

# We Only Care What You Do, Not Who You Are: Reexamining Human Rights and Public Support for War

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## Abstract

Does the public apply a “double standard” for human rights abuses based on the perpetrator’s alliance status? Research shows that individuals are more supportive of military action against states that violate human rights. However, other studies claim that condemnations of violations are often contingent upon the strategic relationship with the perpetrators. In this paper, we bridge these different strands of literature by examining whether the effect of foreign states’ human rights practices on public support for war depends on the alliance status of the violator. To investigate this interaction, we conducted two pre-registered experiments that independently randomized the state’s human rights practices and U.S. alliance status. Both experiments reveal that the alliance status of the human rights violator has a negligible effect on support for war. Consequently, our findings challenge the prevailing notion that the public applies a double standard for human rights violations.

**Keywords:** human rights, double standards, alliances, and survey experiments

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## INTRODUCTION

Does the public apply a “double standard” for human rights abuses based on the perpetrator’s alliance status? Research shows that the public is more supportive of military action against states that violate human rights—a preference rooted in the perception that violators are more threatening and the moral duty to intervene when informed about human rights violations ([Tomz and Weeks 2020](#)). However, condemnations of human rights abuses are often politicized and contingent on strategic relations with the perpetrator (e.g., [Terman and Byun 2022](#)).<sup>1</sup>

The notion of a double standard on human rights aligns with previous studies that show states enforce norms only when it aligns with their interests ([Krasner 1999](#); [Mearsheimer 1994](#)). The application of supposedly absolute, universal principles can often be self-interest in disguise ([Carr 2001](#)). Indeed, U.S. leaders are often criticized for employing double standards on human rights when dealing with strategically important partners, such as the Shah of Iran during the Carter administration ([Goshko 1977](#)) and Saudi Arabia during the Biden administration ([Detrow 2022](#)). Similarly, citizens exhibit a diminished propensity to support sanctions or reduce aid allocations in response to human rights violations when the perpetrators are strategic partners ([Zarpli 2024](#); [Heinrich, Kobayashi, and Long 2018](#); [Esarey and DeMeritt 2017](#)). When contemplating backing military intervention against human rights violators who are aligned with the U.S., leaders and the public must weigh the moral obligation to protect human rights against the potential loss of a strategic partner.

Despite its importance, there is surprisingly limited research investigating how the human rights practices of foreign states interact with strategic relations to shape public support for war. If there is a double standard, the public will be less supportive of attacking human rights violators if the violator is a strategic partner. Put differently, the standard for tolerable behavior will be different for allies and non-allies. Understanding whether citizens in democracies apply this double standard holds paramount importance for our comprehension of public support for war.

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<sup>1</sup>Previous studies suggest that the public may also apply double standards on human rights based on the victim’s nationality and religion ([Sagan and Valentino 2020](#); [Piazza 2015](#)); however, we focus solely on double standards based on strategic logic.

To investigate the dynamics between strategic interests and human rights in shaping public support for war, we implemented a  $2 \times 2$  factorial experiment in two separate U.S. nationwide surveys. In both surveys, we independently manipulated two key factors: (1) whether the foreign state violates human rights and (2) whether the foreign state is a U.S. ally. Both experiments yield two consistent findings. First, respondents are more inclined to support military action against states that violate human rights compared to those that respect human rights. Second, the effect of human rights violations on support for war is not contingent on the alliance status of the target state. In other words, we find no evidence of a double standard: *domestic citizens are concerned about human rights violations regardless of the violator's alliance status.*

Our contributions are twofold. First, we successfully replicate the pioneering study by [Tomz and Weeks \(2020\)](#) on human rights and public support for war. Replication enables the accumulation, progression, and generalization of knowledge through the validation of findings and the identification of boundary conditions ([Jasny et al. 2011](#); [Maxwell, Lau, and Howard 2015](#); [Shadish, Cook, and Campbell 2002](#)). Our study reaffirms that human rights shape public support for war and that perceptions of threat and morality drive these preferences.

Second, we demonstrate that the effect of human rights violations on public support for war is not contingent on the violator's alliance status. Contrasting with conventional notions of a double standard on human rights (e.g., [Zarpli 2024](#); [Heinrich, Kobayashi, and Long 2018](#)), we find that the alliance status of human rights violators has a negligible effect on public support for war. This finding has important implications for U.S. foreign policy. While we often observe leaders employing double standards ([Terman and Byun 2022](#); [Terman and Voeten 2018](#)), the domestic public may not endorse such actions which may prompt leaders to reconsider how they balance their image as human rights advocates while pursuing strategic interests. An important caveat is that our research focuses solely on democracies. The extent to which our findings generalize to a non-democratic context remains an open question which we leave for future investigation.

## PUBLIC OPINION, STRATEGIC INTERESTS, & HUMAN RIGHTS

Public opinion is an important consideration when leaders form foreign policy. Increasingly, experiments using elite samples show that leaders are more likely to pursue foreign policies that have public support (Tomz, Weeks, and Yarhi-Milo 2020; Chu and Recchia 2022; Lin-Greenberg 2021). This evidence suggests that democratic leaders consider public opinion when determining whether to initiate conflict. We examine two factors that could affect public support for war against a target state: its human rights record and alliance status.

The public is more supportive of military action against foreign states that violate human rights (Tomz and Weeks 2020). A state's willingness to use force to solve its domestic problems is likely to be reflected in the way it solves international disputes (Peterson and Graham 2011; Sobek, Abouharb, and Ingram 2006; Caprioli and Trumbore 2003, 2006; Maoz and Russett 1993). Thus, states with peaceful internal conflict resolution practices are perceived as less threatening than those with violent practices (Tomz and Weeks 2020). Public support for intervention is also driven by perceptions of morality (Tomz and Weeks 2020; Kreps and Maxey 2018; Hildebrandt et al. 2013; Pomeroy and Rathbun 2023). The public may feel morally obligated to intervene against human rights abusers and have fewer misgivings towards initiating conflict against states that abuse their citizens (Tomz and Weeks 2020).

However, the public's preference to promote human rights may be in tension with other important goals. For example, in pursuit of security, economic or political goals, states sharing common interests may form alliances (Bueno De Mesquita 1981). Reflective of these shared interests, alliances increase national security and autonomy (Morrow 1991; Snyder 1990). Since allies "burden share" security costs (Snyder 1990), allies face an opportunity cost for terminating their alliance (Maoz 2009). Thus, turning against an ally—should it violate human rights—risks severing the ties that provide these strategic advantages.

States may also suffer reputational damage for turning against an ally (Tomz and Weeks 2021; Simmons 2010; Crescenzi et al. 2012). Tomz and Weeks (2021) find that the public's preference to intervene militarily on behalf of an ally over a non-ally is driven, in part, by concerns that

abandoning an ally could damage its reputation. Thus, should an ally violate human rights, the public's preference to safeguard human rights vies with the reputational costs of turning against an ally.

Recent studies show that leaders and the public are not always willing to uphold human rights, revealing evidence of a double standard for perpetrators determined by their strategic value as a partner (e.g., [Terman and Byun 2022](#)). For example, regarding their willingness to name and shame, impose sanctions or grant foreign aid, states tend to be more tolerant of abuses by their strategic partners ([Terman and Byun 2022](#); [Terman and Voeten 2018](#); [Peksen, Peterson, and Drury 2014](#); [Heinrich, Kobayashi, and Long 2018](#); [Sandlin 2022](#); [Nielsen 2013](#)). Further, citizens are less supportive of sanctioning human rights violations if the perpetrator is a strategic partner ([Zarpli 2024](#); [Heinrich, Kobayashi, and Long 2018](#)).

In summary, prior research indicates that public support for war is likely shaped by considerations of safeguarding human rights and advancing other strategic goals. However, current studies fall short in exploring the nuanced interplay between these two variables. By using a factorial design, we examine the trade-off between the desire to protect human rights and maintain beneficial relationships from the public's perspective. Following [Tomz and Weeks \(2020\)](#), we expect that a foreign state having a record of human rights violations will increase public support for war in contrast to a state not having a record (Hypothesis 1). We also expect that being a U.S. ally will decrease public support for war in contrast to not being an U.S. ally (Hypothesis 2). Finally, if a double standard on human rights exists, we should observe that the public is less supportive of initiating conflict against a U.S. ally that violates human rights, compared a non-U.S. ally that violates human rights (Hypothesis 3).

## RESEARCH DESIGN

To investigate our hypotheses, we conducted two pre-registered survey experiments that employed identical vignettes.<sup>2</sup> The first survey employs a two-wave approach, conducted by YouGov be-

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<sup>2</sup>The YouGov and PureSpectrum experiments were approved by the Institutional Review Board at

tween November and December 2022, and includes 1,000 U.S. adults.<sup>3</sup> The second survey, executed by PureSpectrum, used a national sample of 4,002 U.S. adults in September 2023.<sup>4</sup>

We first told participants that they would read about a hypothetical situation that the U.S. could face in the future. We then presented respondents with a description of the scenario based on [Tomz and Weeks \(2020\)](#): “A country is developing nuclear weapons and will have its first nuclear bomb within six months. The country could then use its missiles to launch nuclear attacks against any country in the world.” We hold several characteristics of the proliferating state constant: its level of trade with the U.S. (low), regime type (democracy), and military strength (half as strong as the U.S.). We elected to hold regime type constant because democracy, or the holding of elections, is conceptually different from human rights practices ([Tomz and Weeks 2020](#)). Indeed, it is common practice for states—regardless of regime type—to engage in torture ([Cingranelli and Richards, 2004](#), cf. [Conrad and Moore, 2010](#)). Further, the U.S. has historically partnered with states with elected leaders who have allegedly violated human rights, including Turkey and Israel ([Amnesty International 2024](#)). Thus, our experiment can help shed light on the conditional effect of alliance status on differences between electoral democracies that violate human rights versus those that protect them.

Our first treatment describes the foreign state’s human rights practices following [Tomz and Weeks \(2020\)](#). Half of the respondents were informed that: “The country does not violate human rights; it does not imprison or torture its citizens because of their beliefs,” and the other half were told that: “The country violates human rights; it imprisons or tortures some of its citizens because of their beliefs.” Our second treatment captures the foreign state’s alliance status. Half of respondents were told that: “The country has not signed a military alliance with the United States,” and the other half were told that: “The country has signed a military alliance with the

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Florida State University. The anonymized pre-registrations are located at [https://osf.io/9wcjz?view\\_only=3e3a079c04e84d898a65dad4fd879525](https://osf.io/9wcjz?view_only=3e3a079c04e84d898a65dad4fd879525) and [https://osf.io/wm8gy?view\\_only=cfaa9a4fac1d4c68a56a89c331cf470e](https://osf.io/wm8gy?view_only=cfaa9a4fac1d4c68a56a89c331cf470e).

<sup>3</sup>Respondents were assigned the same vignette and experimental condition in both waves; however, in the second wave, we included an additional statement about the expected cost of the military operation. We analyze the differences in public support for war after including the expected costs in Appendix E, Table S11.

<sup>4</sup>To attain sufficient statistical power, we followed the power analysis recommended by [Cohen \(1988\)](#) and employed the R package *pwr* to conduct Cohen’s power calculations. The sample size for the PureSpectrum experiment was determined based on the treatment effects obtained in the YouGov survey.

United States.”

The scenario concluded with several points that were the same for all respondents. Participants were informed that “The country’s motives remain unclear, but if it builds nuclear weapons, it will have the power to blackmail or destroy other countries.” Finally, the scenario concluded that “by attacking the country’s nuclear development sites now,” the U.S. could “prevent the country from making any nuclear weapons.” After presenting this information, we asked whether respondents would favor or oppose using U.S. armed forces to attack the nuclear development sites on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “Oppose Strongly” to “Favor Strongly.” We also asked questions about perceptions of threat, morality, costs, and success to investigate the mechanisms behind the treatment effects.<sup>5</sup>

Several features of the experimental design are worth emphasizing. First, by independently randomizing *Human Rights* and *Alliance*, we can estimate how information about a state’s human rights record influences support for war, not only on average, but also based on whether the target is a U.S. ally. This interaction allows us to examine whether public support for war against a state implicated in human rights abuses varies based on the extent of its shared strategic interests with the U.S. Second, as our experiment is based on [Tomz and Weeks’ \(2020\)](#) design, we can affirm whether the effect of human rights practices on public support for war is replicable.<sup>6</sup> Finally, in certain conditions, our vignette reflects the high-stakes dispute between the U.S. and Israel in the 1960s. Recently declassified archives reveal that despite the U.S.’ disapproval of Israel’s nuclear proliferation, neither country wanted to abandon their partnership. Thus, Washington exhibited leniency towards Israel due to its strategic significance ([Burr and Cohen 2019](#); [Cohen and Burr 2019](#)).

## EXPERIMENTAL FINDINGS

To assess the interaction between the human rights record and alliance status of the foreign state, we randomized two treatments. *Human Rights* is a binary variable equal to 1 if the state violates

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<sup>5</sup>The full survey can be found in Appendix C.

<sup>6</sup>See Table S3 for a comparison between our and [Tomz and Weeks’ \(2020\)](#) design.

human rights, and 0 if it does not. Our second treatment, *Alliance*, is a binary variable set to 1 if the state has a military alliance with the U.S., and 0 otherwise. Following [Tomz and Weeks \(2020\)](#), we converted our dependent variable, support for war, into a binary variable, which is coded as 100 if the respondent thought that the U.S. military should attack, and 0 otherwise. This coding strategy enables us to interpret the average treatment effect as the percentage point change in support for war. We use the following OLS regression model to estimate the coefficients:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 HumanRights_i + \beta_2 Alliance_i + \beta_3 HumanRights_i \times Alliance_i,$$

where  $Y_i$  is an indicator for support for war, and  $HumanRights_i$  and  $Alliance_i$  are treatment indicators for human rights violations and alliance status respectively. The outcomes of the Pure-Spectrum survey are presented in the main text, whereas the results of the first wave of the YouGov survey are reported in Appendix E.<sup>7</sup> We also pooled both surveys and reproduced the analyses in Appendix F. The results are consistent with those in the main text.

Table 1 presents the estimates from three linear regression models. All models consistently demonstrate that *Human Rights* significantly affect respondents' support for military action. Model 1 indicates that if the state violated human rights, respondents, on average, were 10.6 percentage points more likely to support attacking it. This equates to a shift in support from 37.3 percent when the state respected human rights to 47.9 percent when the state violated human rights. This result supports our first hypothesis, and successfully replicates [Tomz and Weeks' \(2020\)](#) major finding. We also replicate [Tomz and Weeks' \(2020\)](#) finding that human rights exert influence on public support for war by altering perceptions of threat and morality (Appendix D.2).

Model 1 reveals a reduction in public support for war due to alliance partnerships, but this difference does not achieve statistical significance ( $p = 0.11$ ). However, upon employing an alternative, preregistered measure of public support for war (5-point Likert scale), *Alliance* does indeed significantly diminish public support for war ( $p = 0.006$ ) (Table S5). Overall, we find some preliminary evidence suggesting that participants responded to our treatment in the expected direction.

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<sup>7</sup>Respondents who completed the survey were included in the analysis. For more details on the sampling procedures, see Appendix A.



Our primary focus is on Model 2 in which we interact *Human Rights* with *Alliance* to examine whether the effect of human rights violations is contingent on alliance status. Contrary to our expectations, the estimate of the interaction term ( $\beta_3$ ) in Model 2 is positive but insignificant. This result shows that the effect of human rights violations on support for war does not change based on whether the perpetrator was a U.S. ally. Our finding remains robust after accounting for pre-treatment covariates, as stipulated in our preregistration (Model 3).

Figure 1a shows average public support for war under each condition. Average support for war under our baseline condition, a non-allied state engaging in human rights abuses, stands highest at 46.9 percent. Figure 1b demonstrates the differences in means between each treatment and the baseline condition (Non-Ally, Violates Human Rights). Compared to the baseline, support for war decreases by 8.6 percentage points when the state is not a U.S. ally but protects human rights ( $p < 0.0001$ ) and decreases by 13.1 percentage points when the state is a U.S. ally and protects human rights ( $p < 0.0001$ ). However, when participants were told that the state is a U.S. ally but violates human rights, the proportion of support for war decreases only marginally by 0.5 percentage points ( $p = 0.81$ ), compared to the baseline condition. Therefore, we find little evidence that the U.S. public applies a double standard for human rights violations based on the U.S.’ strategic relationship with the perpetrator.

Given the unexpected finding, we further investigate the lack of a double standard on human rights. The most compelling evidence of the lack of a double standard is that the results of the PureSpectrum survey are consistent with the findings from our initial YouGov survey. Both surveys reveal that respondents do not apply a double standard on human rights (Table S9). The result remains robust when we utilize a 5-point Likert scale to measure public support for war (Table S5) or restrict the analysis to participants who successfully passed the “mock vignette check” (MVC) (Kane, Velez, and Barabas 2023).<sup>8</sup> We investigate several alternative explanations for the null effect in Appendix D.4, but maintain our conclusion that the alliance status of a human rights

<sup>8</sup>Our MVC passing rate aligns closely with that of the National Opinion Research Center survey that utilizes a nationally representative sample (Kane, Velez, and Barabas 2023). In Appendix A, we reference additional papers that have utilized PureSpectrum.

violators has a negligible effect on support for war.

Table 1: Regression Estimates of Support for War (PureSpectrum Survey)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Violating Human Rights	10.57*** (1.55)	8.64*** (2.18)	8.80*** (2.16)
U.S. Military Alliance	-2.45 (1.55)	-4.41** (2.20)	-4.09* (2.17)
Violating Human Rights $\times$ U.S. Military Alliance		3.89 (3.10)	3.43 (3.06)
Male			9.43*** (1.58)
Age			-0.21*** (0.05)
Education			-6.56*** (2.53)
Income			0.85*** (0.18)
(Intercept)	37.27*** (1.33)	38.23*** (1.54)	40.47*** (3.02)
Num. obs.	4002	4002	4000

*Note:* The table shows the estimates of the coefficients and standard errors from OLS regression. The dependent variable is coded as a binary variable that takes a value of 100 if the public approves of attacking the target country and 0 otherwise.

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

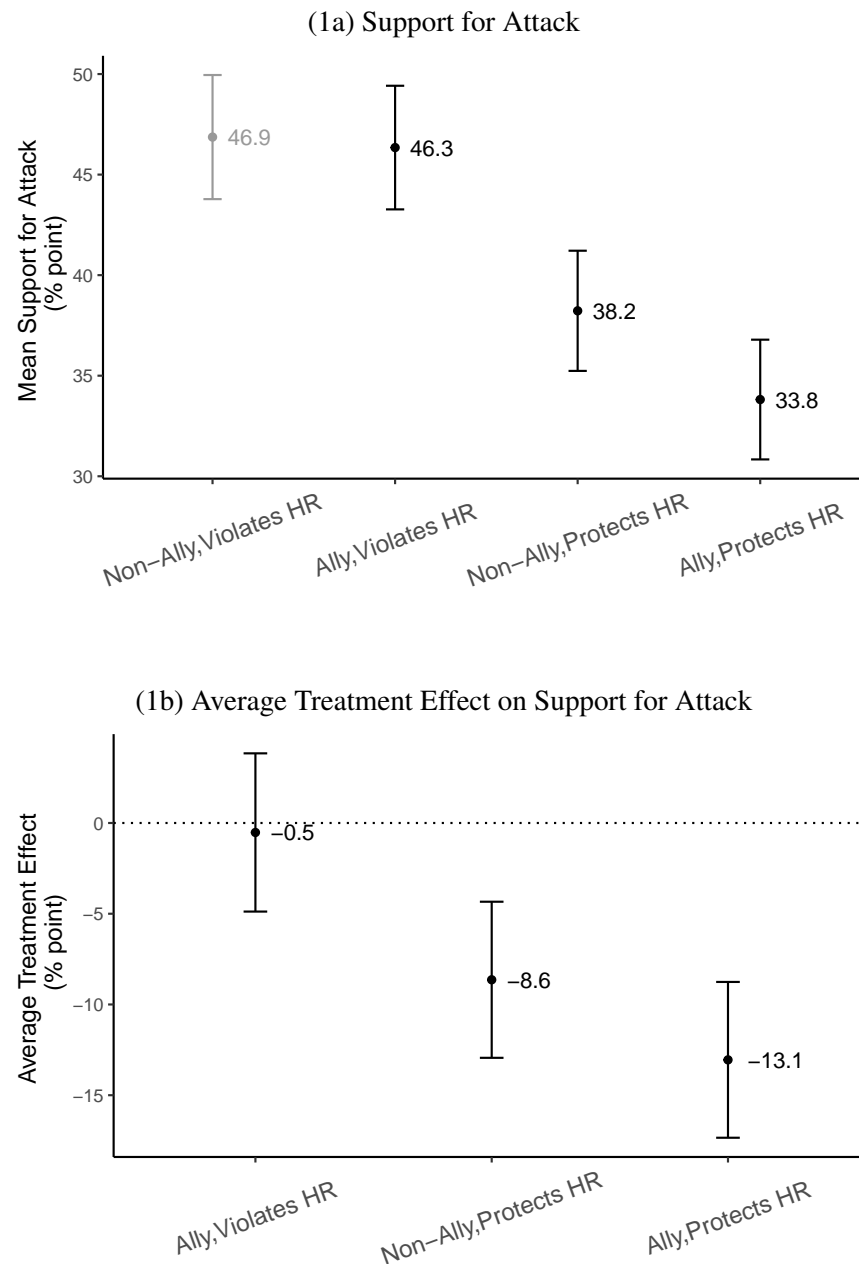
\*\* $p < 0.05$ .

\* $p < 0.1$ .

While this finding is contrary to the expectations of our third hypothesis, it joins scholars who do not find evidence of a double standard on human rights in foreign policy. For instance, [Koliev \(2020\)](#) finds that democracies are just as likely to name and shame fellow democracies as non-democracies for labor rights violations. Indeed, for some forms of human rights violations, states are more likely to reprimand their strategic partners ([Terman and Byun 2022](#)).<sup>9</sup> Further, [Allendoerfer \(2017\)](#) shows that public support for punishing foreign aid recipients who violate human rights is the same regardless of the recipient's strategic importance.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>[Terman and Byun \(2022\)](#) find that states are more likely to name and shame their strategic partners only when their behavior and policies do not challenge their leader's political survival.

<sup>10</sup>In addition to reliability, the public could also be concerned about the U.S.' reputation for resolve in preventing nuclear proliferation or its reputation for upholding the international human rights regime. The public must balance their concerns about the U.S.' multidimensional reputation. Further, [Casler, Ribar, and Yarhi-Milo \(2023\)](#) find that respondents' foreign policy orientation for hawkishness drives how they evaluate reputational costs. To investigate the possibility that respondents think about reputation differently, we calculate heterogeneous treatment effects by party, nationalism, patriotism, and cooperative internationalism and find no evidence of a double standard (Figures S1- S4).



*Note:* Figure 1a plots the means of public support for war in percentage points. Figure 1b plots the percentage point difference in support for war between each treatment and the baseline condition (Non-Ally, Violates Human Rights). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 1: Impact of Treatments on Support for War (95% Confidence Intervals)

## CONCLUSION

If an ally violates human rights, supporting policies to uphold human rights may come at the cost of pursuing strategic interests. This research article asks: does the public apply a double standard on human rights abuses based on the perpetrator's alliance status? To answer this question, we utilized two experiments on the U.S. public to explore the trade-offs between protecting human rights and pursuing national interests when determining support for conflict.

We find that individuals are more likely to support conflict against human rights violators and in some specifications, are less likely to support conflict against allies. However, we find little evidence of a double standard: the effect of violating human rights on support for conflict is consistent for allies and non-allies. In other words, individuals weigh the importance of a foreign state's human rights record equally for allies and non-allies.

Our paper contributes to our understanding of double standards for human rights in several important ways. By replicating and expanding [Tomz and Weeks' \(2020\)](#) experiment, we add to the expanding literature on human rights and public support for war. Our results show an important pattern: approximately one-third of respondents support war against states that prioritize human rights protection, but support surges to a near majority against states that violate human rights. Since leaders prefer foreign policies with public support (e.g., [Tomz, Weeks, and Yarhi-Milo 2020](#); [Chu and Recchia 2022](#); [Lin-Greenberg 2021](#)), these differences could exert substantive influence on elites' decisions to engage in conflict.

Further, by demonstrating that the U.S. public does not exhibit double standards on human rights, this paper contributes to our understanding of the U.S. public's commitment to safeguarding human rights irrespective of strategic ties ([Koliev 2020](#); [Allendoerfer 2017](#)). For example, Americans, particularly Democrats, have become increasingly concerned about Israel's alleged human rights violations in Gaza ([El Baz and Smeltz 2023, 2024](#); [Data for Progress 2023](#)), and protests on college campuses have sparked nationwide ([Thompson and Beck 2024](#)). The influence of public opinion could elucidate the Biden administration's condemnation of Israel's human rights violations ([U.S. Department of State 2024](#)) and its decision to temporarily halt some weapons shipments

to Israel due to humanitarian concerns in May 2024 (Hudson 2024).

We acknowledge several important caveats regarding our results. First, our experimental design, which focuses only on proliferating democracies, does not allow us to investigate whether the lack of a double standard applies to non-democracies. Our results should be treated with caution regarding how well they generalize to a non-democratic context. Future experiments should investigate whether this lack of a double standard can be sustained in an autocratic context. In addition, there are multiple conceptualizations of double standards of human rights. Future research may investigate how the public reacts to diverse manifestations of double standards, encompassing not only those related to alliance partners but also disparities based on race and ethnicity.

Third, we recognize that when an ally pursues nuclear proliferation without U.S. consent, it may raise concerns about the ally's reliability. Future experiments could examine the benefits that allies bring to the U.S. For example, researchers could investigate whether the public supports criticizing allies with poor human rights records, even when such actions jeopardize strategic interests, such as stationing troops or obtaining overflight permissions. Finally, our vignette investigates the double standard in a security-driven scenario where a state is proliferating nuclear weapons; therefore, caution should be applied regarding how generalizable our findings are for scenarios where the public might want to punish human rights violations. Future experiments could explore whether the U.S. public applies double standards for humanitarian intervention when an ally is abusing human rights.

**Supplementary material.** To view supplementary material for this article, please visit [INSERT DOI].

**Data Availability Statement** The data code, and any additional materials required to replicate all analyses in this article are available at the Journal of Experimental Political Science Dataverse within the Harvard Dataverse Network, at: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/6GMO9C>.

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PureSpectrum: [https://osf.io/wm8gy?view\\_only=cfaa9a4fac1d4c68a56a89c331cf470e](https://osf.io/wm8gy?view_only=cfaa9a4fac1d4c68a56a89c331cf470e)

YouGov: [https://osf.io/9wczej?view\\_only=3e3a079c04e84d898a65dad4fd879525](https://osf.io/9wczej?view_only=3e3a079c04e84d898a65dad4fd879525)

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# SUPPLEMENTAL APPENDIX

## We Only Care What You Do, Not Who You Are: Reexamining Human Rights and Public Support for War

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## A Sample Characteristics

We collaborated with PureSpectrum which is a multi-source sampling platform. We employed the quota sampling method to build a sample whose demographic statistics matched the U.S. national adult population census. Table S1 lists the comparison of the sample demographics (N = 4,002) in comparison with the demographics of the U.S. adult population based on U.S. census data. PureSpectrum utilizes a patented technology to filter out respondents who have demonstrated a lack of credibility, reliability, or consistency in their online behavior. Moreover, it prevents individuals from being recruited for the same survey multiple times through advanced device fingerprinting and fraud prevention techniques. Further details about the data quality of PureSpectrum can be found at <https://www.purespectrum.com/data-quality>.

As a verification of the quality of their sampling methods, numerous social science publications in recent years have utilized PureSpectrum, including 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): 575–594.
- de Benedictis-Kessner, Justin, Daniel Jones, and Christopher Warshaw. 2024. “How Partisanship in Cities Influences Housing Policy.” *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Druckman, James N., Katherine Ognyanova, Matthew A. Baum, David Lazer, Roy H. Perlis, John Della Volpe, Mauricio Santillana, Hanyu Chwe, Alexi Quintana, and Matthew Simonson. 2021. “The Role of Race, Religion, and Partisanship in Misperceptions about COVID-19.” *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 24(4): 638-657.
- Lacombe, Matthew J., Matthew D. Simonson, Jon Green, and James N. Druckman. 2022. “Social Disruption, Gun Buying, and Anti-System Beliefs.” *Perspectives on Politics*: 1-18.
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- 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(7964): 342–48.

Table S1: Sample Demographics in Comparison with Census Benchmarks (PureSpectrum Survey)

		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:* Percentages for sex, race and Hispanic origin are based on the adult population. Sex and age are calculated from Table S0101 of the [2021 American Community Survey](#). Race figures are calculated from the 2022 CES.

## B Mean of Dependent Variables by Treatment Condition

Table S2: Mean of Dependent Variable by Treatment Condition (PureSpectrum Survey)

Treatment Condition	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Non-Ally, Violates HR	46.87	49.93	1005
Non-Ally, Protects HR	38.23	48.62	1015
Ally, Violates HR	46.34	49.89	1012
Ally, Protects HR	33.81	47.33	970

*Note:* The table shows the means, standard deviations, and number of observations of public support for war by treatment group in the PureSpectrum survey (N=4,002).



## C Survey Instruments

This appendix contains the survey instruments for both studies: PureSpectrum (N=4002) and YouGov (N=1000). With one exception (detailed below), the experimental vignette and outcome variables used in the PureSpectrum survey are identical to those used in the YouGov survey. However, since the PureSpectrum and YouGov surveys differ slightly in which demographic and dispositional questions are included as well as how these questions are worded, we elect to include both here. The survey instruments are followed by Table S3 which compares our survey experiment to Tomz and Weeks (2020).

### C.1 PureSpectrum Questionnaire

The following contains the survey instrument used in the PureSpectrum questionnaire.

#### PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AND ATTENTION CHECK

- 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
- income: What is your estimate of your family's annual household income (before taxes)?
  - Less than \$30,000
  - \$30,000 - \$69,999
  - \$70,000 - \$99,999
  - \$100,000 - \$200,000
  - More than \$200,000
- (Attention Check Questions) MVC\_vig: A Passage from a Recent Magazine Article

More than 125 scientific societies and journal publishers are urgently warning lawmakers not to move forward with a rumored policy that would make all research supported by federal funding immediately free to the public. In three separate letters, they argue such a move

would be costly, could bankrupt many scientific societies that rely on income from journal subscriptions, and would harm the scientific enterprise. Lawmakers won't comment on whether they are considering a policy that would change publishing rules. But if the rumor is accurate, the order would represent a major change from current U.S. policy, which allows publishers to withhold federally-funded research from the general public for up to 1 year.

- MVC\_1: What was the topic of the magazine excerpt you just read?
  - Literary magazines
  - Scientific research publishing
  - Arts funding
  - English education
  - Immigration policy
  - Funding for space exploration
- MVC\_2: What was the topic of the magazine excerpt you just read?
  - Lawmakers won't comment on whether they are considering it
  - Legal scholars stated the change in policy would be challenged in courts
  - Journal publishers have already begun preparing for the change in policy
  - Scientific researchers are divided in terms of their support for the policy
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
- MVC\_3: According to the magazine excerpt you just read, current policy allows federally-funded research to be withheld from the general public for up to:
  - 1 month
  - 6 month

- 1 year
- 3 year
- 5 year
- None of the above

## **PART 2: POLITICAL IDENTITY, FOREIGN POLICY PREDISPOSITIONS**

- 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 [Shown if pid\_1 == Republican]: Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?
  - Strong
  - Not very strong
- pid\_2d [Shown if pid\_1 == Democrat]: Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?
  - Strong
  - Not very strong
- pid\_2i [Shown if pid\_1 == Independent OR Other]: Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?
  - Closer to the Republican party

- Closer to the Democrat party
  - Neither
- 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
- coop\_int: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Response grid is displayed as: "Strongly disagree," "Somewhat disagree," "Neither agree nor disagree," "Somewhat agree," "Strongly agree."]
  - (coop\_int\_1) The U.S. needs to cooperate more with the United Nations
  - (coop\_int\_2) It is essential for the U.S. to work with other nations to solve problems such as overpopulation, hunger, and pollution
  - (coop\_int\_3) Promoting and defending human rights in other countries is of utmost importance
  - (coop\_int\_4) It is important for countries to comply with international law

- US\_dem\_eval: How democratically is the United States being governed today? Please rate how democratic the United States is on a scale of 1 (not at all democratic) to 10 (completely democratic). [Response options range from: “1 (not at all democratic)” to “10 (completely democratic)”]

### PART 3: EXPERIMENTAL VIGNETTE

introduction\_exp: We are going to describe a situation the United States could face in the future. The situation is general, and is not about a specific country in the news today. Please read the details very carefully.

exp\_4: [The following is a  $2 \times 2$  factorial experiment. The first factor, *Alliance*, states that the country has / has not signed a military alliance with the U.S. The second factor, *Human Rights*, states that the country violates / does not violate human rights. The factors create four experimental conditions: Non-Ally, Violates HR, Non-Ally, Does Not Violate HR, Ally, Violates HR, and Ally, Does Not Violate HR. Respondents are randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions with equal probability ( $p = 0.25$ ). ]

[Show if exp\_4 = Non-Ally, Violates HR]: Here is the situation:

- A country is developing nuclear weapons and will have its first nuclear bomb within six months. The country could then use its missiles to launch nuclear attacks against any country in the world.
- The country is a democracy. The president, the legislature, and local councils are elected by the people.
- The country has not signed a military alliance with the United States.
- The country does not have high levels of trade with the United States.

- The country violates human rights; it imprisons or tortures some of its citizens because of their beliefs.
- The country's nonnuclear military forces are half as strong as U.S. nonnuclear forces.
- The country's motives remain unclear, but if it builds nuclear weapons, it will have the power to blackmail or destroy other countries.
- The country has refused all requests to stop its nuclear weapons program.

[Show if exp\_4 = Non-Ally, Does Not Violate HR]: Here is the situation:

- A country is developing nuclear weapons and will have its first nuclear bomb within six months. The country could then use its missiles to launch nuclear attacks against any country in the world.
- The country is a democracy. The president, the legislature, and local councils are elected by the people.
- The country has not signed a military alliance with the United States.
- The country does not have high levels of trade with the United States.
- The country does not violate human rights; it does not imprison or torture some of its citizens because of their beliefs.
- The country's nonnuclear military forces are half as strong as U.S. nonnuclear forces.
- The country's motives remain unclear, but if it builds nuclear weapons, it will have the power to blackmail or destroy other countries.
- The country has refused all requests to stop its nuclear weapons program.

[Show if exp\_4 = Ally, Violates HR]: Here is the situation:

- A country is developing nuclear weapons and will have its first nuclear bomb within six months. The country could then use its missiles to launch nuclear attacks against any country in the world.
- The country is a democracy. The president, the legislature, and local councils are elected by the people.
- The country has signed a military alliance with the United States.
- The country does not have high levels of trade with the United States.
- The country violates human rights; it imprisons or tortures some of its citizens because of their beliefs.
- The country's nonnuclear military forces are half as strong as U.S. nonnuclear forces.
- The country's motives remain unclear, but if it builds nuclear weapons, it will have the power to blackmail or destroy other countries.
- The country has refused all requests to stop its nuclear weapons program.

[Show if exp\_4 = Ally, Does Not Violate HR]: Here is the situation:

- A country is developing nuclear weapons and will have its first nuclear bomb within six months. The country could then use its missiles to launch nuclear attacks against any country in the world.
- The country is a democracy. The president, the legislature, and local councils are elected by the people.
- The country has signed a military alliance with the United States.
- The country does not have high levels of trade with the United States.
- The country does not violate human rights; it does not imprison or torture some of its citizens because of their beliefs.



- The country’s nonnuclear military forces are half as strong as U.S. nonnuclear forces.
- The country’s motives remain unclear, but if it builds nuclear weapons, it will have the power to blackmail or destroy other countries.
- The country has refused all requests to stop its nuclear weapons program.

#### **PART 4: OUTCOME VARIABLES**

The following section describes our major dependent variable (DV, public support for war) and the underlying mechanisms. On each new page of the survey, respondents were shown a summary of the information previously provided in the experimental vignette.

- alliance\_DV1 (Support for War): By attacking the country’s nuclear development sites now, the United States could prevent the country from making any nuclear weapons. Do you favor or oppose using the U.S. military to attack the country’s nuclear development sites?
  - Favor strongly
  - Favor somewhat
  - Neither favor nor oppose
  - Oppose somewhat
  - Oppose strongly
- alliance\_DV2 (Mechanism: Moral): Do you think the U.S. has a moral obligation to attack the country’s nuclear development sites?
  - The U.S. has a strong moral obligation to attack.
  - The U.S. has a weak moral obligation to attack.
  - The U.S. has no moral obligation to attack.
- alliance\_DV3 (Mechanism: Moral) : Do you think it would be morally wrong for the U.S. military to attack the country’s nuclear development sites?

- It would be morally wrong for the U.S. to attack.
- It would not be morally wrong for the U.S. to attack.
- alliance\_DV4 (Mechanism: Threat): If the U.S. does not attack the country's nuclear development sites, what are the chances that each of the following things will happen? [Response grid is displayed as: "Almost no chance," "25% chance," "50-50 chance," "75% chance," "Nearly 100% certain".]
  - (alliance\_DV4\_1) If the U.S. does not attack, the country will build nuclear weapons and threaten to use them against another country.
  - (alliance\_DV4\_2) If the U.S. does not attack, the country will build nuclear weapons and threaten to use them against the U.S. or a U.S. ally.
  - (alliance\_DV4\_3) If the U.S. does not attack, the country will build nuclear weapons and launch a nuclear attack against another country.
  - (alliance\_DV4\_4) If the U.S. does not attack, the country will build nuclear weapons and launch a nuclear attack against the U.S. or a U.S. ally.
- alliance\_DV5 (Mechanisms: Success [1-2] and Costs [3-6]): If the U.S. does attack the country's nuclear development sites, what are the chances that each of the following things will happen? [Response grid is displayed as: "Almost no chance," "25% chance," "50-50 chance," "75% chance," "Nearly 100% certain".]
  - (alliance\_DV5\_1) If the U.S. does attack, it will prevent the country from making nuclear weapons in the near future.
  - (alliance\_DV5\_2) If the U.S. does attack, it will prevent the country from making nuclear weapons in the long run.
  - (alliance\_DV5\_3) If the U.S. does attack, the country will respond by attacking the U.S. or a U.S. ally.

- (alliance\_DV5\_4) If the U.S. does attack, the U.S. military will suffer many casualties.
- (alliance\_DV5\_5) If the U.S. does attack, the U.S. economy will suffer.
- (alliance\_DV5\_6) If the U.S. does attack, U.S. relations with other countries will suffer.

## **C.2 YouGov 2022**

The following contains the survey instrument used in the 2022 YouGov questionnaire. As the experimental vignette and outcome variables in the 2022 YouGov survey are identical to the PureSpectrum survey with one exception, we do not replicate those questions here. Please refer to the PureSpectrum questionnaire detailed above for this information. Regarding the exception, we detail below one novel outcome variable in the 2022 YouGov post-election survey.

### **PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

- birthyr: In what year were you born?
- gender: Are you...?
  - Male
  - Female
- race: What racial or ethnic group best describes you?
  - White
  - Black or African-American
  - Hispanic or Latino
  - Asian or Asian-American
  - Native American
  - Middle Eastern
  - Two or more races

- Other
- educ: What is the highest level of education you have completed?
  - Did not graduate from high school
  - High school graduate
  - Some college, but no degree (yet)
  - 2-year college degree
  - 4-year college degree
  - Postgraduate degree (MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, etc.)
- faminc\_new: Thinking back over the last year, what was your family's annual income?
  - Less than \$10,000
  - Less than \$10,000
  - \$10,000 - \$19,999
  - \$20,000 - \$29,999
  - \$30,000 - \$39,999
  - \$40,000 - \$49,999
  - \$50,000 - \$59,999
  - \$60,000 - \$69,999
  - \$70,000 - \$79,999
  - \$80,000 - \$99,999
  - \$100,000 - \$119,999
  - \$120,000 - \$149,999
  - \$150,000 - \$199,999

- \$200,000 - \$249,999
- \$250,000 - \$349,999
- \$350,000 - \$499,999
- \$500,000 or more
- Prefer not to say

**PART 2: EXPERIMENTAL VIGNETTE**

The experimental vignette is identical to the vignette used in the PureSpectrum survey.

**PART 3: OUTCOME VARIABLES**

In the pre and post-election YouGov survey, the outcome variables are identical to those collected in the PureSpectrum survey with one exception. In the post-election YouGov survey, respondents were told about the expected U.S. military casualties incurred for attacking the country's nuclear development sites. The wording of the novel outcome variable in the post-election YouGov is given below.

- alliance\_DV1\_post: (Support for War with Costs): By attacking the country's nuclear development sites now, the United States could prevent the country from making any nuclear weapons. The Joint Chief of Staff estimated that if the US attacked the nuclear development sites, there would be a large number of US casualties. Do you favor or oppose using the U.S. military to attack the country's nuclear development sites?
  - Favor strongly
  - Favor somewhat
  - Neither favor nor oppose
  - Oppose somewhat
  - Oppose strongly

### C.3 Comparison with Tomz and Weeks (2020)

Table S3: Comparing Our Experimental Design with Tomz and Weeks (2020)

Design Feature	Tomz and Weeks (2020)	Our Experiment
<i>Treatment</i>	<p><b>Introduction:</b> We are going to describe a situation the United States could face in the future. The situation is general, and is not about a specific country in the news today. Some parts of the description may seem important to you; other parts may seem unimportant.</p> <p>Please read the details very carefully. Do you agree to read the details very carefully, and then give your most thoughtful answers?</p> <p>[Yes; No]</p> <p><b>Survey Vignette:</b> Here is the situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A country is developing nuclear weapons and will have its first nuclear bomb within six months. The country could then use its missiles to launch nuclear attacks against any country in the world.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Introduction:</b> We are going to describe a situation the United States could face in the future. The situation is general, and is not about a specific country in the news today. Please read the details very carefully.</p> <p><b>Survey Vignette:</b> Here is the situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A country is developing nuclear weapons and will have its first nuclear bomb within six months. The country could then use its missiles to launch nuclear attacks against any country in the world.</li> </ul>

*Continues on next page*

Table S3: Comparing Our Experimental Design with Tomz and Weeks (2020)

Design Feature	Tomz and Weeks (2020)	Our Experiment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The country is a democracy. The president, the legislature, and local councils are elected by the people.</li> <li>-OR- The country is not a democracy. The people do not have the power to choose the leader.</li> <li>• The country has not signed a military alliance with the United States and does not have high levels of trade with the United States.</li> <li>• The country does not violate human rights; it does not imprison or torture its citizens because of their beliefs.</li> <li>-OR- The country violates human rights; it imprisons or tortures some of its citizens because of their beliefs.</li> <li>• The country's nonnuclear military forces are half as strong as U.S. nonnuclear forces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The country is a democracy. The president, the legislature, and local councils are elected by the people.</li> <li>• The country <u>has signed a military alliance</u> with the United States.</li> <li>-OR- The country <u>has not signed a military alliance</u> with the United States.</li> <li>• The country does not have high levels of trade with the United States.</li> <li>• The country <u>does not violate human rights</u>; it does not imprison or torture its citizens because of their beliefs.</li> <li>-OR- The country <u>violates human rights</u>; it imprisons or tortures some of its citizens because of their beliefs.</li> <li>• The country's nonnuclear military forces are half as strong as U.S. nonnuclear forces.</li> </ul>

*Continues on next page*



Table S3: Comparing Our Experimental Design with Tomz and Weeks (2020)

Design Feature	Tomz and Weeks (2020)	Our Experiment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The country's motives remain unclear, but if it builds nuclear weapons, it will have the power to blackmail or destroy other countries.</li> <li>• The country has refused all requests to stop its nuclear weapons program.</li> <li>• When you have finished reading the situation carefully, please check this box: [Respondents check "I have read the situation carefully."]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The country's motives remain unclear, but if it builds nuclear weapons, it will have the power to blackmail or destroy other countries.</li> <li>• The country has refused all requests to stop its nuclear weapons program.</li> </ul>
<i>Outcome</i>	<p><b>Favor Attack:</b> By attacking the country's nuclear development sites now, the United States could prevent the country from making any nuclear weapons. Do you favor or oppose using the U.S. military to attack the country's nuclear development sites? [1 = Favor strongly; 5 = Oppose strongly]</p>	<p>alliance_DV1 (Same as Tomz and Weeks)</p>

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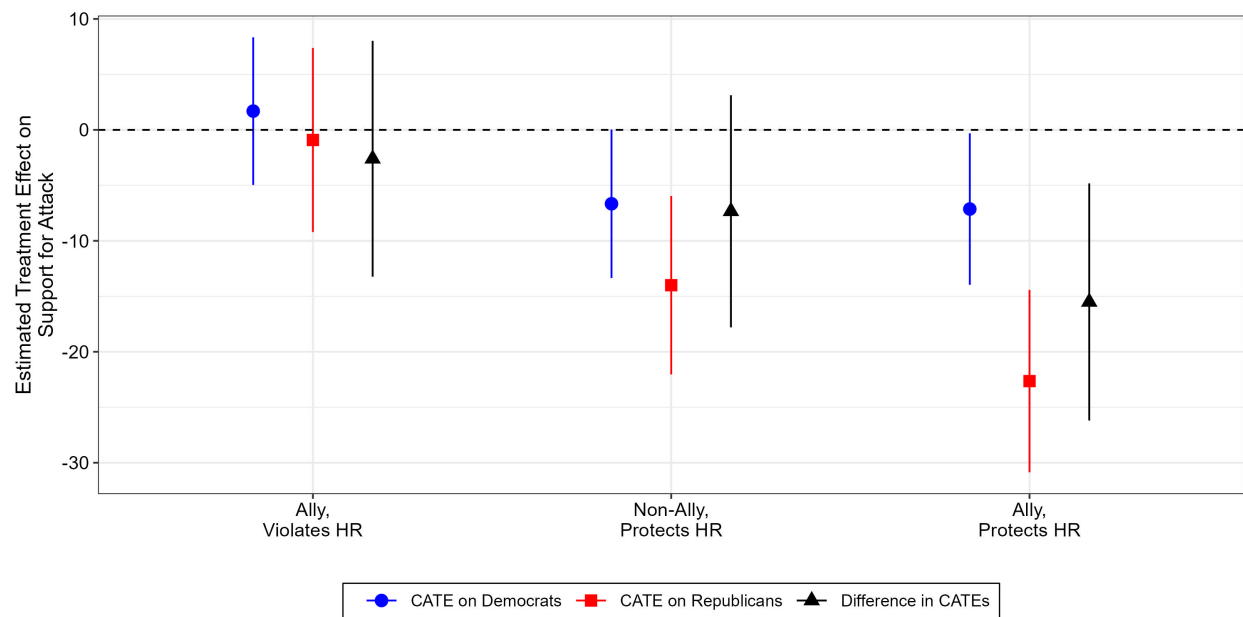
Table S3: Comparing Our Experimental Design with Tomz and Weeks (2020)

Design Feature	Tomz and Weeks (2020)	Our Experiment
		(Additional outcome variable in the post-election 2022 CES survey)
		<b>Favor Costly Attack:</b> By attacking the country's nuclear development sites now, the United States could prevent the country from making any nuclear weapons. The Joint Chief of Staff estimated that if the U.S. attacked the nuclear development sites, there would be a large number of U.S. casualties. Do you favor or oppose using the U.S. military to attack the country's nuclear development sites?
	<b>Mechanisms:</b> questions about morality, success, costs, and threat perception	alliance_DV2 – alliance_DV5 (Same as Tomz and Weeks)

*Note:* The “Our Experiment” column includes our PureSpectrum and 2022 pre-election YouGov surveys. We include one additional outcome variable in the 2022 post-election YouGov which introduces the expected U.S. military casualties incurred for attacking the country's nuclear development sites.

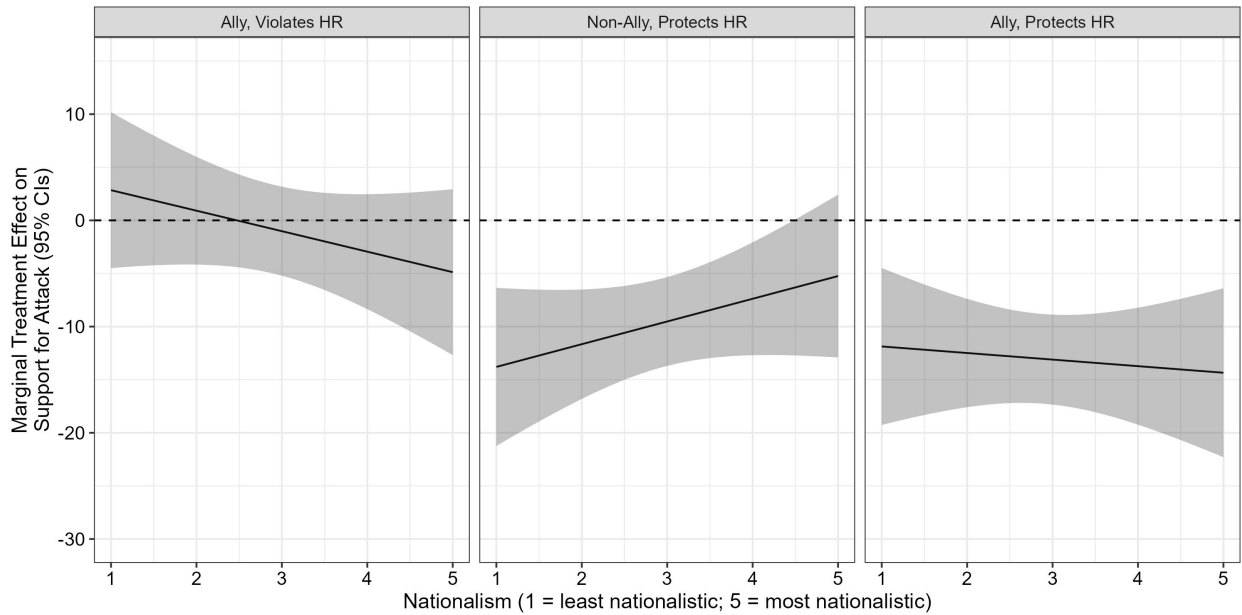
## D Additional Analyses

### D.1 Heterogeneous Effects



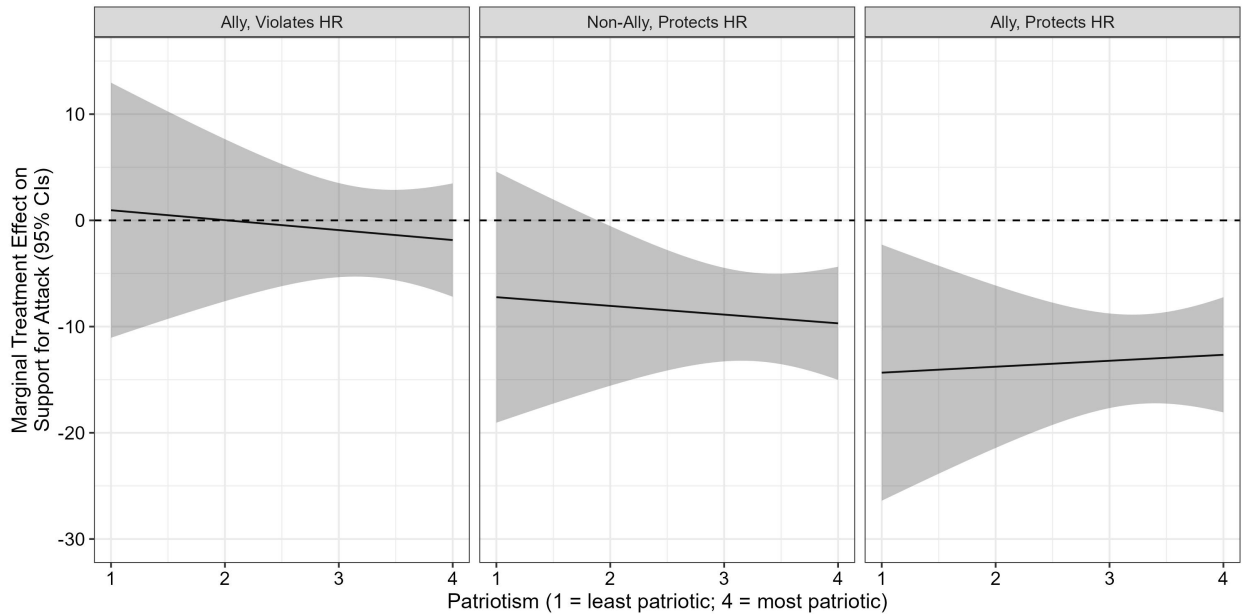
*Note:* This figure depicts the conditional average treatment effects (CATE) by party (excluding Independents) and the differences-in-CATEs with 95% confidence intervals (PureSpectrum survey). The CATE is calculated using OLS regression where we analyze the effect of the interaction between party (excluding Independents) and each treatment condition on support for attack with controls for sex, age, race, income, and education. The baseline condition is Non-Ally, Violates HR.

Figure S1: Conditional Average Treatment Effects (CATE) by Party



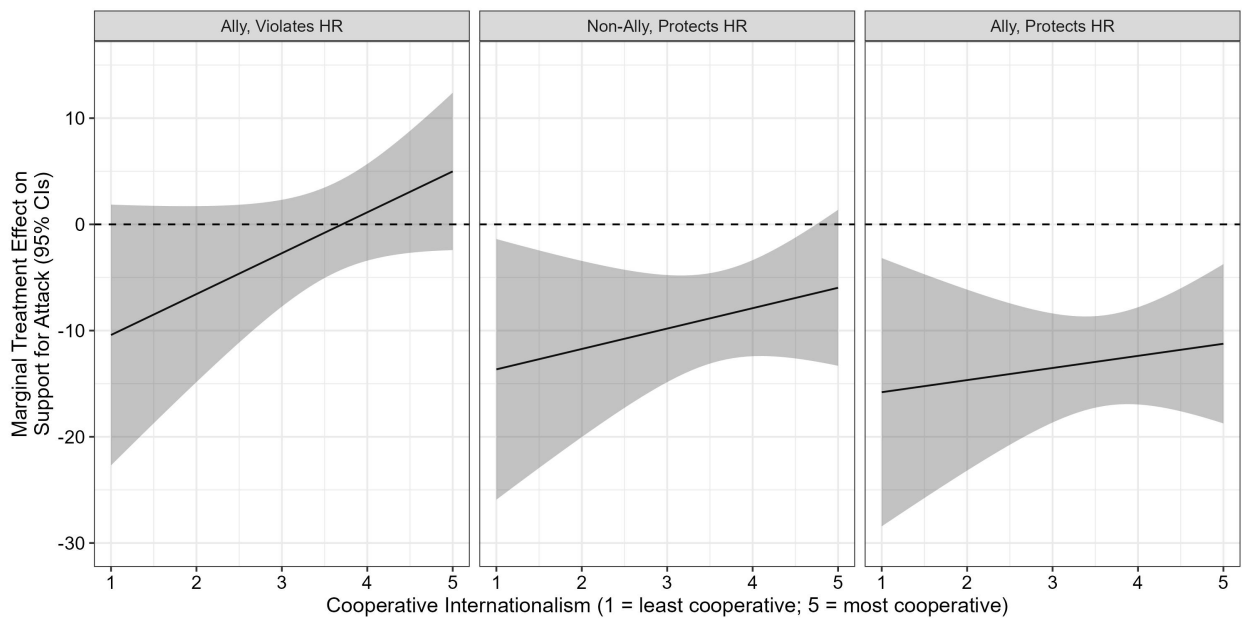
*Note:* This figure depicts the results of an OLS regression model which interacts the treatment condition with nationalism on support for attack, controlling for sex, age, race, income, and education (PureSpectrum survey). The controls are held at their means. The baseline condition is Non-Ally, Violates HR.

Figure S2: Marginal Treatment Effect on Support for Attack by Nationalism



*Note:* This figure depicts the results of an OLS regression model which interacts the treatment condition with patriotism on support for attack, controlling for sex, age, race, income, and education (PureSpectrum survey). The controls are held at their means. The baseline condition is Non-Ally, Violates HR.

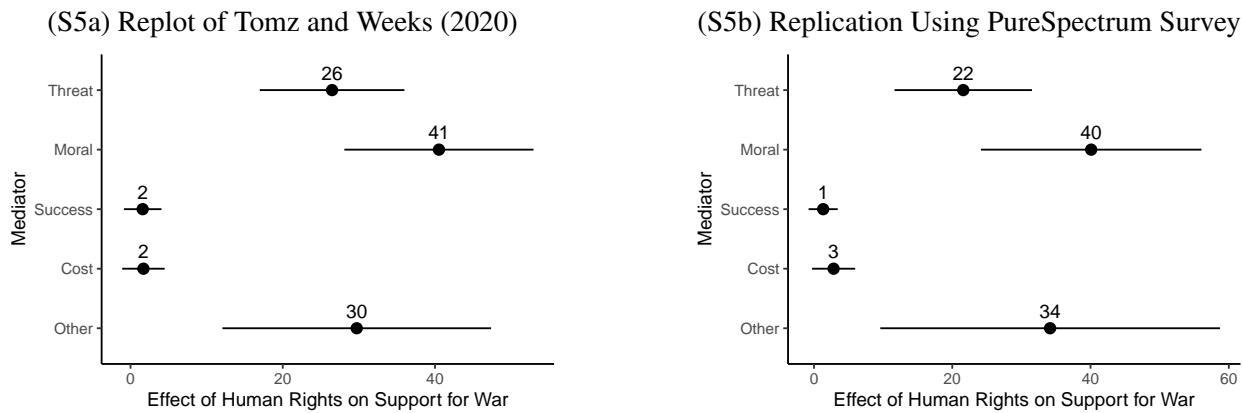
Figure S3: Marginal Treatment Effect on Support for Attack by Patriotism



*Note:* This figure depicts the results of an OLS regression model which interacts the treatment condition with cooperative internationalism on support for attack, controlling for sex, age, race, income, and education (PureSpectrum survey). The controls are held at their means. The baseline condition is Non-Ally, Violates HR.

Figure S4: Marginal Treatment Effect on Support for Attack by Cooperative Internationalism

D.2 Mediation Analysis



*Note:* Figure S5a is a replot of Figure 4 from Tomz and Weeks (2020, 188) using their original data. Figure S5b is a replication of Figure 4 of Tomz and Weeks (2020, 188) using the PureSpectrum survey. The estimates show the percentage points of the total effect of human rights on public support for war that are accounted for by mediators, including the 95% confidence intervals. The percentage points are calculated using the product of regression coefficients (Baron and Kenny 1986). To do this, we obtain the product of the coefficient regressing the treatment on the mediator and the coefficient regressing the mediator on the dependent variable, then divide it by the coefficient of regressing the treatment on the dependent variable.

Figure S5: Mechanisms as Percentage of Total Effect

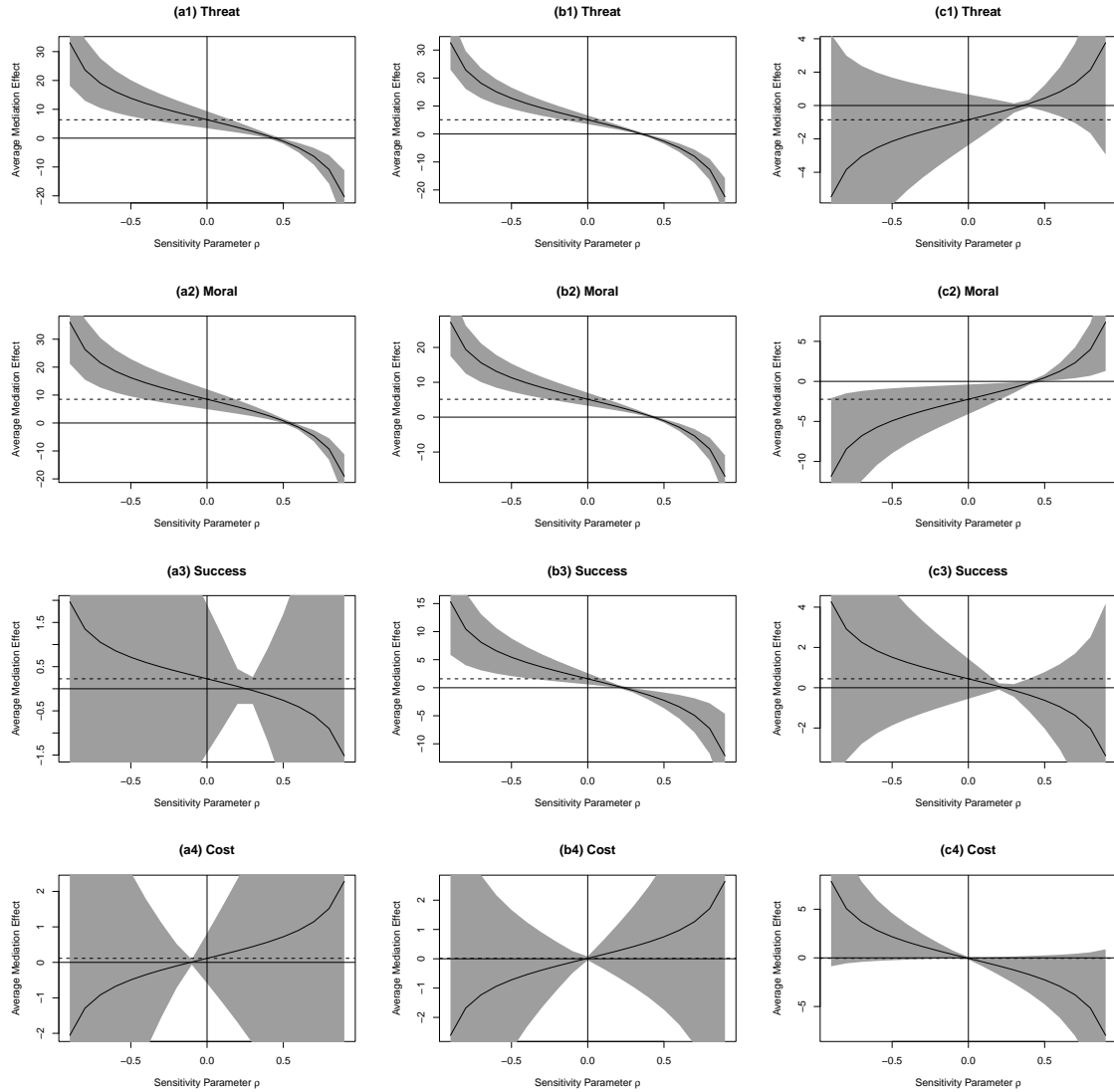
Table S4: Causal Mediation Analysis (Potential Outcomes Framework)

	Tomz and Weeks (2020)	PureSpectrum Survey	
	Tr= Violate Human Rights	Tr=Violate Human Rights	Tr=U.S. Ally
Threat	<b>7.78</b>	<b>4.83</b>	<b>-1.12</b>
Moral	<b>9.34</b>	<b>5.92</b>	<b>-1.44</b>
Success	0.79	<b>1.16</b>	0.01
Cost	0.33	0.04	-0.03

*Note:* The table shows Average Causal Mediation Effects (ACMEs) on public support for war by each mediator (in percentage points). Bold ACME estimates are significant at the .05 level. To analyze ACMEs, we utilize the *mediation* package in R ([Tingley et al. 2014](#)).

Table S4 illustrates the outcomes derived from the potential-outcomes framework, also known as Average Causal Mediation Effects (ACMEs), as proposed by [Imai et al. \(2011\)](#). The second column reveals that human rights shape public support for war through four mechanisms – threat, morality, success, and cost – outlined by [Tomz and Weeks \(2020\)](#). Our survey successfully replicates their findings, highlighting the pivotal roles of morality and threat in shaping public for war. Furthermore, our analysis reveals that alliances diminish public support for war by reducing the perceived threat and diminishing moral obligations among the U.S. public. This table further illustrates the robustness of the four mechanisms, aligning consistently with the outcomes depicted in Figure S6.

## D.2.1 Sensitivity Analysis



(S6a) Tomz and Weeks (2020)

(S6b) PureSpectrum Survey

(S6c) PureSpectrum Survey

Tr = Violating Human Rights

Tr = Violating Human Rights

Tr = U.S. Ally

*Note:* The figure shows the sensitivity analysis for the mediation analysis in Table S4. The solid line represents the estimated ACMEs for differing values of the sensitivity parameter  $\rho$ . The gray region represents the 95% confidence interval based on the Delta method. The horizontal dashed line reflects the point estimate of the mediation effect in Table S4.

Figure S6: Mediation Sensitivity with Respect to Different Sensitivity Parameter  $\rho$



### D.3 Analysis of Continuous Dependent Variable

Table S5: Regression Estimates of Support for War (5-Point Likert Scale, PureSpectrum Survey)

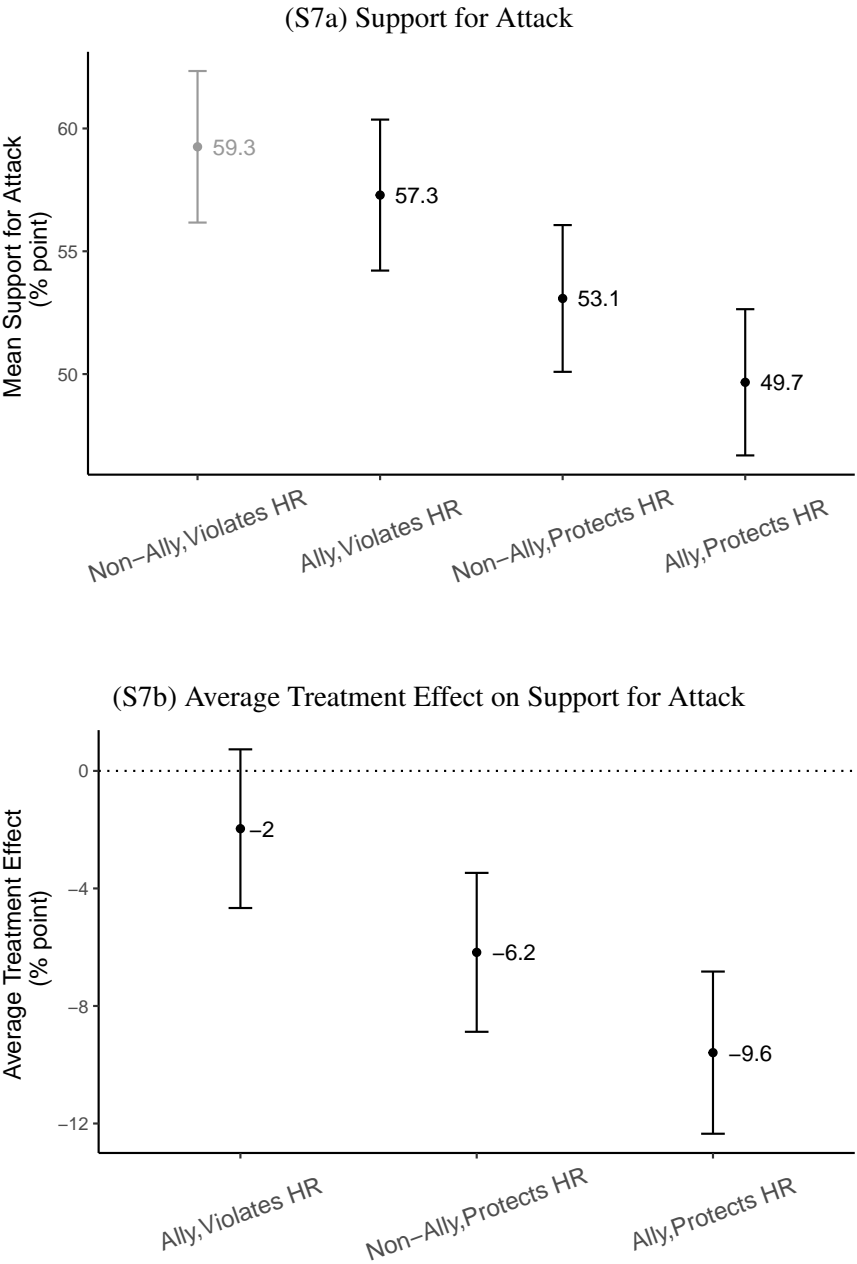
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Violating Human Rights	6.89*** (0.98)	6.17*** (1.39)	6.49*** (1.36)
U.S. Military Alliance	-2.68*** (0.98)	-3.41** (1.40)	-3.03** (1.37)
Violating Human Rights $\times$ U.S. Military Alliance		1.45 (1.97)	0.75 (1.94)
Male			3.65*** (1.00)
Age			-0.26*** (0.03)
Education			-8.70*** (1.60)
Income			0.44*** (0.11)
(Intercept)	52.72*** (0.85)	53.08*** (0.98)	63.97*** (1.91)
Num. obs.	4002	4002	4000

*Note:* The table shows the estimates of the coefficients and standard errors from OLS regressions. The dependent variable is coded as 0, 25, 50, 75, or 100, with larger numbers indicating higher support for war.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.05$ .

\*  $p < 0.1$ .



*Note:* Figure S7a plots the means of public support for war in percentage points. Figure S7b plots the percentage point difference in support for war between each treatment and the baseline condition (Non-Ally, Violates Human Rights). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S7: Impact of Treatments on Support for War (5-Point Likert Scale, PureSpectrum Survey, 95% Confidence Intervals)

## D.4 Investigating the Lack of a “Double Standard”

Given our finding was contrary to our expectations, we further investigate the lack of a “double standard” on human rights. While we cannot eliminate all concerns, we examine the evidence for the null effect and explore several alternative explanations.

Although our internal replication and robustness checks enhance the credibility of our conclusions, we also investigate several alternative explanations for the null effect. First, readers may be concerned that respondents are less likely to consider the real-world effects of losing a strategic partner because our scenario is hypothetical and does not specify the name of the foreign state. While we cannot completely dismiss this possibility, recent studies reveal that “describing a scenario as hypothetical or real” and “varying the identity of actors” such as naming specific states does not change the results (Brutger et al. 2023, 980; see also Berinsky 2009, 124; Gartner 2008; Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999). Further, Tomz and Weeks (2020) successfully replicated their experiment on which our study is based by stipulating that the state pursuing nuclear weapons was in Africa.

Second, there may be remaining concerns that despite its statistical insignificance, the substantive size of the double standard on human rights violators is meaningful. To address this concern, we employed the “negligible effect” approach to evaluate whether the 0.5 decrease in support for war is a meaningful treatment effect (Figure S8) (Rainey 2014; see also “two one-side tests” in Westlake 1979; Berger and Hsu 1996). We begin to determine *the smallest substantively meaningful effect* ( $m$ ) of human rights violations on support for war. Our choice of  $m$  was not pre-registered, and the negligible effects analysis is exploratory. But as Stefan (2010, 1) says, “Finding a consensus on how to specify [ $m$ ] concretely is far from easy in the majority of applications. However, it is an indispensable step without which the testing problem the experimenter proposes would make no statistical sense at all.” Due to the inherent uncertainty in determining  $m$ , we tested two thresholds, based on the effect size of human rights violations on support for war.

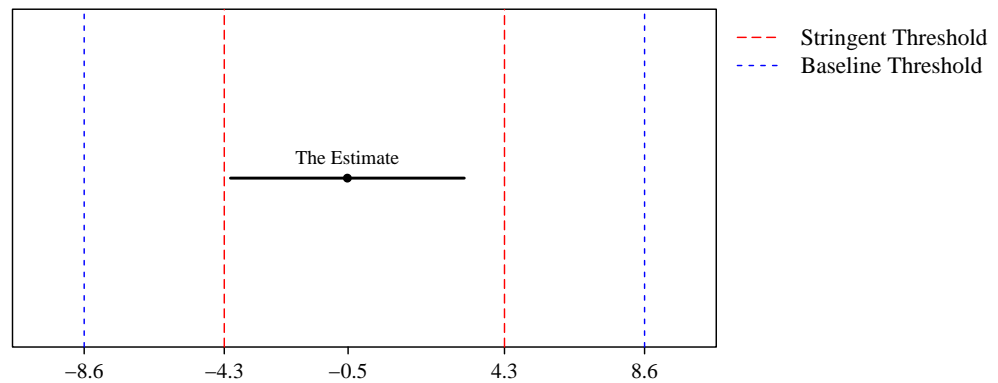
If a double standard exists, we expect that the effect of human rights violations on public support for war should be completely negated. Nonetheless, some may contend that this baseline

threshold is too lenient. To address this concern, we establish a more stringent criterion, which asserts that the effect of human rights violations on public support for war should be reduced by half when people apply double standards. Drawing on the results for Model 2 in Table 1, which reveal that human rights violations increase public support for war by 8.6 percent, we set *the smallest substantively meaningful effect (m) of human rights* at two values: (1)  $m$  equals 8.6 percent, representing a baseline threshold for a double standard on human rights; this  $m$  signifies that alliances negate the entire effect of human rights on public support for war, and (2)  $m$  equals 4.3 percent, representing a stringent threshold for a double standard on human rights; this signifies that alliances negate half of the effect of human rights on public support for war.

Figure S8 illustrates the results of negligible effects of alliances on public support for war. The horizontal line represents the expected change of alliance status on support for war when the target state violates human rights. The vertical dashed lines correspond to the two different thresholds. According to Rainey (2014, 1086-7), “[I]f the confidence interval lies entirely below  $m$  and entirely above  $-m$  (i.e., it contains only negligible effects), then the researcher can confidently reject the null hypothesis of a meaningful effect.” Following Rainey (2014), our analysis demonstrates that the 90 percent confidence interval of our estimate consistently resides within both thresholds, indicating that for human rights violators, the effect of alliance status on support for war is negligible.<sup>11</sup> Overall, our results provide little evidence that the U.S. public applies a “double standard” on human rights when contemplating military engagement.

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<sup>11</sup>Given we use the “two one-side tests,” it is important to employ a 90 percent confidence interval, rather than a 95 percent confidence interval, for our estimates (Rainey 2014; Westlake 1979; Berger and Hsu 1996).



*Note:* This figure illustrates the third hypothesis concerning a “double standard” on human rights. The null hypothesis posits that the effect of alliance status on public support for war is negligible when the human rights violator is a U.S. alliance partner. Following [Rainey’s \(2014\)](#) guidance, if no double standard is present, the 90% confidence interval should lie between the vertical dotted lines.

Figure S8: The Estimated Effect of Alliance on Public Support for War (PureSpectrum Survey)

## D.5 Analysis of Attentive Sample

Table S6: Regression Estimates of Support for War (Binary Dependent Variable, Attentive Sample in PureSpectrum Survey)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Violating Human Rights	16.84*** (2.25)	14.23*** (3.16)	14.73*** (3.12)
U.S. Military Alliance	-3.10 (2.25)	-5.79* (3.20)	-4.93 (3.16)
Violating Human Rights $\times$ U.S. Military Alliance		5.32 (4.51)	4.14 (4.45)
Male			-0.43 (2.29)
Age			-0.33*** (0.07)
Education			-19.53*** (3.85)
Income			0.42 (0.28)
(Intercept)	30.02*** (1.97)	31.40*** (2.29)	54.43*** (4.88)
Num. obs.	1786	1786	1784

*Note:* The table shows the estimates of the coefficients and standard errors from OLS regressions. The estimation uses a sample from the PureSpectrum survey that passes three attention check questions ([Kane, Velez, and Barabas 2023](#)). The dependent variable is coded as a binary variable where it takes a value of 100 if the public is approved of attacking the third country and 0 otherwise.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.05$ .

\*  $p < 0.1$ .

Table S7: Regression Estimates of Support for War (5-Point Likert Scale, Attentive Sample in PureSpectrum Survey)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Violating Human Rights	10.09*** (1.49)	8.75*** (2.08)	9.16*** (2.03)
U.S. Military Alliance	-2.84* (1.49)	-4.21** (2.11)	-3.40* (2.06)
Violating Human Rights $\times$ U.S. Military Alliance		2.73 (2.97)	1.75 (2.90)
Male			-2.69* (1.49)
Age			-0.30*** (0.05)
Education			-16.83*** (2.51)
Income			0.31* (0.18)
(Intercept)	45.34*** (1.30)	46.05*** (1.51)	68.24*** (3.18)
Num. obs.	1786	1786	1784

*Note:* The table shows the estimates of the coefficients and standard errors from OLS regressions. The estimation uses a sample from the PureSpectrum survey that passes three attention check questions ([Kane, Velez, and Barabas 2023](#)). The dependent variable is coded as 0, 25, 50, 75, or 100, with larger numbers indicating higher support for war.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.05$ .

\*  $p < 0.1$ .

## D.6 Balance of Pre-Treatment Variables

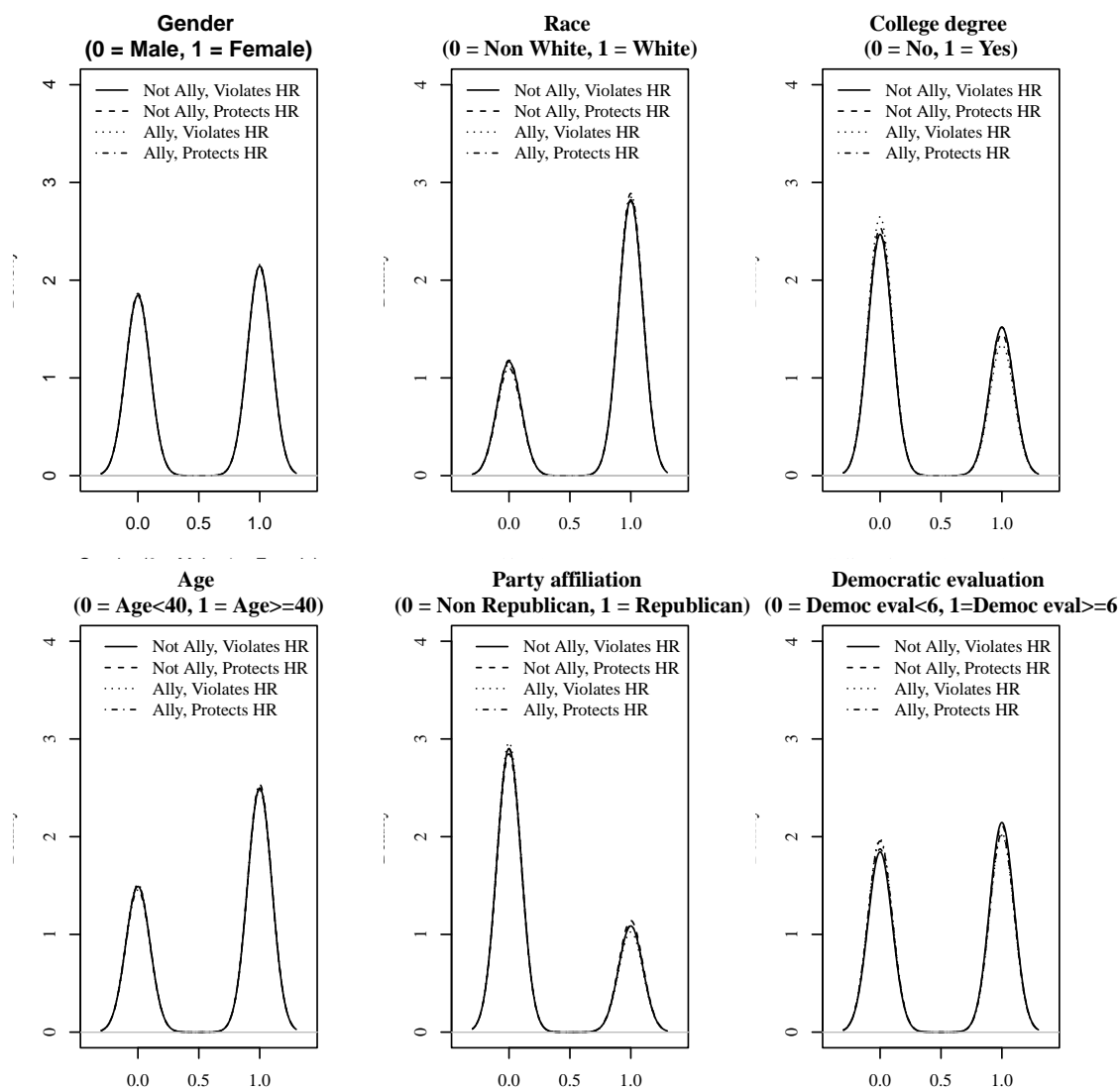


Figure S9: Distribution of Pre-Treatment Variables (PureSpectrum Survey)

*Note:* This figure shows the distribution of the six pre-treatment variables - gender, race, college degree, age, party affiliation and democratic evaluation - in the PureSpectrum survey. All variables are coded as binary variables.



## E Analysis of YouGov Survey

Table S8: Sample Demographics in Comparison with Census Benchmarks (YouGov Survey)

		Benchmark	Sample
Sex	Male	49.0%	47.1%
	Female	51.0%	52.9%
Age	18-29	20.2%	15.6%
	30-39	17.5%	15.2%
	40-49	15.9%	13.8%
	50-59	16.3%	18.7%
	60-69	15.5%	21.4%
	70+	14.5%	15.3%
Race	White	69.2%	70.7%
	Black or African American	13.4%	13.1%
	Hispanic or Latino	8.9%	8.6%
	Other	8.5%	7.6%

*Note:* Percentages for sex, race and Hispanic origin are based on the adult population. Sex and age are calculated from Table S0101 of the [2021 American Community Survey](#). Race figures are calculated from the 2022 CES.

Table S9: Regression Estimates of Support for War (Binary Dependent Variable, YouGov Survey)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Violating Human Rights	15.71*** (3.03)	20.58*** (4.27)	19.83*** (4.46)
U.S. Military Alliance	-2.78 (3.03)	2.06 (4.26)	2.57 (4.46)
Violating Human Rights $\times$ U.S. Military Alliance		-9.78 (6.05)	-8.19 (6.31)
Male			-5.15 (3.18)
Age			-0.03 (0.10)
Education			-20.84*** (5.10)
Income			0.53 (0.35)
(Intercept)	31.42*** (2.61)	29.02*** (3.00)	37.45*** (6.39)
Num. obs.	1000	1000	916

*Note:* The table shows the estimates of the coefficients and standard errors from OLS regressions. The dependent variable is coded as a binary variable where it takes a value of 100 if the public is approved of attacking the third country and 0 otherwise.

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

\*\* $p < 0.05$ .

\* $p < 0.1$ .

Table S10: Regression Estimates of Support for War (5-Point Likert Scale, YouGov Survey)

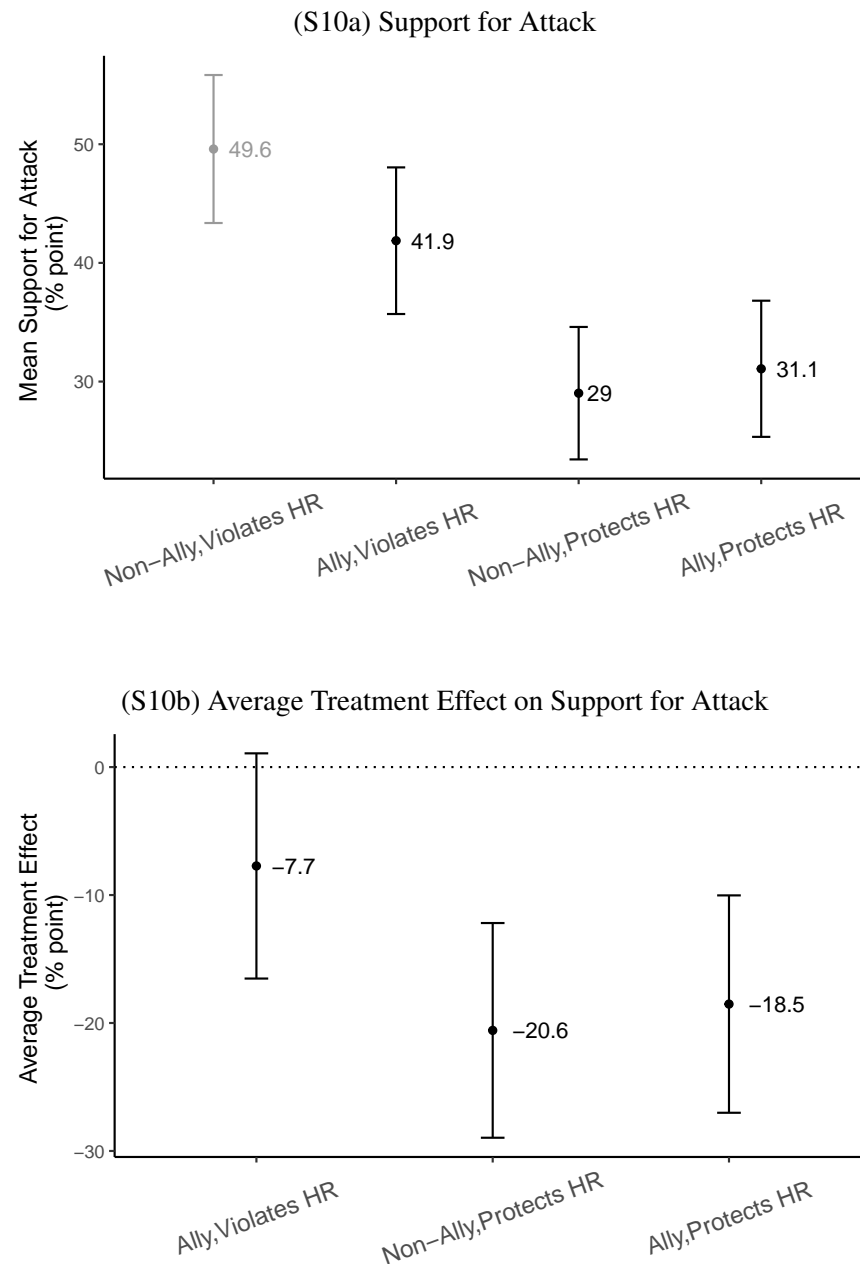
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Violating Human Rights	8.91*** (1.97)	11.26*** (2.77)	11.41*** (2.84)
U.S. Military Alliance	-1.51 (1.97)	0.82 (2.76)	1.17 (2.84)
Violating Human Rights $\times$ U.S. Military Alliance		-4.73 (3.93)	-4.55 (4.02)
Male			-5.73*** (2.02)
Age			-0.10 (0.06)
Education			-18.97*** (3.24)
Income			-0.04 (0.23)
(Intercept)	46.55*** (1.69)	45.39*** (1.95)	60.70*** (4.06)
Num. obs.	1000	1000	916

*Note:* The table shows the estimates of the coefficients and standard errors from OLS regressions. The dependent variable is coded as 0, 25, 50, 75, or 100, with larger numbers indicating higher support for war.

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

\*\* $p < 0.05$ .

\* $p < 0.1$ .



*Note:* Figure S10a plots the means of public support for war in percentage points. Figure S10b plots the percentage point difference in support for war between each treatment and the baseline condition (Non-Ally, Violates Human Rights). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S10: Impact of Treatments on Support for War (Binary Dependent Variable, YouGov Survey, 95% Confidence Intervals)

Table S11: Means of Public Support for War (Binary Dependent Variable, YouGov survey)

	Pre-election Wave	Post-election Wave	Difference of Means
Non-Ally, Violates HR	49.6 (N = 248)	26.3 (N = 205)	-23.3 (p < 0.001)
Ally, Violates HR	41.9 (N = 246)	25.7 (N = 210)	-16.2 (p < 0.001)
Non-Ally, Protects HR	29.0 (N = 255)	17.6 (N = 222)	-11.4 (p < 0.001)
Ally, Protects HR	31.1 (N = 251)	11.5 (N = 200)	-19.6 (p < 0.001)

*Note:* The post-election YouGov survey, as explained in Table S3, included an additional sentence that introduced the expected U.S. military casualties incurred for attacking the country's nuclear development sites. The within-subject comparison between the pre-and post-election YouGov surveys allows us to estimate the effect of expected casualties on public support for war. The table shows the means of public support for the war by treatment group in the pre-and post-election waves with the number of observations in parentheses. The "difference of means" column reflects the difference between the means of public support for war in the pre-and post-election surveys by treatment group with the p-value given in parentheses. The results show that introducing the expected U.S. military casualties leads to a statistically significant decrease in public support for war.

## F Analysis of the Pooled Sample

Table S12: Regression Estimates of Support for War (Binary Dependent Variable, Pooled Sample)

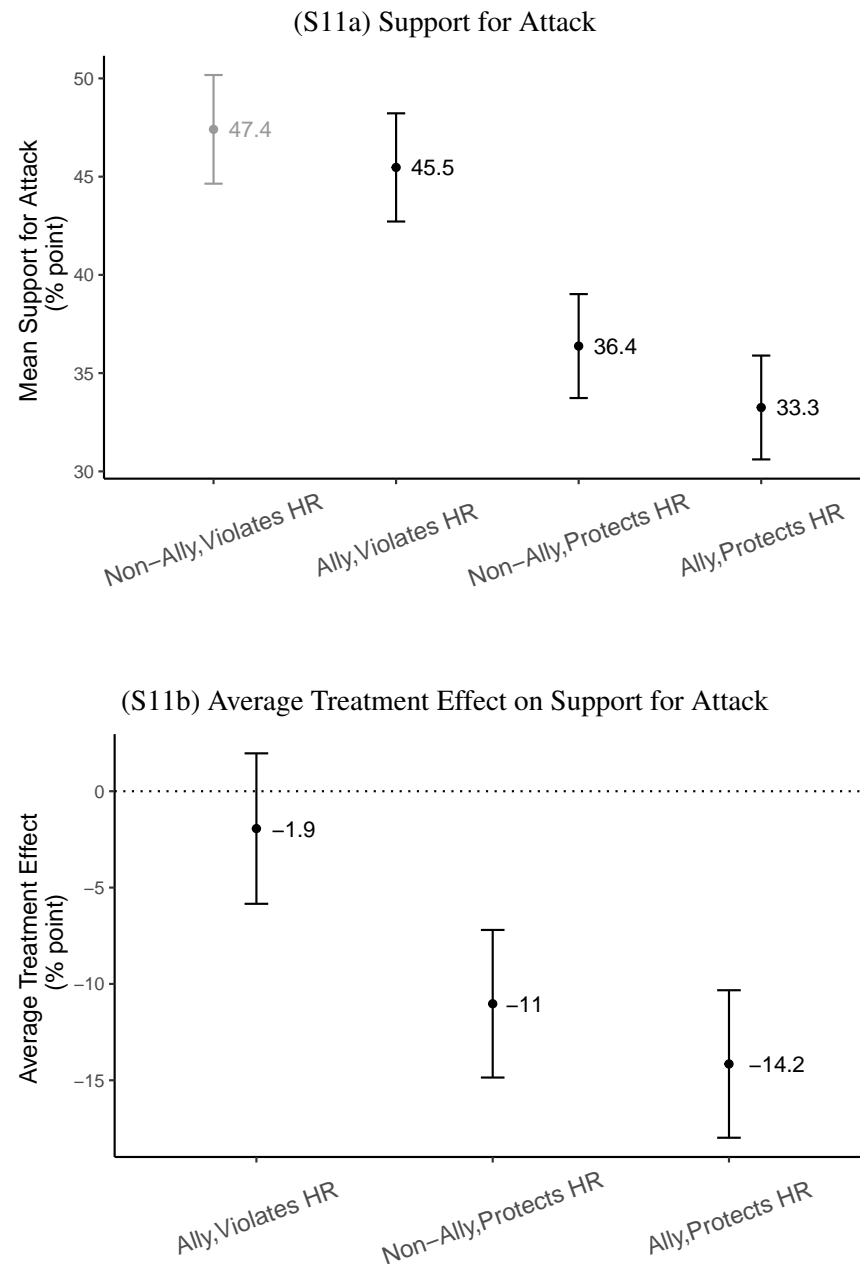
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Violating Human Rights	11.60*** (1.38)	11.02*** (1.94)	10.81*** (1.95)
U.S. Military Alliance	-2.53* (1.38)	-3.11 (1.95)	-3.02 (1.96)
Violating Human Rights $\times$ U.S. Military Alliance		1.16 (2.76)	1.42 (2.76)
PureSpectrum Sample	3.46** (1.72)	3.46** (1.72)	2.69 (1.78)
Male			7.00*** (1.41)
Age			-0.18*** (0.04)
Education			-9.06*** (2.26)
Income			0.82*** (0.16)
(Intercept)	33.33*** (1.82)	33.62*** (1.94)	37.49*** (3.16)
Num. obs.	5002	5002	4916

*Note:* The table shows the estimates of the coefficients and standard errors from OLS regression. The dependent variable is coded as a binary variable where it takes a value of 100 if the public approves of attacking the target country and 0 otherwise.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.05$ .

\*  $p < 0.1$ .



*Note:* Figure S11a plots the means of public support for war in percentage points. Figure S11b plots the percentage point difference in support for war between each treatment and the baseline condition (Non-Ally, Violates Human Rights). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S11: Impact of Treatments on Support for War (Binary Dependent Variable, Pooled Sample, 95% Confidence Intervals)

Table S13: Regression Estimates of Support for War (5-Point Likert Scale, Pooled Sample)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Violating Human Rights	7.29*** (0.88)	7.19*** (1.24)	7.39*** (1.23)
U.S. Military Alliance	-2.45*** (0.88)	-2.56** (1.25)	-2.38* (1.24)
Violating Human Rights × U.S. Military Alliance		0.21 (1.76)	-0.16 (1.75)
PureSpectrum Sample	4.59*** (1.10)	4.59*** (1.10)	3.82*** (1.13)
Male			2.16** (0.90)
Age			-0.23*** (0.03)
Education			-10.53*** (1.43)
Income			0.37*** (0.10)
(Intercept)	47.82*** (1.16)	47.87*** (1.24)	60.16*** (2.00)
Num. obs.	5002	5002	4916

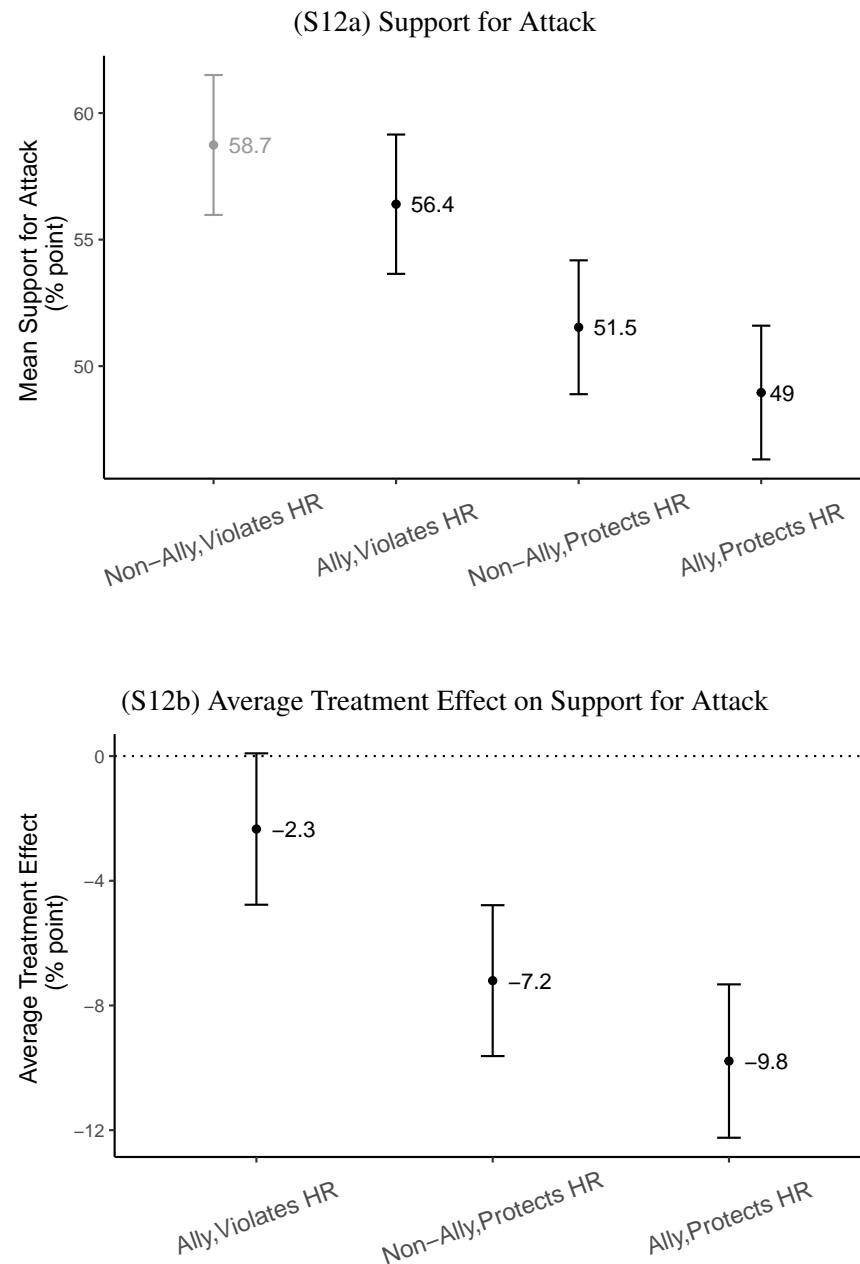
*Note:* The table shows the estimates of the coefficients and standard errors from OLS regressions. The dependent variable is coded as 0, 25, 50, 75, or 100, with larger numbers indicating higher support for war.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.05$ .

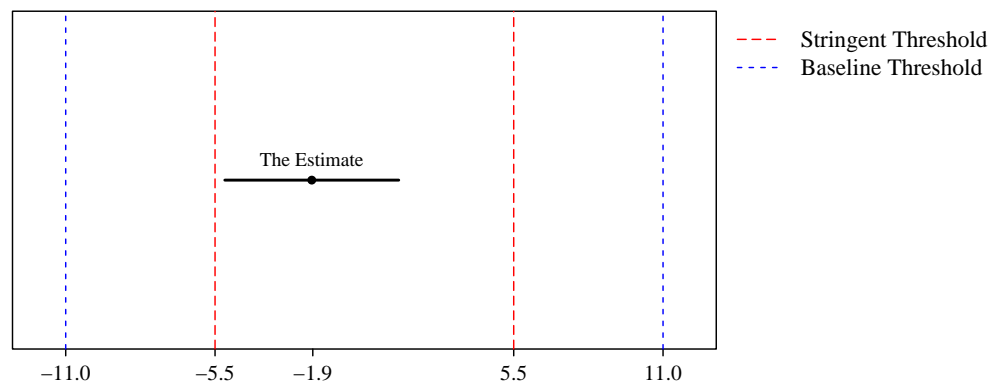
\*  $p < 0.1$ .





*Note:* Figure S12a plots the means of public support for war in percentage points. Figure S12b plots the percentage point difference in support for war between each treatment and the baseline condition (Non-Ally, Violates Human Rights). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure S12: Impact of Treatments on Support for War (5-Point Likert Scale, Pooled Sample, 95% Confidence Intervals)



*Note:* This figure illustrates the third hypothesis concerning a “double standard” on human rights. The null hypothesis posits that the effect of alliance status on public support for war is negligible when the human rights violator is a U.S. alliance partner. Following [Rainey’s \(2014\)](#) guidance, if no double standard is present, the 90% confidence interval should lie between the vertical dotted lines.

Figure S13: The Estimated Effect of Alliance on Public Support for War (Pooled Sample)

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