trump makes Democrats and Republicans diverge in their perceptions of China. Relative to the nonpartisan condition, the partisan condition increases perceptions of threat among Republicans but has no effect on perceptions of threat among Democrats. In the partisan condition, the partisan difference in threat perceptions is six times as large as in the nonpartisan condition and twice as large as in the control group. (Myrick 2021, 946)

What do we find with our conceptual replication of the nonpartisan and Trump threat primes, as well as the addition of the Biden threat prime? Figure S16 reports the results. We find that threat perceptions of China remained consistent across the four experimental conditions *and* across Democrats and Republicans. Compared to the nonpartisan condition, the Trump condition did not appear to diverge Democrats' and Republicans' perceptions of China—contrasting with Myrick's finding (see Figure S17, which we reproduce by using Myrick's replication material). We also find no evidence that the Biden condition substantively altered the gap between Democrats' and Republicans' threat perceptions. These findings suggest that the view that partisan communication of external threats will further polarize American citizens is perhaps overly pessimistic. Even in the midst of hyperpartisanship, Democrats and Republicans are not necessarily "intoxicated partisans" who blindly follow elite cues (Fowler 2020; see also Fowler and Howell 2023; Lipsitz, Pop-Eleches, and Robertson 2023; Tappin, Berinsky, and Rand 2023).

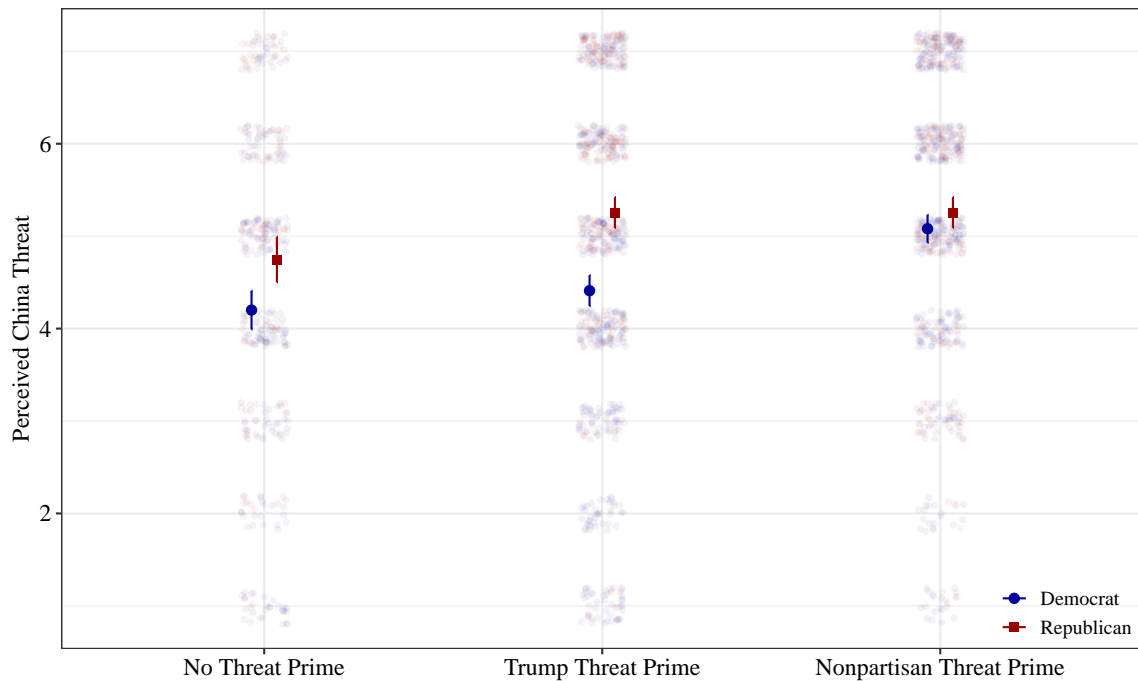
One reason why, unlike Myrick's experiment conducted in 2019, our threat primes did not

Figure S16. Mean and Distribution of Threat Perceptions of China by Partisanship and Experimental Condition in Our Survey



Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S17. Mean and Distribution of Threat Perceptions of China by Partisanship and Experimental Condition in Myrick’s Survey



Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

measurably increase in-partisans' perceptions of the China threat is the ceiling effect. (But we would again stress that the main takeaway from these empirical patterns is that the threat primes did not backfire among out-partisans and did not further polarize Americans.) Compared to Myrick's 2019 survey, our 2023 survey saw an escalated perception of the China threat in the baseline condition. In Myrick's 2019 survey, the mean perceptions of the China threat were 4.2 among Democrats and 4.7 among Republicans in the control group, where respondents were not subjected to any threat primes. However, these numbers increased to 5.1 and 5.7, respectively, in the control group of our survey experiment (compare the "No Threat Prime" condition in Figure S16 with the "No Threat Prime" condition in Figure S17). The heightened perceptions of the China threat among both Democrats and Republicans in the baseline condition, therefore, could play a role in explaining why our threat primes did not measurably amplify the US public's perceived China threat.

Yet, despite the ceiling effect for this particular measure, our treatments increased support for aggressive foreign policies toward China among both Democrats and Republicans (see Figure 1 in the main text). Thus, our experimental stimuli had substantive downstream effects on respondents' political attitudes and preferences; the public opinion effects, however, were largely uniform across Democrats and Republicans such that further polarization did not materialize.

G Does Measurement Choice Lead to Different Results from Myrick?

In the main text, we argue that the unique time context of our experiment—where a bipartisan consensus about the China threat had largely been formed in the US—plays a major role in explaining the divergent results of Myrick’s and our studies regarding preference polarization. In this appendix, we consider an alternative explanation: that we simply used different foreign policy measures than Myrick. As the set of foreign policies we explored are generally less controversial and escalatory (see the comparison in Table S2), it could be that for less controversial policies the public is more willing or likely to trust even out-party elite cues, whereas for more controversial policies (e.g., taxes, abortion, climate change, etc.) respondents are going to be more hesitant and skeptical about responding to out-party elite cues. We believe this explanation, compared with our explanation based on time context, is less plausible for two reasons.

First, while Myrick’s set of foreign policies—especially the use of military force against China that the paper especially analyzed—may be more escalatory, there is weak evidence that they are substantively more polarized compared to ours. We find that the baseline differences between Democrats’ and Republicans’ preferences for our foreign policy measures are comparable to those in Myrick’s experiment. In the control group of our study, the partisan gaps in our “expanding military spending,” “restricting scientific exchange,” and “reducing US–China trade” variables are 0.4, 0.5, and 0.4, respectively, on a 5-point Likert scale. In the control group of Myrick’s study, the partisan gaps in “using covert action to secretly influence China’s politics,” “threatening military force against China,” and “using military force against China”—the most escalatory policies—are 0.3, 0.6, and 0.5, respectively, on the same 5-point Likert scale.

Second, even if we assume that the set of foreign policies analyzed by Myrick were as polarizing as the more controversial domestic policies (e.g., taxes, abortion), we believe our experimental results would still hold if we instead measured preferences for the policy issues covered by Myrick. Two recent contributions support our conjecture. By investigating 24 different policy issues, Tappin, Berinsky, and Rand (2023) “found no evidence that the [elite] cues meaningfully diminished partisans’ receptivity to the messages—despite standing in direct contradiction to the messages. [...] When Trump-voting Republicans or Biden-voting Democrats were exposed to persuasive mes-

saging about a policy issue, they responded by (1) updating their attitudes towards the message on average, and (2) updating their attitudes by a similar amount even when confronted with the fact that Trump or Biden’s position, respectively, was opposed to the message. They responded this way largely *irrespective of the policy issue in question*” (569, emphasis added), including more controversial issues (e.g., taxes, illegal immigration) and less controversial ones (e.g., assisted suicide, enhanced interrogation) (see Figure 3 of Tappin, Berinsky, and Rand 2023).⁴ By examining another set of policy issues, Fowler and Howell (2023) find similar results, concluding that “partisans update their beliefs in accordance with the positions of Republican and Democratic leaders alike. Partisans are not perennially determined to disagree. Rather, they are often willing to incorporate opposing viewpoints about *a wide range of policy issues*” (24, emphasis added).⁵

Therefore, we believe that the nature of the policies we examined is unlikely to account for the difference between our and Myrick’s findings. In light of recent contributions that focus largely on domestic issues but not on security-related policies, our timely study strengthens this nascent yet incomplete literature through a new empirical lens.

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4. Tappin, Ben M., Adam J. Berinsky, and David G. Rand. 2023. “Partisan Receptivity to Persuasive Messaging Is Undiminished by Countervailing Party Leader Cues.” *Nature Human Behaviour* 7(4): 568–82.
 5. Fowler, Anthony, and William G. Howell. 2023. “Updating amidst Disagreement: New Experimental Evidence on Partisan Cues.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 87(1): 24–43.

H Analysis of Open-Ended Responses

To further understand why there were no measurable changes in preference and affective polarization, we analyze the open-ended responses obtained from the writing task that aimed at reinforcing our threat primes (see `threat_reinforce_T1`, `threat_reinforce_T2`, and `threat_reinforce_T3` in Appendix B.1). We use structural topic modeling (STM) to estimate a three-topic model (Roberts et al., 2014).⁶ We estimate a three-topic model (rather than a four- or five-topic model, for example) because the topics are most easily interpretable under this specification. To estimate the STM, we use (1) the dummy variables for treatment conditions, (2) 7-point party identification, and (3) their interaction terms as covariates (Roberts et al., 2014). Following Roberts, Stewart, and Tingley (2016), we address the multimodal estimation problem by using spectral initialization.⁷ Table S4 shows the top words for each topic and their interpreted themes. We also show some of the representative responses for each topic in Table S5.

Table S4. Top Words and Theme for Each Topic

Topic	Top Words	Theme
<i>Topic 1</i>	get, thing, way, agre, anyth, see, great	Commenting on the Report/Trump
<i>Topic 2</i>	realli, sure, feel, just, scari, noth, interest	Expressing Uncertainty
<i>Topic 3</i>	threat, militari, biden, good, unit, technolog, steal	Discussing China Threat

Note: Word stems are shown; these are the words after standard text processing is carried out. Top words are calculated based on simplified frequency–exclusivity scoring (Roberts et al. 2014). The themes are jointly determined by the top words and representative responses from each topic (see also Table S5).

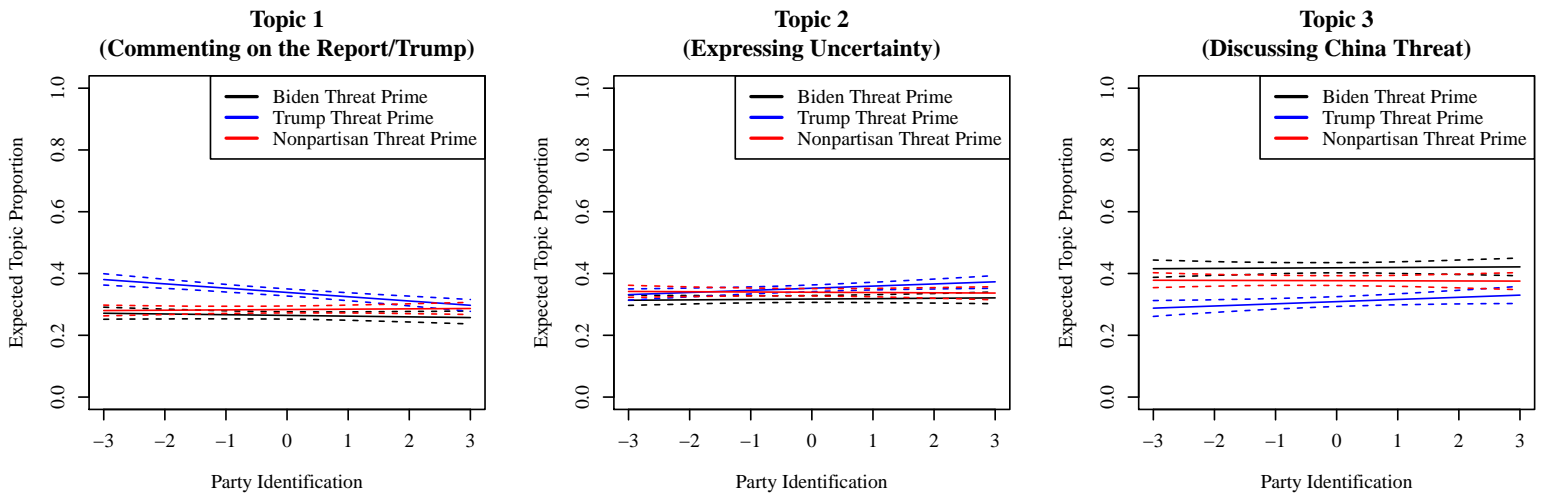
-
6. STM is a semi-automated content analysis technique developed by political methodologists to conduct text analysis, especially on open-ended responses in online surveys. See Roberts, Margaret E., Brandon M. Stewart, Dustin Tingley, Christopher Lucas, Jetson Leder-Luis, Shana Kushner Gadarian, Bethany Albertson, and David G. Rand. 2014. “Structural Topic Models for Open-Ended Survey Responses.” *American Journal of Political Science* 58(4): 1064–82.
 7. Roberts, Margaret E., Brandon M. Stewart, and Dustin Tingley. 2016. “Navigating the Local Modes of Big Data: The Case of Topic Models.” In *Computational Social Science: Discovery and Prediction*, ed. R. Michael Alvarez, 51–97. Cambridge University Press.

Table S5. Representative Responses for Each Topic

Topic	Representative Responses
<i>Topic 1</i>	<p>I don't trust much coming from the Trump administration, but I do find this report credible. The US is too busy fighting among themselves, and it has hindered the US from progressing.</p> <p>I believe that they hit it right on the nose.the American people need to wake the heck up and see and listen to what is going on around them. It is time for the US TO get off their blessed assurances and run this country the way our forefathers intended it to be run.</p> <p>This is a dangerous time in history and careful, thoughtful steps are required to prevent another world war. Geopolitical diplomacy is the preferred route. This report seems to agree with what I hear in the news regularly.</p> <p>I totally agree with these statements. We are going to turn into a socialist country if we let this continue. We need term limits to get rid of the ancient people who have no idea what they are letting happen to a free America.</p> <p>I don't put trust on the government with Trump and what has happened to him now.</p> <p>I think it could be true. Even more true when Trump was President, unfortunately heru s most people & countries the wrong way"</p>
<i>Topic 2</i>	<p>I am suspicious about the veracity of the public statement made by the administration. Is it really accurate or is it what the administration wants the citizens to believe? What advantage does the administration believe it will gain by making it?</p> <p>I don't really know anymore because nothing is changed. Things just keep getting worse honestly. I never knew how sick and perverted this world is.</p> <p>I think it's part fake media and partial truth.</p> <p>Although I believe in roughly one percent of what his administrations says, I believe that this is the one thing that is probably very close to being truthful.</p> <p>If this information is truly accurate, then the U.S. needs to keep their eyes open. Keeping open lines of communication is key, not only with China but with our other international friends.</p> <p>I'm kind of indifferent about the report. I'm not really sure what to think about it. It just seems like the whole democracy thing is completely off balance at the moment.</p>
<i>Topic 3</i>	<p>Conflict with China and the USA is at an all time high. China is building a world-class military, stealing information and becoming a top threat to technology, and using subsidies and trade policies to give its firms a competitive edge.</p> <p>China's military policy is of concern but should be addressed diplomatically. The U.S. should mount a strong defense against theft of information. Trade policy should be addressed diplomatically in conjunction with allies, but retaliatory policy should not be off the table.</p> <p>China is aggressively pursuing its goal of building a world-class military that will enable it to project power globally and offset U.S. military superiority.</p> <p>China has a threefold strategy that includes a strong military, willingness to engage in conflict, a strong commitment in competition in trade and is illegally gaining technical information."</p> <p>China is using intelligence services to steal information and has become the top threat to U.S. technological competitiveness. The U.S should strategies and looks for a formulation that would protect the military strength of the state</p> <p>China is trying to beat the US on technology and military fronts. China will use US business and trade policy against us</p>

Figure S18 shows the prevalence of each topic across the three experimental groups, alongside its relationship with the party identification of respondents. In each experimental condition, respondents from across the political spectrum discussed the intelligence report in similar ways. The flat prediction lines for each topic, as well as their proximity across the experimental conditions, suggest that *how* Democrats, Republicans, and Independents reacted to the threat primes was largely unaffected by their messenger. This finding runs counter to the “partisan intoxication” hypothesis that partisan cues will distort information processing among partisans. Rather, it is more consistent with recent experimental findings that partisans can update their prior beliefs amid disagreement against the backdrop of polarization (Fowler and Howell 2023; Tappin, Berinsky, and Rand 2023). The text analysis thus sheds light on why our respondents’ preferences for policy responses to China did not further polarize—even in the shadow of partisan cues and hyperpartisanship.

Figure S18. Expected Topic Proportions across Experimental Groups and Their Relationship with Party Identification



Note: Party identification takes the range from -3 (strong Democrat) to 3 (strong Republican). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. The overlapping confidence intervals—in each topic and across all experimental groups—suggest that, regardless of treatment status, *how* respondents explained their views on the intelligence report remained unchanged.

I Ethics Information and Preanalysis Plan

I.1 Ethics

In the consent form, we informed respondents that the study was being conducted by university researchers and that their responses would be anonymous. We informed them about the content of the survey in advance and allowed them to choose whether or not to participate. We made it clear that they could exit the survey at any time. We did not collect any personally identifiable information from our respondents. In addition, our experimental stimuli did not involve any deception because all information provided was factual (as discussed in the main text). We confirm compliance with APSA's Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research. The study was deemed exempt from further review and approval by the Institutional Review Board of Emory University (IRB ID: STUDY00006197).

I.2 Preanalysis Plan and Deviations

Pages S37–S41 show our preanalysis plan, which is also available at <https://osf.io/jvehu>. We document our consistencies with and deviations from the preanalysis plan below:

- **Hypotheses about preference polarization:** Drawing on the American politics literature on partisan cues, we expected to find polarizing effects of Trump's threat prime on foreign policy preferences (in line with Myrick 2021) and depolarizing effects of Biden's threat prime on foreign policy preferences. We also expected that the nonpartisan threat prime would neither polarize nor depolarize the foreign policy preferences among Democrats and Republicans. In the main text, we did not state these hypotheses; instead, we discussed the different theoretical perspectives from American politics and international relations scholarship.
- **Hypotheses about affective polarization:** We were agnostic about the treatment effects on affective polarization because the literature had provided relatively little guidance on this issue. We particularly highlighted the contrasting perspectives by Levendusky (2023) and Myrick (2021) in the preanalysis plan, which were also discussed more extensively in the main text.

- **Dependent variables:** All the dependent variables were measured and operationalized as preregistered.
- **Experimental conditions:** The randomization procedure and experimental stimuli were all implemented as preregistered.
- **Analyses:** The preregistered econometric specification was estimated as preregistered and reported in Table S3. These estimates were reported in Figure 2. To simplify interpretation and further make sense of our data, we conducted exploratory analyses, including the average treatment effects on preference polarization as reported in Figure 1.
- **Outliers and exclusions:** Following our preregistration, we excluded independents from our analyses, although we still reported the CATEs on them in the Appendix. We confirm that our conclusions are not sensitive to removal of inattentive respondents (not reported to conserve space).
- **Sample size:** Consistent with our recruitment target ($N = 4,000$), we recruited 4,006 respondents in total.

Preanalysis Plan for “Do External Threats Depolarize Americans?”

September 5, 2023

Background

The objective of this document is to outline our preanalysis plan for “Do External Threats Depolarize Americans? An Experimental Test in the Shadow of China’s Rise,” which investigates whether and how policy-based and affective polarization among the American public are shaped by external threats. Our preanalysis plan follows the standard AsPredicted format.

Hypotheses

We argue that whether external threats depolarize Americans’ foreign policy preferences depends not only on partisan cues (Berinsky 2009; Lenz 2012) but also on *pre-existing polarization patterns*. When polarized citizens are subjected to partisan cues about external threats, Democrats and Republicans will update their foreign policy preferences differentially and, given their pre-existing polarization in these policies, external threats *can* promote partisan unity in turn. Specifically, because Democrats’ baseline preferences for aggressive U.S. foreign policy are generally weaker than Republicans’ and external threats communicated by a Democratic leader will disproportionately strengthen Democrats’ preferences, such threat prime will close the gap between Democrats’ and Republicans’ preferences for aggressive U.S. foreign policy. On the other hand, if external threats are communicated by a Republican leader, they will disproportionately strengthen Republicans’ preferences such that the gap between Democrats’ and Republicans’ preferences for aggressive U.S. foreign policy will be further widened. We state the hypotheses, which concern *policy-based polarization*, below:

- H1: The threat prime delivered by the Biden administration will converge Democrats’ and Republicans’ attitudes toward aggressive U.S. foreign policy, compared to the control group where no threat prime is delivered.
- H2: The threat prime delivered by the Trump administration will diverge Democrats’ and Republicans’ attitudes toward aggressive U.S. foreign policy, compared to the control group where no threat prime is delivered.
- H3: The threat prime delivered by nonpartisan experts will neither converge nor diverge Democrats’ and Republicans’ attitudes toward aggressive U.S. foreign policy, compared to the control group where no threat prime is delivered.

We are, however, more agnostic about how external threats interact with partisan cues and pre-existing polarization patterns to shape *affective polarization*. While external threats, regardless of partisan cues and pre-existing polarization patterns, can prime national identity and are therefore conducive to reducing affective polarization (Levendusky 2023), a recent experimental test conducted in the Trump era found that priming external threats did not depolarize Americans in the affective dimension as measured by in-party and out-party feeling thermometers (Myrick 2021). Because we do not have a strong theoretical prior, we formally state the null hypotheses, which we will test *against*, below:

- H4₀: The threat prime delivered by the Biden administration will neither converge nor diverge Democrats' and Republicans' affect toward each other, compared to the control group where no threat prime is delivered.
- H5₀: The threat prime delivered by the Trump administration will neither converge nor diverge Democrats' and Republicans' affect toward each other, compared to the control group where no threat prime is delivered.
- H6₀: The threat prime delivered by nonpartisan experts will neither converge nor diverge Democrats' and Republicans' affect toward each other, compared to the control group where no threat prime is delivered.

Dependent Variables

1. **Support for U.S. foreign policy—military spending:** A 5-point scale indicating support for expanding U.S. military spending, ranging from 0 (strongly oppose) to 4 (strongly support). Recent surveys show that Democrats' support is much lower than Republicans' support. This measure thus fits the scope of our theory, which requires baseline polarization between Democrats and Republicans.
2. **Support for U.S. foreign policy—scientific exchange:** A 5-point scale indicating support for restricting the exchange of scientific research between the U.S. and China, ranging from 0 (strongly oppose) to 4 (strongly support). Recent surveys show that Democrats' support is much lower than Republicans' support. This measure thus fits the scope of our theory, which requires baseline polarization between Democrats and Republicans.
3. **Support for U.S. foreign policy—trade reduction:** A 5-point scale indicating support for significantly reducing trade between the U.S. and China, ranging from 0 (strongly oppose) to 4 (strongly support). Recent surveys show that Democrats' support is much lower than Republicans' support. This measure thus fits the scope of our theory, which requires baseline polarization between Democrats and Republicans.
4. **Support for U.S. foreign policy—industry subsidy:** A 5-point scale indicating support for offering financial support to U.S. companies that are in strategic industries (e.g., energy, telecommunications), ranging from 0 (strongly oppose) to 4 (strongly support). A recent

survey shows that Democrats' support is *not* lower—and even greater—than Republicans' support. Including this measure thus allows us to explore the scope of our theory. We expect treatment effects on this variable would differ from those on the first three variables.

5. **Affective polarization—feeling thermometer:** The difference between how cold or warm the respondent feels toward in-partisans versus out-partisans (rescaled to range from 0 to 1). This measure is also used by Myrick (2021) to explore how external threats shape affective polarization in the United States.
6. **Affective polarization—trait ratings:** An average index indicating how well the respondent thinks various positive (patriotism, intelligence, honesty, open-mindedness, and generosity) and negative (hypocrisy, selfishness, and meanness) traits describe out-partisans (rescaled to range from 0 to 1). This measure is conceptually and empirically distinct from Myrick's (2021) measure of affective polarization (Druckman and Levendusky 2019; Levendusky 2023).
7. **Affective polarization—trust ratings:** A 5-point scale indicating the extent to which the respondent thinks she can trust the out-party to do what is right for the country (rescaled to range from 0 to 1). This measure is conceptually and empirically distinct from Myrick's (2021) measure of affective polarization (Druckman and Levendusky 2019; Levendusky 2023).
8. **Affective polarization—social distance:** An average index indicating how comfortable the respondent is having close friends, neighbors, and their children marry someone from the out-party (rescaled to range from 0 to 1). This measure is conceptually and empirically distinct from Myrick's (2021) measure of affective polarization (Druckman and Levendusky 2019; Levendusky 2023).

Experimental Conditions

We will use simple randomization, with equal probability, to assign respondents to the control condition, the Biden condition, the Trump condition, and the nonpartisan condition. Based on treatment assignment, the treatment groups will read the following text that distills the major insights from several real-world intelligence reports.

Intelligence reports from [the Biden administration / the Trump administration / non-partisan experts] warned that the risk of conflict between the United States and China is higher than any time since the end of the Cold War. According to these reports, [President Biden and his cabinet officials / President Trump and his cabinet officials / non-partisan experts] said that:

- China is aggressively pursuing its goal of building a world-class military that will enable it to project power globally and offset U.S. military superiority.
- China is using intelligence services to steal information and has become the top threat to U.S. technological competitiveness.

- China is actively using subsidies and trade policy to give its firms a competitive advantage.

After reading this text, respondents will be asked to tell us what they think about the report in a few sentences. This is to reinforce the threat prime (see also Myrick 2021). The control group will not be given this report and thus will not be asked to complete this task.

Analyses

We will use OLS to estimate the following equation:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Biden}_i + \beta_2 \text{Trump}_i + \beta_3 \text{NP}_i + \text{Democrat}_i (\gamma_0 + \gamma_1 \text{Biden}_i + \gamma_2 \text{Trump}_i + \gamma_3 \text{NP}_i) + \lambda \Phi_i + \varepsilon_i,$$

where i is a respondent who identifies as a Democrat or a Republican. Y_i is the outcome variable of interest and Φ_i is a vector of pretreatment measures of individual characteristics, including age (6 steps), sex (female or male), race (white or not), education (5 steps), income (5 steps), self-reported ideology (7 steps), nationalism (5-point), patriotism (4-point), national identity (5-point), and cooperative internationalism (Kertzer, Rathbun, and Rathbun 2020). The dummy variables Biden_i , Trump_i , and NP_i indicate treatment assignment to the Biden, Trump, and nonpartisan conditions, respectively. Democrat_i indicates a self-reported Democrat, including leaners. The baseline is thus Republicans in the control group. The standard errors, ε_i , will be heteroskedasticity-consistent.

Under this specification, γ_0 is the baseline polarization between Democrats and Republicans. The estimands of interest, γ_1 , γ_2 , and γ_3 , are differences-in-CATEs by partisanship. While we will make statistical inference based on two-tailed p -values at the conventional threshold $p < 0.05$, we will visualize the data and make substantive interpretation of the results in the style of Coppock (2022), who focuses on the CATEs of persuasive information on Republicans and Democrats respectively and compares the CATEs using a more qualitative, graphical approach.

Outliers and Exclusions

We will exclude independents from our analyses, though respondents who report themselves as independents in a pretreatment question will still be asked to complete the experimental module. While we will include a pretreatment measure of respondent attentiveness in the style of mock vignette checks (Kane, Velez, and Barabas 2023), we will not remove inattentive respondents; instead, we will evaluate the sensitivity of our results to inattentiveness.

Sample Size

We will recruit around 4,000 American adult respondents via PureSpectrum in September 2023. We will set demographic quotas based on U.S. census statistics on age, sex, and race. The final available sample size will be smaller than 4,000 because we will exclude independents from our analyses.

Other

We will assess the extent to which we experimentally manipulated the independent variable by comparing control and treatment groups' responses to the following manipulation check: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? China poses a threat to the United States." The available response options range from 0 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). We expect that respondents in treatment conditions will rate China's threat higher than those in the control condition. We also expect that those treated with the in-party threat prime will rate China's threat higher than those treated with the out-party threat prime.

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