Political Elites and Public Support for War

by

William Howell (University of Chicago) and Douglas Kriner (Boston University)

March 22, 2007

A growing body of research underscores the importance of political elites in shaping the public's views about war. Building on this literature, we examine how the political identity of elites interacts with the content of appeals in order to influence (or not) the views of different constituents of the American public. Linking over 5,000 congressional speeches about the Iraq War with trends in public support for the War, and examining three experiments imbedded within a national public opinion survey, we find considerable evidence that elite appeals are most influential when they are deemed either trusted (because they come from a like-minded source) or costly (because they self-evidently conflict with a source's private interests). We also find that public appeals on war can occasionally backfire, inducing members of the opposing party to respond in ways exactly opposite an elite's intentions.

As the Iraq War enters its fifth year, a growing number of scholars have analyzed trends in popular support for America's costliest conflict since Vietnam. Much of this literature assesses the impact of American casualties on public opinion. Building on Mueller's pioneering work (1970; 1973) on the Korean and Vietnam wars, some scholars have found evidence that popular support for the Iraq War has waned as casualties have mounted (Eichenberg and Stoll 2006). Others, however, argue that the impact of casualties on opinion varied markedly across different stages of the War (Eichenberg 2005; Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2006). A third group of scholars, meanwhile, contends that while casualties have had some influence on popular assessments of the War's progress, they have had no direct impact on other elements of wartime opinion, such as beliefs of whether or not the war was worth its costs or presidential approval (Voeten and Brewer 2006). Despite the disparate findings, one point of consensus is beginning to emerge: though casualties may partially explain trends in support for war, they are only a part—perhaps even a small part—of the overall story.

Just as important as objective measures of a war's progress, we argue, are the positions taken and arguments advanced by political elites. Given they lack of knowledge of world affairs, and they have limited ability to conduct anything resembling a cost-benefit analysis, most citizens regularly look to elites to monitor and interpret a war's progress. Such observations, to be sure, are hardly new. Scholars have long recognized the importance of elite cues to understanding opinion dynamics (Zaller 1992). A growing body of work, however, now illustrates the ways in which elite consensus underlies popular support for military endeavors, just as elite dissension sows general discord (Berinsky 2007; Brody 1991; Larson 1996; Zaller 1994a; Zaller 1994b).

This elite-centric research, though, is not without its own shortcomings. Most significantly, from our vantage point, is the fact that this literature typically treats both political elites and the public as undifferentiated masses. Notes Berinsky (2007), "many researchers who study public opinion and war—even those scholars who conduct individual-level analyses—often talk about 'the public' as if it were a monolithic entity. But, foreign policy is often as contentious and partisan as domestic politics. Theories of war must account for the effects of the domestic political process." More specifically, we argue, research on public opinion and war would do well to begin investigating the relative capacity of different elites to bolster or diminish support for war among different segments of the American public.

This paper does so. Specifically, it examines how the political identity of different elites affects the influence of different kinds of appeals to Democratic and Republican constituencies. When a Democratic member of Congress reinforces the president's claims that another country is harboring terrorists, developing weapons of mass destruction, or waging genocide against its people, we show, she evokes a different public reaction than when a Republican member of Congress, a member state of the United Nations, or a prominent interest group does so. The content of their arguments may be identical, but their ability to sway public opinion differs in material ways.

We proceed as follows. The first section summarizes the existing literature on public opinion and war, and the second distills from the signaling literatures some basic theoretical propositions about the conditions under which elites can persuade mass publics about the efficacy of proposed and ongoing military ventures. The third and fourth sections examines two datasets—one observational, the other experimental—that

reveal the variable ways in which different elites shape public opinion about a variety of military deployments. The final section concludes by relating our findings to broader debates about source effects in political discourse and the relative capacity of different political elites to check presidential war powers.

Section I: Public Opinion and War

The existing literature on war and public opinion splits into two competing camps. The first explores the impact of conflict events, particularly combat casualties, on popular support for military interventions. In the U.S. case, study after study has shown support for the sitting president declining as the death toll of American servicemen mounts (Eichenberg and Stoll 2006; Erikson and Mackuen Stimson, James; Gertner and Segura 1998; Kernell 1978; Mueller 1973). Others, however, caution that casualties' impact on the public is contingent on contextual factors. Bruce Jentleson (1992; Jentleson and Britton 1998), for example, argues that the public is "pretty prudent" and its sensitivity to casualties depends on whether the military action directly serves the security needs of the United States. In a similar vein, an extensive literature led by Peter Feaver and Chris Gelpi (2004) contends that casualty sensitivity is contingent on popular perceptions of the military venture's prospects to succeed or fail (Larson 1996; Larson and Savych 2005).[1] When the prospects for victory are high, public support for war will not flag in the face of mounting war dead; however, when success seems more remote, the patterns observed in Mueller's seminal study of Korean and Vietnam War casualties emerge.

If Feaver and Gelpi are correct and public opinion does not simply respond deterministically to unmediated reports flowing from the battlefield, what factors most immediately drives public opinion? In addition to popular conceptions about a war's success or failure, Feaver and Gelpi's preferred explanation,[2] opinion changes may be spurred by political elites—the core claim advanced by the second branch of war opinion scholarship. Analyzing conflicts from World War II to the current war in Iraq, scholars have documented powerful linkages between aggregate trends in public and mass opinion on war (Belknap and Campbell 1951; Berinsky forthcoming; Zaller 1992; Zaller 1994a). Shifting focus to the ability of different elites to influence popular support for military action, numerous studies have emphasized the president's power to rally popular support (Holsti 1996; Larson and Savych 2005; McCormick 1992; Mueller 1970).[3] Still others have attempted to gauge the relative influence of Congress, interest groups, foreign governments, and outside experts on the public's foreign policy opinions (Brody 1991; Brody 1994; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Jentleson 1992; Jentleson and Britton 1998; Oneal, Lian, and Joyner 1996; Page and Shapiro 1988). Across these richly varied approaches, one common thread emerges: elite consensus induces popular support for war, while elite conflict yields a divided public.

The aggregate influence of elite discourse on the public's foreign policy preferences appears well established. Less attention, though, has been paid to its variance. As Berinsky (2007) laments, "To date, even the best work on public opinion concerning war has failed to account for the effects of partisan and other societal cleavages on levels

[1] In a similar vein, experimental research by Boettcher and Cobb (2006) suggests that how casualties are framed by the media and elites also influences their impact on the public's support for war.
[2] For a critique of this view, see (Berinsky and Druckman 2007).
[3] But see (Baum 2004).

of support for war." This is problematic, for in public debates concerning war citizens probability do not take a simple average or a random draw of those arguments articulated by presidents, members of Congress, interest groups, international organizations, or anyone else. Rather, citizens may privilege the arguments advanced by some political elites while discounting the arguments of others. And the likelihood of either eventuality likely depends upon the political identity of these elites and the predispositions of various groups of citizens to believe or reject their claims.

Lacking extensive background knowledge and relevant everyday experiences on which to evaluate various elite claims about war, citizens may rationally focus more on the identity of the sender, and less on the quality of the information itself, when updating their own beliefs. But with just the one exception,[4] none of the above studies, nor any others of which we are aware, systematically investigates the possibility that an elite group's ability to influence public opinion on war depends on the perceived credibility of the signals it sends to different segments of the American population. And so doing, these studies risk under-estimating the capacity of different political groups, under certain conditions, to influence public opinion.

Section II: The Credibility of Elite Signals

When citizens witness political debate, they are not exposed to free-floating claims and queries, posed generically in the form: "Some people argue X, other people argue Y. Which comes closer to your belief?" Claims about X and Y come from the mouths of people, and who these people are can have a major impact on the probability that different members of the public will endorse their views. At least since Hovland and Weiss (1951), Asch (1987(1952)) and McGuire (1968), scholars have recognized the importance of source effects—that is, the ways in which characteristics of a messenger affect the persuasive appeal of a message.[5] Who articulates an argument may matter just as much as the structure, substantive content, or language of the argument itself.[6] As Lupia and McCubbins (1998, p. 201) note, when confronted with a variety of claims, "people are selective about whom they choose to believe." And according to Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey (1987, p. 24), "news from … different sources is likely to have quite a range of salience and credibility, and therefore quite a range of impact on the public." The challenge, then, is to identify the conditions under which different kinds of sources advancing different kinds of arguments appear most persuasive.

To begin, we stipulate the following: elites have incentives to characterize policies in ways that suit their own private interests, which may or may not align with the

[4] (Groeling and Baum 2007).

[5] The distinguishing characteristics of what scholars intermittently call "sources" (Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey 1987, p. 23), "agents" (Downs 1957, p. 203), or "political brand names" (Tomz and Sniderman 2005) are especially pertinent in foreign policy debates, where citizens generally are less equipped to evaluate the substantive merits of competing claims. For recent studies of source effects, see (Kuklinski and Hurley 1994; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991; Tomz and Sniderman 2005).

[6] Notably, source effects differ from notions of framing or priming, which have received extensive study elsewhere. Rather than scrutinize the content, language, or logical ordering of arguments, we examine how the political characteristics of elites who articulate these arguments condition their persuasive appeal for various segments of the public. We are less interested in the relevance of an argument's formulation and more in the identity of the person who, or organization that, expresses it.

interests of their constituents. This basic fact about politics, which is the primary subject of studies of representation, produces all sorts of complications as claims about foreign crises and the efficacy of military action are transmitted from elites to mass publics. For when listening to elite debate, average citizens have ample cause for skepticism. Unfortunately, though, most lack the independent information required to distinguish meaningful communications from pure propaganda. On what basis can citizens possibly decide whether or not to believe an elite's claims about war? When, for instance, should citizens affirm proffered assessments of nuclear programs in Iraq, Iran, and North Korea? or of human rights abuses in Tibet, the Balkans, or Sudan? or of civil strife in Algeria, Haiti, or China? And in each instance, how do citizens then go about deciding whether to accept accompanying recommendations about the optimal U.S. response? Answers, we suggest, partially depend upon the political identity of the sender of the signal, the political orientation of the receiver, and the content of the message itself.

Under reasonably well specified conditions, political elites may convey either of two persuasive appeals about the state of foreign affairs and the appropriate policy response.[7] The first we label "trusted" signals. Since Crawford and Sobel's seminal article (1982), a massive game theoretic literature illustrates the ways in which shared preferences enable parties with asymmetric information to communicate with one another,[8] and a number of scholars have recently applied these insights to mass-elite relations. Citizens, both McCubbins and Lupia (1998) and Druckman (2001a) find, are especially responsive to cues offered by political elites with whom they most closely align. Similarly, Groeling (2001) finds that citizens view fellow partisans as more reliable sources of political information than partisan opponents. In all accounts, citizens tend to believe elites within their own party not because they have independent information to corroborate their views; but rather because citizens know that, on average, these elites will likely draw the same conclusions about the merits of a specific policy that the citizens would were they privy to the elites' private information. As a result, Democrats tend to believe Democrats, and Republicans tend to believe Republicans. Across party lines, meanwhile, much discounting occurs.

Elite cues are also likely to be influential if they are deemed "costly" by the recipient—that is, when a claim self evidently conflicts with its advocate's prior political commitments or more narrow self-interests. Scholars have long argued that citizens can distinguish costly and cheap talk, and that they naturally place more weight on the former than the latter.[9] When political elites break from their parties, they forsake partisan ties and the electoral gains they afford; and precisely because of this, the literature on

---

[7] Ours plainly is not an exhaustive list. For general differences in the persuasive power of appeals made by various government and non-governmental sources, see (Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey 1987); for the reinforcing effects of partisanship, see (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995); and for the effects of an elite's race, see (Kuklinski and Hurley 1994); and for the effects of an elite's perceived credibility, see (Druckman 2001a; Druckman 2001b). It may also be the case that in debates specific to war, veterans may wield more influence over public opinion than do non-veterans (Feaver and Gelpi 2004).

[8] Applications within political science range from analyses of committee-floor relations (Krehbiel 1992) to congressional-executive relations (Epstein and O'Halloran 1999) to interest group-legislative relations (Grossman and Helpman 2002).

[9] For general discussions on the value of costly signals, see (Dutton 1973; Eagly, Wood, and Chaiken 1978; Koeske and Crano 1968; Lupia and McCubbins 1998). For related work on disconfirming signals, see (Sears and Whitney 1973).

signaling argues, citizens have a stronger basis upon which to accept the substantive content of elites' arguments. Citizens, therefore, have reason to privilege critiques of a president's foreign policies from his partisan supporters and demonstrations of support from his partisan opponents (Groeling and Baum 2007).[10] The notion here is simple enough. More information about the quality of a foreign policy is conveyed when a Republican member of Congress opposes a Republican president's foreign policy initiative than when a Democratic member of Congress does so.

For trusted and costly signals to take effect, citizens need not directly witness the appeals made by political elites. The media, instead, may facilitate their transmission. Two facts about media coverage warrant special attention here. First, as other scholars have demonstrated (Baum 2003; Prior 2005), citizens increasingly select media sources that reflect their own ideological orientations; and these media markets, in turn, tend to grant more (and more sympathetic) coverage to those political elites whose partisan affiliation they share, and less (and less sympathetic) coverage to political elites from the opposing party (Baum and Groeling 2004; Baum and Groeling 2005). As such, the media serves the distinct purpose of reaffirming trusted signals, both by increasing the volume of communication between like-minded elites and mass publics, and by disparaging communications that occur across party lines. All media outlets, meanwhile, tend to grant more coverage to a political elite's public appeals when they contradict her partisan affiliation (Baum and Groeling 2004; Baum and Groeling 2005). Compare, by way of example, the disparate amounts of media attention paid to Lindsay Graham's (R-SC) and Ted Kennedy's (D-MA) criticisms of the Bush administration's "war on terror." The probability that different segments of the public are exposed to public appeals also increases when the signal is deemed costly.

Our theoretical expectations are reasonably straightforward: the persuasive appeal of an argument about war should increase when the appeal comes from a like-minded source or it conflicts with the source's ideological precommitments or vested interests. Empirically, though, challenges unavoidably arise when trying to distinguish the relative influence of trusted and costly signals. These signals, after all, can interact with one another (and with altogether different signals) in complex ways. When an individual communicates costly information to individuals who view him as trusted, the persuasiveness of an appeal should peak. But expectations about the relative magnitude of a signal's effect are less clear when they are merely trusted, merely costly, or neither.

As a practical matter, it may not be possible to identify the independent influence of each type of signal in every communication between political elites and mass publics. By carefully tracing the kinds of arguments that different elites advance and mass publics receive, however, we can gain some insight into the joint effects of trusted and costly signals. Analyzing observational data on congressional debates over the Iraq War and three survey experiments, the next two sections initiate the empirical testing of source effects on public opinion and war.

Section III: The Iraq War, 2003-2006

We begin with a study of the linkages between elite discourse and public opinion on the Iraq War. Throughout the period of investigation, President George W. Bush

[10] This logic has been applied in such variety contexts as inter-state relations (Kydd 2005), employer hiring and promotion decisions (Spence 1973), and gender relations (Grafen 1990).

steadfastly supported the war. Within Congress, however, a wider range of views emerged, providing a basis for exploring the influence of trusted and costly signals. To wit, we identified 5,118 "speeches" in the House and Senate on the Iraq War between the war's outbreak in March 2003 and May 2006.[11] We coded each as being supportive or critical of the president.[12] Of these more than 5,000 speeches, 35 percent of were supportive, and 65 percent were critical. Those speeches constitute the sample frame.

Figure 1 presents the weighted daily volume of speeches made by Democratic and Republican members of Congress. Within each panel considerable variation is observed; and across panels, the four series often peak at roughly the same periods, when members of Congress debated different aspects of the war. At least three major peaks in the volume and valence of the congressional rhetoric are significant. The first spike captures the October 2003 debate over the initial $87 billion supplemental appropriations bill to fund continued military operations and reconstruction in Iraq. The debate over the spending bill precipitated the first major outburst of vocal Democratic opposition to the war; yet, it also prompted a vigorous defense of the Bush administration's war policies among Republicans and many Democrats. A second, albeit smaller increase in congressional activity emerged around the 400 day mark of the war with the revelations of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib and the release of General Antonio Taguba's report documenting the atrocities. The disclosure prompted increased attacks on the administration's prosecution of the war from many Democrats, but also a spike in supportive statements from Republicans and from some Democrats reiterating their commitment to the war effort despite the setbacks. A final surge in activity in at least three of the four series was in response to Representative John Murtha's (D-PA) call for withdrawing American forces from Iraq in November of 2005 (approximately 1,000 days into the war) and the ensuing debate on a series of competing resolutions staking out contrasting positions on the merits of withdrawal or staying the course.

Beginning with the upper left panel and moving counterclockwise, the speeches, from the vantage point of Democratic citizens, are merely trusted, both trusted and costly, neither trusted nor costly, and merely costly. From the vantage point of Republican respondents, the same speeches are neither costly nor trusted, merely costly, merely trusted, and both trusted and costly. To estimate the influence of such signals, we estimate a simple model that posits citizen support for the war, which is presented in figure 2, as a function of Democratic and Republican congressional speeches, information about the conduct of the war, recent economic developments, and fixed

[11] We defined a congressional speech as any statement by a member of Congress printed in the *Congressional Record* that met at least one of two criteria: a) addressed the situation in Iraq at some point in a direct manner, rather than referring to the war only in passing; or b) contained at least one substantive argument either supporting or opposing the initial decision to invade Iraq or the present course of the American military operation there. Any speech meeting the second criterion, by definition, also met the first. Of the 5,118 speeches so identified, 4,998 contained at least one substantive argument. Replicating the analysis with only this subset of speeches yields identical results. Speeches were identified through full text searches of all statements in the *Congressional Record* containing the word "Iraq."

[12] We examined the inter-coder reliability for a subset of 100 speeches. In only one case did one coder argue that a speech supported the president and another that it opposed him.

effects for polling outfits. The following regression appropriately accounts for temporal dynamics in the time series:[13]

$$Support_{pit} = \alpha + B_1 DemAppeals + B_2 GOPAppeals + B_3 PresAppeals_{t-1} + B_4 Unemployment_t +$$
$$B_5 CPI_t + B_6 PosEvents_{t-1} + B_7 NegEvents_{t-1} + B_8 \log(\sum_{t=0}^{t} Casualties_t) +$$
$$B_9 Pew_i + B_{10} CBS_i + B_{11} Newsweek_i + B_{12} Quinnipiac_i + \varepsilon_{it}$$

The dependent variable identifies the level of public support for the president's decision to go to war in poll *i* among citizens of party *p* at time *t*, which is a quarterly counter that begins at the war's initiation.[14] Separate regressions are estimated for Democratic and Republican citizens. The first and second terms identify appeals by Democratic and Republican members of Congress over different periods of time, which explains why subscripts are missing. The next term identifies the number of presidential appeals, all of which were positive, during the quarter prior to a poll. As economic indicators, we include measures of unemployment and inflation. To account for progress in the war itself, we include two terms that identify the number of "positive" and "negative" events in Iraq during the quarter prior to a poll.[15] Consistent with scholars who argue that the public is sensitive to a war's human toll, we control for the logged cumulative number of casualties over the conflict's duration. Finally, because we pool results from differing polls, we Kalman filter the dependent variable and include fixed effects for different polling outfits.[16] Appendix A includes summary statistics on all variables.

How we characterize the appeals made by Democratic and Republican members of Congress very much depends upon what underlying model of citizen persuasion we think is operational. In this paper, we explore two possibilities—one that focuses on longer term assessments of congressional appeals, the other on shorter term perturbations. We consider each in turn.

Two Models of Citizen Updating

---

[13] Autocorrelation functions and partial autocorrelation functions occasionally reveal evidence of different moving average processes. Having made the appropriate corrections in each regression, a Dickey-Fuller rejects the null hypothesis that the errors contain a unit root.

[14] The question wording varied slightly across the five polling organization. To control for this, we include fixed effects for each outfit in our regressions. The most frequently asked survey question was by CBS and was worded as follows: "Looking back, do you think the United States did the right thing in taking military action against Iraq, or should the U.S. have stayed out?"

[15] Following previous scholars' attempts to track critical events in the ongoing course of a war (Brace and Hinckley 1992; Gronke and Brehm 2002), positive and negative events for Iraq were identified using the annual chronologies of the *World Almanac* and the *Time Almanac*. Example of positive events include: the fall of Baghdad; the capture of Saddam Hussein; the transfer of sovereignty from the United States to a provisional Iraqi government; and the successful staging of free elections. Examples of negative events include: the assassination of the UN envoy to Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, in August of 2003; the bloody Fallujah offensive after the mutilation of five American contractors; and the issuance of the final report finding no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

[16] We Kalman filter the public opinion data both to account for differences in the size of each poll and the uneven spacing between them, and to distinguish actual opinion change from random sampling variability (Green, Gerber, and de Boef 1999; Hamilton 1986).

Over the last two decades, a substantial literature has scrutinized the cognitive processes by which individuals incorporate information into their political evaluations. From this research, two models of the survey response stand out. One group of scholars led by Milton Lodge has argued that citizens' widespread inability to recall specific reasons or evidence for their political evaluations does not mean that political information imparted by elites has no influence on opinion formation. Rather, Lodge and his colleagues argue that citizens, being cognitive misers, incorporate elite cues as they are received into an online tally and then discard the specific information that prompted the updating (Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh 1989; Lodge, Steenbergen, and Brau 1995; Lodge, Stroh, and Wahlke 1990; McGraw, Lodge, and Stroh 1990). Through this process, citizens produce an overall evaluation based on the myriad information they have received, even though they usually cannot recall many of the specifics underlying their judgments. Thus, the online tally perspective suggests that cumulative measures of relevant elite signals on Iraq should correlate with opinion change on the war.

To generate measures that are consistent with models of online processing, we identify all speeches made by members of each party from the war's outbreak to the conduct of a poll, and then calculate the proportion of these speeches that opposed the president. To account for the speeches' varying lengths, we weight each by its word count. Notions of trusted signals suggest that Democratic citizens should follow Democratic members of Congress, just as Republican citizens follow Republican members. Because they aggregate both positive and negative speeches, these measures do not provide a basis upon which to evaluate the influence of costly signals.

The findings, which are presented in table 1, show strong evidence of trusted signals. The expressed views of Democratic respondents covary with those of Democratic members of Congress; and by almost exactly the same magnitude, the views of Republican members of Congress covary with those of Republican respondents.[17] The magnitudes of the correlations associated with trusted signals are large, with a five percentage point increase in the measures of criticism coming from the parties corresponding with a four and a half percentage point decline in support for the war. The cumulative percentage of Republican speeches against the war bears no relationship with the beliefs of Democratic respondents. Changes in the cumulative percentage of Democratic speeches criticizing the war, meanwhile, did influence the thinking of Republican respondents, albeit in exactly the opposite way one might expect. Though Democratic speeches plainly were not trusted from the vantage point of Republican respondents, rising levels of Democratic criticisms induced more support for the president among his copartisans, a finding about which we will have more to say later in the paper.

[17] These findings appear robust to alternative model specifications. We have estimated models with unweighted cumulative speech measures, raw and Kalman filtered public opinion data, lagged realizations of the dependent variable, general presidential approval measures, lagged and contemporary realizations of the economic indicators, unweighted measures of presidential appeals, linear versions of casualty figures, the inclusion of a misery index, the identification of positive and negative events during the month prior to a poll, indicators of progress in Iraqi reconstruction such as monthly electricity production figures and subsets of each of the covariates in the models reported. To address Berinsky's (2007) concern that cumulative casualty figures are collinear with time, we also have estimated models that include only recent casualty figures. In each instance, the main findings hold.

The estimated effects for the other covariates are generally intuitive. Presidential appeals bolster support among Republicans, but depress support among Democrats. Republican respondents appear less likely to support the war in the aftermath of negative events; and respondents from both parties are more likely to support the war following positive events, though these effects are not significant. As casualties mount, Democratic support declines. Effects associated with the various economic indicators are generally sporadic. The fixed effects for polling outfits are jointly significant, with Quinnipiac, CBS, and Time yielding consistently lower levels of support among both Democrats and Republicans.[18]

A second model of the survey response contends that citizens' political judgments are the product of the most salient considerations in their minds at the precise moment of decision. Proponents of "top of the head" models posit that survey responses reflect the first considerations that come to mind when a question is asked (Taylor and Fiske 1978). Other scholars, led by John Zaller and Stanley Feldman, relax the assumption that a single perspective or piece of information is dominant and instead argue that individuals average across a range of salient considerations when constructing their responses (Zaller 1992; Zaller and Feldman 1992). In both models, temporally proximate information primed by recent elite cues should drive opinion formation. This suggests that shorter term measures of relevant congressional cues on Iraq should also correlate with changing opinion on the war.

To generate measures of public appeals that are broadly consistent with top-of-the-head models, we calculate the weighted daily volume of positive and negative appeals made by Republicans and Democrats during the quarter preceding a poll. By creating separate measures that draw independently from each of the series in Figure 1, we now can evaluate the influence of both trusted and costly signals. Table 2 presents the results of a regression that relates these four measures to public support for the war.[19]

When examining recent perturbations in the various time series, we find that the views of respondents from both parties correlate with elite appeals that are both costly and trusted. Democratic respondents register higher levels of support for the war in the immediate aftermath of Democratic speeches that support the president; and Republican respondents register lower levels of support following Republican speeches criticizing the president. We do not observe any relationship between the views expressed by Democratic and Republican respondents and speeches that are merely trusted, merely costly, or neither. Among the other covariates, we now find evidence that positive events in the preceding quarter boost support for the war among both Democratic and Republican respondents; and that casualties depress support among respondents from the two parties. None of the economic indicators now appear significant. All of the other estimated effects look much like they did in table 1.

---

[18] The effects for polling outfits are almost certainly the result of their unequal distribution over time. Pew and Newsweek accounted for over 52 percent of all polls querying support for the decision to invade Iraq during the first 18 months of the war, when support was it its highest. By contrast, over the next 21months of the conflict, Pew and Newsweek sponsored only 27 percent of the surveys in our sample.

[19] As with the findings presented in table 1, these models are robust to wide variety of alternative model specifications. The one exception, however, concerns the period over which speeches are aggregated. When surveying elite appeals over periods less than three months, the findings become unstable, largely because of the sporadic attention paid to the issue of Iraq by members of Congress.

On the whole, then, models that account for the possibility of online processing provide strong support for the influence of trusted signals; and models that are more consistent with memory-based theories of survey response yield significant effect only when elite appeals are both trusted and costly. When interpreting these findings, however, two sources of ambiguity linger. First, both the content and timing of congressional and presidential speeches may reflect, even as they inform, public opinion about the Iraq War. Unfortunately, it is difficult even to conceive of a proper set of instruments that would identify an appropriate system of equations specifying the complex relationships between congressional Republican, congressional Democratic, and presidential appeals and public opinion.[20] The results presented above, therefore, do not permit causal inferences about the relationship between elites and mass publics. Rather, they merely demonstrate that the views of certain segments of the public track more or less closely to the articulated views of certain parties in Congress.

The second concern relates to the transmission of signals from Congress to the public. Signals can only have their intended effect if they are actually received by the American people. But because of the public's fickle levels of attentiveness to politics (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1997), politicians' variable levels of access to the media (Entman 2004), and the previously discussed self-selection of citizens into increasingly differentiated media markets (Baum 2003; Prior 2005), the mere fact that someone within Washington sends a trusted or costly signal does not ensure that every household receives it. It remains uncertain, therefore, whether certain segments of public opinion respond (or do not respond) to elite cues because of the credibility of the signals sent, or because different citizens do (or do not) hear the various types of messages emitted from Washington. The experiments presented below attend to these endogeneity and exposure concerns.

Section IV: Three Experiments

In the spring of 2006 we conducted three simple experiments that manipulate the transmission of different messages by different elites to different mass publics. So doing, these experiments augment our capacity to infer the relative influence of political elites on the public's willingness to support a president's war.[21] The first experiment concerns an ongoing military venture about which respondents already know a great deal; the second and third experiments propose new hypothetical military ventures. The basic structure of all three experiments is identical. With a nationally representative sample of 1,617 adults,[22] we randomly assigned individuals to one of nine (one baseline, eight treatment) conditions that presented various vignettes about the foreign policy positions of the president and either congressional Republicans or Democrats, the United Nations, or international aid organizations. The president's position was always stated first, while that of other political elites followed. Respondents then were asked whether they supported the president's preferred policy.

[20] Some plausible instruments, such as whether or not Congress is in session, permit the identification of overall congressional activity. They do not allow us, however, to distinguish Republican from Democratic and positive from negative speeches within Congress.

[21] These experiments were conducted in coordination with Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences and Knowledge Networks.

[22] We had a completion rate of 70.3 percent, and a response rate of 30.6 percent.

Experiment #1: An Ongoing Military Venture in Iraq

In the first experiment, subjects assigned to the baseline condition were told the following: "According to President Bush, considerable progress is being made toward building a stable, democratic government in Iraq. President Bush opposes setting a fixed timetable for withdrawal of American troops from Iraq." Subjects then were asked whether they "strongly agreed," "agreed," "somewhat agreed," "neither agreed nor disagreed," "somewhat disagreed," "disagreed," or "strongly disagreed" with the following statement: "The U.S. government should not set a fixed timetable for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq." Agreement, as such, connotes support for Bush's policy, and disagreement connotes opposition.

For each of the treatment conditions, subjects read exactly the same text on Bush and were asked exactly the same question. After learning Bush's position, however, subjects were told that either "many Democrats within Congress," "many Republicans within Congress," "many members of the United Nations," or "many international aid organizations" either agreed or disagreed with the president's claims, and that these individuals or groups either supported or opposed setting a fixed timetable for the withdrawal of troops. The four groups and two positions generate the eight treatment conditions (4x2=8) that complete the experiment.

The treatment conditions that include the United Nations and international aid organizations permit further investigations of the influence of trusted and costly signals. A primary objective of both organizations is to avoid war, or at least to reduce the incidence of suffering that it causes. As such, whenever either organization supports military action, its appeal can appropriately be labeled costly. Additionally, survey evidence suggests that Democrats vest greater faith in the United Nations' judgment than do Republicans (Center 2005; Jones 2006; Jones and Carroll 2005). We know of no evidence, though, that suggests that Democrats think more highly of international aid organizations than do Republicans. We should expect, then, that appeals supporting the president's martial policy made by either the United Nations or an aid organization should influence the views of Democratic respondents (for whom the appeals are both costly and trusted) and Republican respondents (for whom the appeals are costly). U.N. opposition may influence Democratic respondents (for whom the appeal is trusted but not costly) but not Republicans (for whom the appeal is neither trusted nor costly). Finally, opposition by an international aid organization may influence both Democratic and Republican respondents (for whom the appeal is trusted but not costly).

Several features about the experiment deserve notice, each of which reduces the probability of observing evidence of source effects. First, in order to recognize the president's privileged stature in public debates about war, Bush's position was always listed first. Second, the experiment focused on an issue that had received extensive media attention by the time the experiment was conducted. Third, the "treatment" itself was quite modest. Respondents only received the president's view of the situation in Iraq—namely, that considerable progress was being made—and when the treatment conditions introduced the positions of other political elites, they offered no new information about or competing characterizations of the state of the world. In this experimental context, the only way other elites could influence public opinion was by expressing their mere support for or opposition to the president's position. Given the sharp political divisions

surrounding the Iraq War at the time the experiment was conducted (Jacobson 2006), it is quite possible that baseline partisan differences may swamp our admittedly subtle treatment effects.

Table 3 presents the main results. Each of the figures represents respondents' average levels of support for the president's position.[23] Possible responses ranged from 1 to 7, with higher values representing greater support for the president's position and lower values representing less support. As one might expect, Democrats (column 1) and Republicans (column 2) differ markedly from one another. In the baseline condition (row 1), the mean Republican response was "somewhat agree" (4.65 on the 1-7 scale), as compared to "somewhat disagree" (3.32) for Democrats. This difference is both substantively and statistically significant.[24]

Across the experimental conditions, the expressed views of Democratic respondents appeared reasonably resilient. When told that Republican or Democratic members of Congress, the United Nations, or international aid organizations opposed the president's position, Democratic respondents consistently offered lower levels of support, on average, than in the baseline condition. Only the effect associated with Republican members of Congress, however, appears statistically significant. We do not find any evidence, meanwhile, that support from any of these sources induced higher levels of support for the president's position. The widespread disaffection with the Iraq War among Democrats, combined with the fact that at the time of the experiment every elite constituency except Republicans voiced criticisms of the war, may have negated the assigned positive treatments.

Republican respondents, by contrast, appeared sensitive to affirmations of the president's claim, but not criticisms. When told that Republican or Democratic members of Congress, the United Nations, or international aid organizations supported the president, Republican respondents consistently offered higher levels of support for the president's position than in the baseline condition. Here, though, the only effect that is statistically significant is for Democratic members of Congress. When told that elites opposed the president, meanwhile, Republican respondents appeared unaffected. Indeed, the only significant effect observed in rows 2-5 suggests a positive stimulus. Among Republican respondents, support for the president actually *increased* when they were told that Democratic members of Congress opposed the president. Once again, we find evidence that Democratic criticisms caused Republican respondents not to waver in their support for the Iraq War, but instead to rally behind their president.

Experiments #2 and #3: Proposed Military Ventures in Liberia and Eritrea

[23] Because respondents were randomly assigned to control and treatment conditions, the differences in means reported in Table 1 are unbiased. To ensure that the randomization worked, we compared the background characteristics of subjects assigned to the nine conditions. We find no evidence of systematic demographic differences across the treatment conditions. There are modest efficiency gains, however, from pooling the observations and estimating regressions that include background controls. We have estimated a series of multivariate models, which yield results that virtually mirror those observed in Tables 2 and 3.

[24] These samples include respondents who self-identify as "lean Democrat" and "lean Republican." When dropping these individuals, the observed differences between Democrats and Republicans are even larger.

Two additional experiments, each with exactly the same structure as the first, shift attention to proposed military deployments.[25] In the first instance, the president recommends military action against Eritrea, claiming that its government harbors terrorists; and in the second, he recommends military action against Liberia, claiming that its government commits human rights atrocities. In each vignette, the same assembly of political elites either expresses support for or opposition to the president. Respondents then are asked whether they support military action.

These scenarios, of course, are entirely hypothetical. Though both Eritrea and Liberia might have been considered new targets of military action, at the time of the experiment the president had not advocated deploying troops to either nation. These hypothetical scenarios, however, should yield additional insights into the relevance of source effects in public debates about war. Specifically, these experiments serve three purposes:[26] first, they direct people's attention to an entirely new military venture, the politics of which differ markedly from those of an ongoing military campaign;[27] second, they examine public opinion in a context where people's views remained poorly informed, and hence where stronger evidence of source effects should appear;[28] and third, they facilitate the plausible manipulation of different political elites' positions.

Table 4 presents the main findings. Respondents from the president's party again were more supportive of military action on average than members of the opposition party. Respondents from both parties tended to express lower levels of support for military action when political elites opposed the president, and higher levels of support when political elites lined up behind the president. Interestingly, Republicans appeared more supportive of military action when the precipitating crisis concerned terrorism, while the baseline differences for Democratic respondents are indistinguishable from one another. And all groups expressed less support for future military operations in Eritrea and Liberia than they did for staying the course in Iraq.

The responses of Democrats are considerably more malleable in the latter experiments than they were in the first. In the Eritrea experiment, when either the United Nations or international aid organizations supported the president, Democratic respondents expressed higher levels of support; and when Republican members of Congress or international aid organizations opposed the president, Democratic respondents expressed lower levels of support. In the Liberia experiment, United Nations opposition depleted the president's support among Democratic respondents; just as support from the United Nations augmented it.

Relative to the baseline conditions in the two experiments, significant increases in Republican support for the presidential use of force intermittently appeared when either Republican members of Congress, international aid organizations, or the United Nations came out in support; and significant declines in Republican support emerged when

[25] Within the survey, respondents always answered the question about Iraq last. The order of the other two experiments was randomized.

[26] Respondents were not informed that these scenarios were strictly hypothetical until after the experiment was completed.

[27] See, for example, (Russett 1990).

[28] As other scholars have shown, citizens who know less about a chosen policy are more susceptible to a wide range of framing influences (Druckman 2004). But see Zaller (1992; 1994a) and Berinsky (2005), who find that respondents with higher levels of political information to be both more responsive to elite cues than low information respondents.

Republican members of Congress and international aid organizations opposed the use of force. In the Liberia experiment, for the third time we find evidence that opposition from Democratic members of Congress induces higher levels of support for the president among his co-partisans.

Relating the Experimental Findings to Trusted and Costly Signals

Many, though not all, of the observed differences across baseline and treatment conditions in the three experiments can be attributed to either trusted or costly signals. Consistent with expectations about trusted signals, Republican respondents consistently took cues from Republican members of Congress. Though the differences are not always statistically significant, Republican respondents appeared more likely to support the president when their party in Congress supported him, and less likely when their party in Congress opposed him. And in line with theories of costly signals, when Democratic members of Congress came out in support of a presidential use of force, respondents from both parties appeared more likely to support the president; and when Republican members of Congress came out in opposition to the president, respondents from both parties expressed lower levels of support.

Traces of costly and trusted signals are also observed when considering the treatment conditions involving the United Nations and international aid organizations. United Nations opposition did not consistently influence the views of Republican respondents one way or another. But in all three experiments, United Nations opposition depressed support among Democratic respondents, and in one of the three instances the effect was statistically significant. When opposition is articulated by an international aid organization, meanwhile, partisan differences attenuate. For both Democratic and Republican respondents, negative effects are uniformly observed for both groups. Finally, support from the United Nations and international aid organizations consistently induced higher levels of support among both Democratic and Republican respondents, with significant effects observed at least once for both groups.

Other findings do not match with theory quite so neatly. Most interestingly, among Republican respondents, Democratic opposition to the president (a signal that is neither trusted nor costly) actually increased support for the president in two of three experiments, as it did in the observational studies as well.[29] It is possible that when told that Democrats oppose the president, Republicans engaged in "counter arguing" that reaffirmed their support for the president (Mutz 1998). Additionally, the perceived stridency of Democratic dissent that received such prominent media coverage at the time of this experiment also may have contributed to Republicans' reticence to support any policy endorsed by the opposition party.[30] Whatever the explanation, though, these findings suggest that opposition voiced by some political elites occasionally can be counterproductive, at least when directed at partisan opponents within the public.

Additionally, there is the puzzling unresponsiveness of Democratic respondents to the trusted signals from their co-partisan elites. In five of the six cases, the change from

[29] Groeling and Baum (2007) also find evidence of a backlash effect, whereby Democratic opposition increases Republican support for the president's national security policies.

[30] Just before the experiment was fielded, Representative John Murtha (D-PA) stoked the partisan fires by coming out in opposition to the war, openly criticizing the president, and calling for the troops' immediate withdrawal.

the baseline is in the expected direction, but in no case is the difference statistically significant. Republicans, by contrast, proved much more receptive to the trusted signals of their party's congressional elite. Republicans also constituted the only group to register the kinds of backlash effects noted above.

Obviously, more experiments must be conducted before strong conclusions can be drawn about the interplay of trusted and costly signals. What is immediately clear, though, is that average citizens do pay attention to the political identity of elites who advance arguments about either the ongoing or prospective use of military force. Surveying the differences across treatment conditions and disaggregating the results for Republicans and Democrats reveals considerable variability in the willingness of different citizens to support the use of military force. And in most cases, observed effects can meaningfully be ascribed to the persuasive appeal of trusted and/or costly signals.

Section V: Conclusion

How do citizens begin to decipher claims that a contemporary war is going especially well, that the nation's geo-strategic interests are best served by the military's continued presence, or that situations in others parts of the globe have become sufficiently dire to warrant altogether new deployments? At first blush, citizens seem woefully ill-equipped for the task. With little knowledge of foreign affairs generally, and even less about specific crises occurring internationally, citizens might indiscriminately await direction from any and all political elites.

This depiction of elite-public communications about war, we argue, overstates matters considerably. Even when they lack substantive knowledge of a particular policy proposal, citizens can (and do) reflect critically upon the arguments advanced about both ongoing and prospective military ventures. In political life, after all, arguments about war, as with arguments about all policies, do not circulate singly. Rather, elites advance the arguments. And knowing the political identity of these elites, citizens have a stronger basis upon which to evaluate their claims.

Previous research demonstrates rather convincingly that public opinion unifies around a military action when political elites rally behind the president, and that public opinion divides just when elite opinion divides. The literature on public opinion and war, however, has said close to nothing about the specific characteristics of elite-mass communications that produce this aggregate effect. Additionally, most of the existing literature overlooks the particular conditions under which appeals effectively persuade certain segments of the American public and the conditions under which such appeals either founder or backfire.

This paper focuses on two types of elite communications, which we label trusted and costly signals, that predictably influence public opinion on war. The former refers to the propensity of citizens to mimic the policy preferences of their co-partisans, and the latter to the tendency of all citizens to privilege arguments that would appear to conflict with a political elite's self interest or ideological priors. Knowing very little about ground operations in Iraq and nothing about purely hypothetical conditions in Liberia and Eritrea, we have shown that citizens sort themselves in systematic ways in response to the kinds of arguments that different elites, manifesting unambiguous political characteristics, offer to the American public. When Republicans support Bush's foreign policy and Democrats oppose it, citizens within each of their respective parties update their views accordingly.

And when Republicans oppose the president and Democrats support him, all citizens take notice.

These findings, we suggest, concern more than just the heuristics poorly informed citizens utilize when trying to interpret elite discourse on foreign policy. They also speak to scholars' characterization of what David Mayhew (2000, p. xi) calls the "public sphere"—that is, the "realm of shared American consciousness in which government officials and others make moves before an attentive stratum of the public, and in which society's preference formation, politics, and policymaking all substantially take place." Mayhew points out that much of politics consists of jockeying over positions and making "moves" designed to shape public discussions about a range of policy issues. The findings presented here suggest that under reasonably well specified conditions, members of Congress, international organizations, and interest groups can each meaningfully participate in such debates and influence public opinion even in a policy domain where all admit that the president has extraordinary advantages.

This is of some consequence. As a number of scholars have recently demonstrated (Howell and Pevehouse 2007; Kriner 2006), members of Congress typically challenge executive supremacy in matters involving war not by passing restrictive legislation or slashing budgets, but by going public, delivering speeches, staging hearings and investigations, and making the rounds on the talk-show circuit. The findings presented here suggest that such appeals can either bolster or diminish the public's willingness to back the presidential use of force. Observed changes in public opinion, however, very much depend upon the political identity of the messenger, the content of the message, and the partisan affiliation of the listening public—a fact that has implications both for scholarship that relies upon highly aggregated data to assess the relationship between elite position-taking and public opinion, and for contemporary assessments of the president's discretion to wage war when, and as, he pleases.

Figure 1: Congressional Speeches Supporting and Opposing Bush

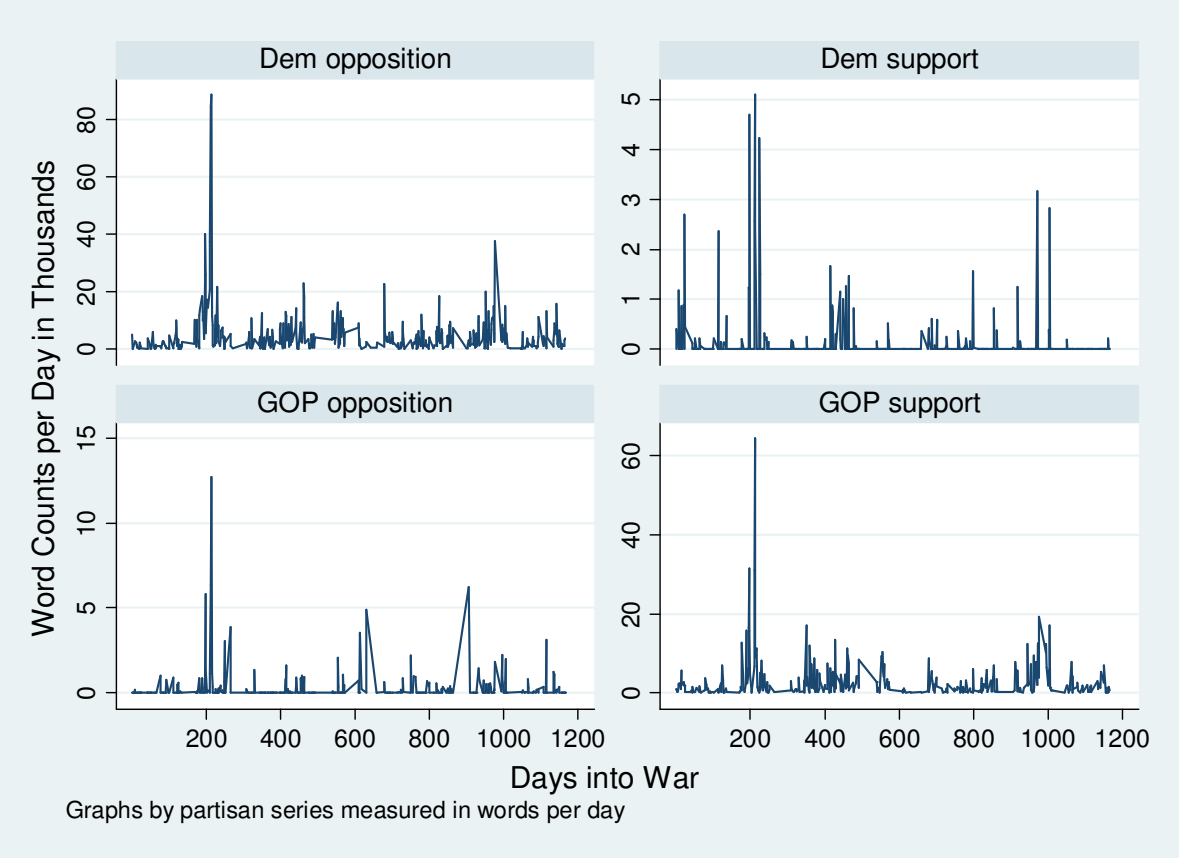

Figure 2: Public Support for the Iraqi Invasion

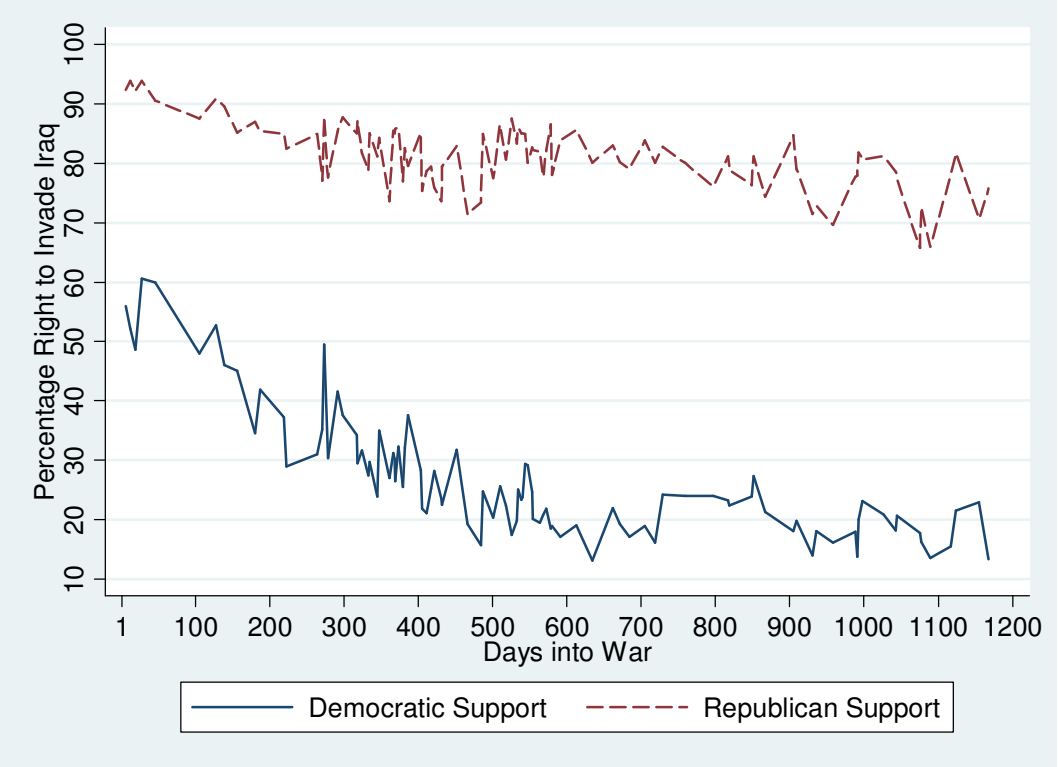

Table 1: Cumulative Congressional Appeals and Support for the Iraq War

	Democrats		Republicans	
Elite Appeals				
Pct Dem speeches opposing Bush (cum)	-0.91**	(0.18)	0.29*	(0.16)
Pct GOP speeches opposing Bush (cum)	0.42	(0.49)	-0.94**	(0.29)
Bush speeches (last quarter)	-2.98**	(1.50)	4.32**	(1.55)
Progress of War				
Positive events (last quarter)	0.42	(0.59)	0.77	(0.50)
Negative events (last quarter)	-0.06	(0.65)	-2.08**	(0.61)
Logged casualties (cumulative)	-9.51**	(1.59)	-0.12	(.91)
Economic Indicators				
Unemployment (current quarter)	-3.04	(3.21)	4.58*	(2.57)
Inflation (current quarter)	-0.19	(1.08)	-1.10	(1.01)
Polling Outfits				
Pew	-0.43	(1.33)	-1.43	(.91)
CBS	-4.33**	(1.18)	-6.52**	(1.10)
Quinnipiac	-6.93**	(1.11)	-3.37**	(1.07)
Time	-2.63*	(1.49)	-3.49**	(1.28)
Constant (Newsweek)	194.74**	(36.98)	42.91	(26.25)
MA(1)	0.29**	(0.09)	--	
Dickey Fuller Test (p-value reported)	.00		.00	
R^2	--		.71	
(N)	97		97	

All models include fixed effects for the five polling outfits administering the surveys and report robust standard errors. All significance tests are two-tailed: * p<.10, two-tailed test; ** p<.05. Democratic and GOP appeals represent the cumulative percentage of speeches opposing the president between the war's outbreak and the current poll. Congressional and presidential speeches are rates per day weighted by their word count (measured in 1,000s). Positive and negative events are scaled as rates per 100 days in the last quarter.

Table 2: Recent Congressional Appeals and Support for the Iraq War

	Democrats		Republicans	
Elite Appeals				
Dem speeches support Bush (last quarter)	42.59**	(17.11)	-1.53	(12.89)
Dem speeches oppose Bush (last quarter)	1.23	(1.50)	2.23	(1.42)
GOP speeches support Bush (last quarter)	-3.73	(2.30)	-2.48	(1.75)
GOP speeches oppose Bush (last quarter)	-12.75	(14.68)	-21.98*	(11.46)
Bush speeches (last quarter)	-4.45**	(1.55)	4.95**	(1.52)
Progress of War				
Positive events (last quarter)	1.18*	(.67)	1.11*	(0.59)
Negative events (last quarter)	0.28	(.85)	-2.04**	(0.74)
Logged casualties (cumulative)	-9.36**	(1.37)	-2.30**	(0.79)
Economic Indicators				
Unemployment (current quarter)	0.68	(3.72)	2.38	(2.32)
Inflation (current quarter)	0.44	(1.21)	-0.34	(0.84)
Polling Outfits				
Pew	-0.51	(1.26)	-1.45	(1.02)
CBS	-4.34**	(1.12)	-6.65**	(1.18)
Quinnipiac	-6.90**	(1.09)	-3.00**	(1.12)
Time	-2.81**	(1.44)	-3.60**	(1.41)
Constant (Newsweek)	89.46**	(29.59)	86.79**	(18.05)
MA(1)	0.36**	(0.12)	--	
MA(2)	0.22**	(0.11)	--	
Dickey Fuller Test (p-value reported)	.00		.00	
R^2	--		.71	
(N)	97		97	

All models include fixed effects for the five polling outfits administering the surveys and report robust standard errors. All significance tests are two-tailed: * p<.10, two-tailed test; ** p<.05. Democratic and GOP appeals represent the total number of speeches supporting or opposing the president during the three months before the poll. Congressional and presidential speeches are rates per day weighted by their word count (measured in 1,000s). Positive and negative events are scaled as rates per 100 days in the last quarter.

Table 3: Experimental Findings on Ongoing Use of Force

	Democrats		Republicans	
Experiment 1: Iraq War				
(1) Baseline condition	3.32	[2.05]	4.65	[2.13]
Treatment conditions that present opposition to the president from:				
(2) GOP Members of Congress	2.90*	[2.04]	4.84	[1.87]
(3) Dem Members of Congress	3.13	[1.91]	5.32*	[1.75]
(4) United Nations	3.04	[1.97]	4.74	[2.08]
(5) Int'l Aid Organizations	3.01	[2.02]	4.44	[2.17]
Treatment conditions that present support for the president from:				
(6) GOP Members of Congress	3.25	[1.87]	4.99	[1.89]
(7) Dem Members of Congress	3.36	[1.90]	5.38*	[1.72]
(8) United Nations	3.10	[1.74]	5.07	[1.90]
(9) Int'l Aid Organizations	3.37	[1.97]	5.01	[1.70]
(N) per condition	75-104		62-90	

Table presents unweighted, mean results on a 7-point scale, where 1 represents strong disagreement with the president's position on Iraq and 7 represents strong agreement. * denotes differences with the baseline condition that are statistically significant at p<.10 on a two-tailed t-test. Standard deviations reported in brackets.

Table 4: Experimental Findings on Prospective Use of Force

	Democrats		Republicans	
Experiment 2: Eritrea				
(1a) Baseline condition	2.63	[1.68]	4.06	[1.72]
Treatment conditions that present opposition to the president from:				
(2a) GOP Members of Congress	2.21*	[1.46]	3.26*	[1.71]
(3a) Dem Members of Congress	2.42	[1.55]	4.00	[1.53]
(4a) United Nations	2.47	[1.56]	3.76	[1.78]
(5a) Int'l Aid Organizations	2.36*	[1.47]	3.53*	[1.70]
Treatment conditions that present support for the president from:				
(6a) GOP Members of Congress	2.56	[1.61]	4.31	[1.77]
(7a) Dem Members of Congress	2.79	[1.76]	4.15	[1.81]
(8a) United Nations	2.99*	[1.61]	4.29	[1.72]
(9a) Int'l Aid Organizations	2.99*	[1.73]	4.34*	[1.70]
(N) per condition	85-97		68-90	
Experiment 3: Liberia				
(1b) Baseline condition	2.55	[1.56]	3.24	[1.52]
Treatment conditions that present opposition to the president from:				
(2b) GOP Members of Congress	2.65	[1.55]	2.97	[1.34]
(3b) Dem Members of Congress	2.63	[1.53]	3.57*	[1.59]
(4b) United Nations	2.24*	[1.46]	3.01	[1.66]
(5b) Int'l Aid Organizations	2.47	[1.66]	3.25	[1.64]
Treatment conditions that present support for the president from:				
(6b) GOP Members of Congress	2.62	[1.60]	3.66*	[1.72]
(7b) Dem Members of Congress	2.74	[1.60]	3.52	[1.69]
(8b) United Nations	2.87*	[1.86]	4.05*	[1.62]
(9b) Int'l Aid Organizations	2.64	[1.73]	3.31	[1.56]
(N) per condition	75-108		65-90	

Table presents unweighted, mean results on a 7-point scale, where 1 represents strong disagreement with the president's position on Iraq and 7 represents strong agreement. * denotes differences with the baseline condition that are statistically significant at p<.10 on a two-tailed t-test. Standard deviations reported in brackets.

Appendix 1: Summary Statistics for Observational Study

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Dependent Variables				
Democratic support for war	26.86	10.73	13.12	60.57
GOP support for war	81.39	5.65	65.80	93.88
Independent Variables				
Pct Dem speeches opposing Bush (cumulative)	95.05	3.73	73.20	97.09
Pct GOP speeches opposing Bush (cumulative)	8.57	2.23	0	11.13
Dem speeches support Bush (last quarter)	0.05	0.07	0	0.28
Dem speeches oppose Bush (last quarter)	1.78	1.36	0.35	6.58
GOP speeches support Bush (last quarter)	0.95	0.71	0.04	3.26
GOP speeches oppose Bush (last quarter)	0.09	0.10	0	0.45
Positive events (last quarter)	0.80	0.87	0	3.57
Negative events (last quarter)	0.73	0.83	0	2.22
Unemployment (current quarter)	5.41	0.40	4.60	6.20
Inflation (current quarter)	2.79	0.75	1.70	4.70
Logged cumulative casualties	6.74	0.82	3.76	7.81
Bush speeches (last quarter)	0.56	0.36	0.16	1.68
Pew	0.32	0.47	0	1
Newsweek	0.08	0.28	0	1
Quinnipiac	0.13	0.34	0	1
Time	0.11	0.31	0	1
CBS	0.35	0.48	0	1

Congressional and presidential speeches are word counts per day (measured in 1,000s). Positive and negative events are rates per 100 days in the last quarter.

References

Ansolabehere, Stephen, and Shanto Iyengar. 1995. *Going Negative: How Political Advertisements Shrink and Polarize the Electorate*. New York: The Free Press.

Asch, Solomon. 1987(1952). *Social Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Baum, Matthew. 2003. *Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the New Media Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Baum, Matthew. 2004. Going Private: Public Opinion, Presidential Rhetoric, and the Domestic Politics of Audience Costs in U.S. Foreign Policy Crises. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48 (5):603-631.

Baum, Matthew, and Timothy Groeling. 2004. Crossing the Water's Edge: Elite Rhetoric, Media Coverage, and the Rally-Rround-the-Flag Phenomenon, 1979-2003. Paper read at Annual Meetings of the American Political Science Association.

Baum, Matthew, and Timothy Groeling. 2005. What Gets Covered?: How Media Coverage of Elite Debate Drives the Rally-'Round-the-Flag Phenomenon, 1979-1998. In *In the Public Domain: Presidents and the Challenges of Public Leadership*, edited by L. Cox Han and D. Heith.

Belknap, George, and Angus Campbell. 1951. Political Party Identification and Attitudes Toward Foreign Policy. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 15:601-623.

Berinsky, Adam. 2005. Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict. Paper read at Annual Meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association, at Chicago.

Berinsky, Adam. 2007. Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict. *Journal of Politics*.

Berinsky, Adam. forthcoming. Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict. *Journal of Politics*.

Berinsky, Adam, and James Druckman. 2007. Public Opinion Research, Presidential Rhetoric, and Support for the Iraq War. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 71 (1):126-141.

Boettcher, William, and Michael Cobb. 2006. Echoes of Vietnam?: Casualty Framing and Public Perceptions of Success and Failure in Iraq. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50:831-854.

Brace, Paul, and Barbara Hinckley. 1992. *Follow the Leader*. New York: Basic Books.

Brody, Richard. 1991. *Assessing the President: The Media, Elite Opinion, and Public Support*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Brody, Richard. 1994. Crisis, War and Public Opinion. In *Taken by Storm: Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*, edited by W. L. Bennett and D. Paletz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Center, Pew Research. 2005. Opinion Leaders Turn Cautious, Public Looks Homeward: America's Place in the World: Pew Research Center.

Crawford, Vincent, and Joel Sobel. 1982. Strategic Information Transmission. *Econometrica* 50:1431-51.

Delli Carpini, Michael, and Scott Keeter. 1997. *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Druckman, James. 2001a. The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence. *Political Behavior* 23:225-256.
Druckman, James. 2001b. On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame? *Journal of Politics* 63:1041-1066.
Druckman, James. 2004. Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects. *American Political Science Review* 98 (4):671-686.
Dutton, Donald. 1973. The Maverick Effect: Increased Communicator Credibility as a Result of Abandoning a Career. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science* 5:145-51.
Eagly, Alice, Wendy Wood, and Shelly Chaiken. 1978. Causal Inferences about Communicators and their Effects on Opinion Change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 36:424-35.
Eichenberg, Richard. 2005. Victory Has Many Friends: US Public Opinion and the Use of Military Force. *International Security* 30:140-177.
Eichenberg, Richard, and Richard Stoll. 2006. War President: The Approval Ratings of George W. Bush. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50 (6):783-808.
Entman, Robert. 2004. *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Epstein, David, and Sharyn O'Halloran. 1999. *Delegating Powers: A Transaction Cost Politics Approach to Policy Making under Separate Powers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Erikson, Robert, and Michael Mackuen. Stimson, James. *The Macro Polity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Feaver, Peter, and Christopher Gelpi. 2004. *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Gelpi, Christopher, Peter Feaver, and Jason Reifler. 2006. Success Matters: Casualty Sensitivity and the War in Iraq. *International Security* 30 (3):7-46.
Gertner, Scott, and Gary Segura. 1998. War, Casualties and Public Opinion. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42 (3):278-300.
Grafen, Alan. 1990. Biological Signals as Handicaps. *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 144:517–546.
Green, Donald, Alan Gerber, and Suzanna de Boef. 1999. Tracking Opinion over Time: A Method for Reducing Sampling Error. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 63:178-92.
Groeling, Tim. 2001. When politicians Attack: The Causes, Contours, and Consequences of Partisan Political Communication: University of California, San Diego.
Groeling, Tim, and Matthew Baum. 2007. Shot by the Messenger: An Experimental Examination of the Effects of Party Cues on Public Opinion Regarding National Security and War: U.C.L.A.
Gronke, Paul, and John Brehm. 2002. History, Heterogeneity, and Presidential Approval: A Modified ARCH Approach. *Electoral Studies* 21:425-52.
Grossman, Gene M., and Elhanan Helpman. 2002. *Special Interest Politics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Hamilton, James. 1986. A Standard Error for the Estimate State Vector of a State-Space Model. *Journal of Econometrics* 33:387-97.

Holsti, Ole. 1996. *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
Hovland, Carl, and Walter Weiss. 1951. The Influence of Source Credibility on Communication Effectiveness. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 15:625-50.
Howell, William, and Jon Pevehouse. 2007. *While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Hurwitz, Jon, and Mark Peffley. 1987. How are Foreign Policy Attitudes Structured? A Hierarchical Model. *American Political Science Review* 81:1099-1120.
Jacobson, Gary. 2006. *Divider, Not a Uniter: George W. Bush and the American People*. New York: Longman.
Jentleson, Bruce. 1992. The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force. *International Studies Quarterly* 36:49-74.
Jentleson, Bruce, and Rebecca Britton. 1998. Stille Pretty Prudent: Post-Cold War American Public Opinion on the Use of Military Force. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42:395-417.
Jones, Jeffrey. 2006. Americans' Ratings of United Nations among Worst Ever. Princeton: NJ: Gallup Organization.
Jones, Jeffrey, and Joseph Carroll. 2005. Public: U.N. Not Doing a Good Job, but Still Necessary. Princeton: New Jersey: Gallup Organization.
Kernell, Samuel. 1978. Explaining Presidential Popularity. *American Political Science Review* 71:44-66.
Koeske, Gary, and William Crano. 1968. The Effect of Congruous and Incongruous Source-Statement Combinations upon the Judged Credibility of a Communication. *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 4:384-99.
Krehbiel, Keith. 1992. *Information and Legislative Organization*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
Kriner, Douglas. 2006. Hollow Rhetoric or Hidden Influence: Domestic Constraints on the Presidential Use of Force, Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
Kuklinski, James, and Norman Hurley. 1994. On Hearing and Interpreting Political Messages: A Cautionary Tail of Citizen Cue-Taking. *Journal of Politics* 56:729-51.
Kydd, Andrew. 2005. *Trust and Mistrust in International Relations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Larson, Eric. 1996. *Casualties and Consensus: The Historical Role of Casualties in Domestic Support for U.S. Military Operations*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand.
Larson, Eric, and Bogdan Savych. 2005. *American Public Support for U.S. Military Operations from Mogadishu to Baghdad*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
Lodge, Milton, Kathleen McGraw, and Patrick Stroh. 1989. An Impression-Driven Model of Candidate Evaluation. *American Political Science Review* 83:399-420.
Lodge, Milton, Marco Steenbergen, and Shawn Brau. 1995. The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation. *American Political Science Review* 89:309-326.
Lodge, Milton, Patrick Stroh, and John Wahlke. 1990. Black-Box Models of Candidate Evaluation. *Political Behavior* 12:5-18.
Lupia, Arthur, and Matthew McCubbins. 1998. *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know?* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mayhew, David R. 2000. *America's Congress: Actions in the Public Sphere, James Madison through Newt Gingrich*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
McCormick, James. 1992. *American Foreign Policy and Process*. Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock Publishers.
McGraw, Kathleen, Milton Lodge, and Patrick Stroh. 1990. On-Line Processing in Candidate Evaluation: The Effects of Issue Order, Issue Importance, and Sophistication. *Political Behavior* 12:41-58.
McGuire, William. 1968. Personality and Susceptibility to Social Influence. In *Handbook of Personality Theory and Research*, edited by E. Borgatta. Chicago: Rand McNally.
Mueller, John. 1970. Presidential Popularity from Truman to Johnson. *American Political Science Review* 64 (1):18-34.
Mueller, John. 1973. *War, Presidents and Public Opinion*. New York: Wiley.
Mutz, Diana. 1998. *Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Oneal, John, Brad Lian, and James Joyner. 1996. Are the American People 'Pretty Prudent'? Public Responses to U.S. Uses of Force, 1950-1988. *International Studies Quarterly* 40:261-279.
Page, Benjamin, Richard Shapiro, and Glenn Dempsey. 1987. What Moves Public Opinion. *American Political Science Review* 81:23-44.
Page, Benjamin, and Robert Shapiro. 1988. Foreign Policy and the Rational Public. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32:211-247.
Prior, Markus. 2005. News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout. *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (3):577-92.
Russett, Bruce. 1990. Economic Decline, Electoral Pressure, and the Initiation of Interstate Conflict. In *Prisoners of War? Nation-States in the Modern Era*, edited by C. Gochman and N. A. Sabrosky. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
Sears, David, and Richard Whitney. 1973. *Political Persuasion*. Norristown, N.J.: General Learning Press.
Sniderman, Paul, Richard Brody, and Phillip Tetlock. 1991. *Reasoning and Choice: Exploration in Political Psychology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Spence, A.M. 1973. *Market Signaling*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Taylor, Shelly, and Susan Fiske. 1978. Salience, Attention and Attribution: Top of the Head Phenomena. In *Advances in Social Psychology*, edited by L. Berkowitz. New York: Academic Press.
Tomz, Michael, and Paul Sniderman. 2005. Brand Names and the Organization of Mass Belief Systems.
Voeten, Erik, and Paul Brewer. 2006. Public Opinion, the War in Iraq, and Presidential Accountability. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50 (6):809-830.
Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Zaller, John. 1994a. Elite Leadership of Mass Opinion: New Evidence from the Gulf War. In *Taken by Storm: Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf*

War, edited by W. L. Bennett and D. Paletz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zaller, John. 1994b. Strategic Politicians, Public Opinion, and the Gulf Crisis. In *Taken by Storm: Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*, edited by W. L. Bennett and D. Paletz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zaller, John, and Stanley Feldman. 1992. A Simple Theory of Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences. *American Journal of Political Science* 36 (3):268-307.