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What You Ask Is What You Get: Citizens’ Support for Military Action, But Not Diplomacy, Depends on Question Framing

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Abstract

Based on decision making literature, we investigated the impact of question framing on support for military versus diplomatic conflict resolution strategies. In three studies with two heterogeneous samples from the U.S. and one representative sample from Israel, preferences for military action were overestimated when asked in isolation (i.e. in form of a “yes/no” [support/reject] question) rather than in conjunction with the alternative of diplomacy (i.e. in form of “either-or” [military or diplomacy]), sometimes even causing a complete reversal from majority support for military action to majority support for diplomacy. These findings point to problematic inaccuracies in public opinion polls and scientific research on military support (usually presenting no alternatives), and address issues important for psychology, political science, sociology, and survey methodology. In a real world context, our findings have important implications for governmental decisions on conflict resolution strategies and the implementation of policies based on public opinion.

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Keywords: polls, public opinion, question wording, survey research, violence and aggression, war
Most models of judgment and decision making see violent political behavior, such as the use of military force, as the outcome of rational utilitarian reasoning (e.g., Page & Shapiro, 1992; Smith, 1983). Based on these models, predictions and assessments of public opinion on the use of military force play an important role in governments’ decisions to engage in political violence in lieu of other approaches to conflict (e.g., diplomacy; Converse & Traugott, 1986). Flawed modeling of public opinion can therefore have grave consequences (see also Schuldt, Roh, & Schwarz, 2015), facilitating far-reaching decisions such as the use of military force and its oftentimes negative effects on the public (casualties, economic and other costs, etc.). Yet, the real world is full of examples violating the expectations of rational-choice models, as in the case of protracted conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continue for decades. Clearly, then, models of judgments and decisions about violent political behavior need to account for human “irrationality” as well. Yet, while models have accounted for personality and situational factors (e.g., Herrmann, Tetlock, & Visser, 1999), to our knowledge to date there is no research investigating whether people’s judgments on the use of military force are irrational in the sense that they can even change within the same person, in the same situation. Thus, in the present contribution we highlight this irrationality by showing that people report stronger support for military force when deciding on its use without considering alternatives such as diplomacy, as opposed to deciding on its use while considering alternatives. Importantly, we demonstrate that this bias is largely specific to judgments on the use of military force, while it is relatively absent for judgments on the use of diplomacy.

**Evaluating the Use of Military Force vs. Diplomacy**
People often evaluate the use of military force in moral terms (*is it right or wrong?*), whereas they evaluate the use of diplomacy in instrumental-rational terms (*is it going to work? is it worth it?* Atran, 2003; Ginges, 1997; Ginges & Atran, 2009, 2011; Ginges, Atran, Sachdeva, & Medin, 2011). Further, they perceive violent responses to conflict as normative, and nonviolent responses to conflict as less normative (Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008). Judgments of right or wrong and evaluations of normative courses of action are made with ease, and therefore without comparisons to alternatives (Kahneman, 2003). Judgments of utility and effectiveness, and evaluations of non-normative courses of action, on the other hand, can hardly be made without comparisons to alternatives (see Greene, Nystrom, Engell, Darley, & Cohen, 2004; Hegarty & Pratto, 2001). Thus, people think about *whether or not to use military force* in a rather isolated manner, whereas they think about *whether or not to use diplomacy* in a less isolated manner, comparing diplomacy to alternatives such as the perceived norm of force.

Evaluating a course of action in isolation, without considering alternatives, is cognitively easier. This cognitive ease of evaluation has been demonstrated to play a key role in people’s preferences for the course of action in question. The more easily it can be evaluated, the stronger people’s preference for it (e.g., Hsee, 1996; for a review see Hsee, Loewenstein, Blount, & Bazerman, 1999; see also Kahneman, 2003). Thus, evaluating a course of action in isolation should increase the likelihood for this course of action to be chosen over other, unconsidered alternatives (see also Song & Schwarz, 2008; Schwarz, 1999, 2007; Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001). This bias does not occur, however, when the same course of action is considered jointly with other alternatives (Druckman, 2004; Hsee, 1996).
Based on these two premises – that (a) evaluation of a course of action in isolation leads to stronger support than joint evaluation of this course of action and an alternative, and that (b) military force by default tends to be evaluated in isolation whereas diplomacy by default tends to be considered in conjunction with the normative alternative of military force – we predicted that people’s self-reported support for military force should depend on the mode of evaluation (isolated vs. joint). Moreover, it should depend on the mode of evaluation more strongly than people’s self-reported support for diplomacy. In other words, self-reported support for military force should be more biased than self-reported support for diplomacy.

**Overview of the Current Research**

In order to examine the effect of mode of evaluation (isolated vs. joint) on people’s self-reported support for the use of military force and diplomacy, in three experiments we manipulated how the question about military force or diplomacy was framed. Similar to past research showing that the provision of different response alternatives to questions can affect the answers to these questions (Bartels, 2003; Druckman, 2001; Schwarz, 1999, 2007; Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001; Zaller, 1992; see also Berinsky & Druckman, 2007; Berinsky & Kinder, 2006; Boettcher, 2004; Boettcher & Cobb, 2006; Entman, 2004, 2007), we asked people about either approach to conflict in isolation, as a “yes/no” question, or in conjunction with one another, as an “either/or” question. In Study 1, we tested the effect in the context of the threat of Iran’s nuclear program to Israel in a field setting with a representative sample of Jewish Israelis. Showing the generalizability of the effect, Study 2 tested it for two hypothetical and one real-life conflict with a convenience sample of American adults. Showing the boundary
conditions of the effect, Study 3 investigated whether the effect depends on conflict severity, testing the effect for low-, medium-, and high-severity conflicts, again with a convenience sample of American adults.

Study 1

If the expected dependency of self-reported support for the use of military force on mode of evaluation has real-life implications, it should be observed in a real-life context and a field setting. Thus, Study 1 aimed to establish the effect in the real-life context of the conflict around Iran’s nuclear program in Israel and the public opinion of Jewish Israelis regarding whether Israel and its allies should respond to Iran’s nuclear program with a military or a diplomatic strategy.

Method

Participants. A representative sample of 499 Israeli adults (245 females, 254 males; age M = 44, range = 18-94) was approached in a telephone survey carried out in June 2007 with random digit sampling. Two hundred and thirty-three participants identified as secular Jews, 134 as traditional Jews, 104 as religious Jews, six as non-Jewish, and 22 refused to identify their religious affiliation. One hundred and nineteen participants were single, 298 married, 58 widowed or divorced, and 24 refused to report their marital status. Fifty-two participants had less than twelve years of education, 202 had twelve years, 241 had more than twelve years, and four refused to report their education. Sixty-seven participants were born in Asia or Africa, 170 were born in Europe or the U.S., 111 were first-generation Israeli from Asian or African descent, 70 were first-
generation Israeli from European or U.S. descent, and 80 were second-generation Israeli, and one refused to report their origin.

**Procedure.** After giving consent, the participants were asked to convey their voting opinion regarding a military or diplomatic plan to deal with Iran’s nuclear program. They were randomly asked one of the following three questions.

*Isolated evaluation of military force.* “Imagine that a new military plan has been proposed to stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons. This plan involves a military attack against Iran where Israel, the United States and the European Union will make significant sacrifices. Would you vote for this military plan to stop Iran?” Participants could either vote for the military plan or not, coded “1” or “2” respectively.

*Isolated evaluation of diplomacy.* “Imagine that a new diplomatic plan has been proposed to stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons. This plan involves negotiation with Iran where Israel, the United States and the European Union will make significant sacrifices. Would you vote for this diplomatic plan to stop Iran?” Participants could either vote for the diplomatic plan or not, coded “1” or “2” respectively.

*Joint evaluation.* “Imagine that two new plans have been proposed to stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons: a diplomatic plan and a military plan. The diplomatic plan involves negotiation with Iran where Israel, the United States and the European Union will make significant sacrifices. The military plan involves a military attack against Iran where Israel, the United States and the European Union will also make significant sacrifices. Which would you vote for: the military plan or the diplomatic plan?” Participants could choose either the military or the diplomatic plan, coded “1” or “2”, respectively. The order of plans was counterbalanced and had no effects on results.
Results and Discussion

To assess whether changes in support occurred depending on question framing (isolated vs. joint), we conducted chi-square tests comparing the frequency of voters for the military plan in the isolated and joint questions, and comparing the frequency of voters for the diplomatic plan in the isolated and joint questions.

Under isolated question framing, a majority of 63.4% of the participants voted for the military plan, whereas under joint question framing only a minority of 45.6% favored the military over the diplomatic plan. The chi-square test revealed the military response frequency under isolated question framing to be significantly higher than the military response frequency under joint question framing, $\chi^2 = 10.91, p = .001$. Regarding the diplomatic plan, 56.7% voted for it under isolated question framing, compared to 54.4% under joint question framing. The corresponding chi-square test did not reach significance, $\chi^2 = 0.17, p > .05$.

As predicted, people’s support for military action was stronger under isolated than joint question framing, whereas the support for diplomacy did not significantly change under the two question frames. Strikingly, a majority for military force under isolated question framing turned into a minority for military force under joint question framing.

Study 2

Study 2 tested the generalizability of our hypothesis that support for military action would be stronger when asked in isolation rather than conjunction. To ensure that the findings of Study 1 generalized to scenarios other than Iran, and to maximize internal
validity, we added two hypothetical conflict scenarios to the real-life scenario that again targeted the conflict about Iran’s nuclear program.

Method

Participants. Study 2 used 334 American adults (254 females, 73 males, 7 did not indicate their gender; age M = 32, SD = 12.57, range = 19-76) recruited via Craigslist. This recruitment strategy favored sample heterogeneity (in terms of age and political views) over experimental control, allowing participants to partake in the study from anywhere with access to the internet. Participants’ responses to the item “In general, I am… [1 = very conservative, 7 = very liberal]” indicated that participants’ political views were on average slightly more liberal than conservative (M = 5.20), but there was considerable variability in political views (SD = 1.73). No other demographic information was assessed in this study.

Procedure. Participants were asked to fill out an online survey on “Attitudes and Decision-Making.” They read three vignettes about conflict between the United States and a hypothetical or real opponent. For each vignette, they were randomly assigned either to the military-isolated, the diplomacy-isolated, or the joint question. To guard against any carry-over effects – such that exposure to one question framing on the first vignette might affect responses to a different question framing on a subsequent vignette – we presented the vignettes in random order. Thus, any carry-over effects that might have occurred should even out at the aggregate level and therefore not affect statistical analyses and results.
**Vignettes.** Two vignettes depicted hypothetical conflicts with a fictitious opponent, the third focused on the actual conflict with Iran over its nuclear program (see scenarios 1-3 in the appendix).

**Evaluation questions.** Participants were asked to “imagine that your vote would decide what we will do to end the conflict.” The military-isolated question asked “Would you vote for a military option (the use of armed force)?” The diplomacy-isolated question asked “Would you vote for a diplomatic option (negotiations)?” The joint question asked “Which of these two options would you vote for: a military option (the use of armed force), or a diplomatic option (negotiations)?” The isolated questions were answered with “yes” or “no”, the joint question with “military option” or “diplomatic option.” The order of response alternatives – whether “yes” was presented before or after “no,” and whether “military option” was presented before or after “diplomatic option” – was counterbalanced and recorded. Adding the order as covariate to the analyses reported below did not change the significance of results; in fact, the covariate had no significant effect on responses at all.

**Results and Discussion**

We compared the frequency of voters for military action under isolated and joint question framing, and the frequency of voters for diplomacy under isolated and joint question framing (see Table 1). As Figure 1 shows, there were more voters for military action under isolated question framing than under joint question framing; all tests of the difference between frequency under joint and frequency under isolated question framing were significant, $\chi^2(1) > 10.00$, $ps <= .001$. While there were also more voters for
diplomacy under isolated than joint question framing, this difference was smaller than for military action, and in case of the Iran scenario not even significant.

To test for these differences more directly, we ran a nonlinear mixed model analysis with question framing as categorical independent variable, subject as a random factor, and response as categorical dependent variable. As expected, the main effect of question framing was significant, $F(2, 658) = 105.64, p < .001$. Pre-planned contrasts revealed that, as expected, military support was higher under isolated ($estimate = 0.14, SE = 0.12$) than under joint question framing ($estimate = 1.24, SE = 0.14$), $t(658) = 6.21, p = .001$, and much more so than diplomacy was higher under isolated ($estimate = 1.67, SE = 0.15$) than joint question framing ($estimate = 1.24, SE = 0.14$), $t(658) = 2.18, p = .030$, confirming our hypothesis that military responses are more biased by question framing than diplomacy responses. Importantly, this bias in military support as opposed to diplomacy support replicated the findings of Study 1 with a wider range of scenarios, a different population, and in a different language and culture.

Study 3

The effect of question framing on self-reported support for military force demonstrated in Study 1 and 2 should only occur for conflicts of moderate severity. Given that severity of harm as well as threat predict people’s retributive motives and punitiveness (Rucker, Polifroni, Tetlock, & Scott, 2004; Singh & Lin, 2011), military force should receive consistently greater support than diplomacy when a conflict is severe. Thus, the bias observed in Study 1 and 2 should not occur for high-severity conflicts, with military support receiving a majority of “votes” even when considering the
alternative of diplomacy under joint question framing. Nor should the bias occur for low-severity conflicts, because in a low-severity conflict military force should seem immoral even under isolated question framing, and thus less viable than diplomacy. In other words, there should be ceiling effects for military and diplomacy support in high- and low-severity conflicts, respectively, canceling out the question framing effect observed in Study 1-2 and hypothesized for moderate-severity conflicts in Study 3. This hypothesized dependence of the effect under investigation on severity has also been observed for other phenomena such as the effect of threat to social order on punitiveness (Rucker et al., 2004).

Method

Participants. 598 Americans were recruited via the Study Response Project (Stanton & Weiss, 2002; Stanton, 2006; Wallace, 2004), resulting in a more representative and heterogeneous sample compared to college samples (312 females, 281 males, 5 did not indicate gender; age M = 46, SD = 13.08, range = 20-84). Participants’ responses to the item “In general, I am… [1 = very conservative, 7 = very liberal]” indicated that participants’ political views were on average right in the center between liberal and conservative (M = 3.84), but there was considerable variability in political views (SD = 1.91). No other demographic information was assessed in this study.

Procedure. The procedure was identical to Study 2, but adding low- and high-severity conflict scenarios (see appendix). The order of response alternatives was counterbalanced and had no effects on responses.

Results and Discussion
Chi-square tests with “military or diplomacy” responses under joint question framing as observed and military or diplomacy responses under isolated question framing as expected values revealed that with the exception of military support for the low-severity conflict, $\chi^2 = 0.85, p = .358$, all differences between military/diplomacy support under isolated vs. joint question framing were significant, $\chi^2 > 7.00, ps < .01$. As expected, for moderate conflicts military support was greater under isolated than under joint question framing, and this difference was greater than the corresponding difference in diplomacy support. For the low-severity conflict, military support did not differ significantly based on question framing, and diplomatic support was significantly lower under isolated as compared to joint question framing. For high-severity conflicts, the pattern we observed for moderate conflicts reversed. The difference in diplomacy support under isolated as compared to joint question framing was greater than the difference in military support under isolated as compared to joint question framing.

To test for the predicted effects of question framing and conflict severity more directly, we ran a nonlinear mixed model analysis with severity and question framing as categorical independent variables, subject as a random factor, and response as categorical dependent variable. The main effects of question framing and severity were significant, $Fs > 55.00, ps < .001$. Pre-planned contrasts revealed that regardless of conflict severity, military support was higher under isolated ($estimate = 0.17, SE = 0.09$) than under joint question framing ($estimate = 0.52, SE = 0.08$), $t(3570) = 5.63, p < .001$, while diplomacy support did not differ between isolated ($estimate = 0.62, SE = 0.07$) and joint question framing ($estimate = 0.52, SE = 0.08$), $t(3570) = 0.72, p = .470$, confirming our hypothesis that military responses are more biased by question framing than diplomacy responses.
Further, regardless of question framing, responses differed between all severity levels, $t$s $> 2.80$, $p$s $< .005$. In line with our hypothesis that severity should moderate the effect of question framing, the main effect of question framing was qualified by an interaction, $F(6, 3570) = 48.51$, $p < .001$. As expected, the effect of question framing on military responses was stronger when the conflict was moderate ($\text{estimate}_{\text{isolated}} = 1.71$, $\text{SE}_{\text{isolated}} = 0.12$, $\text{estimate}_{\text{joint}} = 0.43$, $\text{SE}_{\text{joint}} = 0.09$), $t(3570) = -8.98$, $p < .001$, rather than severe ($\text{estimate}_{\text{isolated}} = 0.71$, $\text{SE}_{\text{isolated}} = 0.16$, $\text{estimate}_{\text{joint}} = -0.28$, $\text{SE}_{\text{joint}} = 0.14$), $t(3570) = -4.63$, $p < .001$, while it was not even significant when the conflict was low in severity ($\text{estimate}_{\text{isolated}} = -2.67$, $\text{SE}_{\text{isolated}} = 0.28$, $\text{estimate}_{\text{joint}} = -2.42$, $\text{SE}_{\text{joint}} = 0.26$), $t(3570) = 0.65$, $p = .516$. The reverse was true of the effect of question framing on diplomacy responses, which increased from moderate to severe conflicts (moderate: $\text{estimate}_{\text{isolated}} = 1.04$, $\text{SE}_{\text{isolated}} = 0.17$, $\text{estimate}_{\text{joint}} = 0.31$, $\text{SE}_{\text{joint}} = 0.15$), $t(3570) = 3.32$, $p < .001$; severe: $\text{estimate}_{\text{isolated}} = 0.22$, $\text{SE}_{\text{isolated}} = 0.09$, $\text{estimate}_{\text{joint}} = -0.46$, $\text{SE}_{\text{joint}} = 0.09$, $t(3570) = 5.50$, $p < .001$). For low-severity conflicts, the effect was negative, $\text{estimate}_{\text{isolated}} = 1.03$, $\text{SE}_{\text{isolated}} = 0.17$, $\text{estimate}_{\text{joint}} = 2.49$, $\text{SE}_{\text{joint}} = 0.27$), $t(3570) = -4.65$, $p < .001$.

When plotted across the whole conflict severity spectrum ranging from low- to high-severity conflicts, military support followed a lopsided U-function with less difference in military support under isolated vs. joint question framing for both low- and high-severity conflicts than for moderate conflicts, whereas diplomacy support followed a linear function with less difference in diplomacy support under isolated vs. joint question framing for low-severity conflicts and increasing difference with increasingly severe conflicts (see Figure 2).
General Discussion

Polling the public on its preference for conflict resolution strategies is one of the factors taken into account by government officials and decision makers when considering military and diplomatic strategies to approach conflict. Similarly, it is an important factor in a large body of research on conflict and its resolution. Across three experiments and two nations, using both representative (Study 1) and convenience samples (Study 2-3), we have demonstrated that questions asking about either strategy in isolation, only giving “yes” or “no” response options (e.g., “Do you support a military solution in the conflict with X?” – yes/no), led to seemingly stronger public support for military strategies than questions asking about both military and diplomatic strategies in conjunction with one another (e.g., “Do you support a military or a diplomatic solution in the conflict with X?” – military/diplomatic). This difference in support depending on question framing went as far as Jewish Israelis displaying a majority in favor of military strategies to resolve the conflict over Iran’s nuclear program when asked under isolated question framing, as opposed to a majority in favor of diplomatic strategies when asked under joint question framing.

Particularly troubling is that self-reported support for use of force depends far more strongly on question framing than self-reported support for diplomacy. In other words, question framing biases self-reported support for military conflict resolution more strongly than self-reported support for diplomatic conflict resolution. Furthermore, the effect was found to depend on conflict severity: For all but low-profile conflicts, biases in people’s support for conflict strategies more strongly affected self-reported support for military conflict resolution rather than self-reported support for diplomatic conflict.
resolution. This was most strongly the case for moderate conflicts – situations where
decision makers are most likely to take into account public opinion when considering
their options in the conflict.

What causes the bias?

The data presented here do not speak directly to the causes of the effects we
found. Where does the framing bias come from, and why does it affect support for
military force more strongly than support for diplomacy? The bias might stem from
different criteria people follow when evaluating an approach to conflict in isolation
versus in conjunction (see also Schwarz, 1999, 2007; Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001). As
we have argued, people might ask themselves whether something has to be done about
the conflict at hand or not when thinking about a conflict resolution approach in isolation,
whereas they might ask themselves what is the best thing to do about the conflict at hand
when thinking about the approach vis-à-vis an alternative approach (cf. Atran, 2003;
Ginges, 1997; Ginges & Atran, 2009, 2011; Ginges et al., 2011). In the former situation,
people will thus be more likely to express support for the approach in question than in the
latter situation, when considering it vis-à-vis an alternative approach. The better defined
the question is by response alternatives, the more people will shift to the “what’s best”
criterion.

This explanation can account for why the bias occurs in general, but not for why it
is particularly strong for military support and less so for diplomacy support. The reason
for this difference is that military conflict resolution strategies are generally more salient
in people’s minds than diplomatic ones (see Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008). Thus, when
asked about diplomacy in isolation, diplomacy might be automatically pitted against the
normative alternative of military strategies, the “no” response option being (re-)interpreted by respondents as “military.” When asked about military approaches in isolation, on the other hand, such a re-interpretation is less likely to occur, as diplomacy is not as salient or normative as use of force, and therefore the “no” response option is unlikely to be (re-)interpreted by respondents as “diplomacy.” While these two explanations can account for our findings and are also in line with decision making research (Ginges & Atran, 2009, 2011; Ginges et al, 2011; Hsee et al., 1999; Schwarz, 1999, 2007; Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001), further research is warranted to test them directly.

Limitations

Of course, the difference in support for conflict resolution strategies under isolated vs. joint question framing raises the question of which framing yields the more accurate measurement of public opinion. Evidently it is hard, perhaps impossible, to obtain a criterion of accuracy in the context of the research presented here. Yet, we believe that it is ultimately less important which framing yields the more accurate responses. What is more important is to understand that when people evaluate how a conflict should be approached (militarily or diplomatically), sooner or later they will consider different options rather than only considering whether to use or not to use one option. Therefore, the joint question framing should provide the more “conservative” estimate of the public’s support for military action, and thus it seems most reasonable and pragmatic to us.

Another issue is the partially ipsative nature of our data. Naturally, “military” responses to the joint question were not independent from “diplomacy” responses on the
same question. At the same time, however, we had to analyze military and diplomacy responses as two separate dependent variables in order to test our hypotheses, as the ipsative element of our data (analyses) is inherent to our research question of comparing the difference in military support under isolated vs. joint question framing to the difference in diplomacy support under isolated vs. joint question framing. Further, this problem is inherent to research on preference changes (e.g., Hsee et al., 1999).

Importantly, our data show that framing bias in military support is most strongly driven by changes in military support under isolated relative to joint question framing, less so (or not at all, see Study 1) by changes in diplomacy support under isolated relative to joint question framing. Thus, the ipsative nature of our data analysis cannot account for why the bias we identified operates more strongly for military than for diplomacy preferences, and our findings cannot be interpreted to simply reflect a statistical artifact.

Nor does it take away from the practical importance of our findings: (a) there is a great risk in measuring people’s support for military action in isolation, which can lead to misinformed decisions by government and military officials, politicians, policy and decision makers in favor of military rather than diplomatic approaches to conflict; and (b) pollsters and researchers should give an alternative response option (e.g., diplomacy) when asking people what approach to conflict they support.

**Conclusion**

Regardless of the causes, our findings clearly show that the measurement of people’s support for use of force in response to foreign policy crises strongly depends on question framing, which could lead to mis- or under-informed decisions by government and military officials, politicians, policy and decision makers as to how approach
conflicts. In order to gather more “conservative” estimates of the public’s support for military action, both pollsters and researchers need to provide an alternative conflict resolution strategy (i.e., diplomacy) for respondents to consider when asking them what approach to conflict they support.
References


### Table 1: Frequencies for responses under separate/joint question framing for all scenarios of Study 2, tested for difference from 50%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario #</th>
<th>Military %</th>
<th>Diplomacy %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Joint</td>
<td>25.25 ***</td>
<td>74.75 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diplomacy separate -</td>
<td>86.18 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military separate 56.19 ns</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Joint</td>
<td>26.40 ***</td>
<td>73.60 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diplomacy separate -</td>
<td>87.37 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military separate 51.35 ns</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Joint</td>
<td>15.24 ***</td>
<td>84.76 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diplomacy separate -</td>
<td>79.51 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military separate 30.77 ***</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*** p < .0001, ** p < .01, * p < .05, + p < .07, ns = not significant
<table>
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<th>Scenario # (severity)</th>
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<th>Diplomacy %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (moderate)</td>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>41.27 *</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diplomacy separate</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military separate</td>
<td>75.63 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (moderate)</td>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>43.41 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diplomacy separate</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military separate</td>
<td>66.84 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (moderate)</td>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>32.74 ***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diplomacy separate</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military separate</td>
<td>48.66 ns</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 (low-profile)</td>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>8.16 ***</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Diplomacy separate</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military separate</td>
<td>6.54 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (severe)</td>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>60.59 **</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diplomacy separate</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military separate</td>
<td>86.89 ***</td>
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<td>6 (severe)</td>
<td>Joint</td>
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<td>Military separate</td>
<td>90.95 ***</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 (severe)</td>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>82.68 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diplomacy separate</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military separate</td>
<td>92.12 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Frequencies for responses under separate/joint question framing for all scenarios of Study 3, tested for difference from 50%.

*** p < .0001, ** p < .01, * p < .05, + p < .07, ns = not significant
Figure 1: Frequency of participants supporting the military plan or the diplomatic plan under separate (s) or joint (j) question framing in Study 2.
Figure 2: Frequency of participants supporting the military plan or the diplomatic plan under separate (s) or joint (j) question framing in Study 3.
Scenarios in Study 1 and 2

**Scenario 1:** Imagine that 100 US soldiers have been captured and are being held hostage by "Country X".

**Scenario 2:** Imagine the following was true: Three months ago it was discovered that Bundistonia has been dumping radioactive substances in the Pacific Ocean. This practice is damaging the water supply of the United States. Without water a country cannot survive. Bundistonia has been told that they must stop, but has so far ignored all requests to stop. This has led to increasing tension between the U.S. and Bundistonia.

**Scenario 3:** As you might know, Iran's program for nuclear power is advanced. Democrats and Republican members of Congress are nearly unanimous in arguing that an Iran with nuclear weapons is a threat to the United States and its allies.

**Scenario 4:** Imagine the following was true: Yesterday the president of the United States visited the republic of Myanmar on an official visit to give a speech to the parliament of Myanmar. Just as he entered the hall to begin his speech, a group of anti-American students burst in and threw rotten eggs
at the president. The eggs landed on the president's face. Disorientated, the president fell to his knees and tripped over. Everybody in the hall roared with laughter, some pointing at the president of the United States, some clapping. Shocked and deeply humiliated, the president rushed off the stage and left the parliament, escorted by his bodyguards.

Scenario 5: Imagine that 100 innocent men, women and children who are US citizens have been captured and are being held hostage by "Country X". "Country X" is expected to torture and kill all the hostages.

Scenario 6: Imagine that one month ago, 100 citizens of different countries, including citizens of the US, were captured by a country we will call "Country X" as an act of war. Those hostages included men, women and children and were all brutally tortured and killed. The killings were broadcast throughout "Country X" and widely celebrated there. Now 100 more innocent US citizens have been captured and are being held hostage by "Country X". "Country X" is expected to torture and kill all the hostages.

Scenario 7: Imagine the following was true: American Parents for Peace (APP) is a group of American doctors and nurses who have given up their jobs in the United States to work for free in hospitals in Dombonia, a developing country with a history of anti-American activities. The government of
Dombonia encouraged the peace mission, guaranteeing the safety of the volunteers and their families. Many volunteers came with their children, who go to the American embassy's kindergarten. This evening, when many parents came to pick up their children, the American kindergarten was attacked by Dombonia's military and police forces. The children were forced to watch while their parents were tortured and killed. After murdering the parents the killers mutilated the bodies of the dead. Videos of the killings are being broadcasted in many international TV stations and in the internet. The children are still hostage. Every ten minutes, one child is killed in front of a video camera and its corpse thrown out of the window to the hands of the enthusiastic crowd around the building, burning American flags.