

NEWS IN THE SHADOW OF WAR

by

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Abstract

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News in the Shadow of War

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Theories over the role of news coverage in war and peace differ significantly in how much ability they afford the news media to affect public opinion and policy and the media's overall relationship with political and economic power. This study offers a synthesized game theoretic model that asserts these theoretical stories can all be true, depending on the conditions in which a country's media operates. It also finds evidence that a particular, invisible outcome of the model – that an independent news media in a state can deter that state from participating in wars – indeed occurs. Finally, the study develops a methodology to examine news coverage of international crises to look for evidence of media aggressiveness in challenging elite narratives as well as differences in coverage of conflict that results in war versus conflict with peaceful outcomes, and finds a variety of markers that predict either outcome, and also nuanced support for elements of all of the various theories of media-state relations.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Research Question

What is the role of a state's domestic press when the state is considering war? Is it merely a cheerleader for elite preferences, regardless of whatever freedoms it is endowed with? Or can it, under certain circumstances, exert a decisive influence on state behavior during periods of conflict? These are difficult questions to answer given the challenge of isolating news media's independent influence on policy from various other influences, both immediate and long-term.

After the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, critics leveled charges that the mainstream American press failed to uphold its duty to challenge the Bush administration's faulty rationale for the war – and instead helped manufacture public consent for the invasion of a sovereign nation that presented no serious threat to U.S. national security. Such charges are not new: The widely accepted narrative of the 1898 Spanish-American war is that the press drove the nation to support a needless imperial adventure. Newspaper publishers William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, locked in a competition for circulation in New York City, capitalized on the unexplained destruction of the battleship *USS Maine* in a Cuban harbor to goad a reluctant President William McKinley into war with Spain. Pulitzer's *New York World*, claiming it was reporting on the rebellion in Cuba against Spain, asked, "Is there no nation wise enough, brave enough to aid this blood-smitten land?" (quoted in Leckie (1991)). Questions of wisdom aside, the United States answered the call, and in 10 weeks violently acquired a colonial empire from an ailing Spain. Motives attributed to Hearst and Pulitzer are commercial, rather than ideological, in nature, although the two were far from the sole elites in the country who desired war. The press is further credited with the ability to contribute to the conclusion of a war already underway, with coverage of the My Lai massacre, the Pentagon Papers and Cronkite's

conclusion that “we are mired in stalemate” playing a role in turning U.S. support against continuing the Vietnam War.

The assumption in these cases is the press has the ability to exert an independent and decisive influence on state’s decisions to begin, continue or conclude wars. But this assumption is not universally held, even among senior leaders of the elite press. When the magnitude of the Bush administration’s faulty case for invading Iraq in 2003 became apparent, *Washington Post* executive editor Leonard Downie, Jr. acknowledged his newspaper’s coverage was flawed but said:

People who were opposed to the war from the beginning have been critical of the media’s coverage in the period before the war have this belief that somehow the media should have crusaded against the war. They have the mistaken impression that somehow if the media’s coverage had been different, there wouldn’t have been a war. (Kurtz, 2004)

Downie does not state his precise reasons for holding this view, but it can be read as stating the press lacks the influence to affect decisions made by the executive branch. Whether this marks the press forsaking its responsibility (Ryan, 2006) or is a simple acknowledgment of the reality of press’ impotence (Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007) is an open question, as is whether Downie would apply this conclusion to all possible wars, or just the Iraq conflict in particular.

This study takes up these issues with the aim of exploring the connection between press behavior and a state’s foreign policy, specifically decisions whether to go to war, by exploring theory from both international relations and the media studies fields, particularly in the realm of political communication, and employing primarily quantitative methodologies, specifically time-

series data analysis of press independence and country behavior and a content analysis of press coverage in the shadow of impending war.

1.2 Contribution

The literature on the free press is lively with debate over its role in international conflict, with key theories deeply at odds on whether the news media has any ability to challenge foreign policy. The first contribution of this study will be to offer a game-theoretic model that shows how many of these theories are *conditionally* correct, in an attempt to shift the debate from what the dominant model is to what conditions lead to the theoretical outcomes scholars have proposed. This draws inspiration from international relations theory and methodologies, which have grown increasingly concerned with the domestic institutions of states, which may influence states' behavior, and leaders within states, who may have preferences and constraints that are not apparent when considering the state as a unitary actor, as traditional international relations inquiry has done.¹

This study will also generally seek to raise some potentially unacknowledged alternatives to extant theoretical stories. First, it will offer both a theoretical story and empirical evidence of what amounts to wars that *didn't* take place. This will provide a baseline for contrasting press institutions and behavior in crises in war and peace. In addition, this study will explore the possibilities that could be behind Downie's statement, by laying out multiple conditions and press behaviors that could explain why any given policy goes forward.

Finally, it will develop a novel methodology for analyzing international crisis news coverage that synthesizes existing theories of media and international relations, and apply it to

¹ See Levy & Thompson (2010) for a discussion of various levels of analysis in approaching international relations.

six recent conflicts, with analysis particularly focusing on the differences that manifest between crises that result in war and those that are resolved peacefully.

1.3 Outline

Chapter 2 explores existing treatments of press models in relation to international affairs, press structures within the state, and treatments of war and public opinion in the field international relations. Chapter 3 develops the model of press-policy relations in which a state's leaders and the press are the players, with the aim of deriving under what conditions in which the press can affect state policy decisions. Chapter 4 conducts a time-series analysis to test hypotheses drawn from the model in Chapter 3. Chapter 5 develops the methodology to conduct a content analysis aimed at exploring press behavior in several international conflicts in which war was raised as a possibility. Chapter 6 concludes by exploring the implications for press coverage decisions and proposes directions for future research into the press-state relationship.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Approaches to the Press and War

2.1 Introduction

I can envision two mechanisms by which press coverage can influence a state's preference for war during a period of conflict. First, it might directly inform leaders of countries involved in a particular conflict in a way that changes their views on how to proceed in a crisis – functioning, in effect, as an intelligence service. This might come through images of civilian suffering in a particular country, or by altering one leader's estimation of the resolve of an adversary, for example. Second, press coverage may influence public opinion over the wisdom of going to war, which in turn affects a leader's chances for retaining his or her job. This may induce the leader to change course and pursue alternate outcomes in a conflict. This study acknowledges the first mechanism but focuses on the second, arguing the key role of the press is to influence processes of deliberation and persuasion that are internal to the state.

2.2 Framing-Oriented Theories of Media, Press Independence and Conflict

Scholars in the field of media studies regard *news framing* as one of the primary mechanisms by which news coverage can influence public opinion. News frames are interpretative schema journalists impose – often unconsciously – on a set of factual assertions to help them make sense, and they are built on tacit theories of causation and salience that sources and journalists hold (Gitlin, 1980; Entman, 1991). They manifest in various ways in coverage: in analogies and synecdoche, in themes and solutions highlighted, and in matters downplayed or ignored. Frames vary in power: The words and images used to build them can induce stronger or weaker effects in an audience governed by its own interpretive frameworks; powerful frames with widespread appeal are *resonant*. Framing an issue in a particular way tends to promote a particular range of acceptable policy options in response (Entman, 1993), so political actors may

employ frames as strategies to promote policies favorable to their interests, and journalists pick up these frames and transmit them to an audience; they may also offer *counterframes* that promote alternative explanations or solutions. Some of these may come from other political actors, or may be offered by the journalists themselves – the latter a manifestation of independence from official sources. The classic treatment of frames and how they are applied to foreign policy comes from Robert Entman, who studied how the American news media portrayed the shootdowns by military forces of two blundering civilian airliners in the 1980s -- one by the Soviet Air Force and the other by the U.S. Navy. Entman found the 1983 Soviet shootdown of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 was framed as an atrocity committed by an evil and corrupt empire deliberately targeting civilians, while the 1988 shootdown of Iran Air Flight 655 was treated as an accident that occurred in a tense combat zone (1991). A more recent example of frames as manifest in the news media and society at large is the treatment of domestic terrorist attacks: before Sept. 11, 2001, the press and government treated domestic terrorist attacks as criminal acts, which left the investigation and response to civilian authorities. Afterward they became matters of national security, involving intelligence agencies and the military (Edy & Meirick, 2007), and airstrikes and secret prisons replaced due process as the chief mechanism for dealing with perceived terrorist threats.

Framing concepts inform several broader theoretical models about the relationship between press coverage and foreign policy. Five models, representing a breadth of theoretical stories, are considered in this study. Ordered here by increasing degrees of expected journalistic independence from elite control, they are the hegemonic, indexing, cascading activation, independent and event-driven models.

In the hegemonic model, the only frames acceptable to the news media are those that serve elite interests. The model draws from the broader body of critical theory to describe how elite preferences and market forces determine news coverage and prevent the press from fulfilling its role in a democracy. Elite frames and factual assertions are seamlessly adopted by the press and the public, preventing them from generating constraints on elite behavior by adopting alternate views (Herman & Chomsky, 2006; Gitlin, 1980). It asserts that economic logic leads to press overreliance on official sources: It is cheaper to just assume these sources are credible and reproduce their words than it is to risk official reprisals and commit resources to investigate and establish credibility for unofficial ones who are promoting alternate points of view. Thus only narratives endorsed by political and economic elites – the same elites who maintain and benefit from the system that forces economic logic on newsgathering operations in the first place – receive widespread attention (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Scholars have also suggested press endorsement of war behavior results from a deep cultural conditioning that leads reporters to lionize soldiers and war leaders (Carruthers, 2011), reporter patriotism (Robinson, 2004), or reporters' lack of confidence in their expertise to cover complex and high-stakes international affairs (Zaller & Chiu, 2000).

Indexing theory (Bennett W. L., 1991) allows for meaningful debate to play out in press coverage, but only under a specific condition: if political elites, typically the two major American parties, are divided over the issue at hand. If they are united, alternate frames are downplayed or treated as deviant (Hallin, 1986). So the key determinant of the range of press coverage is opposition preferences, leaving the press less independent than it appears, as it is unable to inject alternate frames into coverage if they are not sponsored by at least some political elites. A number of studies have found this to be driving paradigm in a significant portion of

press coverage of foreign affairs, including Bennett's seminal study of U.S. policy in Nicaragua in the 1980s, in which *The New York Times* editorial opposition to Reagan administration's policies stopped at the same time that Democrats in Congress acquiesced to Reagan's policies, despite no change in public polling on the issue.

Explanations of the cause of indexing vary. It may be that economic influences, as supposed by hegemonic theories, prevent meaningful inquiry into foreign policy matters. Or, again, journalists defer to authority in matters of national security. Or reporters may hold potentially faulty beliefs that only elected policymakers and their subordinates have viewpoints worth covering, either because they ultimately make decisions, or they – essentially by virtue of their position – represent the entire range of legitimate public opinion. (Zaller & Chiu, 2000; Melkote, 2009; Reese & Lewis, 2009; Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007).

Certainly political and military elite preferences over war carry a mighty impact upon news coverage of both prospective and active wars; these same elites often serve as primary sources of information about the conduct of such wars, and they are institutionally empowered to determine whether the wars actually occur or not, so their words and preferences are of extreme importance. But the norms of the journalistic enterprise require journalists to offer alternative and critical viewpoints of both the justification for, and management of, such wars. Entman's cascading activation of frames model (2003) agrees that foreign affairs frames typically begin with elites and spread downward, to experts, the news media, and ultimately the public, and, similar to indexing theory, contrary frames usually occur when elites are not united on an issue. But exceptions are possible, and counterframes can be driven by non-elites in cases when cultural norms provide no easily packaged interpretation or obvious approach to a problem at hand. Significant press attention can lead to counterframes being adopted by the opposition,

allowing the usual indexing mechanisms to take hold and provide a wider range of debate. One investigation found evidence of this at work in non-American press in regards to the second U.S.-Iraq war (Valenzano, 2009).

The independent model most closely matches the professional ideal taught in American journalism schools and expressed by mainstream journalists themselves (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986; Hallin, *We keep America on top of the world: Television journalism and the public sphere*, 1994; Robinson, Goddard, Parry, & Murray, 2009). In this model, journalists include a range of frames and opinions in their coverage, actively seeking out or themselves raising contrary views to fulfill norms of fairness and balance, although they do not cross over into advocating particular positions. Coverage is full of meaningful controversies and disputes over policies, and journalists can and do seek sources outside the government when elites do not fill the range of possible opinion. Alternately, beat journalists, through interactions with sources in off-the-record or background contexts, perceive a wider range of opposition to policies than is publicly acknowledged by careful elected officials, and they index their coverage by seeking unofficial sources willing to go on-the-record, or they simply imagine and offer opposing viewpoints themselves.

Some investigations have found indications of greater press independence than elite models suppose. In the case of the first Iraq war, reporters raised fears, unattributed, of a Vietnam-like quagmire (Althaus, 2003).² In the second, they turned to foreign sources for criticism when they found few or none within among American political elites (Hayes & Guardino, 2011), or managed critical coverage in certain areas, particularly casualties and

² Althaus (2003) notes that empirical findings over the range of coverage of a given issue often differ over what investigators deem sufficiently critical coverage of a proposed policy. A higher threshold that may not include critical coverage of *how* a policy can achieve its goals, but instead focuses on debate over the goals themselves, tends to lend support to indexing theories. I try to capture both in the content analysis in Chapter 5.

civilian suffering (Robinson, Goddard, Parry, & Murray, 2009). This may be based on looser empirical definitions of what constitutes evidence of press independence – particularly over whether the critical reporting occurs on the conduct of war, rather than on only its justifications and objectives (Althaus, 2003). Even more critical scholars have noted an uptick in press independence from elite messages in covering conflict following the end of the Cold War (Zaller & Chiu, 2000; Robinson, 2004). But whatever gains in press independence occurred, they were said to have been lost again in the Sept. 11 attacks, as evidenced by the uncritical coverage of the Bush administration afterward (McChesney, 2002; Calabrese, 2005).

Finally, the event-driven news model deemphasizes the framing power of elites in the face of a chaotic world: Too many things of interest and requiring policy responses are out of their control, so they are left to react to hurricanes, coups and wars like everyone else, and these phenomena simply cannot always be immediately framed to support the economic and political outcomes they prefer (Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007). Here the press actively selects certain issues to magnify based at least in part on a normative stance that the issue at hand *should* be addressed by those in power. The ability of real-time news media to create pressure on policymakers to take action – dubbed the “CNN Effect” – is an example of this, and some scholars have argued press coverage of famine in Somalia is what drove the first Bush administration to support U.N. intervention there (Livingston, 1997).

This study will not set out to determine which of these models accurately describes the preponderance or totality of foreign affairs coverage in ostensibly free media systems; instead, it proposes these all describe possible aspects of a larger model of press-state relations. These outcomes are predicated on the interaction of several strategic actors making decisions based on several important but sometimes difficult-to-measure conditions. This study also proposes a

number of additional outcomes, including those in which an active and free press quietly deters elites from pursuing certain poor policies in the first place.

2.3 Comparative Media Systems: How States Organize Their Media

The above theories are generally raised in discussion of U.S. and other media operating under loose formal regulation in which criticism of the state is permitted -- even if it is not meaningfully practiced, as elite-driven models suggest. To examine behavior in media systems around the world, however, we must widen the scope beyond ideological frameworks to legal, political, and economic ones.

The classic approach to the comparative study of media systems is contained in *Four Theories of the Press*, which divides the world into four press models: libertarian, authoritarian, communist and social responsibility. These are holistic, qualitative models that very much reflect the Cold War era in which they were created. In this typology, states adopting the libertarian model emphasize the free flow of information without government restriction to allow people to seek the truth on their own. The social responsibility model is treated as a development of this, but the press acknowledges its own power to shape opinion and seeks a measure of social justice for people whose voices might otherwise be silenced by an oligopoly or monopoly on commercial media. The authoritarian model focuses on government control of information to serve the state; the communist model is an outgrowth of this; it does not allow for ideological dissent, although in limited cases it may allow for a measure of investigation into poorly executed programs (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1963).

Other writers have challenged or expanded this model. Hachten and Hachten (1981) offer a five-model typology that retains the authoritarian and communist models, combines libertarian and social responsibility into a "Western" type, and adds developmental and revolutionary types.

The developmental type tends to include heavy government regulation and de-emphasis on political conflict, replacing it with a focus on improving the quality of life for the state's citizens through education – a middling sort of independence. The revolutionary type describes media serving the interests of a substate group attempting to promote overthrow of the existing government. An additional type is Picard's (1985) proposal of a "democratic socialist" model that eschews the profit motive, perhaps in favor of collective ownership, and is thus better able to challenge economic interests as well as political and social ones.

Further work attempted to draw out key variables that describe these types of media systems. Blumler and Gurevitch (1995) offered four: state control of mass media, partisanship within media, media and political elite integration, and the media's role within the state. Drawing from this, Hallin and Mancini (2004) also key on four dimensions in their analysis:

- ... (1) the development of media markets, with particular emphasis on the strong or weak development of a mass circulations press;
 - (2) political parallelism; that is, the degree and nature of the links between the media and political parties or, more broadly, the extent to which the media system reflects the major political divisions in society; (3) the development of journalistic professionalism; and
 - (4) the degree and nature of state intervention in the media system.
- (21)

While cautioning against universalizing their model, Hallin and Mancini make valuable distinctions within European and North American news media, arguing systems that other typologies classify as "libertarian" or "free" may still carry significant differences, particularly in systems of ownership and political polarization, as well as in restricting hate speech. They

propose three categories of Western media. One is the “liberal” model of the United States and United Kingdom, which is above all else commercial in nature. The second they call the “democratic corporatist model,” which is in place in Germany and other states in the European mainland and is described as a mix of commercial media and media allied with political groups, situated in a state that possesses a limited but very real capability to intervene. The third is the “polarized pluralist model,” which describes media that are predominantly allied with one political group or another. This model is in play in Mediterranean states like Italy and Spain.

These models square with the five theories above if they are considered as key determinants of press incentives; that is, these frameworks compel news media actors to behave in certain ways. State intervention can be described as an incentive structure if one views penalties for noncompliance with state directives – like jail – as an attempt to induce certain behaviors. Commercial media, though unfettered by the state, may have profit motives that produce different coverage and thus policy outcomes than those that result from politically polarized media, which gains benefits from promoting a particular ideology. These factors -- degree of government interference, economic logics, partisan and professional ideologies – all serve as underlying structural determinants of press behavior, and thus play a role in policy outcomes.

But theories of the press alone are not sufficient to explain its possible impact on the occurrence of organized violent conflict. A theory of war is also necessary.

2.4 International Relations: Rational Choice and Bargaining approaches to Conflict; Leaders, State Institutions and Audience Costs

The body of work in the study of international relations that falls under the rubric of *rational choice* is built on some simple assumptions, the most fundamental of which is that

actors choose to do what they define as in their best interest (Morrow, 1997). The term *rational* is a bit fraught in that some would load it with extra meaning about the normative value of some choice, but in this sense, it merely means that players know what they want and the decisions they make will be with the goal of attaining it. It additionally assumes that preferences are consistent and transitive, that is, if an actor prefers outcome *A* to *B*, and *B* to *C*, they will also prefer *A* to *C*. So the term does not speak to the morality or agreeableness of a certain choice, nor does it assume actors prefer short-term material gain to the satisfaction of more altruistic motives: Such matters may be part of these studies, but they are not implicit in the assumption of rationality (Powell, 1999; Osborne, 2009).

Indeed, rational choice is better characterized as a general methodological approach than a theory; it allows researchers to develop stylized models of behavior built around decision points, theorized preferences, and in some cases uncertainty and limited knowledge. These models can be operationalized and tested against empirical observations and ultimately each other. They typically constructed using related utility, game and bargaining theory methodologies. Influential works in the realm of conflict include Bueno de Mesquita (1981) and Fearon (1995).

The canonical crisis bargaining model consists of two states, *A* and *B*, who disagree over what should be the international status quo. The dissatisfied state of the two wishes to acquire certain benefits enjoyed by the other, such as territory. In this stylization, the states each have a certain military power that gives them a chance to prevail in a violent conflict with the other. In bargaining, they make successive offers, and the model can either end in a deal that involves some redistribution of benefits or retains the status quo. If the dissatisfied state remains so, it can initiate a costly war to acquire the benefits the other state would not accede in negotiations. War

grows more likely as the disparity in power between two states is not matched by a similar disparity in benefits; that is, if one state has most of the power and the other most of the benefits, the more powerful state grows more willing to seize benefits by force (Powell, 1999).

Fearon (1995) supposes that if the two states were certain about the outcome of that prospective conflict, they would forgo its irrational waste – the overall loss in benefits both countries suffer from war, which does away with the zero-sum nature of peaceful bargaining. He offers two primary reasons why the states cannot reach a peaceful accord. The first, commitment problems, arises when the state giving up benefits (the “declining” state) cannot be assured that the other, rising state will abide by the terms of the deal; the declining state may fear the rising state will increase in power – quite possibly due to concessions resulting from the current negotiation – and return to demand more in future bargaining. In this case, the declining state determines that taking the risk of fighting now may result in better outcomes than reaching an agreement with the dissatisfied state that will only grow stronger.

Fearon’s second explanation, information problems, occurs when both states disagree about their ability to prevail in a conflict; that is, they have asymmetric beliefs about their relative power. If the leaders of the dissatisfied state believe they can do better in war (including in paying its costs) than in the best negotiated settlement they can reach, they will attack.³

Mutually truthful and trusted communication between the states could solve these information problems. Each state could show the other the power of its military, and declare its resolve to fight over certain benefits, and Fearon’s conflict-free ideal could be in reach. But the states have significant incentives to deceive each other. If state A increases B’s estimate of the

³ Fearon supposes but only weakly endorses a third reason, called issue indivisibility, in which fighting occurs because the benefit in question by its nature cannot be shared. This could be ownership over a perceived sacred place or determination of who occupies a throne, for example. Powell (2006) shows this to be another form of the commitment problem.

A's willingness to suffer war, or B's estimate of its costs of war, A gains an advantage in bargaining, whether A's action was a bluff or an honest threat. B knows this, however, and has reason to distrust A's declarations of capability and resolve, leaving the information problem intact. States might also underrepresent their power in some ways, if their capabilities and strategies rely on surprise (Wittman, 2009). Thus, reliance on secrecy, coupled with – and possibly created by – erroneous estimates of one's own or enemy capabilities, are a major contributor to war in this stylization (Meirowitz & Sartori, 2008). It is worth noting that this means that even honest communications of power and intent are suspect, because the incentives for one side to mislead the other remain, and those communications will not necessarily be believed.

The problem, then, is how states can establish credibility in their communications, which are typically termed “signals” in international relations literature, so they can overcome their incentives to deceive and help one another recognize the likely outcome of a prospective war, encouraging them to strike a peaceful and efficient bargain.

Two related approaches are in the extant literature. Both operate on the assumption that states' leaders wish to retain the power and the benefits of their office. The first points to a state's institutional structures – most notably, whether it has a free press that renders the state unable to deceive its opponents. Through news coverage of political actors' behavior, a state with a free press can't help but accurately signal its intentions; it additionally gives opponents a good sense of its military capabilities through coverage of things like military budgets. In addition, states with a free press are less able to conceal the costs of war from their public, again potentially deterring leaders in those states from embarking upon risky wars that might hurt their

political standing, and thus lending credibility to their signals.⁴ This knowledge induces potential opponents to make offers that will lead to a peaceful settlement in a crisis. Presumably the effect of honest transmission is enhanced between two states with high levels of media openness, a possible explanation for the democratic peace, the observed phenomenon that democracies rarely go to war with one another (Schultz, 1999; Van Belle, 1997). This proposed mechanism has found empirical support in Choi and James (2006), who determined that dyads in which both states have at least a marginally free press were involved in significantly fewer militarized interstate disputes.

The second approach explores the nature and context of the communications themselves. States can make their signals themselves costly, in an effort to distinguish them from cheap posturing. This might be moving forces to the border and mobilizing reserves: The state is revealing it is willing to spend something on gaining a favorable outcome from the bargaining process, in hopes of causing its opponent to adjust its beliefs. However, these actions do not reveal how much a state is willing to spend; the move may still be a bluff and does not have complete credibility (Fearon, 1997). Indeed, one might consider even initiating fighting as a form of signal in this regard, or as a separate effort to “solve” information problems by violently decreasing uncertainty about the outcome (Slantchev, 2003), although this result is typically considered outside many bargaining models, which aim to determine when wars begin.

Another solution requires the state to participate in many bargaining sessions with many states, and establish a reputation for only sending honest signals; that is, the state apparently prefers the long-term benefits of being honest to the potential short-term gain that comes from a bluff, because of the risk that bluff might be called and the state be deemed dishonest (Guisinger

⁴ Previous research has shown that leaders of all states who engage in international wars indeed undertake a domestic risk that threatens their ability to maintain power, and that leaders, particularly democratic ones, may respond to this knowledge by selecting wars they are more likely to win (Bueno de Mesquita & Siverson, 1995).

& Smith, 2002). However, it is possible to imagine shifting conditions – changing leaders, poor harvests or new and greater threats – that may compel a formerly honest state to embrace bluffing as a strategy, and it may be difficult for an opponent to divine in what cases that may be, so wise states would still only trust one another’s integrity up to a point.

Fearon (1994) offers a related but distinct mechanism, which requires consideration of a state’s internal political dynamics. In this case, state leaders may make *public* signals for all to observe about the state’s willingness to engage in war to achieve a goal. These are threats of such magnitude that the population of the state will punish the leader if the leader ultimately backs down in the crisis in retribution for harming the national honor; in essence, the leader is committing to “self-punishment” if he or she backing down after escalating a crisis (Fearon, 1997, p. 82). Thus, by issuing the threat, the leader is tying his or her own hands. The cost of backing down from an escalated crisis is termed *audience costs* in the literature and are in addition to whatever political price leader may pay for conceding at all. In democracies, the population has elections, a fairly cost-free mechanism to carry out that punishment. The opponent knows the leader will be punished for bluffing and lose his or her leadership position, so concludes the threat thus cannot be a bluff. In autocracies, where changing leaders via revolt is often terribly costly, leaders cannot generate audience costs in the same manner, leaving their signals suspect.

One problem with this concept, however, is the assumptions behind the concept of “national honor” – why, for example, wouldn’t a strategically minded democratic populace prefer their leaders to bluff if it is the best strategy, or leaders to relent if they learn new information that changes the bargaining outlook? Smith (1998) argues that citizens cannot discern a bluff and thus regard backing down as a signal of incompetent leaders who make

promises they cannot fulfill, and Tomz (2007) finds in a survey experiment that citizens indeed care about the international reputation of their state.

A more persuasive explanation comes from Slantchev (2006), who more generally defines audience costs not as tied to notions of national honor, but instead to citizens' punishment for leaders for pursuing bad policies – that is, those that they would not have pursued themselves. So the national honor only becomes situationally important: when the public values it more than the leader. Slantchev's model notably adds a mechanism for citizens to evaluate leader policies and determine if they merit punishment: In most states, the news media is the primary means the public has to assess policy quality, but they can only do this with any accuracy if the news media is free to provide information to them.

However, Levendusky & Horowitz (2012), in another survey experiment, find that audience costs can be mitigated by how leaders frame their decision to back down to the public. This is an important point and merits further discussion, as it threatens to minimize the hypothesized impact of the audience costs model on conflict behavior. This sets up framing as a powerful and readily available strategy for a leader working to remain in power; if that leader takes any action in a crisis that may be unpalatable to the public, he or she can be expected to employ frames aimed at minimizing audience costs.

Along with Potter & Baum (2010), Slantchev (2006) and Levendusky & Horowitz (2012) present a substantial challenge to Fearon's original audience cost mechanism: To generate such costs and thus send credible signals, an opponent first must believe the leader would be deviating from the public's preference by backing down, and the opponent thus must have an independent, credible source to learn about the public's preferences. Even then, if a leader can mitigate potential audience costs by a strategy of successfully reframing backing down into a good

decision, the opponent must also assess whether the leader can only do so via a credible mechanism – such as new information that changes the bargaining outlook. Otherwise, if the public is easily swayed by leader statements (like claims of new information when none actually exist), its malleable preferences mean the leader was never really threatened by audience costs for backing down; it can simply remove them at will. Foreign leaders can then no longer trust signals from such states.

This study proposes that the primary way for a leader to establish credibility in international bargaining is by suffering audience costs at home over prior policies, so a mechanism to ensure the audience costs are both present and ultimately assessed is necessary. This study submits that an independent press is the proper institution of interest, bringing us almost full circle to the institutional approach discussed above.⁵ In essence, the press ensures the audience costs are real, first by independently assessing the leader's policies, allowing the public to determine policy quality per Slantchev's mechanism, and thus signaling to the opponent whether the leader and public are indeed aligned in preferences about the crisis. They also function by being able to verify a leader's framing of reasons for backing down are based in reality.

2.5 Synthesizing IR and Media Studies approaches: The News Media as a Rational Actor and Frames as Strategies

But many factors may make a press apparatus less credible, and modeling it as a strategic actor would be useful in determining its role in a given state: If it lacks resources or exists under

⁵ As Slantchev (2006) notes, the political opposition in a country is unlikely to be able to establish its credibility, as its interests too often lie in opposing the leader, rather than honestly assessing polity quality. He does offer cases in which the state is capable of moderate repression against the opposition – that is, the opposition is not fully free (in which case it will always oppose the leader for electoral advantage) or fully repressed (in which case it cannot oppose the leader, ever). The proposed model for this study doesn't allow the opposition to generate audience costs on its own; instead, it supposes the possibility that some portion of a highly partisan press becomes aligned with, and perhaps even an arm of, the opposition, which should have the same effect.

the threat of repression, it cannot investigate and offer credible counterframes to a leader's claims; if it is nationalistic, corrupt or shows no innate preference for seeking and reporting concealed truths, it is untrustworthy; if it is highly partisan and not operating independently of the leader-opposition dynamic, it may be regarded as only acting in the interests of political actors, trying to win elections rather than providing accurate information to a public.

So a credible and independent press is required for a leader to generate genuine audience costs – giving leaders a measure of incentive to maintain a free press in their states, even if that press often becomes the instrument of costs for them. It also suggests that only one state in a bargaining dyad needs to have an independent press for this effect to occur, so a monadic exploration of press independence and violent conflict is warranted, in contrast to dyadic investigations.

That is not to say, however, that the mechanisms proposed in the purely institutional approach are at odds with the signaling context and audience costs mechanisms. Accurate assessments of the military power of states with a free press may be more accessible than in those without, and the state may also offer more credible signals for multiple reasons. These mechanisms and effects merit further study, with a particular focus on showing leaders' divergent preferences about the independence and thus credibility of the news media. The focus of this study will be modeling news media as a possibly nonpartisan but strategic actor in its own right, rather than a simple conveyor belt of information or noisy transmitter of signals, as previous stylizations have proposed, a step that should elucidate the competing pressures both the government and the news media face.

Chapter 3: A Model of Press-State Relations

3.1 Game Theoretic Approaches

This chapter will offer a game theoretic model of press-state interactions, with the intention of relating it to extant theory and exploring some outcomes that have perhaps been underrepresented in the literature. It is not intended to perfectly capture the reality of the press-government relationship, but instead offer an analytical framework to generate hypotheses while making assumptions plain. A model is, in essence, a way of expressing what the modeler thinks is important about some complex interaction; it is a formal way of expressing a theory of causes and outcomes. The model in this chapter is a theory of press-state relations, and it builds on prior work by containing it in a larger whole – a sort of theory of theories, with some important additions. It does not attempt to explain press behavior and state war choices by keying on a single variable, such as press aggressiveness or financing. Instead, this study argues that a host of variables play a role in determining these outcomes, and each merits attention.

The particular model in this chapter is a *game*, a perhaps frivolous term for the interaction of two more strategic actors, called *players*, who make decisions as they look to maximize their benefits and minimize costs, which, when added together, are called *payoffs*. Game theoretic models are frequently used in economics, political science and evolutionary biology, but less so in the field of media studies, so some fundamentals are described here.

Games that involve multiple moves, called a game in the extensive form, may be expressed visually in a game tree, which contains the following:

- 1) The players, who are making decisions to try reach their preferred outcomes
- 2) A series of moves they may take, and the order in which they take them

3) Statements that depict the players' preferences over the possible outcomes, allowing them to be compared

Games may also contain representations of each player's information about the other players' preferences and moves at a given point in time, but this model presented in this study will assume all players are fully informed.

Studies of games seek to describe Nash equilibria, which are solutions in which no player may improve their payoff by changing their moves.⁶ Extensive-form games pursue a refined solution, called a subgame-perfect equilibrium, in which players are additionally required to make rational decisions at each step of the game, eliminating illogical outcomes in which players could issue non-credible threats.

An example of a simple game tree is in Figure 3.1.

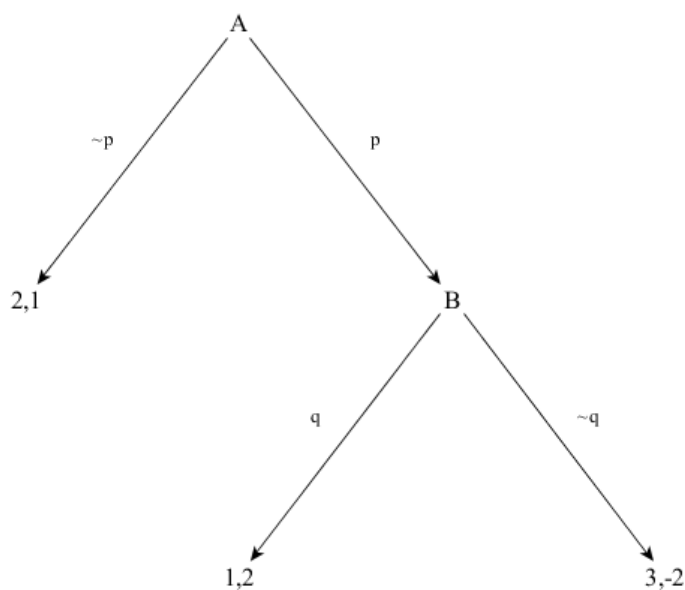


Figure 3.1: A sample game tree

⁶ Named for mathematician John F. Nash, Jr., who developed the concept.

This game has two players, A and B, who appear at nodes that represent their opportunities to make a decision. In this representation, Player A, at the top, moves first, choosing between the moves p and $\sim p$. If A chooses $\sim p$, the game reaches the terminus marked by the numbers (2, 1), which are the payoffs A and B respectively receive, and ends. If A instead chooses p , B gets a move and chooses between q and $\sim q$.

Extensive-form games are solved by working backward, from the last decision to the first. In this case, player B will choose q instead of $\sim q$, because $2 > -2$. Knowing this, player A will choose $\sim p$, because $2 > 1$. A's best payoff of 3, which occurs with the plays $(p, \sim q)$, is unattainable, because B will always play q . Thus the sole subgame-perfect Nash equilibrium for this game is represented by the strategies $(\sim p, q)$.

Of course, this has little meaning without any theoretical story to give it context. Perhaps A and B are countries in a dispute. A may choose between invading (playing p) B's territory or negotiating ($\sim p$). If A invades, B may defend itself (q) or capitulate ($\sim q$). B is apparently quite capable of defending itself, which deters A into negotiating.

More advanced versions of these models replace some or all of the payoffs with variables. Say B's payoff for (p, q) is instead represented by the variable x – a reflection of the state's battlefield prowess. Thus if $x > -2$, B will do better fighting, and the equilibrium $(\sim p, q)$ will hold. But if $x < -2$, B expects to lose a war badly and should capitulate, changing the Nash equilibrium for the game to $(p, \sim q)$. (In the unusual case in which $x = -2$, B is said to be indifferent over the outcome. Typically, the practice in solving games is to arbitrarily select one option in which the player will prefer if the payoffs are equal.)

The reason to use a game-theoretic model for this investigation is straightforward: It allows consideration of the competing interests of the press and a state's leadership, and it allows

outcomes to vary based on characteristics of the state, the policy and the press itself. This should allow consideration of the many of the theories of press-state relations discussed in the previous chapter, with an eye toward examining the conditions that would cause the outcomes predicted by each to occur.

3.2 Model Specification

With that in mind, this study will model press-state relations as an extensive-form game with perfect information, meaning the players know each other's moves and payoffs, and that they must commit to actions in a particular order. It is represented in Figure 2.

Consider a country with leader, an opposition, a press, and a public, who interact via policies and, on occasion, a process to select a new leader. The leader, denoted as L , wishes to enjoy the benefits of office and retain power. The opposition wishes to enjoy benefits as well, but it also wishes to replace the leader. The press, denoted as P , is governed by some mix of norms that reward it for providing the public facts about existing and proposed policies to the public and/or for challenging and obstructing its ideological adversaries, and it sometimes prefers some policies to others. The public, meanwhile, wishes to avoid suffering and will, if it blames enough of its problems upon the leader, will attempt to replace the leader with the opposition, either via election or revolt. While this investigation is primarily concerned with the incidence of war, similar to the models of Smith (1996) and Slantchev (2006), it will abstract away the foreign actor to focus on processes internal to the state; instead, the foreign actor's impacts will be felt in the various payoffs offered in the model. The opposition, too, will be simplified into a nonstrategic actor, whose preferences are established and unwavering over the course of the game; while this does cost the model some verisimilitude, it makes it far easier to digest. The

public is ultimately modeled as a prize, whose strategic behavior – picking the leader – takes place well after the period covered by the game.

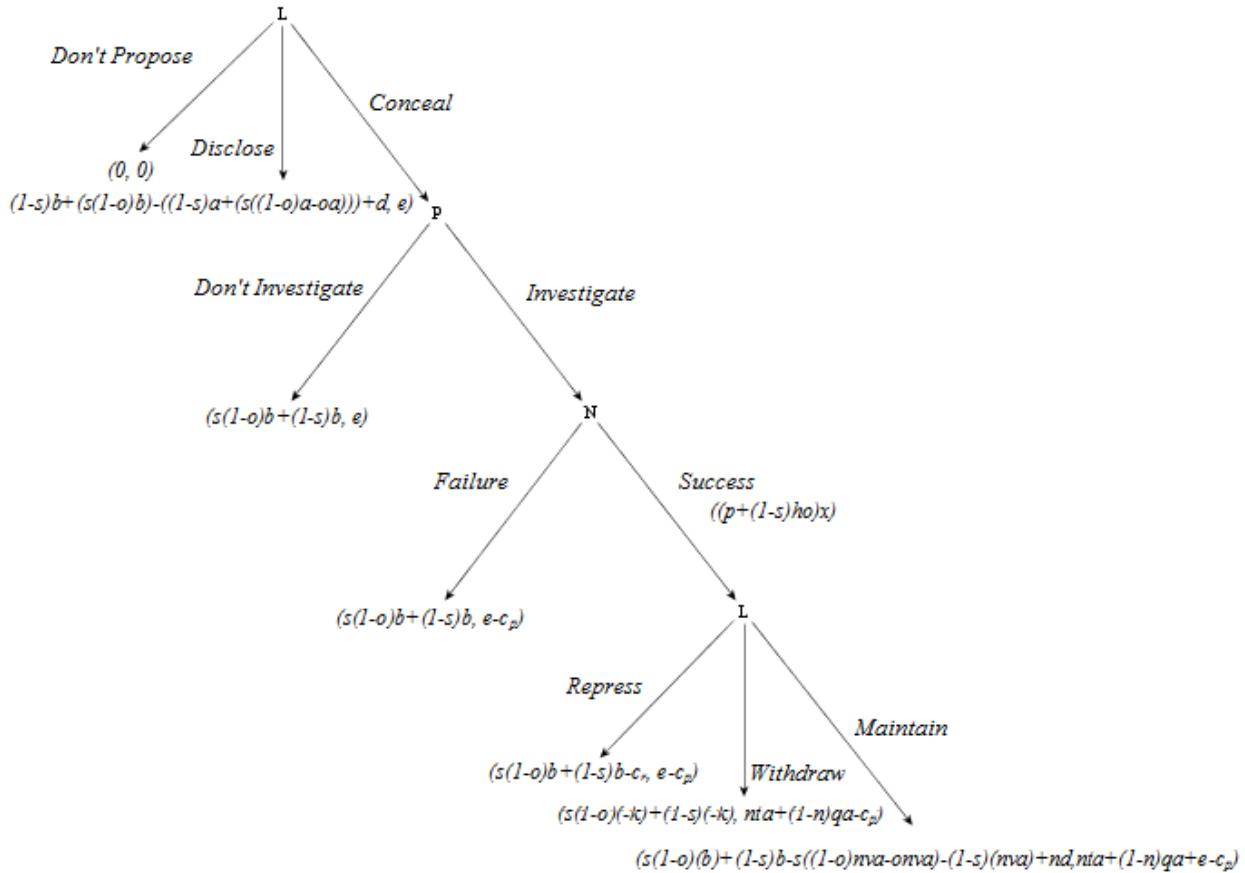


Figure 3.2: A model of press-state interaction over policy

In this stylization, at any time a leader may propose a policy, which is imbued with certain characteristics. If enacted, it offers a private benefit b , such that $b > 0$, for the leader. This benefit could be material, in the form of money or goods, and/or intangible, providing ideological satisfaction or ego rents. This benefit may be shared with the opposition or kept entirely by the leader. It also imposes a cost on the public, which again may be material or ideological, but the public must be made aware of that cost for it to impose audience costs a ,

such that $a > 0$, upon the leader, lowering the leader's chance for reselection or causing increased civil unrest. The opposition also holds a particular stance on the policy, s , such that $s = \{0,1\}$ ⁷, where a value of one means the opposition supports the policy, and a value of zero means it opposes the policy.

The difficulty the public will have connecting the harmful effects of the policy to its own well-being will be represented by an innate variable *issue accessibility*, denoted as x , such that $x \in (0, 1)$: Consider the challenges of the public understanding the harm of a change in banking regulations versus that of a simple tax increase. Finally, the policy also may offer a distinct payoff for the press itself, denoted as e , such that $e \geq 0$. This may be an ideological benefit or a material one.

The institutions in the state also possess a number of relevant qualities. The opposition has a certain strength, o , such that $o \in (0, 0.5)$, representing its share of power within the state. This means the leader's strength may be represented as $1-o$. The press has a certain skill, p , such that $p \in (0, 1)$, representing its ability to find and present information and frames to the public in a way that would cause the public to assess audience costs if the policy is enacted. It also has a measure of neutrality, n , such that $n \in (0, 1)$, representing its adherence to ethical norms about providing unbiased or balanced accounts of political matters to the public. Press actors with low neutrality instead receive greater benefit from supporting or obstructing ideological opponents. Finally, the state's public has developed a certain degree of vigilance, v , such that $v > 1$,

⁷ The braces $\{ \}$ used in this notation means that the variable s is either zero or one. A notation with the "is a member of" symbol, \in , and parentheses, such as $x \in (0,1)$, means that x is a number between zero and one, and cannot be exactly 0 or 1. Finally, a notation with brackets, such as $x \in [0,1]$, means zero and one are included in the range of possible numbers.

representing additional punishment its members will impose on leaders if they feel they have been misled about a policy's costs.⁸

The game begins with the leader choosing between one of three options. First, the leader may do nothing, maintaining the status quo: risking nothing, gaining nothing. The press similarly neither gains nor loses, so the payoffs, or utility, for both players can be represented in this manner:

$$U_i (\text{Don't Propose}) = (0, 0)$$

The i represents the set of players, where $i = \{L, P\}$. Thus the leader's payoff, U_L , will be listed first in these notations; the press', U_P , second.

The leader's second option is to propose the policy but disclose its harm up front, gaining its benefits but suffering audience costs. In addition, the leader gains a small international credibility benefit, d , such that $d > 0$ and $d < b$, for being honest. This represents that foreign executives will trust this leader to issue truthful statements about power and intent, which in turns increases the state's bargaining position. In addition, the amount of the leader's benefit and audience costs depends somewhat on the power and preference of the opposition; if they support the policy, they share both the benefits and audience costs to a degree commensurate with their power. Any audience costs, however, that the opposition accepts, function as an additional benefit for the leader – essentially, he or she does not lose as many supporters to the opposition over the policy, because the opposition supported it as well. The payoffs for this decision are represented so:

$$U_i (\text{Disclose}) = (1-s)b + (s(1-o)b) - ((1-s)a + (s((1-o)a - oa))) + d, e)$$

⁸ One could easily suggest that hegemonic theories actually keys on this variable, arguing that over the long haul the function of the news media is to reduce public vigilance in difficult to observe ways. Tracking that alleged effect, however, is beyond the scope of this model, which treats vigilance as a constant through a single policy choice period.

While that appears rather complex, recall that s is an all-or-nothing binary, representing the opposition's preference to support ($s=1$) or oppose ($s=0$) the policy proposal. If the opposition indeed supports the policy, the leader's payoff simplifies to $b-ob-a+2oa+d$. If the opposition opposes the policy, the leader's payoff reduces to $b-a+d$.

The leader's third opening option is to propose the policy but conceal information about its harms to the public. The choice to conceal may involve lying or hiding relevant facts from the public, or it may occur via more subtle processes as framing the policy in ways that make it easier for the public to incorrectly conclude the proposed policy won't cause it any harm. Of course, more egregious deviations from the truth are easier to contest, so executives can be expected to employ only mechanisms of influence they believe they can get away with.⁹ In this sense, simple but resonant frames – manifesting in sound bites and political catchphrases, for example – may serve to obfuscate a complex issue by providing the audience with heuristic shortcuts that make it hard to conceive of the deeper costs the policy entails.

In this instance, the leader's payoffs are conditional upon the press, which now has a move: It must decide to expend resources valued as c_p to investigate the leader's proposal. An investigation consists of uncovering facts about the costs of the policy and/or building and offering resonant counterframes to the audience that cause its members to assess audience costs on the leader. The investigation cost represents things like staff time, political capital with

⁹ A simplifying assumption in this model is that the leader is able to perfectly calculate his or her case to have a maximum impact on the public, and the press recognizes the amount of effort required to challenge that case, and only determines whether it is worth the trouble. A more complex model would allow the leader to determine the degree to which it will obfuscate (and accepting a measure of audience costs without any press investigation), and the press determines how hard it wants to try to investigate, so every policy would have the possibility of disclosed audience costs, press-imposed audience costs, and unrealized audience costs at the same time.

sources, and sanctions short of outright suppression from any powerful people it angers.¹⁰ If the press declines to investigate, for whatever reason, the game ends with the policy being enacted, and the leader suffers no audience costs because the public has been left unaware of the policy's negative impact. The payoffs when the press does not investigate are thus:

$$U_i (\text{Conceal}; \text{Don't Investigate}) = (s(1-o)b + (1-s)b, e)$$

If the press does investigate, however, the nonstrategic player Nature, represented by N , makes the next move. The placement of this essentially represents uncertainty over the outcome of the investigation, which is controlled by variables outside the model's purview – for example, sometimes sources don't come through or news stories simply don't gain sufficient traction to influence public opinion. High press skill can increase the press' chance of success, but investigations into complex topics (with low accessibility) decrease it. If the opposition is opposing the proposed policy, it can increase the chances of an investigation's success by offering the press inside information or resonant counterframes to cover, for example. The chance of a successful investigation is thus:

$$\text{Success} = (p + (1-s)ho)x$$

In this construction, h serves as a constant that normalizes the opposition's strength o to the parameters of the formula.

In terms of players' decision-making calculus, this probability serves as a coefficient for any payoffs, so that $(\text{Success})(\text{Payoff } 1) + (1-\text{Success})(\text{Payoff } 2)$ represents a player's expected utility when Nature has only two choices. If, for example, a player has an 80 percent chance of receiving Payoff 1, the player will assess its utility at 80 percent of its full value.

¹⁰The treatment of a state's press as a single entity and an investigation as a single act are also simplifications, of course. But while the examples given point to traditional journalism institutions and methods, the real-world manifestations of the "press" and an "investigation" can be much looser in definition and still work within the model – the "press" is really an aggregation of people and institutions in a nation who can cause the public to enact audience costs on the leader, and the "investigation" is the actions that can cause that to occur.

Returning to the model, a failed investigation by the press ends the game, with its payoff worse than not conducting investigation at all, as it expended resources in the attempt. The leader again gains the full benefit without any costs:

$$U_i (\text{Conceal}; \text{Investigate}; \text{Fail}) = (s(1-o)b + (1-s)b, e - c_p)$$

However, should the investigation succeed, the public is to be informed of the policy's potential harm, and the leader is faced with a second decision, the outcome of which will end the game.

The leader's first option is to use his or her powers to repress the results of the press investigation and carry forward with the policy. The leader must pay c_r , such that $c_r > 0$, to repress the reporting – a cost that may be particularly high in countries with legitimate free press guarantees, as doing so could entail the leader's removal from office for breaking the law. If the leader represses, the press gains nothing in this case beyond the possible benefit e from the policy itself. The payoffs in this case are thus:

$$U_i (\text{Conceal}, \text{Repress}; \text{Investigate}; \text{Success}) = (s(1-o)b + (1-s)b - c_r, e - c_p)$$

The leader's second option after a successful investigation is to withdraw the policy from consideration, forgoing the benefits but not suffering the audience costs. Instead, the leader pays cost k , representing expended political capital and reputational and ego costs, such that $k > 0$, $k < a$, $k < b$, for proposing a lousy policy in the first place. This cost is somewhat mitigated if the opposition also supported the policy: The blame is spread around. The press, meanwhile, gains benefits for having fulfilled its role and launched a successful investigation. These benefits increase as the degree of public harm increases – this represents the press drawing greater satisfaction from covering matters of greater impact. The nature of the benefits varies with the

neutrality of the press, and is calibrated by the coefficients t ($t > 0$) for a neutral, truth-seeking press and q ($q > 0$) for a partisan press. This leads to the following payoffs:

$$U_i (\text{Conceal}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate}; \text{Success}) = (s(1-o)(-k) + (1-s)(-k), nta + (1-n)qa - c_p)$$

Finally, the leader may decide to maintain the policy, keeping the benefits and suffering audience costs, which are enhanced by the public's vigilance against political misbehavior. A highly partisan press (that is, with a low n) will have far less ability to impose audience costs on a leader, as the public will regard investigations by such a press as politically motivated and untrustworthy. However, leaders do not entirely benefit from a partisan press: If they continue with a policy the press has challenged, they also receive an international credibility benefit of nd , (a similar but possibly mitigated benefit to the leader disclosing the costs of the policy at the outset), because continuing with the policy signals to other states that the exposed audience costs were not sufficient to deter the leader from the policy.

The outcome for the press largely the same as if the leader withdrew the policy, with only e being added, leading to the following payoffs:

$$U_i (\text{Conceal}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate}; \text{Success}) = (s(1-o)(b) + (1-s)b - s((1-o)nva - nova) - (1-s)(nva) + nd, nta + (1-n)qa + e - c_p)$$

3.3 Equilibria

The game has 12 subgame-perfect equilibria out of 18 possible outcomes – meaning there are 12 combinations of leader and press choices that do not contradict the assumptions of this model. Proofs are located in Appendix A, and in the description of each equilibrium are listed the key conditions which must be true for the outcome to be reached. These conditions explore the relationship between all the variables described above.

3.3.1 Equilibrium 1: Repression

This equilibrium is represented by the following strategies: (*Conceal, Repress; Don't Investigate*). In this case, the leader prefers to hide the costs of the policy from the public, and it threatens to repress any successful press investigation, leaving the press with no payoff except that from the policy itself. The press, with nothing to gain, thus declines to investigate, and the policy goes forward. Some key conditions for this equilibrium are:

$$c_r \leq nva - nd - 2nosva$$

$$c_r \leq b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$a \geq \frac{d}{1 - 2os}$$

The leader's cost to exercise his or her powers of repression must be lower than the sums of the other variables. So, all other things being equal, a leader is more likely to repress reporting on a policy with high benefits, or high audience costs, or in states with a weak opposition, or states with an opposition challenging the policy. This outcome certainly describes the day-to-day life under authoritarian governments, where repression has few consequences for leaders, so they are free to enact whatever policies they choose. It can also apply to states of middling freedom, where leaders may only employ repression when they feel extremely threatened. A sufficiently large international credibility increase d for suffering audience costs may deter a state from repressing a press investigation.

3.3.2 Equilibria 2 and 3: The feckless press

These equilibria are represented by the strategies (*Conceal, Withdraw; Don't Investigate*) and (*Conceal, Maintain; Don't Investigate*). While the leader cannot afford to repress the state's media, he or she hides the negative effects of the proposed policy out of a belief the press will

decline to investigate it. The conditions for Equilibria 2 (*Conceal, Withdraw; Don't Investigate*) are:

$$c_r > b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$b < \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$a \geq \frac{d}{1 - 2os}$$

$$c_p > (x)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nta - nqa + qa - e)$$

The last condition is the critical one: It describes when the press will decide an investigation is too costly to pursue. Issues with low accessibility x serve to magnify the costs of the investigation (as $0 < x < 1$). In essence, $nta - nqa + qa - e$ represents the press payoff from a successful investigation, while $(ho(1-s)+p)$ represents the chance it will succeed. So low values of p will tend to deter press investigations – the press expects to fail, so why expend resources? Low values of a will do the same – the policy isn't worth investigating because the harm is low relative to the challenge of investigating it. Finally, a sufficiently high value of e will deter the press. In this case, it values the policy more than fulfilling its role in society – this could represent a press bribed to look the other way, or one that sees ideological benefit in tacitly or explicitly endorsing a policy.

For equilibria 3 (*Conceal, Maintain; Don't Investigate*), the value of e is irrelevant because the policy will be enacted, but the analysis is otherwise the same. The conditions are:

$$c_r > nva - nd - 2nosva$$

$$b \geq \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$a \geq \frac{d}{1 - 2os}$$

$$c_p > (xa)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nt - nq + q)$$

3.3.3 Equilibrium 4: Shouting in the wind

This equilibrium is the result of the strategies (*Conceal, Maintain; Investigate*): The leader is willing to gamble on the risk of exposure but plans to carry on with the policy regardless of the outcome of the press investigation. The conditions for this outcome are a bit more complex. For the leader, the following must be true:

$$c_r > nva - nd - 2nosva$$

$$b \geq \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$b - os(b - nx(hva - hd + 2pva)) - nx(ho + p)(va - d) \geq 0$$

$$a - d - os(2a - nx(hva - hd + 2pva)) - nx(ho + p)(va - d) \geq 0$$

For the press, the condition is:

$$c_p \leq (xa)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nt - nq + q)$$

Low public vigilance, low accessibility and high press partisanship (low n) makes this outcome more attractive for leaders – the press will have a hard time inducing audience costs; and, if it does, they are mitigated by a divided press and/or a public that cares little when its leaders are caught deceiving them.

The press must be skilled enough to believe its investigation will succeed, but not overwhelmingly so, or else the leader may be deterred from concealing information in the first place. An addition, if the public is not vigilant enough to punish leaders caught obfuscating, the leader is far more likely to do so, regardless of press abilities. The condition for the press to investigate may also be expressed in terms of its skill, rather than its cost for a particular investigation:

$$p \geq \frac{c_p}{xa(nt - nq + q)} - ho(1 - s)$$

Simple but harmful issues and opposition assistance all increase the press' preference for this outcome. In essence, this describes a press toiling away in accordance with its ethos, but it has been reduced to irrelevancy in light of a public unable to punish its leaders.

3.3.4 Equilibrium 5: The watchdog press

This equilibrium is represented by the strategies (*Conceal, Withdraw; Investigate*). In this case, the leader's desire to avoid paying audience and repression costs outweighs his or her desire to ensure the proposal is enacted. Nevertheless, the benefits of the proposal, if enacted, make the risk worth taking for the leader. For the leader, the conditions are:

$$c_r > b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$b < \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$b - os(b - x(h + p)(b + k)) - x(ho + p)(b + k) \geq 0$$

$$a - d - os(2a - x(h + p)(b + k)) - x(ho + p)(b + k) \geq 0$$

The press' calculation can be described as:

$$\frac{c_p}{x} \leq (ho(1 - s) + p)(nta - nqa + qa - e)$$

Absent a high value of e , this case grows more likely with high-cost policies and a middleweight but motivated press – one strong enough to be willing to investigate, but not so strong as to deter the leader from trying.

3.3.5 Equilibria 6 and 7: Keeping them honest

The key feature of these equilibria, represented by the strategies (*Disclose, Maintain; Investigate*) and (*Disclose, Withdraw; Investigate*) is that the presence of an active and capable press and a vigilant and interested public serve to deter the leader from attempting to mislead

everyone about the issue at hand. The leader still receives sufficient benefit from the policy to pursue it in spite of the audience costs, and/or he or she or receives a meaningful credibility benefit for disclosing the truth.

For the strategy (*Disclose, Maintain; Investigate*), the leader's conditions are:

$$c_r > nva - nd - 2nosva$$

$$b \geq \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$a - d - os(2a - nx(hva - hd + 2pva)) - nx(ho + p)(va - d) < 0$$

$$a \leq \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

The press' decision remains based on an affordable investigation with a high likelihood of success, and/or an accessible or costly issue:

$$c_p \leq (xa)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nt - nq + q)$$

For the strategy (*Disclose, Withdraw; Investigate*), the conditions are:

$$c_r > b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$b < \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$a - d - os(2a - x(h + p)(b + k)) - x(ho + p)(b + k) < 0$$

$$a \leq \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

The press' decision is again governed by:

$$\frac{c_p}{x} \leq (ho(1 - s) + p)(nta - nqa + qa - e)$$

In this case, the press itself must not support the policy strongly; otherwise it would be comfortable not threatening an investigation in the first place.

3.3.6 Equilibria 8 and 9: Deterrence

These equilibria represent cases where the leader decides not to pursue a policy at all and instead maintain the status quo. The threat of a press investigation into more obviously harmful policies, working together with a public on guard against leader transgressions, drives this outcome, and the leader can't repress the results. These cases differs from the prior two in that the audience costs of the policy generally exceed the benefits, meaning the leader will ultimately suffer for acknowledging the costs up front and cannot choose that route to see the policy enacted. An opposition that sides with the press also makes this outcome more likely, as the leader cannot offload sufficient audience costs onto the opposition.

For the strategy (*Don't Propose, Maintain; Investigate*), the key conditions for the leader are:

$$c_r > nva - nd - 2nosva$$

$$b \geq \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$b - os(b - nx(hva - hd + 2pva)) - nx(ho + p)(va - d) < 0$$

$$a > \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

For the press:

$$c_p \leq (xa)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nt - nq + q)$$

For the strategy (*Don't Propose, Withdraw; Investigate*), the conditions governing the leader's decision are:

$$c_r > b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$b < \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$a > \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

$$a > \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

And for the press, which can't derive meaningful benefit from the policy:

$$c_p \leq (x)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nta - nqa + qa - e)$$

3.3.7 Equilibria 10, 11, and 12: Performing for the International Stage

The final set of perhaps unlikely equilibria occur when the leader prefers to bear – or even induce – domestic audience costs to gain an international credibility benefit, even he or she could forgo them because the press will not challenge the policy. This requires a policy with high base benefits b and credibility benefit d , and low audience costs, or costs shared with a supportive opposition. For these equilibria, the common conditions are:

$$a < \frac{d}{1 - 2os}$$

$$a \leq \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

For the strategy (*Disclose, Repress, Don't Investigate*), additional conditions are:

$$c_r \leq nva - 2nosva - nd$$

$$c_r \leq b + k - os(b + k)$$

For the strategy (*Disclose, Maintain, Don't Investigate*), the additional conditions are:

$$c_r > nva - nd - 2nosva$$

$$b \geq \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$c_p > (xa)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nt - nq + q)$$

And for (*Disclose, Withdraw, Don't Investigate*), they are:

$$c_r > b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$b < \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$c_p > (x)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nta - nqa + qa - e)$$

A stronger press would credibly threaten an investigation, shifting this to the “keeping them honest” equilibrium.

3.3.8 Non-equilibria

The remaining six candidate equilibria were shown to be impossible.¹¹ One set of failed candidates were those in which the leader would play *Investigate* in the face of the leader playing *Repress*. With no hope of a positive payoff, the press would instead play *Don't Investigate*, leading to equilibria 1. The other set involved the leader playing *Don't Propose* when the press plays *Don't Investigate*. In those cases, the leader would always instead play *Conceal* to do away with any audience costs or *Disclose* to gain international credibility.

3.4 Discussion

Many of the variables in this model performed as one might expect: high press freedom (as expressed in high repression costs), opposition assistance to the press, high press skill and accessible issues all deter the leader from pursuing harmful policies, or at least force he or she into being honest about them. High audience costs work doubly against a leader, as they also motivate the press to challenge them. While the press neutrality variable (n) affects both the payoffs of the leader and the press, it is particularly important in the leader calculus: Low neutrality can mitigate audience costs (usually represented in the conditions by some form of the product nva), but it may not always be in the leader's interest to see neutrality reduced, as it also costs them credibility on the international stage (nd), which can mitigate audience costs in the

¹¹ The six non-equilibria strategies are (Don't Propose, Repress; Don't Investigate), (Don't Propose, Withdraw; Don't Investigate), (Don't Propose, Maintain; Don't Investigate); (Don't Propose, Repress; Investigate); (Disclose, Repress; Investigate), and (Conceal, Repress; Investigate).

strategy (*Conceal, Maintain; Investigate*). This suggests that states that have a stronger need for international credibility – perhaps seeking allies in a cold war against an adversary of roughly equal power -- could be more likely to favor a neutral press, while a state without international rivals may shift to a more partisan press, as leaders worry more about maintaining domestic control.

Returning to the five framing-oriented theories of the press described in Chapter 2, four map quite well into the outcomes presented by the above model. While each emphasizes particular variables and may characterize observed outcomes in different ways, they could indeed be reconsidered as products of a larger set of interactions than the theories supposed.

Many contentions of hegemonic theories best fit the “feckless press” equilibria, describing a media system that is deterred from challenging the government line by either its own lack of resources and skill, or by its own ideological preferences over certain outcomes. This allows leaders to operate with impunity in this policy realm. This could describe, for example, a national press tacitly supporting the state’s foreign policy during international conflict: It places a high value on state survival, which in the model is contained within the variable e . Certainly many hegemonic theorists would extend this behavior to a variety of state policies, including deeply embedded economic ones. Some scholarly inquiry into the prewar coverage of the 2003 Iraq invasion contains assertions of low press skill p – such as an uncritical press unable to discern propaganda and disinformation from evidence (Altheide, 2009; Feldstein, 2007) or one beholden to tired practices that favor official pronouncements over challenges to them (Moeller, 2004). Others point toward a subverted news media enjoying a high e , deciding displays of patriotism was good for viewership (Calabrese, 2005) or abandoning its creed of

objectivity and determining on its own the Bush administration was justified in pursuing war (Ryan, 2006).

Indexing theory instead seizes upon s as the key variable, tacitly assuming that press skill is generally low, and thus successful investigations only occur with opposition aid. So if $s = 1$, the usual outcome is again that of the deterred and feckless press, while if $s = 0$, an investigation occurs, with the “Watchdog Press” outcome and policy changes possible. This is the Bennett’s semi-independent (1991) press in action. Several investigators suggested the lack of significant Democratic opposition indeed led to narrow and unquestioning press coverage of Bush administration claims of the Iraq threat in 2002 and 2003 (Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007; Gup, 2004; Melkote, 2009).

While the independent model is simply more optimistic about the value of p – the press’ ability to effect changes in opinion on its own, event-driven news theory instead suggests that some issues are such that they confound government attempts to control views of it, even if the leader and opposition are united. In essence, this captures issues with high accessibility (the variable x); in these cases, the press has an easier time of creating high audience costs for a leader if a particular policy is adopted – in the Somalia story, the policy carrying audience costs was non-intervention; that is, the George H.W. Bush administration faced mounting costs for maintaining a policy of not sending troops to end the famine.

The cascading activation theory, however, is not as strong a fit into this study’s proposed model, but it offers a useful view of its limitations and a direction for future development. Entman’s model offers two additional mechanisms for public opinion change: In one, public opinion is malleable due to some quality of the issue itself; this is something like high accessibility and could be considered part of that variable. The second, however, requires press

coverage to cause the opposition to see opportunity to make political gains and throw its support to the press. Capturing this sequence of events within a game theoretic model would at a minimum require adding the opposition as a player, with a decision whether to support or oppose the policy, and the payoffs forcing the opposition weighing sharing the benefits of the policy against assisting the press in hurting the political standing of the leader. Unfortunately, such a large game would become quite unwieldy, potentially with hundreds of candidate equilibria and thus difficult to analyze. Still, within this study's model, Entman's model outlines what a successful "investigation" might look like.

But however compelling these theories are, the proposed model suggests they miss some important, if hard to observe, outcomes. The first is the strategies (*Conceal, Maintain; Investigate*), in which the press can inflict costs upon a leader, but they are not sufficient to change the leader's behavior, because of the leader's valuation of the policy or low public vigilance. From an empirical perspective, how does this differ in appearance from a failed investigation, or one that didn't take place at all? It raises a problem with using policy outcomes, like a decision to go to war, as a definitive measure of press aggressiveness. Consider yet again the case of the 2003 Iraq war, for which the press has been castigated for failing to challenge the Bush administration's rationale for the war. In February 2001, weeks after President George W. Bush's inauguration, 52 percent of respondents told Gallup they favored invading Iraq with ground troops. After the Sept. 11 attacks, that support spiked to 74 percent, but – during the period of the most intense press coverage – it dropped to the 50s and remained there after August 2002 until the month before the beginning of the war. By the end of January 2003, only 33 percent of Americans thought the United States should invade without U.N. authorization, which is ultimately what happened (Gallup, 2003).

Of all the equilibria, the watchdog outcome is the only one that is a directly observable press “success,” during which a leader visibly pushes a policy but then withdraws it after press scrutiny. But this isn’t the sole measure of press capability: The second set of outcomes that go largely unacknowledged in extant theory marks a quiet power of a free press -- the ability to deter leaders from pursuing extraordinarily bad policies. Even if press investigations cannot prevent a nation from embarking on every bad war it considers, some potential wars may have gone unfought due to the threat of shifting sentiment by an informed public. Chapter 4 will investigate whether that is the case.

Chapter 4: Time-Series Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The model described in the previous chapter includes two outcomes in which a state's executive declines to pursue a policy because of the presence or behavior of the state's news media. In one, the press, perhaps aided by the opposition, is able to create sufficient audience costs that the leader withdraws the policy from consideration. In the other, the executive's respect for the free press' power to harm his or her standing deters the introduction of the policy in the first place.

A common condition in the equilibria for these two outcomes is that repressing a press investigation would be costly for the leader. If it is not costly, leaders can enact policies as they please; the press will not waste resources investigating, and it thus cannot deter the leader from introducing harmful policies in the first place.

This indicates that, all other things being equal, countries with higher press freedom – which can be equated to high repression costs – may pursue different policies than those with low press freedom. Democratic systems of government may enhance this effect, but they are not necessarily required, as autocrats must worry about revolts if they grow too unpopular.

In the realm of conflict, this study proposes a state's public can be persuaded that it will bear the costs of war in ways that leaders do not – through, for example, battlefield casualties of soldiers drawn from the populace or attacks on civilian infrastructure. A free press is the instrument of this persuasion, and it may also render judgments whether an ongoing conflict is being won or lost, independent of leader pronouncements. Leaders in states with a free press know these things, and they are deterred from taking part in war, instead seeking bargaining

solutions when domestic or international conflict arises.¹² This should manifest in states with a free press pursuing wars with lower frequency – particularly risky ones. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 2, a leader in a state with a free press is able to issue more credible threats, as foreign leaders understand the risk they face for proposing bad policies, further improving the chance of a peaceful bargain. A state-controlled press, meanwhile, is able to deny the public information about possible costs of a prospective war or create an image of imminent victory in an ongoing one.

It is possible it is not the case: Perhaps a free press never generates sufficient audience costs for a leader to consider different courses of action. The public may frequently have preferences that don't diverge from those of leaders, or those preferences, when they do diverge, do not do so consistently in opposition to war. If that is the case, states with a free press may embark on as many as those without one. It may also be that states with a free press take on different types of wars than those without: Autocrats may pursue wars that satisfy their own ambitions, while leaders in democracies seek war to induce the rally-around-the-flag effect, or to acquire resources to enrich the voting public.

States with a free press may instead be *more* warlike. Perhaps its independence is merely a façade that gives elites an air of legitimacy to their behavior, and the public is more easily swayed to endorse elite preferences than in autocracies, in which executives have no such tools of persuasion with a cynical public. Alternately, it may be a given public prefers war more often than executives do, and authoritarian governments actually serve to reduce state warlike behavior by preventing populist war fever from taking hold.

¹² This has interesting implications for remote drone warfare, in which the public may only perceive a tiny, shared financial risk when drones are shot down.

4.2 Hypotheses

Nevertheless, this study proposes that states with a free press are more careful about engaging in war for the stated reasons. This should apply regardless of whether the conflict is internal or external. This chapter will thus test the following hypotheses:

H1: As a state's press freedom increases, its odds of participating in wars decreases.

H1a: As a state's press freedom increases, its odds of joining new wars decreases.

H2: As a state's press freedom increases, its odds of participating in interstate wars decreases.

H2a: As a state's press freedom increases, its odds of joining new interstate wars decreases.

H3: As a state's press freedom increases, its participation in intrastate wars decreases.

H3a: As a state's press freedom increases, its odds of joining new intrastate wars decreases.

4.3 Methodology

This investigation employs a time-series analysis in which the unit of observation is the country-year (e.g. France in 1952; Gabon in 1988). It examines states from a monadic perspective; it assumes the primary effect of a state's press system on international affairs is through its impact on the domestic political scene.¹³ It employs logistic regression to assess the impacts of various state characteristics on the odds of that state being at war in a given year. All independent variables are lagged by one year, so a country's conditions in 1960 will be tested

¹³ Van Belle (1997) instead considers dyadic press freedom, arguing that two states with a free press can better foster mutual understanding and eliminate information problems between each other, making war unpalatable for citizens and leaders.

against its war behavior in 1961. This study will cover years 1948 through 2007, a domain set by the availability of relevant data.

4.3.1 Dependent Variable: State Conflict Behavior

This study employs data from the Correlates of War project, which tracks conflicts that produce at least 1,000 battle deaths through 2007. The project delineates wars into four categories: 1. Interstate, or war between at least two recognized states; 2. Intrastate, or war between the national government and an internal non-national actor; 3. Extra-state, or war between the national government and a colony or a non-state actor outside the state's borders; 4. Non-state, or wars between non-state actors or taking place outside of recognized states.

From this data, a series of dichotomous variables were created that captured whether a country was experiencing any of these war types in a given year, and whether a country was experiencing a specific war type in a given year; In addition to combining all war types into single variables, this study will conduct specific investigations into interstate and intrastate war.

Extra-state and non-state wars are too infrequent during the 1948-2007 timeframe to be of specific interest, but they were included in the "any war" category. It is also worth noting that the categorization of wars is a tricky affair when considering the role allies play; for the United States, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 is coded as an interstate war solely for 2003, and an extrastate war from 2004 onwards. This lends support to combining participating in all wars into a single variable; they collectively represent a state's willingness to engage in violent conflict rather than negotiate with its adversaries.

4.3.2 Independent Variable of Interest: Press Freedom

Surveys of press independence is typically frame the concept in the permissive sense (Karlekar, 2011); that is, measurements capture to what degree states are prevented by law and

practice from establishing control over press content, with the assumption that press freedom results in citizens gaining information beyond – and sometimes contrary to – that provided by the government. This study expects that greater press independence leads to a wider range of information and opinion that is available to the public – that is, that an independent press will at least sometimes fill the ideological space granted to it with a greater variety of content, relative to a state-controlled or otherwise unfree press, and that this content will sometimes challenge government policy in ways not permitted in states where legal freedom is low.

Several datasets measuring relative press freedom are available, and they generally correlate with each other (Becker, Vlad, & Nusser, 2007), although many only cover a short and recent periods. Perhaps the most comprehensive are Douglas Van Belle’s media freedom dataset, which has data from 1948 to 1995, and the Freedom House Freedom of the Press index, which covers 1979 through the present (Van Belle, 1997; Freedom House, 2011). This study will run separate models with each dataset to ensure robustness.

Freedom House scores aspects of media freedom in a number of legal, economic and political categories, which are condensed into a three-level, “free,” “partially free,” and “not free” scale. From 1979 through 1987, the index coded print and broadcast media separately using these three levels; for this study, these were combined into a single rating via the following method:

1. If the codes were the same for both print and broadcast, the combined score was kept the same.
2. If the codes were at the two extremes; e.g., if print was declared “free” and broadcast “not free,” the national media system was recoded as “partially free.”

3. If one code was at an extreme, and the other was in the middle, the national media system was recoded at the extreme category; e.g., if print was coded as “partially free” and broadcast at “not free,” the country was coded as “not free.”

Van Belle codes countries in five primary categories, measuring their ability to criticize the government.¹⁴

The categories are:

1. No national media exist;
2. Media are under strict government control;
3. Media are not under government control but is still incapable of operating independently;
4. Media freedom is sometimes but not always compromised by political influence or corruption;
5. Media are generally free to criticize the government.

For this analysis, categories 1 through 3 were condensed into a single category, comparable to “not free,” because they would all have the same effect on policymakers’ thinking: that is, little to none. This tripartite ranking correlates strongly with Freedom House’s measurements in the years the two datasets overlap ($r(2660)=.746, p<.001$). In addition, a second, dichotomous variable was created, in which categories 4 and 5 were combined, so this measures “at least some press freedom,” which is used as an alternate test variable if the three-category measure fails to show significance.

¹⁴ A category 8 appeared in a few cases but was not described in the legend. It appears to mark a national transitional period and was treated as missing data.

4.3.3 Covariates

One challenge in using press freedom as an independent variable is that it correlates strongly with other virtuous variables of democratic governments and advanced economies, and it may become difficult to distinguish any effects of press freedom from those of a broad, active, and relatively educated and comfortable selectorate empowered to peacefully remove bad leaders from office. But we shall try:

Democracy

This study employs the combined polity scores for the Polity IV project (Marshall & Jaggers, 2011), a measure of state autocratic and democratic features, which scores states along a 21-point continuum, from -10 to 10, with 10 being the most democratic of states. These features include the presence, competitiveness and openness of elections. As one would expect, these correlate strongly with the Van Belle and Freedom House press freedom rankings ($r(5757)=.751$, $p<.001$ and $r(4788)=.814$, $p<.001$, respectively). But it is worth noting that press freedom is not solely a feature of democracies; democratic states like Turkey, Mexico, and Zambia score high in measures of democracy but low on those of press freedom, while states like Kuwait, Thailand, and Morocco have had strong authoritarian features in their recent history but concurrently have had at least a measure of press freedom (Peksen, 2010). Nevertheless, it seems likely that press freedom and high levels of democracy would enhance one another's impact on reducing war occurrence and duration.

Alternate Covariates: Clout of Political Opposition

Extending the logic of the indexing hypothesis would suggest that states with more powerful opposition would see press organs more likely to challenge the government line. Under the indexing hypothesis, if a free press is able to deter war, a strong opposition would be

necessary for the effect to occur, so this study will include models with opposition clout as a covariate. Data for opposition strength and capability within states are taken from two components of the Polity IV measures, Competitiveness of Political Participation and Executive Constraints. Competitiveness of Political Participation, defined as “the extent to which alternative preferences for policy and leadership and be pursued in the political arena” (Marshall, Gurr, & Jaggers, 2010, p. 25) is scored on a 1 to 5 scale, with higher scores marking more stable and capable opposition groups. Executive Constraints, “the extent of institutionalized constraints on the decision-making powers of chief executives, whether individuals or collectivities” (Marshall, Gurr, & Jaggers, 2010, p. 23) is scored on a 1 to 7 scale, with higher scores marking greater degrees of checks on a state executive’s power. Opposition groups in states with higher scores would be more able to assist press organizations in conducting investigations and challenging policy, and themselves overturn executive policies, so higher scores should make the state less likely to participate in war.

Returning to the model in Chapter 3, the Polity and clout covariates serve as operationalizations of the opposition strength variable. While the opposition won’t always assist the press, the degree to which it *sometimes* can do so should be reflected in amplifications of the effect of the press freedom variable.

Education

A more educated public is presumably capable of a greater degree of critical thinking and tolerance for diverse views, including those presented by an independent press. It may also be more creative in finding solutions to conflict in ways that avoid the inefficiency of war, and thus a sign that a public more apt to punish leaders who make inefficient decisions: It is, in short, an operationalization of the public vigilance variable. Education correlates positively with a variety

of factors, including income and political engagement (Hillygus, 2005). It allows one to better assess his or her own welfare and what may be necessary to improve it. Literacy allows access to printed media products, and media literacy allows critical engagement with them.

This study employs average-years-of-total-schooling data from Barro and Lee (2010). As this only contains data for every fifth year, the intervening years were estimated on a simple slope between each successive pair of data points. This study predicts higher levels of education will function in the same manner as higher levels of press freedom, making the state less likely to participate in war.

Per-Capita GDP PPP

A state with a materially comfortable public may be less inclined to go to war with itself. Higher levels of per-capita GDP should lower the probability of intrastate war but have no effect on interstate war. This study uses logged data from Maddison (2006) as a measure of material quality of life in a country.

Trade Openness

This is measured by trade (imports and exports) as a percentage of a state's Gross Domestic Product, as reported by the World Bank (2012). Scholars' estimations of trade's impact on conflict behavior run the gamut, with liberal scholars arguing trade promotes mutual profit, economic interdependence and thus peace, while others pointing to imbalances in trade leading to economic dependence, and later, violent conflict when the dependent state tries to assert any autonomy. This study is agnostic about the impact of this variable. (Barbieri, 1996; Namkoong, 1999).

Extant conflict

As a way of distinguishing between overall warlike behavior and willingness to enter into new wars, several models will include a covariate marking whether the state was already involved in a war of the same type as the dependent variable. These will certainly have a large positive effect on the likelihood of the state remaining at war the following year.

This is a particularly important covariate, as it highlights what each model is and isn't measuring. Models without this covariate simply examine the odds of being at war in a given year, with no connection to prior and future years: lower odds suggest some combination of fewer wars and shorter ones. This is still meaningful information: these are states that avoid war and/or only select wars they can conclude quickly. Controlling for whether the state was already at war gives information on the impact of the other variables on starting new wars.

4.3.4 Imputed data

These analyses, performed in SPSS, impute missing data for the per-capita GDP, trade openness, education, democracy, and political opposition clout covariates. SPSS creates five separate datasets with varying estimates of the missing values based on relationships between data points established elsewhere in the original data, and then combines them for its full analysis. While having original data is ideal, this method is a worthwhile alternative and may potentially provide more valid results than listwise deletion, the common method of dealing with missing data, which simply removes cases (in this study, country-years) entirely from any analyses. Listwise deletion can introduce bias if the missing data is more likely to come from countries with similar characteristics – say, poorer countries that cannot provide economic data to the World Bank. War behavior and press freedom variables are not imputed because they are our variables of interest.¹⁵

¹⁵ For a discussion of the utility of imputed data and how it can be better than listwise deletion, see King, Honaker, Joseph, & Scheve (2001).

4.4 Results

The hypotheses were generally validated, showing in most models that higher degrees of press freedom make states less likely to take part in war, even when rigorously controlling for domestic political and economic factors. The effect of press freedom was stronger with the more recent Freedom House data than with Van Belle's; possible explanations for this are investigated below.

4.4.1 Press freedom and annual war odds (H1 and H1a)

In all four models testing H1 and three of four models testing H1a, higher press freedom is a significant negative predictor of whether the state will be at war the following year, providing strong support for both hypotheses. Results are in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. The four variations of Model 1 test any-year war odds; Model 2 tests war odds with the extant war control.

Table 4.1: Results of logistic regressions testing domestic press freedom and odds of experiencing a year with a war, 1948-2007

Variables	Model 1a	Model 1b	Model 1c	Model 1d
Press Freedom, 1979-2007 (Freedom House)	-.84*** (.10) .43		-.80*** (.10) .45	
Press Freedom, 1948-1995 (Van Belle)		-.30*** (.08) .74		-.22* (.09) .98
Polity	.07*** (.01) 1.07	.01 (.01) 1.01		
Executive Constraints			.16*** (.04) 1.17	.13** (.04) 1.11
Competitiveness of Participation			.10 (.07) 1.10	-.24** (.07) .79
Education	.03 (.03) 1.03	.08** (.03) 1.06	.03 (.03) 1.03	.08** (.03) 1.08
Log Per-Capita GDP	-.08 (.17) .93	-.48** (.17) .62	-.16 (.17) .85	-.34 (.18) .71
Trade Openness	-.02*** (.00) .98	-.02*** (.00) .98	-.02*** (.00) .98	-.02*** (.00) .98
Constant	1.13* (.46) 3.09	1.03* (.50) 2.80	.45 (.46) 15.66	.53 (.50) 1.70
Model				
χ^2	361.49	236.96	356.38	249.05
Pseudo R ²	.153	.103	.151	.108
<i>p</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	4275	4185	4275	4185

First number in each entry is B. Second number is Standard Error (in parentheses).

Third number is odds ratio (Exp (B)). Naglekerke R² is reported for each model.

Negative coefficients indicate reduced odds of war. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

For imputed models, reported data is pooled; χ^2 , pseudo R² and *p* are means from the five separate models, and N is the number of cases in each of the five models.

Table 4.2: Results of logistic regressions testing domestic press freedom and odds of experiencing a year with a war, 1948-2007 (already at war included)

Variables	Model 2a	Model 2b	Model 2c	Model 2d
Press Freedom, 1979-2007 (Freedom House)	-.37* (.15) .69		-.30* (.15) .74	
Press Freedom, 1948-1995 (Van Belle, dichotomous)		-.48* (.21) .62		-.37 (.21) .69
Polity	.04* (.02) 1.04	.01 (.01) 1.01		
Executive Constraints			.07 (.07) 1.07	.09 (.06) 1.09
Competitiveness of Participation			.03 (.11) 1.03	-.14 (.10) .87
Education	.01 (.05) 1.01	.01 (.04) 1.01	.01 (.05) 1.01	.02 (.04) 1.02
Log Per-Capita GDP	.67 (.28) 1.07	-.15 (.24) .86	.03 (.28) 1.03	-.04 (.25) .96
Trade Openness	-.02*** (.00) .99	-.02*** (.00) .98	-.02*** (.00) .99	-.02*** (.00) .98
Already at war	4.66*** (.15) 105.83	4.45*** (.14) 85.85	4.67*** (.15) 106.56	4.45*** (.14) 85.16
Constant	-2.13** (.76) .12	-1.37 (.75) .25	-2.50** (.76) .08	-1.86* (.72) .16
Model				
χ^2	1,800.82	1,648.25	1,798.50	1,649.77
Pseudo R ²	.647	.608	.646	.608
p	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	4275	4185	4275	4185
First number in each entry is B. Second number is Standard Error (in parentheses). Third number is odds ratio (Exp (B)). Naglekerke R ² is reported for each model. Negative coefficients indicate reduced odds of war. *** p < .001; ** p < .01; * p < .05.				

In Models 1a and 2a, level of democracy serves as significant *positive* predictor of war, indicating that the institutions typically associated with democracy, such as free electoral systems and unhindered opposition groups, actually lead to more warlike behavior from states absent the mitigating power of a free press. This may be interpreted as evidence of a free press checking populist or rally-around-the-flag tendencies by offering alternatives to war otherwise unpalatable to leaders, and lends support to independence theories of the press.

In Models 1c and 1d, higher Executive Constraints scores also increased war odds. This is a puzzle: Why would more institutional constraints on a leader be associated with more years of war? These scores were not significant once controlling for extant wars, suggesting that constraints do not strongly favor entering new wars, but they may extend them.

The other Polity component, Competitiveness of Participation, was significant, with a negative sign, only in the Van Belle model (1d) without the extant war control, suggesting more empowered opposition indeed leads to shorter wars, even when controlling for press freedom. This could mark state executives embarking on wars more likely to be successful for fear of losing their position to the opposition when fighting a losing or drawn-out conflict.

Education was also only significant in Van Belle models 1b and 1d, and its effect was perplexingly positive. This finding suggests that education, as measured, doesn't guarantee the critical thinking and peace-seeking behavior described above, but instead contributes to a state's overall ability to wage war, perhaps through ideological preparation or training of workers able to contribute to war-related industries. This will be explored further in the models of specific war types.

In addition, trade openness had a negative effect on war. This holds true for all models presented in this study – indeed, the covariate had a remarkably consistent and negative effect on war behavior, lending credence to interdependence theories.

Only in Model 2d did press freedom show up as negative but insignificant, with the dichotomous Van Belle variable showing up possibly significant ($p < .1$). The effects of most variables were muted in the models that included the extant war covariate, presumably lost in the sea of collinearity.

4.4.2 Interstate War (H2 and H2a)

Turning to specific war types, H2 was validated, as shown in Table 4.3, with higher degrees of press freedom significantly discouraging interstate war in all four models. H2a, explored in Table 4.4, was validated in two of the four models – the two that relied on Freedom House data. Note that for the interstate war models, the dichotomous Van Belle press freedom score was used, as the full three-level score showed as negative but insignificant; the two-level score was only significant in models without the extant interstate war covariate.

Indeed, the Freedom House and Van Belle models diverged from each other, as well as from the general war models in Table 1. Polity score was insignificant. Of its components, only Executive Constraints was significant, with a negative effect, in one model, Model 3d, which tested Van Belle and no extant war, pointing to lower likelihood of war in states with institutional structures that allow overruling the executive.

Education was negative and significant in all four Freedom House models, evidence it may be causing the sort of peace-seeking behavior supposed above. In the Van Belle models, however, it remained positive, and it was significant in Models 3b and 3d.

Table 4.3: Results of logistic regressions testing domestic press freedom and odds of experiencing a year with an interstate war, 1948-2007

Variables	Model 3a	Model 3b	Model 3c	Model 3d
Press Freedom, 1979-2007 (Freedom House)	-.76** (.28) .47		-1.01** (.29) .36	
Press Freedom, 1948-1995 (Van Belle, dichotomous)		-.75* (.30) .47		-.70* (.31) .50
Polity	.01 (.03) 1.01	-.00 (.02) 1.00		
Executive Constraints			-.06 (.14) .94	-.12* (.09) .89
Competitiveness of Participation			.34 (.23) 1.41	.14 (.15) 1.15
Education	-.20* (.08) .82	.15** (.06) 1.16	-.21* (.08) .81	.16** (.06) 1.17
Log Per-Capita GDP	3.04*** (.55) 20.89	.39 (.36) 1.47	3.00*** (.55) 20.04	.33 (.37) 1.39
Trade Openness	-.03*** (.01) .98	-.03*** (.00) .97	-.03*** (.01) .98	-.03*** (.00) .97
Constant	-11.06*** (1.60) .00	-3.26** (1.09) .04	-11.13*** (1.58) .00	-3.11** (1.05) .05
Model				
χ^2	66.99	74.58	69.88	76.40
Pseudo R ²	.116	.083	.121	.086
p	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	4275	4185	4275	4185

First number in each entry is B. Second number is Standard Error (in parentheses). Third number is odds ratio (Exp (B)). Naglekerke R² is reported for each model. Negative coefficients indicate reduced odds of war. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$. For imputed models, reported data is pooled; χ^2 , pseudo R² and p are means from the five separate models, and N is the number of cases in each of the five models.

Table 4.4: Results of logistic regressions testing domestic press freedom and odds of experiencing a year with an interstate war, 1948-2007 (already involved in interstate war)

Variables	Model 4a	Model 4b	Model 4c	Model 4d
Press Freedom, 1979-2007 (Freedom House)	-.74* (.30) .48		-.91** (.31) .40	
Press Freedom, 1948-1995 (Van Belle, dichotomous)		-.67 (.37) .51		-.55 (.38) .58
Polity	.03 (.03) 1.03	.01 (.02) 1.01		
Executive Constraints			-.04 (.15) .96	-.08 (.11) .92
Competitiveness of Participation			.32 (.24) 1.38	.09 (.18) 1.09
Education	-.18* (.09) .84	.08 (.07) 1.08	-.19* (.09) .83	.09 (.07) 1.09
Log Per-Capita GDP	2.57*** (.57) 13.03	.33 (.44) 1.40	2.52*** (.57) 12.42	.33 (.44) 1.39
Trade Openness	-.02*** (.01) .98	-.02*** (.01) .98	-.02*** (.01) .98	-.02*** (.01) .98
Already at war	2.86*** (.36) 17.44	4.24*** (.25) 69.15	2.82*** (.35) 16.84	4.23*** (.25) 68.57
Constant	-10.08*** (1.64) .00	-3.95** (1.31) .02	-10.30** (.16) .00	-4.07** (1.27) .02
Model				
x^2	115.43	337.20	117.57	337.73
Pseudo R ²	.199	.366	.203	.366
p	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	4275	4185	4275	4185

First number in each entry is B. Second number is Standard Error (in parentheses).

Third number is odds ratio (Exp (B)). Naglekerke R² is reported for each model.

Negative coefficients indicate reduced odds of war. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Log Per-Capita GDP was significant and positive in the Freedom House models, suggesting it is either a proxy for industrial warmaking capability, or that rich countries make lots of war in absence of press freedom and education. It was insignificant in the Van Belle models.

4.4.3 Intrastate War (H3 and H3a)

As Table 4.5 shows, H3 was validated in four of four models; press freedom again lowered the odds of a state facing a year with an intrastate war, and Table 4.6 shows H3a was validated in two of four models – those using Polity score as the control for government type. In the models using the components of the Polity score, the signs on the press freedom measures were negative, but only the trade and extant war variables were significant, again suggesting that collinearity issues have rendered these models unhelpful.

Polity Score and Executive Constraints again were positive and significant predictors of war in several models (5a, 5c and 5d), suggesting that government checks and balances alone are insufficient if the public does not have access to unregulated information about it.

Competitiveness of Participation, meanwhile, is significant and negative in Model 20, working in concert with Van Belle's press freedom measure. Per Capita GDP was negative and significant in four models (5b, 5c, 5d and 6a), indicating that higher average wealth tends to reduce the chance of civil conflict.

Table 4.5: Results of logistic regressions testing domestic press freedom and odds of experiencing a year with an intrastate war, 1948-2007

Variables	Model 5a	Model 5b	Model 5c	Model 5d
Press Freedom, 1979-2007 (Freedom House)	-.92*** (.11) .40		-.82*** (.11) .44	
Press Freedom, 1948-1995 (Van Belle)		-.35*** (.09) .70		-.24* (.10) .79
Polity	.07*** (.01) 1.08	.03 (.01) 1.21		
Executive Constraints			.21*** (.05) 1.23	.22*** (.04) 1.25
Competitiveness of Participation			-.02 (.08) .98	-.31*** (.08) .73
Education	.00 (.03) 1.00	.11** (.03) 1.11	.01 (.03) 1.01	.10** (.03) 1.11
Log Per-Capita GDP	-.48 (.20) .62	-.93** (.19) .40	-.56** (.19) .57	-.75*** (.20) .47
Trade Openness	-.02*** (.00) .98	-.02*** (.00) .98	-.02*** (.00) .98	-.02*** (.00) .98
Constant	2.58* (.51) 13.23	2.21* (.56) 9.11	1.87 (.50) 6.52	1.38* (.55) 3.97
Model				
χ^2	403.77	222.72	396.94	242.07
Pseudo R ²	.187	.107	.184	.116
<i>p</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000
<i>N</i>	4275	4185	4275	4185

First number in each entry is B. Second number is Standard Error (in parentheses). Third number is odds ratio (Exp (B)). Naglekerke R² is reported for each model. Negative coefficients indicate reduced odds of war. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Table 4.6: Results of logistic regressions testing domestic press freedom and odds of experiencing a year with an intrastate war, 1948-2007 (already involved in intrastate war)

Variables	Model 6a	Model 6b	Model 6c	Model 6d
Press Freedom, 1979-2007 (Freedom House)	-.34* (.17) .71		-.25 (.17) .78	
Press Freedom, 1948-1995 (Van Belle)		-.30* (.14) .74		
Press Freedom, 1948-1995 (Van Belle, dichotomous)				-.41 (.24) .67
Polity	.03 (.02) 1.03	.02 (.02) 1.02		
Executive Constraints			.07 (.07) 1.07	.10 (.07) 1.11
Competitiveness of Participation			-.06 (.13) .94	-.12 (.12) .89
Education	-.01 (.05) .99	.04 (.05) 1.04	-.00 (.98) 1.00	.04 (.05) 1.04
Log Per-Capita GDP	-.33* (.31) .72	-.34 (.30) .71	-.32 (3.07) .72	-.27 (.31) .76
Trade Openness	-.02*** (.00) .98	-.02*** (.00) .98	-.02*** (.00) .98	-.02*** (.00) .98
Already in Intrastate war	5.06*** (.18) 158.09	4.98*** (.17) 145.06	5.08*** (.18) 160.78	4.96*** (.17) 142.63
Constant	-1.05 (.86) .35	-1.36 (.88) .26	-1.38 (.84) .25	-1.59 (.88) .20
Model				
χ^2	1,720.91	1,578.47	1,719.96	1,579.18
Pseudo R ²	.687	.649	.687	.649
p	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	4275	4185	4275	4185

First number in each entry is B. Second number is Standard Error (in parentheses). Third number is odds ratio (Exp (B)). Naglekerke R² is reported for each model. Negative coefficients indicate reduced odds of war. *** p < .001; ** p < .01; * p < .05.

Interestingly, education is significant and positive in Models 5b and 5d. Unlike matters of general or interstate conflict, it is difficult to imagine this is best characterized as a proxy for war-making capability, as this is about a state going to war with itself. A possible explanation is that high-education states that are lower in the other significant areas of press freedom and economic stability are more apt to face political instability, as a well-educated populace has come to believe it deserves better than it has.

4.4.4 Differences between Freedom House and Van Belle results

While the Freedom House press freedom measure was significant in 11 of 12 models, it was significant in 8 of 12 Van Belle models – and two of those eight were with a less-precise dichotomous “at least some press freedom” variable. The significance was in some cases smaller, and the covariates performed differently in some cases in the Van Belle models, as well.

This could reflect one of two things: a difference in the measures themselves, as suggested by the strong but not perfect correlation in the years the two datasets overlap, or an underlying change in press-state relations during that time, in which governments saw greater reason to avoid war in states with higher press freedom.

To test which may be true, additional versions of Models 1 and 2 were run, with one set marking country-years from 1948 through 1969, and the other from 1970 through 1995, the upper limit of the Van Belle data. The results, in Table 4.7, indicate that indeed the strongest effect of the press freedom variable came after 1970, suggesting that the press grew more effective in using its freedom to influence conflict policies. While exploring the precise cause of this is beyond the scope of this study, it certainly coincides with improved telecommunications technology and what is perceived as the golden age of investigative reporting in the United States, when the press challenged Vietnam War policy, and the public responded. Whether those

factors would contribute to a worldwide increase in press impact on war policy, or some other factors are at work, is a puzzle for future investigations.

4.5 Discussion

Despite the nasty battery of controls that mark advanced industrial democracies, press freedom (along with participation in international trade) emerges as a powerful limiter on states' participation in warfare, pushing states toward both fewer and shorter wars, while the coefficients for polity, wealth and education operated inconsistently across models.

This presents strong support for the more optimistic visions of the press' ability to influence policy that were presented in Chapter 2. If hegemonic models were in effect, public preferences could be easily molded to those of leaders, leaving leaders to pursue wars unfettered by public opinion. That would manifest as press freedom having no impact on wars, as institutionalized space for journalists to investigate potential wars would be rendered irrelevant, but the data show that is not the case. Nor was the indexing or cascading activation models strongly supported; while both rely on opposition behavior (either causing or being caused by press challenges to policy), only in three of the 24 models was the measure of opposition strength or executive constraints a significant and negative influence on conflict. In all of those, press freedom was also significant. It is worth noting that both models in which the competitiveness of participation variable was significant, and the third in which executive constraints was significant, relied on the Van Belle press freedom measure. Bennett's original indexing hypothesis was published in 1990, so it may be indexing was indeed more of a factor during the time the theory was formed, while most of the evidence indeed points toward the independent and event-driven models being in effect in recent years.

Table 4.7: Results of logistic regressions testing domestic press freedom and odds of experiencing war during the following year, 1948-1995

Variables	1970-1995 Model 1e	1948-1969 Model 1f	1970-1995 Model 2e	1948-1969 Model 2f
Press Freedom (Van Belle)	-.38*** (.10) .69	.11 (.20) 1.11	-.30* (.14) .74	.08 (.29) 1.08
Polity	.02 (.01) 1.02	-.02 (.02) .98	.02 (.02) 1.02	-.02 (.03) .98
Education	.04 (.03) 1.04	.13 (1.14) 1.14	-.01 (.04) .99	.10 (.10) 1.11
Log Per-Capita GDP	-.37 (.19) .69	-.75 (.47) .47	-.08 (.27) .93	-.42 (.59) .66
Trade Openness	-.02*** (.00) .98	-.03*** (.01) .97	-.01*** (.00) .99	-.03** (.01) .97
Extant war			4.47*** .16 87.60	4.40*** .32 81.62
Constant	1.00 (.56) 2.71	1.20 (1.20) 3.31	-1.78* (.81) .17	-1.19 (1.71) .31
Model				
χ^2	207.04	47.76	1,338.78	313.24
Pseudo R^2	.112	.103	.619	.578
p	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	3341	844	3341	844

First number in each entry is B. Second number is Standard Error (in parentheses). Third number is odds ratio (Exp (B)). Naglekerke R^2 is reported for each model. Negative coefficients indicate reduced odds of war. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$. For imputed models, reported data is pooled; χ^2 , pseudo R^2 and p are means from the five separate models, and N is the number of cases in each of the five models.

But a cursory glance at recent history tells us that the presence of a free press will not stop all wars; this study merely asserts tendencies. It may also be interpreted as a free press

making states *more careful* about wars – pursuing fewer wars, yes, but also briefer ones, in that they can easily triumph in them, as well as negotiating exits from conflicts that turn out worse than expected. It also doesn't preclude the possibility that states with a free press engage in different (while still fewer, in the aggregate) wars than those without: that is, there may be a class of wars that only states with a free press may pursue, but those with a restricted press do not. Certain rally-around-the-flag, humanitarian, or ideologically justified conflicts that a free press can create support for are all possibilities.

With these findings in hand, the next step is to examine coverage of conflicts in which a war is actually proposed and look for signs of press investigations into that policy.

Chapter 5: Content Analysis

5.1 Exploring Prewar Content

The previous chapter established a strong relationship between a state's press freedoms and its behavior in both international and domestic conflict. But, as the data from 1948 through 1969 indicate, the presence of press freedoms does not always guarantee this relationship will be in effect, indicating that whether and how these freedoms are employed in given conflicts are worthy avenues of inquiry. This chapter will develop a methodology to analyze news coverage of international conflict and then apply it to a series of conflicts, only some of which escalated into war, with a goal of exploring the differences between coverage of crises that become war and coverage of crises that do not.

This study does not dispute the importance of understanding news coverage once war is joined. Various scholars have found news coverage of potential reversals can influence public opinion over the wisdom of continuing a war, or whether it was a good idea in the first place. Knightley's seminal study of correspondents in the Vietnam War found that early coverage rarely questioned the purpose of the war – fighting communists – only its execution (2004), and it took events like the Tet Offensive, the My Lai massacre and Walter Cronkite's declaration that "We are mired in stalemate" before the majority of Americans to tell would told pollsters they regarded Vietnam as a mistake (Allen, 2009).

While this is valuable in tracking how wars end, this study is interested in whether wars begin in the first place, so a focus on the pre-war crisis period is in order. Certainly critical coverage can't always prevent wars, but studying only the coverage of wars that did happen, and concluding it wasn't critical *enough* to prevent the war, carries either an endogeneity problem or a problematic assumption about the power of the American press. Ultimately, the executive and,

in some democracies, legislative branches elect to make war. While they are periodically beholden to the state's selectorate via voting or revolution, when changes in public opinion manifest, they may elect not to be swayed by press coverage and public opinion for every particular war they consider. Second, when and if critical coverage does prevent war, it may happen in a difficult-to-observe way; that is, the scenario of a state pulling its armies back from the border in the face of negative editorials and peace rallies seems less likely than leaders estimating coverage and public opinion among various other factors when debating the merit of escalating a crisis.

So it is important to emphasize what this portion of this study is not: an attempt to draw a direct causal arrow between critical press coverage of a particular prospective war and the war not occurring, or the inverse. While Chapter 4 establishes that the presence of a press capable of critical coverage leads to more peaceful states, the mass of varying circumstances around each crisis would make a claim that press coverage was a tipping point in a war decision impossible to support absent a study truly massive in scope. Instead, one goal in this chapter is to develop a methodology to characterize conflict coverage, and employ that methodology on a series of recent crises and determine in what areas do crises resolved by war are covered differently from those covered by peace.¹⁶ This means that not every measure will be addressed by a particular hypothesis, but instead serve an overall goal to describe conflict coverage and assess journalists' behavior in that coverage.

A potentially problematic assumption is that a leader wants war in all cases when he or she issues a threat to an enemy. That certainly isn't true, but we instead assume that a leader

¹⁶ A researcher might hope that this methodology be adopted and applied to a sufficient number of wars that that characterization of coverage could be used as part of a larger model of war, but because characterizing each crisis requires coding between dozens and hundreds of articles, covering hundreds of conflicts is well beyond the resources available for this study.

doesn't want to be restricted by having the option of war removed from the table by negative press coverage, because that reduces the leader's ability to bargain with the adversary by rendering his or her threats hollow.

In general, this study is constructed to describe the following aspects of coverage:

Who is consulted for stories about a conflict?

What aspects of conflict are covered and how are they portrayed?

What attitudes toward the actors involved and the conflict itself are expressed?

The presence of certain types of content within a communications medium has long been regarded as an indicator of real-world military activity. One of the first uses of modern content analysis was in the field of military intelligence in World War II, during which Allied personnel monitored Axis communications and entertainment programs for patterns that were shown to correlate with troop movements and other on-the-ground military activity (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). News, in particular, attempts to mirror reality, although of course news reports do not carry an absolute correspondence with it. While constructed through a rough sort of empirical inquiry into real events, news is shaped by decisions made during the newsgathering process (Tuchman, 1973). Reporter and editors winnow and organize the universe of available information, determining not only what to cover but how to cover it. They make conscious and unconscious choices on how to portray people, institutions and issues. These choices are shaped by influence from elites and the public, personal and institutional ideology, economic considerations, and practices within the news industry. These choices collectively construct the frame or frames presented in the story; thus, a structured examination into the content of a series of stories about several prospective wars allows a general characterization of that coverage and choices of journalists, which may be then indexed with the actual outcome of the crisis.

Investigators regard journalistic autonomy as willingness to give voice to sources and points of view that diverge from those in power (Althaus, 2003; Entman, 2003). In mainstream American print journalism, journalists obey the concept of the “inverted pyramid,” emphasizing certain people, events, and opinions by putting them in headlines and/or in the first paragraphs of news stories, so casual readers have an easier time finding them; what appears in headlines and comes first in stories may be treated as having received greater emphasis than what comes afterward, or doesn’t appear at all.

Prior studies of war coverage, such as Robinson, Goddard, Parry, & Murray (2009) have gone with broad measures that attempt to track pro-war/neutral/anti-war statements; this study additionally investigates treatments of some well-studied components of conflict, taken from the field of international relations: specifically the concepts of war benefits and costs, state power, and information and commitment problems, as described in Chapter 2 (Powell, 1999; Fearon, 1995). This study assumes these components indeed tell us something about the nature of war, and by studying how they manifest and are treated in news coverage of prospective wars, we can say something meaningful about press autonomy and the conflict itself, and see if the coverage tracks with any of the framing-oriented theories of the press, also described in Chapter 2. This requires channeling each to suppose how they might manifest in news copy about conflict.

If a hegemonic paradigm was in effect, for example, one would expect that coverage would strongly reflect the presidential administration’s preference for war. The administration’s goals would be highlighted, while any costs of war would be downplayed, absent from coverage, or framed as necessary sacrifices for a greater good. The adversary would be portrayed as weak, untrustworthy and immoral. Critics and the adversary would be marginalized in coverage in favor of administration and other elites.

If indexing is instead the dominant mechanism, U.S. government sources will remain primary sources, but opposition elites will be prominent sources if significant criticism of the war occurs; otherwise, the coverage should be largely supportive, similar to the hegemonic case. An interesting question is whether the story within indexing theory would be expanded to accommodate foreign elites, such as leaders in Europe or Asia, who could be used as a site for critical opinions if domestic elites are united.

Evidence of the cascading activation paradigm would be a heavier reliance on experts, non-governmental organizations, and perhaps civilians, along with the appearance of critical content elements. If changes in content are measured over time, particularly an increase in oppositional content elements, would be an additional indicator.

The independent model, meanwhile, would see a balance of sources and opinion. Government claims would be reviewed and the consequences of a war discussed in detail. The adversary's government and opposition groups would be given significant opportunities to comment. Meaningful investigative reporting would be present.

Finally, for the event-driven model to be play, the analysis would find many of the features of the independent and cascading activation model, with an additional focus on non-elites and a move away from pseudo-events (press conferences and other controlled releases of information) and Washington-based coverage. In conflict stories, it may also contain a greater focus on humanitarian justifications for war as well as the human costs if war is joined.

While this study does not employ the predominantly normative "peace journalism" concept (Galtung, 2013) as a direct framework, it still offers many useful avenues of investigation. Galtung describes war journalism – the norm in the news – as carrying an implicit bias for violence as a solution to the conflict. Peace journalism, meanwhile, orients itself toward

areas of agreement between parties and on the causes and consequences of war. While the war/peace journalism bifurcation is often discussed on normative or prescriptive lines, Maslog, Lee, & Kim's (2006) empirical study outlines a number of useful content indicators of the framework the journalist operates in. For war journalism, that includes the use of victimizing, demonizing and emotive language and a focus on elites. Peace journalism, meanwhile, avoids these, instead focusing on non-elites and non-partisan reportage.

5.2 Hypotheses

This study explores an overall hypothesis that news coverage that gives anti-war sources greater prominence and depicts war negatively is associated with a peaceful outcome to a crisis. This breaks down into hypothesizing war and peace valences for 47 distinct story sources and content categories, but rather than list them individually, the next section will offer broad justifications for what will be tested, and list the specific hypothesis in the results tables (5.13 through 5.20).

5.2.1 Sources

The first group of specific hypotheses relate to who is consulted and covered in news stories. These will assess whom journalists talk to, allowing evaluation of who is deemed important in news coverage.

The first hypothesis keys on expected war supporters. Republicans are typically regarded as the hawkish party in the United States, and are included here. NATO and officials directly working for other alliances would also be expected to have more of a role in an imminent war case. Specifically:

H4: Conflict coverage that features greater emphasis on the presidential administration, elite presidential allies, Republicans, NATO and other alliances, and opposition groups in the adversary state are associated with a war outcome.

Also, war opponents and civilians are granted more of a voice in peace outcomes. In addition, per the cascading activation model, this study predicts that greater consultation with experts will be associated with the peace outcome:

H5: Conflict coverage that features greater emphasis on Democrats, the U.S. non-presidential party (regardless of which party), civilians from any country, the adversary's government, and experts and non-governmental organizations will be associated with a peace outcome.

The remaining groups of hypotheses relate to what topics and viewpoints are covered in stories. The power, benefits, costs and information problems groups are drawn directly from international relations literature as described in Chapter 2, while the attitudinal and contextual components are grounded in more traditional media studies theory regarding statement valence and framing.

5.2.2 Power

The relative strengths of two belligerents' military forces are integral to a leader's war decision-making. Certain emphases in coverage can reflect real-world preparations for war, as well as imply projects about war outcomes. In addition, increases in military strength can be seen as a cause of war per the commitment problems mechanism (Fearon, 1995) .

H6: Conflict coverage that features greater emphasis on U.S., allied military or adversary forces, increases in military power by the U.S. or the adversary, or describes adversary military weaknesses will be associated with a war outcome.

H7: Conflict coverage that features greater emphasis on U.S. military weaknesses will be associated with a peace outcome.

5.2.3 Benefits

This term is meant to capture the U.S. goals in the conflict and rationales for war, which figure to feature prominently in news coverage, and this study predicts greater emphasis on what are seen as goals in the national interest will be associated with a war outcome.

H8: Conflict coverage that emphasizes an adversary's natural resources and other material capabilities, liberating or aiding beleaguered civilians in the adversary state, removing an international threat, or removing an existential threat to the United States will be associated with a war outcome.

H9: Conflict coverage that emphasizes U.S. politicians' personal benefit from war, or challenges to claims of benefits from war will be associated with a peace outcome.

5.2.4 Costs

These categories are meant to cover what could be lost if the conflict escalates to war.

H10: Conflict coverage that emphasizes the costs of war will be associated with a peace outcome.

H11: Conflict coverage that contains prominent denials that certain costs will be realized will be associated with a war outcome.

5.2.5 Information Problems

Information Problems arise when leaders' private beliefs about their state's ability and resolve to win wars are incorrect. As described in previous chapters, unaddressed information problems can lead to war because both sides believe they can gain more with warfare than in the last offer in a prospective peaceful bargain. If information problems of U.S. leaders are

emphasized, however, this may reflect changing views on whether the U.S. may prevail as quickly as it expects.

H12: Coverage that emphasizes U.S. information problems will be associated with a peace outcome.

Discussion of the adversary state's information problems, however, is expected to refer to why that state doesn't settle for a diplomatic bargain.

H13: Coverage that emphasizes the adversary state's information problems will be associated with a war outcome.

5.2.6 Attitude

These hypotheses regard viewpoints expressed about the United States, the adversary, and war and peace as options for resolving the conflict.

H14: Coverage that emphasizes support for and/or the likelihood of peace or diplomatic solutions will be associated with a peace outcome.

H15: Coverage that emphasizes threats of war, support for war, or a belief that war is likely will be associated with a war outcome.

H16: Coverage that emphasizes the differences of the adversary and its people from Americans, or presents these differences in a derisive manner, will be associated with a war outcome.

H17: Coverage that vilifies the adversary state and its leaders will be associated with a war outcome.

H18: Coverage that vilifies the United States and its leaders will be associated with a peace outcome.

5.2.7 Context

The final group of hypotheses marks how the conflict is framed.

H19: Coverage that emphasizes the current conflict's place in a broader war will be associated with a war outcome.

H20: Coverage that emphasizes prior wars with the adversary will be associated with a war outcome.

H21: Coverage that emphasizes arguments against the current conflict belonging in a larger war will be associated with a peace outcome.

5.3 Methodology

This study tests these hypotheses by coding the news coverage of a series of recent international conflicts involving the United States, only some of which became war.

The full codebook is in Appendix B, but the content categories are described here:

5.3.1 Story Trigger

This measure assesses what the primary near-term impetus for writing the story. The codes are:

1. Event: The story keys on some real-world event that involves sunk costs or consequences beyond news stories and reaction. This includes combat, deployment or movements of forces, mobilization of reserves, weapons being inspected, demonstrated, tested or manufactured, an election or change in state or senior military leadership, or a natural or unforeseen event such as a disaster. It also includes diplomatic actions and public meetings in which meaningful, binding decisions are made.

2. Pseudo-Event: The story is built around a controlled, public release of information, such as a press conference, interview, speech, press release, report or poll. Statements at or

following meetings (absent a binding decision) fall here, including diplomatic meetings in which only statements or non-binding pledges are made. Beneficial leaks, which are stories built around a controlled release of information cited to anonymous officials, such as a preview of an upcoming report or speech, are coded here.

3. Investigative or negative leak: The story contains heretofore unknown information acquired through reporter enterprise or coming from whistleblowers that challenges and/or is generally damaging to U.S. administration or its goals.

4. Analysis: A story that is labeled analysis or is built around expert analysis, rather than being driven by an event, pseudo-event, leak or investigation.

5. Human Interest: A story that focuses on human beings' actions and responses in relation to the potential conflict.

6. Follow-up: A story that appears in reaction to something reported in another outlet. A key phrase is "First reported by."

7. Unrelated: A story that does not relate to or contain meaningful information about the conflict, including offhand references in stories primarily about other topics.

8. Other: A story that does not fit in the above categories.

5.3.2 Story Sources

This study categorizes the following sources in copy:

1. The presidential administration: This includes the president, White House officials, the National Security Adviser and members of the National Security Council, cabinet secretaries, deputy/assistant/under-secretaries, and other political appointees, including ambassadors to the United Nations and other countries.

2. The Republican Party: Other elected Republicans and party officials, retired and active. This includes independents who caucus with the GOP, but not rank-and-file party members, who are coded as U.S. civilians.

3. The Democratic Party: Elected Democrats and party officials, retired and active. This includes independents who caucus with the Democrats, but not rank-and-file party members, who are coded as U.S. civilians.

4. Other U.S. government: This includes people from nominally apolitical agencies, such as non-appointed military, diplomatic, intelligence and law enforcement personnel, review agencies like the Congressional Budget Office and the Congressional Research Service, as well as government sources that are not specifically identified. It also includes the agencies themselves when they are anthropomorphized as actors. However, the United States anthropomorphized into a single, non-specific actor is not to be coded; the nation's presence and role can be expected to appear in almost every story. Instead, this breakdown of four distinct government-related categories is intended to allow analysis of what elements of the state are given primacy in coverage.

5. U.S. civilians: Citizens of the United States who do not fall in any other category.

6. Non-governmental organizations: This includes humanitarian and religious organizations, but not think-tanks or terrorist groups. These may be from any country and supersede the civilian categories.

7. United Nations-International: This includes international and intergovernmental bodies generally recognized as having regulatory authority, including the IAEA. It does not include regional bodies, like NATO.

8. Alliance members: This is for information and actions specifically attributed to an international formal or informal alliance of countries, such as NATO or a general “coalition.” This is coded only if the alliance itself is acting or providing information, as opposed to individual countries within it.

9. Adversary government: Any officials or institutions of the adversary’s government, including diplomatic and military personnel.

10. Adversary opposition: This includes opposition parties and groups and dissidents opposed to adversary's government. This may include civilians living outside the country.

11. Adversary civilians: Any citizens of the adversary’s country who are not described as part of the government or opposition.

12. Violent transnational organization: A non-state group widely thought to be committing violence for political or criminal purposes in multiple countries.

13. Foreign government: Present-day officials, including military and diplomatic personnel, from any country that isn’t the United States or the adversary state. This includes elected opposition officials and institutions anthropomorphized as actors in those countries. It also includes interstate organizations with broad authority, like the European Union, that don’t include the U.S. or the adversary. Note this could include states that are adversaries in other conflicts covered in this study – that is, Iranian leaders commenting on the U.S.-Iraq conflict are coded here and not as an adversary.

14. Foreign civilians: Any citizens of states other than the two countries in conflict. This may include non-government elites like business leaders.

15. Expert: This includes retired government personnel, university professors, and researchers with think-tanks that are noted to have some expertise or relevance to the topic.

Organizations that primarily advise government and media and make policy recommendations are counted as think tanks, as opposed to NGOs.

16. Media: This covers any reportage attributed to other media sources, or media personnel who are quoted directly in coverage. If a media source is described as an official government mouthpiece, it is coded as U.S., Adversary or Foreign government.

For analysis purposes, the Republican and Democrat categories will be recoded into “presidential party” and “opposition party” based on the party of who is president on the date of the story.

5.3.3 Power

The first group of categories relate to state military power, per H3 and H4.

1. U.S. Forces (USFORCES): This includes description and discussion of specific extant components of military power – such as armies, warships, aircraft, paramilitary forces, and weapons of mass destruction – that belong to the United States or its allies and are in some way “pointed” at the adversary in the prospective war by either 1) being located within geographical proximity to the conflict or 2) framed as forces available for use in the conflict.

2. Adversary Forces (ADFORCES): Similar to U.S. Forces, this includes discussion of specific, extant elements of the adversary’s military power.

3. Increase in U.S. power (USPOWUP): This category indicates an assertion of a change in the balance of power between the United States and the adversary that favors the United States and its allies. This includes descriptions of the U.S. moving forces to improve its ability to fight the adversary and the adversary’s power dropping. Changes in the balance of power are a key component of commitment problems (Fearon, 1995).

4. Increase in adversary power (ADPOWUP): The reverse of the above trend, this category indicates an assertion that the balance of power is changing in the adversary's favor. This should not be taken to mean that it requires claims that it is growing stronger than the United States, merely that it is growing relatively less weak. This category includes claims that the adversary is training forces, purchasing or constructing weapons (conventional or unconventional), or overcoming problems of a military nature. In addition, claims the United States' capabilities are dropping go here. It does not include claims that the adversary only desires such a change, but that one is actually taking place.

5. U.S. weakness (USWEAK): This category captures an assertion that the United States and its allies will be unable to prevail in the prospective war.

6. Adversary weakness (ADWEAK): This is an assertion that the adversary is weak or incapable of winning the war, or that the U.S. victory is assured.

5.3.4 Benefits

The next group of content categories relates to conflict benefits and war justifications, per H5 and H6.

7. Material (STUFBENE): The copy carries an assertion that the United States' and/or its allies' goal in the conflict is acquire access to resources or land from the adversary, or that that the adversary has significant resources of interest to the United States.

8. Internal (ADVBENE): This marks an assertion that a goal is to improve the internal material, political or ideological conditions in the adversary state. This includes claims of spreading democracy, civil liberties or religion, or improving some aspect of humanitarian conditions in the adversary state.

9. International (INTLBENE): This is an assertion that a goal is to improve international conditions by eliminating a threat posed by the adversary to other states (including threats to the United States if they are NOT specified as existential in nature), pleasing or gaining allies (including a friendly new government in the adversary state), seeing other countries align their behavior with U.S. preferences, or forestalling a wider conflict. General support of “disarming” a state or attacking it based on its support of terrorists or terrorism is coded here.

10. Survival (SURVBENE): The story asserts a United States’ goal is to specifically eliminate an existential threat to itself. Existential threats may include destruction of American cities or the economy, mass death among the civilian population, loss of civil order, loss of national sovereignty, invasion, or annexation by another country.

11. Political (POLIBENE): The story asserts that the goal of American leaders in the conflict is to gain or retain internal political or material power or personal benefits, such as favorable public opinion or enriching themselves or their allies.

12. General/Other (OTHBENE): The story asserts a potential American benefit from or goal of the conflict that either doesn’t fit into one of the other categories, or is too broad to fit within them. General calls for regime change without providing more specific reasons are coded here.

13. No Benefit (NOBENE): A source in the story questions, downplays or denies the existence, achievability (under any circumstances) or desirability of any of the above benefits of the conflict.

5.3.5 Costs

The third group of content categories relates to potential war costs, per H7 and H8.

14. Military (MILCOST): Through war, the United States risks significant military casualties, financial costs, a long occupation or guerilla war, a “quagmire” or drop in military capabilities and readiness.

15. Foreign (FORNCOST): The United States risks alienating or destabilizing countries other than the adversary. This includes damaged foreign relations and the adversary launching attacks on nearby states, as well as sparking wider regional conflicts.

16. Humanitarian (HUMCOST): The United States risks causing significant humanitarian suffering, economic damage, displaced persons and refugee crises, or civil conflict within the adversary state.

17. Retribution (RETRCOST): The United States risks the adversary or its allies launching attacks on American civilians or the U.S. homeland.

18. Domestic (HOMECOST): Through war, U.S. leaders are risking their political position or lowered public opinion, and/or they are risking damage to the U.S. economy.

19. General/Other (OTHCOST): Some other cost, or some nonspecific reference to the costs of war, is described.

20. None (NOCOST): The potential or threat of any of these losses is denied, questioned or downplayed. This includes assurances that the feared cost won’t take place. A sentence that both raises a potential cost and downplays it is coded in one of the above categories as well as this one.

5.3.6 Information Problems

The final two international conflict categories involve uncertainty about the conflict, per H12 and H13.

21. U.S. uncertainty (USWRONG): The United States is said to be incorrect or uncertain about the adversary's capability and/or resolve to fight a war against it.

22. Adversary uncertainty (ADWRONG): The adversary is said to be incorrect or uncertain about the U.S. and its allies' capability and/or resolve to fight a war against it.

5.3.7 Attitudinal components

These categories capture attitudes expressed about the conflict and its participants. They test H14 through H18.

23. U.S. negative opinion (USBAD): The United States (or its leaders or some or all of its people) is denounced, described as warmongering, rogue, evil, imperial, untrustworthy or deceitful, or operating outside of norms regarding conflict (such as violating sovereignty, treatment of prisoners, handling of internal conflict, etc.) . Or, the existence of the conflict is blamed primarily on the United States.

24. Adversary negative opinion (ADBAD): The adversary (or its leaders or some or all of its people) is denounced or described as warmongering, rogue, evil, imperial, untrustworthy or deceitful, or operating outside of norms regarding conflict (such as violating sovereignty, treatment of prisoners, handling of internal conflict, use of weapons of mass destruction, etc.) Or, the existence of the conflict is blamed primarily on the adversary.

25. Adversary differences (THEYDIFF): Differences between the United States' and the adversary's cultures, values, religions, organizing political principles, or demographics are employed or implied, without the use of any negative terms. Only the adversary need be mentioned, if the term is not one that would be used to describe the United States: An example would be nothing the adversary is a predominantly Muslim country.

26. Negative adversary difference (BADDIFF): As above, but the terms are used in a way that would be regarded as dehumanizing or otherwise negative by average, middle-of-the-road Americans.

27. War support (GOWAR): A story source expresses preference for war or a belief that war is the best means to achieve goals or forestall suffering, issues a threat to use force (either on offense or defense), or questions, disputes or downplays whether non-violent methods or diplomacy will achieve goals in the conflict. Analytical statements that war is likely or peaceful resolutions are unlikely are coded here, as are conditional threats or statements that suggest war is a possibility.

28. Peace support (GOPEACE): A source expresses opposition to the war, a preference for peace, diplomatic or political solutions or de-escalation of the conflict, a belief that peace is the best means to achieve goals or avoid suffering, retracts a threat, or questions, disputes or downplays whether violent methods will achieve goals in the conflict. Statements that war is unlikely or that peaceful resolution is likely are coded here.

5.3.8 Contextual components

The final group of content categories aims to capture attempts to contextualize the conflict. They test H19, H20, and H21.

29. Past conflict (PASTFITE): The story references past wars between the U.S. and the adversary.

30. Grand conflict (GRANDWAR): A source asserts the conflict is part of a larger struggle the United States is engaged in.

31. Distinct conflict (NOTGRAND): A source disputes or downplays any assertions the conflict is part of a larger struggle.

5.3.9 Prominence

All sources and content categories are coded for where their first appearance in the story takes place. News stories are typically written in an “inverted pyramid” style that ranks information of greater importance ahead of that with lesser importance as a way to efficiently communicate to readers, and this translates into information deemed the most critical appearing in the story headline or early paragraphs.¹⁷ This captures the degree to which the news outlets determine who and what deserves priority in news coverage. While not as granular as counting all appearances of a particular story element, it is a more manageable coding task with so many categories to cover, and is less likely to result in coder error. Specific prominence codings are 1) Headline; 2) First three paragraphs, and 3) Anywhere else.

In addition, stories are coded whether they appear on the newspaper’s front page, a sign the news outlet gives particularly high consideration to the story.

For analysis, each source and category is scored on a single scale: 3 for headline appearance, 2 for top-three-paragraphs appearance, and 1 for appearance anywhere else in the copy. If the story is on the front page, the score is increased by three for all sources and categories that appear, giving a range of 0 to 6 (in which zero means the category was not present in the story). Results across multiple stories are reported as a mean prominence score.

5.3.10 Reliability

Fifty stories were selected from the Syrian and Afghanistan conflicts for intercoder reliability tests for the interpretative content categories: the international conflict components, attitudinal components, contextual components, and the story trigger. Two coders were employed for each category. This study employs Krippendorff’s Alpha as the reliability statistic,

¹⁷ While features don’t always follow this style, their headlines and early paragraphs typically contain summary information about the topic and direction of the story.

with a target reliability of .7. While this is on the lower end of acceptable reliability for such studies, the figure is warranted for this study because of the novel nature of the content variables (Neuendorf, 2002). Results are in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Intercoder reliability coefficients for interpretative content categories

Category	α	Agreement	Category	α	Agreement
Trigger	.76	.78	Adversary Populace Benefit	.79	.98
U.S. Administration	.95	.97	International Benefit	.83	.92
Republicans	1.00	1.00	U.S. Survival Benefit	1.00	1.00
Democrats	1.00	1.00	Political Benefit	1.00	1.00
U.S. Government	.94	.97	Other Benefit	1.00	1.00
U.S. Civilians	1.00	1.00	No Benefit	1.00	1.00
Non-Governmental Organization	.85	.97	Military Cost	.79	.98
U.N./International Bodies	1.00	1.00	Foreign Cost	.91	.98
Alliance	1.00	1.00	Humanitarian Cost	.91	.98
Adversary Government	1.00	1.00	Retribution Cost	1.00	1.00
Adversary Opposition	1.00	1.00	U.S. Domestic Cost	1.00	1.00
Adversary Civilians	1.00	1.00	Other Cost	.73	.96
Violent Transnational Organization	1.00	1.00	No Cost	1.00	1.00
Foreign Government	1.00	1.00	U.S. Information Problem	1.00	1.00
Foreign Civilians	1.00	1.00	Adversary Information Problem	1.00	1.00
Experts	1.00	1.00	U.S. is Bad	.80	.94
Media	1.00	1.00	Adversary is Bad	.72	.84
U.S. Forces	.75	.98	Adversary is Different	.83	.92
Adversary Forces	.92	.96	Adversary's Differences Are Bad	.78	.96
U.S. Power Increase	1.00	1.00	Go War	.70	.84
Adversary Power Increase	.90	.96	Go Peace	.82	.90
U.S. Military Weakness	.79	.98	Past War	.90	.98
Adversary Military Weakness	.79	.98	Grand Conflict	.84	.96
Material Benefit	1.00	1.00	Not Grand Conflict	1.00	1.00

α is Krippendorff's Alpha score. Agreement is ratio of agreed-upon codings to total codings.

5.3.11 News Source and Sampling

This study samples articles from *The New York Times*, an elite American newspaper with a strong international focus relative to many other U.S. news outlets. Its reporters are well-connected with the White House, U.S. military establishment and diplomatic corps, and its reporting sets much of the news agenda for the rest of the country (McCombs, 2004). The sample is limited to news stories of 250 words or greater during each crisis period, and relevance

parameters in LexisNexis were employed to ensure stories of substance are analyzed.¹⁸ Stories were selected by systematic random sampling (e.g. code every x th story), with sampling intervals for each conflict case determined by the number of overall stories available about the conflict and a goal of a 95% confidence level and ± 5 or lower confidence interval (Neuendorf, 2002).

5.3.12 Conflict Selection and Survey Period

This study focuses on the coverage of six international crises over a 12-year period, each involving the United States and another country. Three were resolved, or at least ended, without open warfare: North Korea (2003), Iran (2007), and Syria (2013). Three others led to war: Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2002-2003), and Libya (2011).

These similarities in these conflicts were deliberate as they allow holding some things constant in analyzing them. The potential cost of this, of course, is universal applicability in the findings. In each of these six conflicts, one of the two participants, the United States, remains broadly the same country – the same public, the same military and military technology, the same allies and rivals among the world powers, the same economic system, and the same amount of media freedoms. Certainly these things changed over the 12 years, but compared to, say, the United States in 1898 or 1941, they are quite similar. While it is impossible to have a true control in an analysis like this – we can't observe an identical conflict situation where only the news coverage and state war decision changes – this allows some confidence that deep structural factors haven't changed, making comparison of conflict coverage a more viable enterprise.

The precise dates of each crisis, particularly those that ended peacefully, also required some consideration, as many of the issues related to the crises extended before and/or after the

¹⁸ The specific LexisNexis search string is as follows, varying in dates and second country name with each conflict: LENGTH>(250) AND (SECTION(National Desk OR Foreign Desk)) AND (United States #90PLUS#) AND (Iraq #90PLUS#) AND DATE(geq(01/29/2002) AND leq(03/20/2003)).

period covered. These are specifically justified in the case summaries below, but in general the focus was on specific triggers that led to heightened periods of conflict and those, in the case of peaceful outcomes, that signaled a meaningful, if often muted, reduction in tensions.

5.4 Case summaries

Table 5.2 contains details about the six conflicts covered in this study.

Table 5.2: Details of six conflicts covered in content analysis

Conflict	Outcome	Start Event	Start Date	End Event	End Date	Crisis duration
U.S.-Afghanistan	War	Sept. 11 attacks	Sept. 12, 2001	U.S. attack	Oct. 7, 2001	25 days
U.S.-Iraq	War	Axis of Evil speech	Jan. 29, 2002	U.S. attack	March 20, 2003	415 days
U.S.-North Korea	No War	North Korea withdraws from NPT	Jan. 10, 2003	6-Party Talks begin	Aug. 27, 2003	229 days
U.S.-Iran	No War	U.S. seizes Iranians in Iraq	Jan. 11, 2007	U.S. NIE on Iran made public	Dec. 4, 2007	327 days
U.S.-Libya	War	Calls for no-fly zone	Feb. 21, 2011	NATO attack	March 19, 2011	26 days
U.S.-Syria	No War	U.S. claims Syria used chemical weapons	June 13, 2013	Syria accedes to CWC	Sept. 14, 2013	93 days

5.4.1 Afghanistan, 2001

Suspicion of responsibility for the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks quickly fell on al-Qaida, a group founded by Arab veterans of the successful Afghanistan resistance to the Soviet occupation in the 1980s. Members of the group had conducted suicide attacks and other attacks commonly described as terrorism. The group had been accused of the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and the bombing of the American warship *Cole*, in 2000, in Yemen. Al-Qaida's leader, the Saudi Osama bin Laden, cited U.S. support of Israel and the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia, the site of Islam's two holiest mosques, as reasons to attack the United States and its interests. By 2001, al-Qaida had a physical base in Afghanistan was sheltered by the Taliban, which controlled most of the country.

After the attacks, the Taliban denied bin Laden was responsible and refused American demands to surrender him to avoid war, and Taliban leaders alternated between pleas for mercy and defiance. Pakistan agreed to assist the American-led invasion, and the U.S. sought proxies in the Northern Alliance, a coalition of anti-Taliban rebel groups and warlords who held a small portion of the country. The U.S. began overt combat operations in Afghanistan on Oct. 7, 2001. Between Sept. 11 and Oct. 7, the period sampled for this study, Gallup polls showed a steady 90 percent of Americans supported the war (Gallup, 2001a; Gallup, 2001b; Gallup, 2001c).

5.4.2 Iraq, 2002-2003

This crisis began on Jan. 29, 2002, when U.S. President George W. Bush named Iraq, along with North Korea and Iran, as part of an “Axis of Evil” of states that had or were developing nuclear, biological and/or chemical weapons, and/or supported terrorism. The regime of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein consented to U.N. inspections aimed at uncovering prohibited weapons, but the inspections found little to verify the Bush administration’s claims. Numerous countries and publics protested any U.S. invasion of Iraq, citing a lack of a casus belli. On Feb. 6, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell gave a speech to the United Nations, laying out the U.S. case, but world opinion changed little. Bush’s final demand, for Saddam to abdicate, went ignored, and on March 20, the United States attempted to assassinate Saddam with an air strike, and the U.S., United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland invaded.

Gallup polls of Americans during the crisis period showed a majority of Americans favored invading Iraq. While a November 2001 poll showed 74 percent favored such an invasion, the figure dropped to 61 percent in June 2002, and remained in the mid-to-high 50s during most of the crisis, ending at around 60 percent in the period between Powell’s speech and when overt hostilities began. As noted in Chapter 3, however, polls also indicated that two-thirds

of Americans wanted U.N. approval for the invasion, which the Bush administration did not obtain (Gallup, 2003; Gallup, n.d.).

5.4.3 North Korea, 2003

This crisis is founded on increased tensions over North Korea's nuclear weapons program. It began on Jan. 10, 2003, when the government of North Korea announced it was withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in response to threats from the United States. In February, the U.S. deployed heavy bombers to Guam in what American officials portrayed as a deterrent to North Korea attempting offensive action while the U.S. was invading Iraq. In March, North Korean fighter aircraft intercepted an American spy plane and attempted to force it to land in North Korea, but the plane ignored the demand. The regime of Kim Jong Il sought bilateral talks with the U.S., but the Bush administration insisted on multilateral diplomacy involving South Korea, China and Japan, saying bilateral talks would be regarded as a propaganda coup for North Korea. The administration was frequently faulted for having an incoherent policy on North Korea during the crisis period. In June, the U.S. announced it would be moving thousands of troops away from the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea, into southern South Korea, where they would be in less immediate danger should hostilities commence on the Korean peninsula, a move South Korea protested because the reduced threat to U.S. personnel would make the Americans more likely to launch a pre-emptive strike on North Korea. In August, the U.S. announced a large naval exercise off the Korean peninsula, and North Korea, the United States, Japan, China, South Korea and Russia agreed to

hold what became known as the Six-Party Talks over North Korea's nuclear programs, the initiation of which is regarded as the conclusion of this crisis.¹⁹

Polls during this time on whether Americans favored offensive action against North Korea varied depending on whether the question was posed as a conditional – along the lines of “Do you favor attacking North Korea if diplomacy fails” – or a direct inquiry if the respondent favored an attack. A CBS poll immediately before the crisis period found only 8 percent support for an attack, but polls in January and February 2003 found conditional support for an attack ranging from 33 to 62 percent. In April, 43 percent of respondents to an ABC/Washington Post poll said they would support using military force against North Korea. In July, a few weeks before the conclusion of the crisis, 33 percent told a Time/CNN poll said they would support the use of force (Polling Report, n.d.a).

5.4.4 Iran, 2007

This conflict involves disputes over Iran's alleged nuclear weapons programs and its alleged support of anti-U.S. forces occupying Iraq. During this time, Iran's government denied supporting the Iraqi insurgency and stated that its nuclear program was for electricity, not weapons. In January 2007, U.S. troops seized Iranian government personnel in Iraq, alleging they were supporting insurgents. In February, the Bush administration alleged that bombs used by Shia militias against U.S. forces were made with Iranian parts, although it was unclear if and to what extent the Iranian government was directly supporting their transfer to the militias. In March, the U.N. Security Council increased sanctions against Iran over its nuclear programs, despite protests from European companies who did business in Iraq. The United States increased

¹⁹ This crisis roughly corresponds with U.S.-North Korea Militarized Interstate Dispute 30304. Like the Correlates of War dataset employed in Chapter 4, the MID dataset is frequently used in scholarly inquiries into international conflict. It tracks instances where military force is threatened or used in ways short of open warfare (Palmer, D'Orazio, Kenwick, & Lane, 2015). The current iteration of the dataset covers conflicts from 1816 to 2010.

its naval presence in the Persian Gulf with a second aircraft carrier and its escorts, which were located in easy striking distance of Iran. Iran seized 15 Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel from small boats operated off of the *HMS Cornwall* who were inspecting merchant vessels in disputed waters off the Iran-Iraq coast. They were released 15 days later. In April, Iran accused U.S. warplanes of violating its airspace. In the spring and summer, Iran arrested several prominent Iranian-Americans who were visiting Iran, claiming they were fomenting unrest. American presidential candidates argued about whether Iran should be attacked or engaged in diplomacy. Tensions eased when U.S. forces announced a drop in bombing attacks. In December 2007, a new U.S. National Intelligence Estimate – a document produced by American intelligence agencies and partially released to the public -- challenged the Bush administration's claims that Iran was growing closer to a nuclear weapon, instead saying Iran appears to have shut down its weapons programs in 2003. The release of this report altered U.S. perceptions about Iran and marks the conclusion of this crisis.²⁰

During this time period, support among Americans for U.S. offensive action – on conditional or absolute grounds – was low, with most polls finding one-third or fewer of respondents supporting an attack on Iran. (Polling Report, n.d.b)

5.4.5 Libya, 2011

This crisis began on Feb. 21, 2011, days after Libya, ruled by Moammar Gadhafi, descended into civil war in after supporters of the Arab Spring movements toppled the governments in neighboring Tunisia and Egypt. Western sympathies was generally with the rebels, and stories of reprisals by Gadhafi's forces against civilians appeared in world media, leading to calls to establish an airborne umbrella over Libya to prevent government aircraft and armored forces from conducting attacks on civilians. Foreign nationals, including many oil

²⁰ This crisis roughly corresponds with U.S.-Iran MID 50701.

company workers, fled the country, and the administration of U.S. President Barack Obama and United Nations debated whether to support the rebels and, if so, to what degree. By mid-March, it became clear the rebels were losing, and the U.N. Security Council approved a no-fly zone over Libya to protect civilians. NATO aircraft, including U.S. planes, began strikes against Libyan air defenses on March 19.

The U.S. public was divided on the war; support for a no-fly zone ranged from the mid-30s to the low 50s in the few polls that were taken during that time, with some variation apparently dependent on how the question was framed. (Washington Post-ABC News, 2011; CNN-Opinion Research, 2011).

5.4.6 Syria, 2013

The Syrian civil war also had its roots in the Arab Spring movements, which escalated to open warfare in Syria by late 2011. By 2013, rebel forces held significant portions of the country, and foreign powers were backing various sides. The U.S. crisis begins on June 13, when the Obama administration concluded Syrian government forces had employed chemical weapons in limited capacities against rebel forces. This crossed what Obama had called a “red line” in 2012, suggesting the U.S. would respond with force against the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad if such weapons were used. Assad’s forces denied using chemical weapons and they, along with Russia, accused rebel forces of employing them. The Obama administration planned to send aid and provide training to rebels, although rebel groups were fractured and many feared weapons would end up in the hands of militant Islamist groups that could use them against U.S. interests. On Aug. 21, 2013, Syrian forces used sarin, a nerve agent, in the Damascus suburbs, killing hundreds of civilians, including children, according to U.N. investigators. The Obama administration and the administration of French President Francois

Hollande supported airstrikes on the Syrian government in response, saying if such behavior was not punished other governments would be bolder about using chemical weapons in the future. A flotilla of U.S. warships assembled in the eastern Mediterranean. The British Parliament, however, voted against British participation, and Obama sought support from Congress for military action, but it appeared he would not get it. Despite this, the Syrian government relented and on Sept. 14 it acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention and agreed to surrender its chemical weapon stockpiles.

Americans also were strongly against any action, with 36 percent in support of strikes in an early September Gallup poll, which was taken after the Damascus sarin attack came to light (Gallup, 2013).

5.5 *Times* Coverage and Samples

This study coded 959 *New York Times* stories about the six conflicts, totaling more than 940,000 words of news copy. Confidence intervals of 5% or less were attained, with lower numbers due to oversampling in some cases. Table 5.3 details the story counts and sample sizes for each conflict.

Table 5.3: Details of *New York Times* coverage of the six crises and sample sizes for content analysis

Conflict	Outcome	Crisis duration	NYT stories	Stories/day	Coded Sample	CI
U.S.-Afghanistan	War	25 days	173	6.92	132	4.2
U.S.-Iraq	War	415 days	1541	3.71	308	5
U.S.-North Korea	No War	229 days	174	0.76	127	4.5
U.S.-Iran	No War	327 days	338	1.03	203	4.4
U.S.-Libya	War	26 days	64	2.46	59	3.4
U.S.-Syria	No War	93 days	168	1.81	130	4.1

For the purposes of analysis, conflicts were grouped together by their outcome. Table 5.4 describes the samples with a binary war/no-war outcome.

Table 5.4: Sample details if conflicts are coded into war/non-war categories			
	#Stories	Coded Sample	CI
War	1778	499	3.8
Non-War	680	460	2.6

Coding was performed on a custom .html page designed for this study. Statistical analysis was performed with SPSS.

5.6 Results

This study set out to develop a methodology for characterizing conflict coverage. While coverage of the six conflicts contained a number of context-specific elements, such as discussions of geography or the history of the conflict, they also bore many similarities.

5.6.1 Descriptives

Table 5.5 offers a top-down look at the two most interesting story variables, *trigger* and *datelines* – what caused the story and where it was reported from. Overall these breakdowns are markedly similar – pseudo-events make up the plurality of stories in five of six conflicts, with Libya as the exception. Interestingly, the Libya conflict has some characteristics that suggest the event-driven model could be in effect – significant coverage from outside the United States, a greater focus on real events instead of elites talking or experts arguing, and an emphasis on humanitarian goals in protecting civilians from government troops. In this case, many of the “other international” datelines where from adjacent countries or across the Mediterranean, covering refugees from the Libyan civil war.

Table 5.5: Percentages for story trigger and dateline, by conflict

	All Stories	Afghanistan	Iraq	North Korea	Iran	Libya	Syria
<i>Triggers</i>							
Events	27.8	28.0	22.4	31.5	29.6	44.1	26.9
Pseudo-Events	40.6	31.1	42.9	44.9	46.3	27.1	37.7
Investigatives	2.0	3.8	1.3	.8	2.5	3.4	1.5
Analysis	20.9	23.5	23.1	17.3	16.7	16.9	24.6
Human Interest	5.8	11.4	5.8	4.7	3.0	3.4	6.9
Other Categories	3.0	2.4	4.5	.8	2.0	5.1	2.3
<i>Datelines</i>							
Washington	38.7	36.4	39.9	44.1	27.1	47.5	46.9
Other U.S.	17.6	13.6	24.0	12.6	16.3	23.7	10.8
Adversary Country	6.5	9.8	6.5	2.4	10.3	6.8	.8
Other International	37.2	40.2	29.5	40.9	46.3	22.0	41.5
<i>N</i>	959	132	308	127	203	59	130

N is number of stories coded for each conflict. Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

A second striking finding is that, on average, only one story in fifty was built around an investigative effort or a critical leak from within the government. While it is reasonable the grind of daily coverage and subsequent analysis should comprise the majority of stories, that *The New York Times* was able to break out so few original challenges of this nature suggests that fears about reduced resources devoted to investigative reporting along with the impact of anti-leak measures in the government are well-founded.²¹

Table 5.6 show that coverage heavily favored government elites. To some degree this is to be expected: The decision to go to war rests with those elites, and their words and actions are meaningful determinants of outcomes. Civilians of all nationalities received little attention. In addition, this table shows that the prominence of some source categories may be context-

²¹ To be clear, this category does not mark all negative coverage. Overt challenges or people offering their opinions were typically classed as pseudo-events; this category was intended to cover factual assertions that challenge the administration line that were attained through reporter enterprise.

dependent, particularly Alliance, which is emphasized primarily in Libya and Afghanistan – conflicts in which NATO participated.

Table 5.6: Mean prominence score for sources, overall and by conflict; ranked by overall score

	All Stories	Afghanistan	Iraq	North Korea	Iran	Libya	Syria
U.S. Presidential Administration	1.35	1.17	1.25	1.63	1.23	1.41	1.68
Foreign Government	1.05	1.26	.89	1.06	1.06	.73	1.36
U.S. Government	.64	.86	.51	.59	.62	.61	.82
Adversary Government	.58	.65	.36	.89	.81	.47	.43
Expert	.58	.49	.37	.58	.64	.56	1.07
Democrats	.31	.11	.31	.19	.34	.29	.62
U.S. Opposition Party*	.31						
United Nations	.26	.20	.41	.15	.24	.22	.14
Republicans	.23	.14	.16	.19	.17	.20	.65
U.S. Presidential Party*	.23						
Adversary Opposition	.17	.36	.07	.02	.02	.56	.42
Media	.14	.26	.12	.03	.18	.05	.18
Foreign Civilians	.13	.20	.12	.09	.18	.08	.10
U.S. Civilians	.12	.14	.18	.06	.08	.03	.14
Non-Governmental Organization	.11	.08	.07	.03	.08	.32	.22
Adversary Civilians	.08	.14	.06	.02	.05	.17	.09
Violent Transnational Organization	.03	.11	.02	.00	.00	.00	.06
Alliance	.02	.08	.01	.00	.00	.10	.00
<i>N</i>	959	132	308	127	203	59	130

* These means were calculated from the Democrats' prominence scores in Afghanistan, Iraq, North Korea, and Iran, and the Republicans' from Libya and Syria. Range of possible means is 0 to 6 in all categories.

Tables 5.7 through 5.10 show the prominence of various conflict components in stories. Table 5.11 reports the measured prominence of attitudinal components, and 5.12 reports contextual components.

Power-related content figured prominently in all conflicts, particularly in North Korea, the coverage of which included frequent mentions that North Korea probably already had a nuclear weapon, plus descriptions of U.S. forces stationed near the Demilitarized Zone, who were regarded as a kind of “tripwire” to deter North Korean adventures into the south. The high score in the Adversary Power Increase category in the North Korean conflict points to frequent allegations that the country was building more nuclear weapons. The high scores in U.S. Power

Increase in Iraq and Afghanistan generally marked U.S. combat forces moving to the combat zone. The U.S. is Weak score for Afghanistan reflects Taliban posturing, while for Iran it reflects U.S. and expert-raised concerns that the American military was overextended in Iraq and not prepared for open conflict with a second country in the region.

Table 5.7: Mean prominence score for power components, overall and by conflict; ranked by overall score

	All Stories	Afghanistan	Iraq	North Korea	Iran	Libya	Syria
Any Power	1.04	1.07	.98	1.48	.99	1.08	.79
Adversary Forces	.40	.19	.40	.61	.40	.14	.50
U.S. and Allied Forces	.38	.51	.40	.61	.28	.29	.18
Adversary Power Increase	.36	.17	.26	.87	.34	.49	.25
U.S. and Allied Power Increase	.31	.65	.34	.28	.22	.22	.09
Adversary Military Weakness	.08	.17	.08	.00	.04	.24	.05
U.S. Military Weakness	.04	.06	.03	.05	.06	.00	.02
<i>N</i>	959	132	308	127	203	59	130

Score represents the average prominence (0 to 6) given to story component across all news coverage. Any Power category is mean prominence of any power category in a story. *N* is number of articles coded for each conflict.

Across all samples, the most common singular measure was International Benefit – that the U.S. goal in the conflict was to counter the threat posed by the adversary to countries and people outside its borders. This was the main goal in all but the Libya conflict, which instead was primarily couched in humanitarian terms. North Korea had the highest overall prominence of the international benefit category, reflecting the Bush administration’s and others’ constant restating of concerns about North Korea acquiring nuclear weapons and becoming a greater threat to its neighbors and the United States – and perhaps indicative of a rhetorical strategy of repeating oneself when options to address the problem are limited. The relatively higher scores of “Other Benefit” generally measure two additional goals that were frequently restated and didn’t fit in the other categories: retaliation and regime change. “Retaliation” benefits were noted when the U.S. was said to be seeking justice or to punish or hold accountable the adversary country for past behavior. Coder notes say this was mentioned in at least four stories about Afghanistan and 28 stories about Syria. “Regime Change” was frequently mentioned in coverage

in multiple conflicts, and sometimes not paired with any other purpose. In a few cases in Syria coverage, a third other benefit was coded – that the U.S. had to strike to maintain its and/or the U.N.’s credibility in enforcing past threats – specifically President Obama’s threat that Syrian use of chemical weapons constituted a “red line” that would be met with a response. It is also notable that the “No Benefit” category scored well below the primary benefits claimed in each conflict, indicating that challenges to the rationale for a potential war were limited relative to how often that rationale was stated.

Table 5.8: Mean prominence score for benefits, overall and by conflict; positive benefits ranked by overall score

	All Stories	Afghanistan	Iraq	North Korea	Iran	Libya	Syria
Any Benefit	1.38	1.19	1.29	1.82	1.44	1.32	1.28
International Benefit	1.07	1.08	.94	1.76	1.35	.02	.76
Other Benefit	.25	.20	.20	.09	.08	.32	.78
Adversary Populace Benefit	.15	.11	.15	.02	.02	1.00	.15
Material Benefit	.08	.00	.14	.00	.07	.37	.00
Political Benefit	.04	.00	.02	.00	.03	.00	.16
U.S. Survival Benefit	.03	.00	.04	.01	.07	.00	.00
No Benefit	.30	.15	.31	.12	.45	.20	.42
<i>N</i>	959	132	308	127	203	59	130

Score represents the average prominence (0 to 6) given to story component across all news coverage. Any Benefit category is mean prominence of any benefit category (except NoBene) in a story. *N* is number of articles coded for each conflict.

Discussion of potential war costs were generally scattered among the categories, with few consistent themes emerging in any given conflict. Despite its popularity among the American public, the potential costs of an Afghanistan war had more coverage than in the other conflicts. Fears of destabilizing Pakistan (Foreign Cost) were prominent in Afghanistan, as were war adding to the suffering of the impoverished civilian population (Humanitarian Cost). In North Korea, the chief cost was to the civilian population of South Korea, much of whom lives in range of North Korean artillery located near the border of the two states. Despite the much longer buildup, costs played a smaller role in Iraq coverage. The Other Cost category typically marked non-specific mentions of the costs of war.

Table 5.9: Mean prominence score for costs, overall and by conflict; ranked by overall score

	All Stories	Afghanistan	Iraq	North Korea	Iran	Libya	Syria
Any Cost	.77	1.39	.98	.37	.11	.69	1.11
Foreign Cost	.35	.67	.43	.10	.07	.36	.54
Humanitarian Cost	.20	.52	.18	.25	.00	.14	.23
Military Cost	.15	.14	.26	.06	.05	.27	.08
U.S. Domestic Cost	.11	.09	.16	.00	.00	.00	.32
Retribution Cost	.09	.02	.15	.10	.05	.15	.06
Other Cost	.09	.26	.03	.02	.01	.00	.32
No Cost	.04	.01	.06	.00	.00	.08	.08
<i>N</i>	959	132	308	127	203	59	130

Score represents the average prominence (0 to 6) given to story component across all news coverage. Any Cost category is mean prominence of any cost category (except NoCost) in a story. *N* is number of articles coded for each conflict.

The possibility of information problems – either side being wrong about the other’s ability or resolve to fight – almost never appeared. This could be a manifestation of optimistic assumptions about the U.S. military’s technological superiority over its enemies – that is, the press itself may have an information problem – or a tendency to avoid what might be regarded as speculative rather than fact-based reporting.

Table 5.10: Mean prominence score for information problems, overall and by conflict; ranked by overall score

	All Stories	Afghanistan	Iraq	North Korea	Iran	Libya	Syria
Any Information Problem	.06	.06	.04	.09	.13	.00	.03
U.S. Information Problem	.06	.02	.04	.09	.13	.00	.03
Adversary Information Problem	.01	.04	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
<i>N</i>	959	132	308	127	203	59	130

Score represents the average prominence (0 to 6) given to story component across all news coverage. Any Information Problem is mean prominence of either USWrong or AdWrong in a story. *N* is number of articles coded for each conflict.

After International Benefit, the second most common component across all categories was “Adversary is Bad,” marking derisive language directed at the adversary state. The third was Go War, support of initiating war, and the fourth, Go Peace support of peaceful or diplomatic outcomes. The prominence of Go Peace in North Korea came from both the Bush administration and the administration of South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun. Characterization of the adversary country in “Adversary is Different” and “Adversary’s Differences are Bad” varied

widely. Readers were frequently reminded of the Taliban’s fundamentalist and authoritarian rule in Afghanistan as the United States prepared to invade. Iran was sometimes noted to be a predominantly Shia state, and North Korea a hermit kingdom. Iraq’s ethnic and religious makeup was rarely noted, despite the severe divisions along those lines the state has experienced since the war. Criticism of U.S. leaders or policy (U.S. Is Bad) lagged significantly behind that of the adversary in all conflicts.

Table 5.11: Mean prominence score for attitude components, overall and by conflict; ranked by overall score

	All Stories	Afghanistan	Iraq	North Korea	Iran	Libya	Syria
Any Attitude	1.94	2.23	1.92	1.89	1.49	2.12	2.35
Adversary Is Bad	1.00	.84	.79	.96	1.00	1.42	1.53
Go War	.99	1.84	1.06	.57	.36	1.07	1.31
Go Peace	.82	.39	.86	1.13	.49	.80	1.40
U.S. Is Bad	.37	.30	.37	.53	.46	.15	.26
Adversary Is Different	.26	.86	.07	.24	.32	.14	.08
Adversary's Differences Are Bad	.11	.36	.01	.13	.13	.07	.03
<i>N</i>	959	132	308	127	203	59	130

Score represents the average prominence (0 to 6) given to story component across all news coverage. Any Attitude is the mean prominence of any attitude component in a story. *N* is number of articles coded for each conflict.

The presence of contextual contact depended on the conflict, with the “War on Terror” term being applied heavily to Afghanistan, less often to Iraq and not to other conflicts. For Iran, it included language used by the Iranian government describing its conflict with the United States and Israel as existential in nature, showing such techniques can be at work on both sides in a conflict. These claims were almost never challenged.

Table 5.12: Mean prominence score for contextual content, overall and by conflict; ranked by overall score

	All Stories	Afghanistan	Iraq	North Korea	Iran	Libya	Syria
Any Context	.32	.76	.56	.16	.05	.12	.00
Past War	.20	.20	.45	.16	.00	.05	.00
Grand Conflict	.15	.64	.16	.00	.04	.07	.00
Not Grand Conflict	.01	.04	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00
<i>N</i>	959	132	308	127	203	59	130

Score represents the average prominence (0 to 6) given to story component across all news coverage. Any Context is the mean prominence of any of the three context variables in a story. *N* is number of articles coded for each conflict.

Additionally, all content categories were tested whether they significantly correlated with the dates of each crisis, looking for whether any particular category grew more or less prominent during the crisis period. These tests found no consistent correlations across each of the war and peace sets of stories, but the results are nonetheless useful in describing the coverage of each conflict.

In the Iraq crisis (Table 5.13), coverage appears to break into a rhetorical phase and then a war preparations phase. In the former, the Bush administration sought support from Congress, and Iraq was frequently vilified. As this dropped off and America's armies began their buildup in Kuwait, reporting shifted to coverage of the U.S. military and the likely costs of war.

Table 5.13: Significant Pearson Correlation Coefficients for time since crisis start and prominence of various content categories in the Iraq crisis

Variables	Coeff.	Notes
U.S. Administration Source	-.15**	
Any Power	.13**	War Preparations
U.S. Forces	.19**	War Preparations
U.S. Power Increase	.14*	War Preparations
Other Benefit	-.23**	Generic "regime change" rationale
Any Costs	.23***	
Foreign Cost	.12*	
Adversary is Bad	-.13*	
Grand War	-.23***	
<i>N</i> =308. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.		

The Afghanistan crisis saw a decrease in a number of content elements as the onset of war neared and journalists departed Afghanistan (Table 5.14). This included war goals, "War on Terrorism" references, and general characterizations of Afghanistan, although nothing in particular took its place.

Table 5.14: Significant Pearson Correlation Coefficients for time since crisis start and prominence of various content categories in the Afghanistan crisis

Variables	Coeff.	Notes
Any Benefit	-.22*	
International Benefit	-.21*	
U.S. Domestic Cost	-.23**	
Adversary is Different	-.22*	
Any Context	-.28**	
Past War	-.28**	
Grand War	-.25**	

$N=132$. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

The Libyan crisis also shifts in coverage (Table 5.15), in this case in ways somewhat outside of U.S. government control. Early coverage focused on mounting chaos and foreign oil company workers fleeing Libya, followed by a series of victories by the forces of President Moammar Gadhafi, and finally the Obama administration preparing for airstrikes.

Table 5.15: Significant Pearson Correlation Coefficients for time since crisis start and prominence of various content categories in the Libya crisis

Variables	Coeff.	Notes
Foreign Government Source	.26*	
Foreign Civilian Source	-.30*	Oilfield workers fleeing civil war
Any Power	.37**	
Adversary Power Increase	.47***	Gadhafi's forces defeating insurgents
Material Benefit	-.26*	Reduction in mentions of Libya's oil
Go War	.51***	

$N=59$. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Among the crises that ended in peace, the Iran conflict (Table 5.16) shows an increase in U.S. political party activity – in this case, it was not Congress driving the correlation but the *Times* focusing on candidates in the 2008 presidential elections and their views on Iran. The decrease in the power categories comes as the U.S. completed a military exercise in the Persian Gulf earlier in the crisis period.

Table 5.16: Significant Pearson Correlation Coefficients for time since crisis start and prominence of various content categories in the Iran crisis

Variables	Coeff.	Notes
Administration Source	-.15*	
GOP Source	.19**	
U.S. Civilian Source	.15*	Iranian-Americans released from confinement in Iran
U.S. Forces	-.23**	End of show of force
U.S. Power Increase	-.26***	End of show of force
<i>N</i> =203. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.		

In the North Korean conflict (Table 5.17), an early event was the United States moving heavy bombers to Guam as a show of force to North Korea, but discussion of war machinery trailed off as Russia and China intervened and the Six-Party Talks were envisioned. Criticism of the United States and Bush administration from both North and South Korea also dropped as the talks grew more likely.

Table 5.17: Significant Pearson Correlation Coefficients for time since crisis start and prominence of various content categories in the North Korean crisis

Variables	Coeff.	Notes
U.S. Government Source	-.22*	Military and intelligence officials consulted less once diplomatic solution grew more likely
United Nations Source	-.19*	
Foreign Civilian Source	.92**	South Korean and Japanese civilians commenting on North's actions
U.S. Forces	-.21*	End of show of force
Other Cost	-.19*	
U.S. is Bad	-.29**	Less criticism from North and South Korea
<i>N</i> =127. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.		

The Syrian crisis had the most correlations (Table 5.18) despite its relatively short duration, capturing, in order, the Obama administration's uncertainty of whether to support some of the Syrian rebels, the unfolding awareness that the Assad government used chemical weapons on civilians, Obama's campaign to retaliate against Assad, and the unexpectedly strong resistance in Congress and the British Parliament against the war.

Table 5.18: Significant Pearson Correlation Coefficients for time since crisis start and prominence of various content categories in the Syrian crisis

Variables	Coeff.	Notes
Any Power	-.31***	
Adversary Forces	-.34***	
Adversary Power Increase	-.33***	
Any Benefit	.35***	Obama administration campaign
International Benefit	.26**	Obama administration campaign
Other Benefit	.28**	Obama administration campaign
No Benefit	.20*	Pushback to Obama administration
Any Costs	.22*	Pushback to Obama administration
Any Attitude	.30**	Obama administration campaign
Adversary is Bad	.21*	Obama administration campaign
Go War	.34***	Obama administration campaign

$N=130$. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

In summary, conflict coverage frequently contains the U.S. presidential administration restating its core complaint about the adversary country, along with a characterization that the government of that state is bad and that violent conflict may be necessary to resolve the complaints. Here's the *Times* quoting National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice in a front-page Sept. 5, 2002, story, saying "Our critics seem to take the position that if we don't bother him, he won't bother the world." She added,

That's not an approach we can take. Anybody who tried to predict what Saddam Hussein might do is treading in dangerous water. He invaded his neighbors twice, he gassed his own people, he tried to kill a former president. His ambitions have clashed with our interests before, and they will clash with them again (Sanger, 2002).

And an example of repetition from a story two weeks later:

Mr. Bush, in seeking Congressional approval for a possible military strike, made a long string of charges, including repeated Iraqi violation of a decade of United Nations resolutions on disarmament and repression of minorities, Iraq's attempt to

assassinate President Bush's father in 1993, its support for international terrorist organizations and the presence of Qaeda members who, he said, "are known to be in Iraq" (Purdum & Bumiller, 2002).

Challenges to those characterizations and the necessity and wisdom of war did often occur, but the arguments were not as consistently presented – the complaint itself was treated at a minimum as context to be included high in every story, while challenges were presented on a case-by-case basis. While these challenges were prominent in individual cases, they were rarely repeated with the frequency of the original complaint.

5.6.2 Comparisons of war and peace coverage

Analysis of differences between future-war and future-peace coverage was conducted using two means-comparison statistical methods. Prominence data is highly non-parametric, as most sources and components don't show up in most stories; however, the sample sizes may be sufficiently large that parametric tests are viable.²² For maximum robustness, this analysis will employ results from both *t*-tests (parametric) and the Mann-Whitney U tests (nonparametric). Additional *t*-tests will be performed on prominence data weighted so that each conflict, instead of each story, is treated equally. Because the Iraq war had more stories than Afghanistan or Libya, it could conceivably bias the data toward reflecting the specific conditions of that conflict rather than war in general; the weights are designed to raise individual stories about Afghanistan and Libya to avoid this. Neither weighted nor unweighted prominence data is unquestionably superior, though, so the analysis will include both.²³

The heart of this content analysis is to see if meaningful differences exist between coverage of conflicts that become war and those that do not. They do in many cases. The raft of

²² For a discussion of this, see Fay & Proschan (2010).

²³ The author's statistical analysis software package is unable to perform accurate Mann-Whitney U tests on fractionally weighted data.

hypotheses supposed that coverage that portrayed war in a negative light, or consulting more with people with an interest in avoiding war, would be associated with peaceful outcomes. The reality turns out to be more complex: In the case of war, the reasons for war and vilification of the enemy often received less attention while the preparations for, and potential consequences of, the eventual fighting received more.

Peace coverage featured more voices overall, as shown in Table 5.19.²⁴ One of the strongest findings is that the adversary's government was employed as a source far more often in peace coverage. Even expected proponents of war -- the presidential administration and its political allies -- were used as sources more prominently in crises that were resolved without fighting. Experts and foreign governments also showed up more often in those crises, the latter often in stories about multilateral diplomacy, or great powers who supported the adversary making their views plain.

²⁴ Statistical detritus from these tests are in Appendix C.

Table 5.19: Results of Mann-Whitney U and *t* tests of source prominence scores in coverage of crises with war and peace outcomes

Category	War M	Peace M	Wtd. War M	Wtd. Peace M	Hypothesis	Finding (MWU)	Finding (<i>t</i> test)	Finding (Wtd. <i>t</i>)
U.S. Administration	1.25	1.47	1.27	1.51	War	Peace**	Peace*	Peace*
Republicans	.16	.31	.17	.34	War	Peace**	Peace**	Peace**
Democrats	.25	.38	.24	.38	Peace	ns	ns	Peace*
Presidential Party	.17	.30	.20	.33	War	Peace*	Peace*	Peace*
Opposition Party	.24	.38	.21	.39	Peace	ns	Peace*	Peace**
U.S. Government	.61	.67	.66	.67	--	ns	ns	ns
U.S. Civilians	.15	.09	.12	.10	Peace	ns	ns	ns
Non-Governmental Organization	.10	.11	.16	.11	Peace	ns	ns	ns
U.N./International Bodies	.33	.19	.28	.18	--	War**	War*	ns
Alliance	.04	.00	.06	.00	War	War*	War*	War**
Adversary Government	.45	.73	.50	.71	Peace	Peace***	Peace**	Peace**
Adversary Opposition	.21	.14	.33	.16	War	ns	ns	War**
Adversary Civilians	.10	.06	.13	.06	Peace	ns	ns	War*
Violent Transnational Organization	.04	.02	.04	.02	--	ns	ns	ns
Foreign Government	.97	1.14	.96	1.16	--	Peace**	ns	Peace*
Foreign Civilians	.14	.13	.14	.12	Peace	ns	ns	ns
Experts	.42	.74	.47	.76	Peace	Peace***	Peace***	Peace***
Media	.15	.14	.14	.13	--	ns	ns	ns
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460				

War and Peace columns are mean prominence score for each category. "Wtd." columns displays means weighted against number of stories coded for each conflict, so conflicts with fewer stories figure more strongly. *N* is the number of stories coded for war and Peace outcomes. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Coverage of elements of military power did not primarily point in the direction of war as hypothesized, as shown in Table 5.20. Claims of the adversary's military weakness were indeed an indicator of coming war, but coverage of the adversary's forces in general was greater in peace coverage, which focused on deterrents to a U.S. attack and actual nuclear weapons in North Korea and chemical weapons in Syria.

The two "power increase" categories were intended in part to capture manifestations of Fearon's commitment problems, which promote preventive wars, but it may not have perfectly done so – Fearon's theory revolves around increases in strategic power, but the categories also marked short-term increases in power, like carriers arriving in the Persian Gulf and other

preparations for combat. The American increase in power category generally captured this effect, while the adversary power increase was afforded the most significant prominence in the North Korea conflict, marking multiple mentions that the country was developing nuclear weapons. While more in line with Fearon's theory, on balance this category appeared more often in peace coverage. In the case of Iraq, this prominence of this category was lower than one might expect, because of the way the Bush administration sometimes framed its complaints toward Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, accusing him of only *wanting* certain weapons, instead of *building* or *having* them.

Table 5.20: Results of Mann-Whitney U and *t* tests of power component prominence scores in coverage of crises with war and peace outcomes

Category	War M	Peace M	Wtd. War M	Wtd. Peace M	Hypothesis	Finding (MWU)	Finding (<i>t</i> test)	Finding (Wtd. <i>t</i>)
Any Power	1.02	1.07	1.05	1.09	War	ns	ns	ns
U.S. and Allied Forces	.41	.34	.40	.35	War	ns	ns	ns
Adversary Forces	.31	.48	.24	.50	War	Peace***	Peace*	Peace***
U.S. and Allied Power Increase	.41	.20	.40	.20	War	War*	War**	War**
Adversary Power Increase	.26	.46	.31	.49	War	Peace***	Peace*	Peace*
U.S. Military Weakness	.03	.04	.03	.04	Peace	ns	ns	ns
Adversary Military Weakness	.12	.03	.16	.03	War	War**	War**	War***
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460				

War and Peace columns are mean prominence score for each category. Any Power category is prominence score of any of these categories in stories. "Wtd." columns displays means weighted against number of stories coded for each conflict, so conflicts with fewer stories figure more strongly. *N* is the number of stories coded for war and peace outcomes. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Coverage of conflict benefits – typically framed as administration goals by sources and journalists – were similarly nuanced, as indicated in Table 5.21. Again, coverage of goals fell off in general in the war cases, as stories instead focused on preparations for war. This was particularly the case in the “international benefit” category, which was the dominant benefit in both war and peace coverage. But two ancillary benefits – oil and rescue of the adversary's populace – showed up more often in the war cases. When acquiring oil was mentioned specifically as a war goal (and not just in descriptions of the adversary's country), it was

typically done in a protest, essentially as an accusation that the stated war goals were false. As noted above, the adversary's populace benefit was dominant in the Libya case and also appeared in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria coverage, but in lesser amounts. As predicted, coverage of political benefits was indeed greater in the no-war case; similar to oil, these benefits were described in criticism of the administration or the proposed war.

Table 5.21: Results of Mann-Whitney U and *t* tests of benefit component prominence scores in coverage of crises with war and peace outcomes

Category	War M	Peace M	Wtd. War M	Wtd. Peace M	Hypothesis	Finding (MWU)	Finding (<i>t</i> test)	Finding (Wtd. <i>t</i>)
Any Benefit	1.27	1.50	1.27	1.51	War	Peace**	Peace*	Peace*
Material Benefit	.13	.03	.17	.02	War	War***	War***	War***
Adversary Populace Benefit	.24	.05	.42	.06	War	War***	War***	War***
International Benefit	.87	1.30	.68	1.29	War	Peace***	Peace***	Peace***
U.S. Survival Benefit	.02	.03	.01	.03	War	ns	ns	ns
Political Benefit	.01	.06	.01	.07	Peace	Peace**	Peace*	Peace*
Other Benefit	.21	.28	.24	.32	War	ns	ns	ns
No Benefit	.26	.35	.22	.33	Peace	ns	ns	ns
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460				

War and Peace columns are mean prominence score for each category. Any Benefit category is prominence score of any of these categories (except NoBene) in stories. "Wtd." columns displays means weighted against number of stories coded for each conflict, so conflicts with fewer stories figure more strongly. *N* is the number of stories coded for war and peace outcomes. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Contrary to expectations, coverage of the costs of war, shown in Table 5.22, was heavily favored in war outcomes, one of the clearest findings in this study. Journalists and sources worried over U.S. international chaos, dead civilians and military casualties. Of the peace cases, only the Syria conflict received notable coverage of costs, exceeding even Iraq on a per-story average. Given the Syria crisis came closer to the initiation of combat than did Iran or North Korea, this suggests that coverage of war costs may serve as an indicator of the likelihood the conflict escalates to war. Denial of costs was largely uncovered.

Table 5.22: Results of Mann-Whitney U and *t* tests of cost component prominence scores in coverage of crises with war and peace outcomes

Category	War M	Peace M	Wtd.		Hypothesis	Finding (MWU)	Finding (<i>t</i> test)	Finding (Wtd. <i>t</i>)
			War M	Peace M				
Any Cost	1.06	.47	1.02	.53	Peace	War***	War***	War***
Military Cost	.23	.06	.23	.06	Peace	War***	War***	War***
Foreign Cost	.48	.21	.48	.24	Peace	War***	War***	War***
Humanitarian Cost	.26	.13	.28	.16	Peace	War***	War**	War*
Retribution Cost	.12	.07	.11	.07	Peace	ns	ns	ns
U.S. Domestic Cost	.12	.09	.08	.11	Peace	ns	ns	ns
Other Cost	.09	.10	.10	.12	Peace	ns	ns	ns
No Cost	.05	.02	.05	.03	War	War**	ns	ns
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460				

War and Peace columns are mean prominence score for each category. Any Cost category is prominence score of any of these categories (except NoCost) in stories. "Wtd." columns displays means weighted against number of stories coded for each conflict, so conflicts with fewer stories figure more strongly. *N* is the number of stories coded for war and peace outcomes. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

While they received very little mention, U.S. information problems – the suggestion that the U.S. estimate of the enemy's capabilities or resolve to fight could be inaccurate – pointed significantly toward peace outcomes in two out of three statistical tests, as shown in Table 5.23. In North Korea's case, this reflect uncertainty about Pyongyang's possession of nuclear weapons; it Iran's, it was mentions that the U.S. was committed in Iraq and was uncertain whether it could win decisively and prevent retaliation in a simultaneous war with Iran.

Table 5.23: Results of Mann-Whitney U and *t* tests of information problem component prominence scores in coverage of crises with war and peace outcomes

Category	War M	Peace M	Wtd.		Hypothesis	Finding (MWU)	Finding (<i>t</i> test)	Finding (Wtd. <i>t</i>)
			War M	Peace M				
Any Information Problem	.04	.09	.03	.08	War	ns	ns	ns
U.S. Information Problem	.03	.09	.02	.08	Peace	ns	Peace*	Peace*
Adversary Information Problem	.01	.00	.01	.00	War	ns	ns	ns
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460				

War and Peace columns are mean prominence score for each category. Any Information Problems is prominence score of either category. "Wtd." columns displays means weighted against number of stories coded for each conflict, so conflicts with fewer stories figure more strongly. *N* is the number of stories coded for war and peace outcomes. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Of the attitudinal measures, shown in Table 5.26, the most interesting finding was that adversaries were depicted negatively more often in the peace cases in two out of the three

statistical tests. This again points to news coverage focusing on leaders vilifying their enemies in the absence of military options.

Table 5.24: Results of Mann-Whitney U and *t* tests of attitudinal component prominence scores in coverage of crises with war and peace outcomes

Category	War M	Peace M	Wtd. War M	Wtd. Peace M	Hypothesis	Finding (MWU)	Finding (<i>t</i> test)	Finding (Wtd. <i>t</i>)
Any Attitude	2.03	1.84	2.09	1.91	--	War*	ns	ns
U.S. is Bad	.32	.42	.27	.42	Peace	Peace*	ns	Peace*
Adversary is Bad	.88	1.14	1.02	1.16	War	Peace**	Peace**	ns
Adversary is Different	.29	.23	.35	.21	War	ns	ns	War*
Adversary's Differences are Bad	.11	.10	.15	.09	War	ns	ns	ns
Go War	1.27	.69	1.32	.75	War	War***	War***	War***
Go Peace	.73	.93	.68	1.01	Peace	Peace*	Peace*	Peace***
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460				

War and Peace columns are mean prominence score for each category. Any Attitude is prominence score of any attitudinal category in stories. "Wtd." columns displays means weighted against number of stories coded for each conflict, so conflicts with fewer stories figure more strongly. *N* is the number of stories coded for war and peace outcomes. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Finally, contextual measures were heavily favored in the war cases, as shown in Table 5.27. While describing past conflicts may be more a function of the conflicts themselves than news coverage choices, the inclusion of a given conflict within a grander theme is a notable finding, as it points to the success of a framing strategy employed by leaders.

Table 5.25: Results of Mann-Whitney U and *t* tests of contextual component prominence scores in coverage of crises with war and peace outcomes

Category	War M	Peace M	Wtd. War M	Wtd. Peace M	Hypothesis	Finding (MWU)	Finding (<i>t</i> test)	Finding (Wtd. <i>t</i>)
Any Context	.56	.07	.48	.07	--	War***	War***	War***
Past War	.34	.05	.23	.05	War	War***	War***	War***
Grand Conflict	.27	.02	.29	.01	War	War***	War***	War***
Conflict Isn't Grand	.02	.00	.02	.00	Peace	War*	ns	ns
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460				

War and Peace columns are mean prominence score for each category. Any context is mean prominence score of any contextual category in stories. "Wtd." columns displays means weighted against number of stories coded for each conflict, so conflicts with fewer stories figure more strongly. *N* is the number of stories coded for war and peace outcomes. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

5.7 Discussion

5.7.1 Evaluation of Results

Chapter 4 concluded that there are a set of wars that are such a bad idea that they never get proposed in the first place in states with a free press, because the presumed coverage would be so damaging to the state's leaders that their interests are best served by not proposing it in the first place. Other conflicts become observable via threats and demands, but only a portion of those become wars; the rest are resolved via diplomacy or offensive measures short of war, or aren't resolved at all. This chapter analyzes coverage of international conflicts that do rise to the level that war is an option and those that don't.

Evaluating the results in this chapter against the ideal types of press-state relationship discussed in Chapter 2, or the types of issue-specific coverage types in Chapter 3, requires considering them on both an absolute scale – that is, whether a particular component received sufficient coverage to have a meaningful impact on public attitudes and policy decisions – and a relative one, comparing both within a single conflict, all conflicts, and between war-peace outcomes. With this in mind, I offer the following key findings:

Government elites – American and otherwise – were heavily favored in all coverage. But is this by itself conclusive evidence that elite-driven models are in force? Not necessarily. Journalism reports on the machinations of power, and these elites are the ones who ultimately control whether war is joined. Instead, a striking finding was that the adversary's government was afforded less of a say than the American government in stories, and even less still in the war cases, in which the United States attacked. One could argue this is somewhat of a function of the press offices of dictatorships not providing particularly original or substantive information, but North Korea's and Iran's governments both had greater than twice the prominence scores of

Iraq's. Moreover, a core ethic of American journalism is objectivity, and allowing the target of war as much say as, for example, the target of a prosecution in a domestic criminal case would seem to be in line with that. Within the methodology employed for this study, a simple "The Iraqi government denies having weapons of mass destruction" in the top three lines of any story would have scored the same as a fresh accusation of wrongdoing from the Bush administration, so brief, prominent reminders of the adversary's stance would have led to balanced findings here. Indeed this happened with Iran, with frequent, if sometimes buried, reminders that Iran said its nuclear programs were for civilian power generation, not weapons.

Employment of the adversary's civilians as sources and coverage of potential humanitarian costs is also remarkably low in all conflicts. While civilians may be hard to access and have little power over the eventual outcome, they nevertheless face incredible risk during war. Estimates of civilian deaths in the Iraq war are in the hundreds of thousands, but prewar stories offered little discussion of the possibility, typically only quoting American military officials saying they would attempt to limit civilian casualties.

On the comparative level, the differences between eventual-war and peace coverage were significant, suggesting distinct supra-frames might be at work for each. War coverage has the following characteristics:

- Greater attention to U.S. military preparations
- More claims the adversary is weak
- More attention to the costs and consequences of war
- More statements of support for war and assessments it is likely
- Greater attention to material and humanitarian goals of the war
- More inclusion of grand conflict framing devices

Peace coverage employs:

- More sources, including those from the U.S. presidential administration
- Greater number of U.S. Congressional voices
- Greater attention to statements from the adversary's government
- More claims that the adversary is an international threat
- Greater description of the adversary's military and defensive preparations
- Greater criticism and vilification of the both the United States and the adversary

Returning to the five models of press-state relations, this study finds what could be interpreted as evidence of each of them at work. The dominance of government sources throughout, and vilification of the adversary and unchallenged use of grand conflict framing mechanisms in the war cases are features of a hegemonic system. The higher employment of congressional actors, particularly the opposition, in the peace cases suggest an indexing mechanism is in play, moreso if we widen the definition of indexing to include foreign governments as an alternative to domestic opposition. The additional reliance on experts in the peace cases – especially in Syria -- fulfills a criterion of the cascading activation of frames, in which not-quite-elite sources have a greater say in coverage, while the emphasis on war costs in the war cases, despite limited help from the political opposition, suggest reporters are injecting some independent challenges to the administration's case – in the above comparison, the presence of war costs discussion is a saving grace that pre-war coverage doesn't serve as an unquestioning endorsement of the outcome. Finally, the coverage of the humanitarian disaster in the Libyan civil war echoes the model of event-driven news.

Fitting the six conflicts into equilibria described in Chapter 3 is similarly challenging. What, for example, is the standard within this methodology to consider the press to have investigated a potential conflict? Setting it at something like Any Cost + Go Peace + No Benefit + U.S. Information Problem, meaning reporters devoted significant attention to challenges to the rationale of the war, negative consequences of a war, endorsements of peaceful solutions and uncertainty about a favorable U.S. outcome, the Syria conflict (2.96) would score the highest, followed by Iraq (2.19), and given the criticism that Iraq coverage has faced, many researchers would presumably conclude that threshold is too low to consider an investigation to have taken place. The remaining wars -- Afghanistan (1.95), and North Korea (1.81), Libya (1.69) and Iran (1.18) -- are lower. If we put Syria in the “Watchdog” equilibrium, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya would either be in “Shouting in the wind” or “Feckless press” equilibria, depending on one’s threshold to determine the press elected to investigate an imminent conflict. North Korea and Iran would ultimately fall under the “Don’t Propose” action, meaning the Bush administration was deterred by poor prospects for war, including the threat of a press investigation that didn’t fully occur.

While useful, the above exercise also requires adding back the assumption of press-policy causality, which remains problematic. It seems more likely that press coverage and leader behavior ultimately reflect each other – that is, as journalists concluded leader preferences for war in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria were increasing, they devoted more attention to the potential costs of war, which influenced leaders’ preferences – but insufficiently for a policy change in the war cases. Indeed, the Syria case most closely resembles an almost-war that was pulled back from the brink by popular and congressional opposition, although Syria’s partial capitulation to Obama administration demands is valid contrary evidence and further

demonstrates the challenge of cleanly dividing real-world events into simple categories. But compared to Iraq coverage, in the Syria case *The New York Times* was far more aggressive in seeking a variety of sources, questioning the war rationale, highlighting costs, and balancing pro- and anti-war sentiments in copy.

5.7.2 Evaluation of Methodology

A second purpose of this study was to explore a methodology for evaluating conflict coverage that does away with notions of assigning a pro- or anti-war valence to a given statement in favor of a more nuanced analysis informed by the study of international relations. As shown above, this allows a focus on just how arguments for and against war are made.

That said, some avenues for improving this methodology became apparent during this study. Future studies with this methodology could include the following categories:

- A measure of endorsements of aggressive policies short of war, such as sanctions, covert action, or training insurgents. This occurred in several conflicts but didn't fit in any particular category.
- Criticism of the adversary state's domestic opposition. In the Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Libya conflicts, the opposition figured prominently in the U.S. plans, and in all cases, those groups merited evaluation on the basis of their ideology and/or prior behavior.
- Two measures that would tally praise for the United States and the adversary to explore to what degree various nationalistic paeans are being employed as argumentative techniques.
- A measure that records criticism of anyone opposed to the war.
- A measure of the prominence of a punishment or retaliation rationale in the conflict.

- A measure of the prominence of an enforcement rationale in the conflict, such as arguments that the U.S. had to attack Syria to enforce its prior statements of the use of chemical weapons was a “red line” and thus maintain its credibility.
- A measure of the prominence of a preventative justification, that is, the goal is to prevent the adversary from increasing its power or continuing as a threat to other states. This would supplant much of what was coded as INTLBENE in this study and allow that category to focus on goals like defending allies.

While these would further complicate an already complex coding system, they would capture additional coverage decisions and rhetorical techniques observed in many articles.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

A key goal throughout this study is to point at gaps in logic in existing explanations of press-state relations by considering unseen or unproposed alternative cases and outcomes – particularly peace. Chapter 3 does this by raising multiple outcomes of a press-state interaction over a given policy, including many which can look alike to observers who have focused primarily on policy outcomes. Chapter 4 explores a particular invisible outcome – whether the presence of a free press can prevent some wars from taking place. And Chapter 5 asks what coverage of the alternative to war looks like and contrasts that with war coverage to show decisions reporters make – consciously or otherwise.

6.1 Key Findings

1. Extant grand theories do not capture the entirety of the press-state relationship. Instead, the tenets of the grand theories are the products of conditions and are thus situationally in play. The five grand theories discussed throughout this study make assertions about press independence and its ability to influence policy. I assert that what is treated as independence is itself an amalgam of not only legal, social and economic conditions, but also the audience and the particulars of the issue itself that is being considered. A repressed, unskilled, resource-poor and/or ideologically or materially corrupt press can be sufficient for a policy to go unchallenged, as can a complex issue or public that isn't vigilant against leader malfeasance. But in each case the outcome looks very similar – a policy that goes forward unhindered. And sometimes institutions and leaders can have preferences and powers that make even an on-target press and angry electorate meaningless. This means that research that tends to focus on evidence of one of those but fails to address alternate explanations for why a policy choice may have happened is an incomplete argument; if Downie's claim that different press coverage would not have prevented

the 2003 Iraq invasion is to be dismissed, it is important to address the possible reasons his claim implies: the incapable press, a determined administration that would not listen to public opinion, or a war-hungry public that would not listen to the concerns the news media raised. 2. *The presence of a free media can deter leaders from pursuing a certain set of wars, even in states lacking the full suite of democratic features.* This outcome was described in the model in Chapter 3 and was the key empirical finding of Chapter 4. This presents a challenge to elite-driven models that conclude that the press is generally unable to have any meaningful, independent impact on policy. Of the findings in this study, this one certainly presents the strongest challenge to elite-driven models of press-state relations. Certainly those models garnered some support: the general focus on elites and greater utilization of grand framing devices in the war cases are two examples from the content analysis. But decisionmaking elites, at least, appear to fear the consequences of launching unpopular wars in states with high press freedom, which indicates they believe there are limits on their abilities to persuade the public to support any action they take. The respect decision-makers afford the news media's ability to hurt their prospects for staying in power indicates the press isn't a simple conveyor belt of information or manufacturer of consent, even in states that don't otherwise have strong democratic features.

3. *International conflict coverage heavily favored elite sources, but this doesn't predict the crisis outcome.* As noted, relative to other sources, the prominence of political elites was high in all crisis coverage – and generally higher when the crisis was resolved without fighting. This suggests that the reportorial act of focusing on the words of political elites doesn't make it more likely their policy preferences will be realized. Instead, other components of coverage make better predictors of outcomes.

4. *Adversaries were vilified more often in conflicts that didn't result in war, but they were also afforded more of a voice.* This study's expectation was that U.S. leaders would make war palatable by casting the adversary in a negative light, they and other sources actually did so more often in conflicts that were ended without fighting. Indeed, a key feature of eventual-peace coverage was the presence of more sources overall.

5. *The primary oppositional coverage to eventual wars is raising the potential costs of the war.* This suggests a greater reportorial focus on exploring the effects of going to war, but spending less time on debates over the source of the conflict.

6.2 Study Limitations and Future Research

The press-executive game tree in Chapter 3 hints at a number of future paths for inquiry. The concepts of press neutrality and press resources and skill need proper operationalization via a method of categorizing national press systems beyond a linear freedom rating – e.g. perhaps countries with partisan press systems adopt observably different policies from those with commercial-objective ones. Capturing public vigilance is a similar challenge, as a years-of-schooling covariant seems to have failed to do so in Chapter 4. Moreover, the concept of an investigation into a proposed policy being a binary on/off may stray too far from the day-to-day reality of newsgathering, in which the question is better framed as *how much* and *what kind* of attention a particular issue gets, and modeling level of press investigation as well as executive obfuscation on scales would better reflect that.

One limitation of the content analysis is it was only used on the *Times'* coverage of American conflicts over a little more than a decade, reducing its generalizability, especially in light of increasing partisanship in the U.S. media audience. The research design could be applied to other conflicts, and used to compare, for example, television and print journalism about a

prospective conflict, to track changes in the nature of conflict coverage over time, or to compare how different countries' media cover conflict. Sufficient use of this method could lead to establishing informed thresholds for press aggressiveness during times of crisis.

6.3 Some modest suggestions

Proposing sweeping overhauls to the standards of American journalism or massive investments of nonexistent capital to improve crisis coverage is a bit too farfetched for this effort, so I will instead conclude this study by offering a few prosaic suggestions based on the above findings for reporters covering international conflict:

Talk to the adversary. Elementary fairness requires giving all sides a fair say in a conflict. This happens in domestic political debates and trials, and wars should remain no exception. Even if a press officer under the control of a dictator is giving obvious propaganda, the adversary's point of view should be represented in news copy.

Repeat the challenges to the rationale of war every time you state the rationale for it. Repetition has a particular power; if an accusation is repeated over and over again and not contested, it risks gaining acceptance as a reality – even if it is a simple background statement about the presidential administration's complaint about the adversary. Such statements should be followed by the adversary's claim that the nuclear program is for energy purposes, or that the nation does not support terrorist groups, or whatever response the adversary has been able to muster.

Find sources who are willing and able to provide informed conjecture about war outcomes. *Times* reporters were generally unwilling to inject speculation about how a war might go, and until Libya and Syria none seemed to find official sources who would raise concerns about difficulties the U.S. military might encounter. And if official sources are unwilling,

reporters should turn to experts for readouts on an occupation and insurgency, civilian displacement and deaths, and regional instability – an appropriate reminder of what war is.

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Appendix A: Proofs for Chapter 3

Full model specification

$i = \{L, P\}$ {Leader, Press}

Benefits and Costs

$b > 0$; Leader private benefit of proposed policy

$a > 0$; Audience cost to leader by informed public if policy enacted

$k > 0, k < b, k < a$; Leader cost if policy withdrawn in the face of informed public

$e \geq 0$; Press benefit if policy enacted

$c_p > 0$; Press cost for investigating policy

$c_r > 0$; Leader cost for repressing press investigation

$d > 0, d < b$; Leader international credibility increase if audience costs are suffered

Coefficients

$o \in (0, 0.5)$; Opposition strength

$s = \{0, 1\}$; Opposition stance on issue, 0=oppose; 1=support

$x \in (0, 1)$; Issue accessibility

$t \geq 0$; Press benefit for reporting the truth

$q \geq 0$; Press benefit for obstructing leader

$p \in (0, 1)$; Press skill

$n \in (0, 1)$; Press neutrality

$h > 0$; Opposition ability to assist press (normalizer to opposition strength), such that $(p + ho) \in (0, 1)$

$v > 1$; Public vigilance (multiplier to audience cost if caught concealing)

Other values

$Success = ((p + (1-s)ho)x)$; chance of successful investigation

$Fail = (1 - ((p + (1-s)ho)x))$

Payoffs (L, P)

$U_i(Don't Propose) = (0, 0)$

$U_i(Disclose) = (1-s)b + (s(1-o)b - ((1-s)a + (s((1-o)a - oa)))) + d, e)$

$U_i(Conceal; Don't Investigate) = (s(1-o)b + (1-s)b, e)$

$U_i(Conceal; Investigate; Fail) = (s(1-o)b + (1-s)b, e - c_p)$

$U_i(Conceal, Repress; Investigate; Success) = (s(1-o)b + (1-s)b - c_r, e - c_p)$

$U_i(Conceal, Withdraw; Investigate; Success) = (s(1-o)(-k) + (1-s)(-k), nta + (1-n)qa - c_p)$

$U_i(Conceal, Maintain; Investigate; Success) = (s(1-o)(b) + (1-s)b - s((1-o)nva - onva) - (1-s)(nva) + nd, nta + (1-n)qa + e - c_p)$

Individual proofs

Subgame 1, Leader: In the face of a successful investigation, the leader may choose between playing Repress, Maintain, or Withdraw.

Case 1, Repress: The leader will play Repress when it offers higher utility than playing Maintain or Withdraw.

$$U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Maintain}) \cup U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$$

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Maintain})$$

$$s(1-o)b + (1-s)b - c_r \geq s(1-o)(b) + (1-s)b - s((1-o)nva - nova) - (1-s)(nva) + nd$$

$$b - osb - c_r \geq b - osb - nva + 2nosva + nd$$

$$c_r \leq nva - 2nosva - nd$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$$

$$s(1-o)b + (1-s)b - c_r \geq s(1-o)(-k) + (1-s)(-k)$$

$$b - osb - c_r \geq osk - k$$

$$c_r \leq b + k - os(b + k)$$

Case 2, Maintain: The leader will play Maintain when it offers a higher utility than playing Repress or Withdraw.

$$U_L(\text{Maintain}) > U_L(\text{Repress}) \cup U_L(\text{Maintain}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$$

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Maintain}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$$

$$s(1-o)(b) + (1-s)b - s((1-o)nva - nova) - (1-s)(nva) + nd > s(1-o)b + (1-s)b - c_r$$

$$b - osb - nva + 2nosva + nd < b - osb - c_r$$

$$c_r > nva - nd - 2nosva$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Maintain}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$$

$$s(1-o)(b) + (1-s)b - s((1-o)nva - onva) - (1-s)(nva) + nd \geq s(1-o)(-k) + (1-s)(-k)$$

$$b - osb - nva + 2nosva + nd \geq osk - k$$

$$b \geq \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

Case 3, Withdraw: The leader will play Withdraw when it offers a higher utility than playing Repress or Maintain.

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$$

$$s(1-o)(-k) + (1-s)(-k) > s(1-o)b + (1-s)b - c_r$$

$$osk - k > b - osb - c_r$$

$$c_r > b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Maintain})$$

$$s(1-o)(-k) + (1-s)(-k) > s(1-o)(b) + (1-s)b - s((1-o)nva - onva) - (1-s)(nva) + nd$$

$$osk - k > b - osb - nva + 2nosva + nd$$

$$b < \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

Subgame 2, Press: If the leader elects to propose a policy but conceal information about its potential harm from the audience, the press chooses whether to play Investigate or Don't Investigate.

Case 1, when Leader plays Repress

$$EU_p(\text{Repress}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_p(\text{Repress}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$((p + (1-s)ho)x)(e - c_p) + (1 - ((p + (1-s)ho)x))(e - c_p) \geq e$$

$$(px + hox - hosx)(e - c_p) + (1 - px - hox + hosx)(e - c_p) \geq e$$

$$c_p \leq 0$$

This is false, as the model specifications declare the press must pay some cost (that is, $c_p > 0$), so the press will never play Investigate when the leader plays Repress.

Case 2, when Leader plays Maintain

$$EU_p(\text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_p(\text{Maintain}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$((p + (1-s)ho)x)(nta + (1-n)qa + e - c_p) + (1 - (p + (1-s)ho)x)(e - c_p) \geq e$$

$$(px + hox - hosx)(nta + qa - nqa + e - c_p) + (1 - px - hox + hosx)(e - c_p) \geq e$$

$$-hno\text{st}x + hno\text{q}sx - ho\text{q}sx + hno\text{t}x - hno\text{q}x + ho\text{q}x + n\text{p}tx - np\text{q}x + p\text{q}x + e - c_p \geq e$$

$$-hno\text{st}x + hno\text{q}sx - ho\text{q}sx + hno\text{t}x - hno\text{q}x + ho\text{q}x + n\text{p}tx - np\text{q}x + p\text{q}x - c_p \geq 0$$

$$c_p \leq (xa)(ho(1-s) + p)(nt - nq + q)$$

Case 3, when Leader plays Withdraw

$$EU_p(\text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_p(\text{Withdraw}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$((p + (1-s)ho)x)(nta + (1-n)qa - c_p) + (1 - ((p + (1-s)ho)x)(e - c_p)) \geq e$$

$$(px + hox - hosx)(nta + qa - nqa - c_p) + (1 - px - hox + hosx)(e - c_p) \geq e$$

$$hno\text{q}sx - hno\text{st}x - ho\text{q}sx + hno\text{t}x - hno\text{q}x + ho\text{q}x + n\text{p}tx - np\text{q}x + p\text{q}x + hosx - hoxe - pxe - c_p \geq 0$$

$$c_p \leq (x)(ho(1-s) + p)(nta - nqa + qa - e)$$

Subgame 3, Leader: Based on its own preferences if the press successfully investigates its policy, and its knowledge of the press' decision of whether to investigate, the leader decides whether to play Conceal, Disclose, or Don't Propose.

Case 1, when Press plays Don't Investigate and Leader plays Conceal

$$U_L(\text{Conceal}; \text{Don't Investigate}) \geq U_L(\text{Don't Propose}; \text{Don't Investigate}) \cup$$

$$U_L(\text{Conceal}; \text{Don't Investigate}) \geq U_L(\text{Disclose}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Conceal}; \text{Don't Investigate}) \geq U_L(\text{Don't Propose}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$s(1-o)b + (1-s)b \geq 0$$

$$b - osb \geq 0$$

$$b \geq 0$$

This condition is always true, because $b > 0$. A leader will always prefer Conceal to Don't Propose when the Press is not investigating.

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Conceal}; \text{Don't Investigate}) \geq U_L(\text{Disclose}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$s(1-o)b + (1-s)b \geq (1-s)b + (s(1-o)b) - \left((1-s)a + (s((1-o)a - oa)) \right) + d$$

$$b - osb \geq b - osb - a + 2osa + d$$

$$a - 2osa \geq d$$

$$a \geq \frac{d}{1 - 2os}$$

Case 2, when Press plays Don't Investigate and Leader plays Disclose

$$U_L(\text{Conceal}; \text{Don't Investigate}) < U_L(\text{Disclose}; \text{Don't Investigate}) \cup$$

$$U_L(\text{Dislose}; \text{Don't Investigate}) \geq U_L(\text{Don't Propose}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Conceal}; \text{Don't Investigate}) < U_L(\text{Disclose}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$s(1 - o)b + (1 - s)b < (1 - s)b + (s(1 - o)b) - \left((1 - s)a + \left(s((1 - o)a - oa) \right) \right) + d$$

$$b - osb < b - osb - a + 2osa + d$$

$$a - 2osa < d$$

$$a < \frac{d}{1 - 2os}$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Disclose}; \text{Don't Investigate}) \geq U_L(\text{Don't Propose}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$(1 - s)b + (s(1 - o)b) - \left((1 - s)a + \left(s((1 - o)a - oa) \right) \right) + d \geq 0$$

$$b - osb - a + 2osa + d \geq 0$$

$$a \leq \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Case 3, when Press plays Don't Investigate and Leader plays Don't Propose

$$U_L(\text{Conceal}; \text{Don't Investigate}) < U_L(\text{Don't Propose}; \text{Don't Investigate}) \cup$$

$$U_L(\text{Dislose}; \text{Don't Investigate}) < U_L(\text{Don't Propose}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Conceal}; \text{Don't Investigate}) < U_L(\text{Don't Propose}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$s(1 - o)b + (1 - s)b < 0$$

$$b - osb < 0$$

$$b < 0$$

This condition is always false, because $b > 0$. A leader will always prefer Conceal to Don't Propose when the Press is not investigating.

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Dislose}; \text{Don't Investigate}) < U_L(\text{Don't Propose}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$(1-s)b + (s(1-o)b) - \left((1-s)a + \left(s((1-o)a - oa) \right) \right) + d < 0$$

$$b - osb - a + 2osa + d < 0$$

$$a > \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Case 4, when Leader plays Conceal; Press plays Investigate, and Leader plays

Repress. This case was ruled out in Subgame 2, Case 1. The press always plays Don't Investigate when the Leader plays Repress.

Case 5, when Leader plays Disclose; Press plays Investigate and Leader plays

Repress. This case was ruled out in Subgame 2, Case 1. The press always plays Don't Investigate when the Leader plays Repress.

Case 6, when Leader plays Don't Propose; Press plays Investigate and Leader plays

Repress. This case was ruled out in Subgame 2, Case 1. The press always plays Don't Investigate when the Leader plays Repress.

Case 7, when Leader plays Conceal; Press plays Investigate, and Leader plays

Maintain.

$$EU_L(\text{Conceal}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate}) \cup$$

$$EU_L(\text{Conceal}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate})$$

$$\text{Condition 1: } EU_L(\text{Conceal}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate})$$

$$(px + hox - hosx)(b - osb - nva + 2nosva + nd) + (1 - px - hox + hosx)(b - osb) \geq 0$$

$$b - osb + hnosvxa - hnosxd - hnovxa + hnoxd + 2nopsvxa - npvxa + npxd \geq 0$$

$$b - os(b - nx(hva - hd + 2pva)) - nx(ho + p)(va - d) \geq 0$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } EU_L(\text{Conceal}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate})$$

$$(px + hox - hosx)(b - osb - nva + 2nosva + nd) + (1 - px - hox + hosx)(b - osb) \geq$$

$$(1-s)b + (s(1-o)b) - \left((1-s)a + \left(s((1-o)a - oa) \right) \right) + d$$

$$b - osb + hnosvxa - hnosxd - hnovxa + hnoxd + 2nopsvxa - npvxa + npxd \geq b - osb - a + 2osa + d$$

$$hnosvxa - hnosxd - hnovxa + hnoxd + 2nopsvxa - npvxa + npxd \geq -a + 2osa + d$$

$$a - 2osa - d + hnosvxa - hnosxd - hnovxa + hnoxd + 2nopsvxa - npvxa + npxd \geq 0$$

$$a - d - os(2a - nx(hva - hd + 2pva)) - nx(ho + p)(va - d) \geq 0$$

Case 8, when Leader plays Disclose; Press plays Investigate, and Leader plays

Maintain.

$$EU_L(\text{Disclose, Maintain; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal, Maintain; Investigate}) \cup$$

$$EU_L(\text{Disclose, Maintain; Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Maintain; Investigate})$$

$$\text{Condition 1: } EU_L(\text{Disclose, Maintain; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal, Maintain; Investigate})$$

$$(px + hox - hosx)(b - osb - nva + 2nosva + nd) + (1 - px - hox + hosx)(b - osb) \geq$$

$$(1 - s)b + (s(1 - o)b) - \left((1 - s)a + \left(s((1 - o)a - oa) \right) \right) + d$$

$$b - osb + hnosvxa - hnosxd - hnovxa + hnoxd + 2nopsvxa - npvxa + npxd \geq b - osb - a + 2osa + d$$

$$hnosvxa - hnosxd - hnovxa + hnoxd + 2nopsvxa - npvxa + npxd \geq -a + 2osa + d$$

$$a - 2osa - d + hnosvxa - hnosxd - hnovxa + hnoxd + 2nopsvxa - npvxa + npxd \geq 0$$

$$a - d - os(2a - nx(hva - hd + 2pva)) - nx(ho + p)(va - d) \geq 0$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } EU_L(\text{Disclose, Maintain; Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Maintain; Investigate})$$

$$(1 - s)b + (s(1 - o)b) - \left((1 - s)a + \left(s((1 - o)a - oa) \right) \right) + d \geq 0$$

$$b - osb - a + 2osa + d \geq 0$$

$$a \leq \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Case 9, when Leader plays Don't Propose; Press plays Investigate, and Leader plays

Maintain.

$$EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Maintain; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal, Maintain; Investigate}) \cup$$

$$EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Maintain; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Disclose, Maintain; Investigate})$$

$$\text{Condition 1: } EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Maintain; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal, Maintain; Investigate})$$

$$(px + hox - hosx)(b - osb - nva + 2nosva + nd) + (1 - px - hox + hosx)(b - osb) < 0$$

$$b - osb + hnosvxa - hnosxd - hnovxa + hnoxd + 2nopsvxa - npvxa + npxd < 0$$

$$b - os(b - nx(hva - hd + 2pva)) - nx(ho + p)(va - d) < 0$$

Condition 2: $EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Maintain; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Disclose, Maintain; Investigate})$

$$(1-s)b + (s(1-o)b) - \left((1-s)a + \left(s((1-o)a - oa) \right) \right) + d < 0$$

$$b - osb - a + 2osa + d < 0$$

$$a > \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Case 10, when Leader plays Conceal; Press plays Investigate, and Leader plays

Withdraw.

$$EU_L(\text{Conceal, Withdraw; Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Withdraw; Investigate}) \cup$$

$$EU_L(\text{Conceal, Withdraw; Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Disclose, Withdraw; Investigate})$$

Condition 1: $EU_L(\text{Conceal, Withdraw; Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Withdraw; Investigate})$

$$(px + hox - hosx)(osk - k) + (1 - px - hox + hosx)(b - osb) \geq 0$$

$$hosxk - hoxk + opsxk - pxk + hosxb - hoxb - pxb + opsxb + b - osb \geq 0$$

$$b - os(b - x(h + p)(b + k)) - x(ho + p)(b + k) \geq 0$$

Condition 2: $EU_L(\text{Conceal, Withdraw; Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Disclose, Withdraw; Investigate})$

$$(px + hox - hosx)(osk - k) + (1 - px - hox + hosx)(b - osb)$$

$$\geq (1-s)b + (s(1-o)b) - ((1-s)a + (s((1-o)a - oa))) + d$$

$$hosxk - hoxk + opsxk - pxk + hosxb - hoxb - pxb + opsxb \geq -a + 2osa + d$$

$$a - 2osa - d + hosxk - hoxk + opsxk - pxk + hosxb - hoxb - pxb + opsxb \geq 0$$

$$a - d - os(2a - x(h + p)(b + k)) - x(ho + p)(b + k) \geq 0$$

Case 11, when Leader plays Disclose; Press plays Investigate, and Leader plays

Withdraw.

$$EU_L(\text{Disclose, Withdraw; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal, Withdraw; Investigate}) \cup$$

$$EU_L(\text{Disclose, Withdraw; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Withdraw; Investigate})$$

Condition 1: $EU_L(\text{Disclose, Withdraw; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal, Withdraw; Investigate})$

$$(px + hox - hosx)(osk - k) + (1 - px - hox + hosx)(b - osb)$$

$$\geq (1-s)b + (s(1-o)b) - ((1-s)a + (s((1-o)a - oa))) + d$$

$$hosxk - hoxk + opsxk - pxk + hosxb - hoxb - pxb + opsxb \geq -a + 2osa + d$$

$$a - 2osa - d + hosxk - hoxk + opsxk - pxk + hosxb - hoxb - pxb + opsxb < 0$$

$$a - d - os(2a - x(h + p)(b + k)) - x(ho + p)(b + k) < 0$$

Condition 2: $EU_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Don't Propose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate})$

$$(1 - s)b + (s(1 - o)b) - \left((1 - s)a + \left(s((1 - o)a - oa) \right) \right) + d \geq 0$$

$$b - osb - a + 2osa + d \geq 0$$

$$a \leq \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Case 12: Leader Plays Don't Propose; Press plays Investigate; Leader plays

Withdraw.

$$EU_L(\text{Don't Propose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate}) \cup$$

$$EU_L(\text{Don't Propose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate})$$

Condition 1: $EU_L(\text{Don't Propose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate})$

$$(px + hox - hosx)(osk - k) + (1 - px - hox + hosx)(b - osb) < 0$$

$$hosxk - hoxk + opsxk - pxk + hosxb - hoxb - pxb + opsxb + b - osb < 0$$

$$b - os(b - x(h + p)(b + k)) - x(ho + p)(b + k) < 0$$

Condition 2: $EU_L(\text{Don't Propose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate})$

$$(1 - s)b + (s(1 - o)b) - \left((1 - s)a + \left(s((1 - o)a - oa) \right) \right) + d < 0$$

$$b - osb - a + 2osa + d < 0$$

$$a > \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

The next section will lay out the conditions under which the 16 candidate equilibria are true.

Candidate Equilibrium 1: (Don't Propose, Repress; Don't Investigate). The following conditions must be true:

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Maintain})$$

$$c_r \leq nva - 2nosva - nd$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$$

$$c_r \leq b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$\text{Condition 3: } EU_p(\text{Repress; Don't Investigate}) > EU_p(\text{Repress; Investigate})$$

$$c_p > 0$$

This condition is always true.

$$\text{Condition 4: } EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Repress; Don't Investigate})$$

$$> EU_L(\text{Conceal, Repress; Don't Investigate})$$

$$b < 0$$

This condition is always false, so this is not an equilibrium.

$$\text{Condition 5: } EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Repress; Don't Investigate})$$

$$> EU_L(\text{Disclose, Repress; Don't Investigate})$$

$$a > \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 2: (Don't Propose, Maintain; Don't Investigate). The

following conditions must be true:

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Maintain}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$$

$$c_r > nva - nd - 2nosva$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Maintain}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$$

$$b \geq \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$\text{Condition 3: } EU_p(\text{Maintain; Don't Investigate}) > EU_p(\text{Maintain; Investigate})$$

$$c_p > (xa)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nt - nq + q)$$

$$\text{Condition 4: } EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Maintain; Don't Investigate})$$

$$> EU_L(\text{Conceal, Maintain; Don't Investigate})$$

$$b < 0$$

This condition is always false, so this is not an equilibrium.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Condition 5: } EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Maintain; Don't Investigate}) \\ > EU_L(\text{Disclose, Maintain; Don't Investigate}) \end{aligned}$$

$$a > \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 3: (Don't Propose, Withdraw; Don't Investigate). The

following conditions must be true:

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$$

$$c_r > b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Maintain})$$

$$b < \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$\text{Condition 3: } EU_p(\text{Withdraw; Don't Investigate}) > EU_p(\text{Withdraw; Investigate})$$

$$c_p > (x)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nta - nqa + qa - e)$$

$$\text{Condition 4: } EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Withdraw; Don't Investigate})$$

$$> EU_L(\text{Conceal, Withdraw; Don't Investigate})$$

$$b < 0$$

This condition is always false, so this is not an equilibrium.

$$\text{Condition 5: } EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Withdraw; Don't Investigate})$$

$$> EU_L(\text{Disclose, Withdraw; Don't Investigate})$$

$$a > \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 4: (Don't Propose, Repress; Investigate). The following

conditions must be true:

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Maintain})$$

$$c_r \leq nva - 2nosva - nd$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$$

$$c_r \leq b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$\text{Condition 3: } EU_p(\text{Repress; Investigate}) \geq EU_p(\text{Repress; Don't Investigate})$$

$$c_p \leq 0$$

This condition is false, so this is not an equilibrium.

Condition 4: $EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Repress; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal, Repress; Investigate})$

Per Subgame 2, Case 1, this condition is also false.

Condition 5: $EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Repress; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Disclose, Repress; Investigate})$

$$a > \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 5: (Don't Propose, Maintain; Investigate). The following conditions must be true:

Condition 1: $U_L(\text{Maintain}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$

$$c_r > nva - nd - 2nosva$$

Condition 2: $U_L(\text{Maintain}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$

$$b \geq \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

Condition 3: $EU_p(\text{Maintain; Investigate}) \geq EU_p(\text{Maintain; Don't Investigate})$

$$c_p \leq (xa)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nt - nq + q)$$

Condition 4: $EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Maintain; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal, Maintain; Investigate})$

$$b - os(b - nx(hva - hd + 2pva)) - nx(ho + p)(va - d) < 0$$

Condition 5: $EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Maintain; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Disclose, Maintain Investigate})$

$$a > \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 6: (Don't Propose, Withdraw; Investigate).

Condition 1: $U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$

$$c_r > b + k - os(b + k)$$

Condition 2: $U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Maintain})$

$$b < \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

Condition 3: $EU_p(\text{Withdraw; Investigate}) \geq EU_p(\text{Withdraw; Don't Investigate})$

$$c_p \leq (x)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nta - nqa + qa - e)$$

Condition 4: $EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Withdraw; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal, Withdraw; Investigate})$

$$b - os(b - x(h + p)(b + k)) - x(ho + p)(b + k) < 0$$

Condition 5: $EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Withdraw; Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Disclose, Withdraw; Investigate})$

$$a > \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 7: (Disclose, Repress; Don't Investigate).

Condition 1: $U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Maintain})$

$$c_r \leq nva - 2nosva - nd$$

Condition 2: $U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$

$$c_r \leq b + k - os(b + k)$$

Condition 3: $EU_p(\text{Repress; Don't Investigate}) > EU_p(\text{Repress; Investigate})$

$$c_p > 0$$

This condition is always true.

Condition 4: $U_L(\text{Disclose, Repress; Don't Investigate}) > U_L(\text{Conceal, Repress; Don't Investigate})$

$$a < \frac{d}{1 - 2os}$$

Condition 5: $U_L(\text{Disclose, Repress; Don't Investigate}) \geq U_L(\text{Don't Propose, Repress; Don't Investigate})$

$$a \leq \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 8: (Disclose, Maintain; Don't Investigate).

Condition 1: $U_L(\text{Maintain}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$

$$c_r > nva - nd - 2nosva$$

Condition 2: $U_L(\text{Maintain}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$

$$b \geq \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

Condition 3: $EU_p(\text{Maintain; Don't Investigate}) > EU_p(\text{Maintain; Investigate})$

$$c_p > (xa)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nt - nq + q)$$

Condition 4: $U_L(\text{Disclose, Maintain; Don't Investigate}) > U_L(\text{Conceal, Maintain; Don't Investigate})$

$$a < \frac{d}{1 - 2os}$$

Condition 5: $U_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Don't Investigate})$

$$\geq U_L(\text{Don't Propose}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$a \leq \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 9: (Disclose, Withdraw; Don't Investigate).

Condition 1: $U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$

$$c_r > b + k - os(b + k)$$

Condition 2: $U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Maintain})$

$$b < \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

Condition 3: $EU_p(\text{Withdraw}; \text{Don't Investigate}) > EU_p(\text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate})$

$$c_p > (x)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nta - nqa + qa - e)$$

Condition 4: $U_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Don't Investigate}) > U_L(\text{Conceal}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Don't Investigate})$

$$a < \frac{d}{1 - 2os}$$

Condition 5: $U_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Don't Investigate})$

$$\geq U_L(\text{Don't Propose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Don't Investigate})$$

$$a \leq \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 10: (Disclose, Repress; Investigate).

Condition 1: $U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Maintain})$

$$c_r \leq nva - 2nosva - nd$$

Condition 2: $U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$

$$c_r \leq b + k - os(b + k)$$

Condition 3: $EU_p(\text{Repress}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_p(\text{Repress}; \text{Don't Investigate})$

$$c_p \leq 0$$

This condition is false, so this is not an equilibrium.

Condition 4: $EU_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Repress}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Conceal}, \text{Repress}; \text{Investigate})$

Per Subgame 2, Case 1, this condition is also false.

Condition 5: $EU_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Repress}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose}, \text{Repress}; \text{Investigate})$

$$a \leq \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 11: (Disclose, Maintain; Investigate).

Condition 1: $U_L(\text{Maintain}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$

$$c_r > nva - nd - 2nosva$$

Condition 2: $U_L(\text{Maintain}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$

$$b \geq \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

Condition 3: $EU_p(\text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_p(\text{Maintain}; \text{Don't Investigate})$

$$c_p \leq (xa)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nt - nq + q)$$

Condition 4: $EU_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate})$

$$a - d - os(2a - nx(hva - hd + 2pva)) - nx(ho + p)(va - d) < 0$$

Condition 5: $EU_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose}, \text{Maintain}; \text{Investigate})$

$$a \leq \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 12: (Disclose, Withdraw; Investigate).

Condition 1: $U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$

$$c_r > b + k - os(b + k)$$

Condition 2: $U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Maintain})$

$$b < \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

Condition 3: $EU_p(\text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_p(\text{Withdraw}; \text{Don't Investigate})$

$$c_p \leq (x)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nta - nqa + qa - e)$$

Condition 4: $EU_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate}) > EU_L(\text{Conceal}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate})$

$$a - d - os(2a - x(h + p)(b + k)) - x(ho + p)(b + k) < 0$$

Condition 5: $EU_L(\text{Disclose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose}, \text{Withdraw}; \text{Investigate})$

$$a \leq \frac{osb - b - d}{2os - 1}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 13: (Conceal, Repress; Don't Investigate).

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Maintain})$$

$$c_r \leq nva - 2nosva - nd$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$$

$$c_r \leq b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$\text{Condition 3: } EU_p(\text{Repress; Don't Investigate}) > EU_p(\text{Repress; Investigate})$$

$$c_p \geq 0$$

This condition is always true.

$$\text{Condition 4: } EU_L(\text{Conceal, Repress; Don't Investigate})$$

$$\geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Repress; Don't Investigate})$$

$$b \geq 0$$

This condition is always true.

$$\text{Condition 5: } EU_L(\text{Conceal, Repress; Don't Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Disclose, Repress; Don't Investigate})$$

$$a \geq \frac{d}{1 - 2os}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 14: (Conceal, Maintain; Don't Investigate).

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Maintain}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$$

$$c_r > nva - nd - 2nosva$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Maintain}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$$

$$b \geq \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$\text{Condition 3: } EU_p(\text{Maintain; Don't Investigate}) > EU_p(\text{Maintain; Investigate})$$

$$c_p > (xa)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nt - nq + q)$$

$$\text{Condition 4: } EU_L(\text{Conceal, Maintain; Don't Investigate})$$

$$\geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Maintain; Don't Investigate})$$

$$b \geq 0$$

This condition is always true.

$$\text{Condition 5: } EU_L(\text{Conceal, Maintain; Don't Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Disclose, Maintain; Don't Investigate})$$

$$a \geq \frac{d}{1 - 2os}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 15: (Conceal, Withdraw; Don't Investigate).

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$$

$$c_r > b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Maintain})$$

$$b < \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$\text{Condition 3: } EU_P(\text{Withdraw; Don't Investigate}) > EU_P(\text{Withdraw; Investigate})$$

$$c_p > (x)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nta - nqa + qa - e)$$

$$\text{Condition 4: } EU_L(\text{Conceal, Withdraw; Don't Investigate})$$

$$\geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Withdraw; Don't Investigate})$$

$$b \geq 0$$

This condition is always true.

$$\text{Condition 5: } EU_L(\text{Conceal, Withdraw; Don't Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Disclose, Withdraw; Don't Investigate})$$

$$a \geq \frac{d}{1 - 2os}$$

Candidate Equilibrium 16: (Conceal, Repress; Investigate).

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Maintain})$$

$$c_r \leq nva - 2nosva - nd$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Repress}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$$

$$c_r \leq b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$\text{Condition 3: } EU_P(\text{Repress; Investigate}) \geq EU_P(\text{Repress; Don't Investigate})$$

$$c_p \leq 0$$

This condition is false, so this is not an equilibrium.

$$\text{Condition 4: } EU_L(\text{Conceal, Repress; Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Repress; Investigate})$$

$$b \geq 0$$

This condition is always true.

$$\text{Condition 5: } EU_L(\text{Conceal, Repress; Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Disclose, Repress; Investigate})$$

Per subgame 2, case 1, this condition is always true.

Candidate Equilibrium 17: (Conceal, Maintain; Investigate).

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Maintain}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$$

$$c_r > nva - nd - 2nosva$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Maintain}) \geq U_L(\text{Withdraw})$$

$$b \geq \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$\text{Condition 3: } EU_p(\text{Maintain; Investigate}) \geq EU_p(\text{Maintain; Don't Investigate})$$

$$c_p \leq (xa)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nt - nq + q)$$

$$\text{Condition 4: } EU_L(\text{Conceal, Maintain; Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Maintain; Investigate})$$

$$b - os(b - nx(hva - hd + 2pva)) - nx(ho + p)(va - d) \geq 0$$

$$\text{Condition 5: } EU_L(\text{Conceal, Maintain; Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Disclose, Maintain; Investigate})$$

$$a - d - os(2a - nx(hva - hd + 2pva)) - nx(ho + p)(va - d) \geq 0$$

Candidate Equilibrium 18: (Conceal, Withdraw; Investigate).

$$\text{Condition 1: } U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Repress})$$

$$c_r > b + k - os(b + k)$$

$$\text{Condition 2: } U_L(\text{Withdraw}) > U_L(\text{Maintain})$$

$$b < \frac{nva - nd - k - os(2nva - k)}{1 - os}$$

$$\text{Condition 3: } EU_p(\text{Withdraw; Investigate}) \geq EU_p(\text{Withdraw; Don't Investigate})$$

$$c_p \leq (x)(ho(1 - s) + p)(nta - nqa + qa - e)$$

$$\text{Condition 4: } EU_L(\text{Conceal, Withdraw; Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Don't Propose, Withdraw; Investigate})$$

$$b - os(b - x(h + p)(b + k)) - x(ho + p)(b + k) \geq 0$$

$$\text{Condition 5: } EU_L(\text{Conceal, Withdraw; Investigate}) \geq EU_L(\text{Disclose, Withdraw; Investigate})$$

$$a - d - os(2a - x(h + p)(b + k)) - x(ho + p)(b + k) \geq 0$$

Appendix B: Codebook

Project Variables

This study attempts to characterize the debate over a prospective war by examining news copy that speaks to the utility of engaging in warfare to end a conflict.

I. Story Code

The first variable is a unique case identifier assigned to each story.

II. Country 1

1. United States.

III. Country 2

Identify the other country in the conflict and conflict itself.

- 1: 2nd Iraq (2002-2003)
2. Iran (2007)
3. Afghanistan (2001)
4. North Korea (2003)
5. Syria (2013)
6. Libya (2011)

IV. Publication

1. New York Times

V. Headline

Write down the story's headline, as reported by Lexis. The headline may be distinguished from other material in that it is unique to the story. Make sure you replace any commas in the headline with semicolons so the code file saves correctly.

VI. Subhed

Write down any subheads, hammers, or kickers here, as reported by Lexis. Non-unique markers like "A Nation Challenged" should go here. Make sure you replace any commas in the headline with semicolons so the code file saves correctly.

VII. Date

The day, month and year on which the news item was reported published.

VIII. Word Count

Write down the word count of the story, as reported by Lexis.

IX. Byline

The institution that wrote the story, usually described by a tag underneath the byline, although sometimes wire stories are designated by the name of the wire service immediately after the dateline. If a story incorporates information from both staff and other news services, mark the primary contributor, if possible. If a generic tag like “staff and wire reports” is used, mark staff byline.

1. Staff Byline
2. Wire Service or other news organization
3. Other / Unable to determine

X. Dateline

The geographical location from which the story was filed, which is designated in the lead paragraph before the lead sentence begins.

1. Washington: Washington, D.C. and its immediate environs.
2. Other USA: Anywhere else in the United States and its territories, or within U.S. territorial waters, or no dateline.
3. Adversary Country: Anywhere within the adversary’s country.
4. Other International: In any other country or at sea beyond U.S. territorial waters. Include U.S. or adversary’s military and diplomatic installations that are not based in either homeland in this category. (So the Iraqi embassy in Paris would be coded here, as would an American military base in Uzbekistan).

XI. Prominence

Write down where the story appeared in the newspaper.

1. Page A1
2. Inside/Web. Anything not on the cover goes here.

XII. Trigger

After reading the story, assess the primary real-world reason why the story was written. If multiple options seem possible, look to the headline and lead paragraphs of the story to make the determination.

1. EVENT

The story keys on some real-world event that involves sunk costs or consequences beyond news stories and reaction. This includes combat, deployment or movements of forces, mobilization of reserves, weapons being inspected, demonstrated, tested or manufactured, an election or change in state or senior military leadership, or a natural or unforeseen event such as a disaster. It also includes diplomatic actions and public meetings at which meaningful, binding decisions are made.

2. PSUEDO-EVENT

The story is built around a controlled, public release of information, such as a press conference, interview, speech, press release, report or poll. Statements at public meetings (absent a binding decision) fall here, including diplomatic meetings in which only statements or non-binding pledges are made. Beneficial leaks, which are stories built around a controlled release of information cited to anonymous officials (like a preview of an upcoming report or speech) also should be coded here. Negative and critical information can appear here: The key factor is not the valence of the information, but the method by which it was released.

3. INVESTIGATIVE / NEGATIVE LEAK

The story contains heretofore unknown information acquired through reporter enterprise or coming from whistleblowers that challenges and/or is generally damaging to U.S. administration or its goals.

4. ANALYSIS

A story that is labeled analysis or is built around expert analysis, rather than being driven by an event, pseudo-event, leak or investigation.

5. HUMAN INTEREST

A story that focuses on human beings' actions and responses in relation to the potential conflict.

6. FOLLOW-UP

A story that appears in reaction to something reported in another outlet. A key phrase is "First reported by."

7. COMMENTARY

These items express opinions held by the newspaper in general, by specific staff members or syndicated columnists, or by newspaper readers in letters to the editor. These will typically be marked as appearing in opinion sections, while ANALYSIS pieces typically appear in news sections. ANALYSIS pieces usually do not directly endorse a course of action in the author's voice, while COMMENTARY pieces may do so.

8. UNRELATED

A story that does not relate to or contain meaningful information about the conflict, including offhand references in stories primarily about other topics. This supercedes all the above categories, but should only be coded when the reference to the conflict in question is both brief and offhand in nature. If a story contains significant information about multiple topics, including the conflict, code in whatever other category appears to be the best fit.

9. OTHER

A story that does not fit in the above categories. Avoid this category unless none of the above categories provide a good fit.

XIII. Story Sources

Read the headline, any subheads and every sentence in the story. Determine who was directly attributed information in the story that is relevant to the conflict. These can be through interviews

or public statements. They may also be from documentary sources. Look for verbs that denote communication; do not include language that only describes mental states (“French officials HOPE ...”). Include prior statements used as background (“The administration HAS said”).

If information is unattributed, do not mark any source, but make sure the relevant content category is marked.

1. ADMIN

President administration: This includes the president, White House officials, the National Security Adviser and members of the National Security Council, cabinet secretaries, deputy/assistant/under-secretaries, and other political appointees, including ambassadors to the United Nations and other countries.

2. GOP

Republican Party: Other elected Republicans and party officials, retired and active, and their staff members. Include independents who caucus with the GOP, but not rank-and-file party members, who should be coded in the USCIV category. If general references are made to “Congress” acting collectively, check both this and the DEMS category.

3. DEMS

Democratic Party: Elected Democrats and party officials, retired and active, and their staff members. Include independents who caucus with the Democrats, but not rank-and-file party members, who should be coded in the USCIV category. If general references are made to “Congress” acting collectively, check both this and the GOP category.

4. USG

Other U.S. government: This includes people from nominally apolitical agencies, such as non-appointed military, diplomatic, intelligence and law enforcement personnel, review agencies like the Congressional Budget Office and the Congressional Research Service, as well as government sources that are not specifically identified. Do not include political appointees (like cabinet secretaries) in this category, but in the ADMIN category instead. It also includes the agencies themselves when they are anthropomorphized as actors. Also include American state and local government executive officials here, except legislators elected on a partisan basis. Finally, include general reference to congressional officials (like staff) only when specific members are not identified or parties are not identified.

5. USCIV

U.S. civilians: Citizens of the United States who do not fall in any other category. Stories that cite the results of polls of Americans should be coded here.

6. NGO

Non-governmental organization: Any organization that isn't a government / intergovernmental agency that isn't being consulted for its expertise in a subject matter. This includes humanitarian, religious and business organizations, but not think-tanks. These may be from any country and supersede the CIV categories. See the Expert category for distinguishing NGOs from experts.

7. UN/INTL

United Nations/International: This includes the IMF, WTO and other international and intergovernmental bodies generally recognized as having regulatory authority, including the IAEA, whose membership comprises most or all of the world's nations. It does not include regional bodies, like NATO.

8. ALLIANCE

Alliance members: This is for information and actions specifically attributed to an international formal or informal alliance of countries, such as NATO or a general "coalition." If information or actions are attributed to countries who are members of an alliance, use FORNGOV or USG first. This is only if the alliance itself is acting or providing information.

9. ADGOV

Adversary government: Any officials or institutions of the adversary's government, including diplomatic and military personnel.

10. ADOPPO

Adversary opposition: This includes opposition parties and groups and dissidents opposed to adversary's government. This may include civilians living outside the country, who should be coded here and not in ADCIV.

11. ADVCIIV

Adversary civilians: Any citizens of the adversary's country not counted as part of ADGOV or ADOPPO.

12. VTNO

Violent Transnational Organization: A non-state group widely thought to be committing violence for political or criminal purposes in multiple countries. Mention of leaders without the name of the organization should be marked here.

13. FORNGOV

Present-day foreign government officials, including foreign institutions anthropomorphized as actors. Any officials, including military and diplomatic personnel, from any country that isn't the United States or the adversary state. Include elected opposition officials in those countries here. Also include interstate organizations, like the EU, that don't include the US or adversary. Note this could include states that are adversaries in *other* conflicts – that is, Iranian leaders commenting on the U.S.-Iraq conflict should be coded here, not in ADGOV.

14. FORNCIV

Foreign civilians: Any citizens of states other than country A or Country B. This may include non-government elites like business leaders.

15. EXPERT

Expert: Retired government personnel, university professors, and researchers with think-tanks that are noted to have some expertise or relevance to the topic. Organizations that primarily

advise government and media and make policy recommendations should be counted as think tanks, as opposed to NGOs.

16. MEDIA

Media: Any reportage attributed to other media sources. If a media source is framed as an official government mouthpiece, code as USG, ADVGOV or FORNGOV instead.

XIV. Story Content

Read the headline, any subheads and every sentence in the story. If it contains one or more of the primary content categories, code the position of the first appearance of the category in the story.

A. Content Categories

For the remainder of the article, you will code the specific elements of content of the story, looking for information relevant to the conflict at hand. Look for sentences that are tied to the U.S. policy debate of whether to initiate violent acts involving U.S. military personnel against the country in question.

As a general guideline, coders should use what a reasonably educated American would think as a standard in interpreting what is reported. This is particularly important when officials are using vague language and making veiled threats toward a particular adversary. Make sure you determine that the story has established the adversary as within the range of the comments you are coding. Some stories may be about multiple conflicts, so it should be reasonably clear that the content in question applies to the conflict designated by the entries in II and III.

POWER – These categories are intend capture sentences that relate to the abilities of the countries to engage in warfare.

1. USFORCES

This category attempts to capture discussion of specific elements of military power that are to some degree “pointed” at the adversary in the prospective war. This includes specific current-day military and other combat forces of the United States and/or those of its allies mentioned in the context of the conflict. General terms as “forces” or “troops” don’t belong here; instead, this is looking for specific mentions of units and weapon systems that are geared to fighting on a battlefield or at sea. This could include ships (e.g. the USS Abraham Lincoln), units (1st Infantry Division, the Green Berets, the CIA Special Activities Division), aircraft (B-2 Spirit), or weapons of mass destruction, like chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. A description that includes a number of elements (i.e. 4,000 troops, 24 warplanes) is also acceptable. Generic terms like “fleet” or “commandos” may apply if they refer to specific organizations, equipment or people who are described in the context of the conflict. To establish these are in context of the conflict, the forces described should 1) be within or in close geographical proximity to the adversary state, or 2) described as forces that are available for use should the particular conflict erupt into war. Mentions of weapons and units in past conflicts, or equipment in development or proposed, do not apply. This may overlap with USPOWUP if conditions satisfying requirements

for both apply. Allies may also include native insurgent forces if they otherwise meet the thresholds laid out here.

Currently, there are about 4,000 American troops in Afghanistan, with several thousand more aboard ships in the Arabian Sea or stationed in neighboring countries like Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

2. ADFORCES

This category attempts to capture discussion of specific elements of the adversary's military power that could be used in the prospective war. The adversary state's military and other combat forces, and/or those of any allies, are mentioned. This could include paramilitary forces described as militias or terrorists that backed by that state. These forces should be extant, not in development or proposed, nor should they be described solely for their participation in prior conflicts. Claims that the adversary has weapons of mass destruction should be coded here, but claims that its leaders are building or want to build such weapons should not. This should include ships (Osa-II), named units or combat organizations (Special Republican Guard, 055 Brigade), aircraft (MiG-21 fighters), or other weapons, including weapons of mass destruction. Stories that include numbers of forces also belong here. This may overlap with ADPOWUP if conditions satisfying the requirements for both apply. Allies may include VTNOs if they 1) otherwise meet the requirements of this entry and 2) are explicitly described as an arm of the military of the adversary country in question, allied with that country, or otherwise working with the adversary. The mere presence of a VTNO within a state is insufficient if they are simply said to be operating there.

The Quds Force is under intense scrutiny by American intelligence agencies because it is suspected of supplying sophisticated explosives to Iraqi militants.

3. USPOWUP

The source asserts that the United States is growing stronger or more capable of defeating the adversary in war. This category requires the sentence to state or imply some kind of change in the balance of power in the two states. It can include the U.S. moving forces to improve its ability to fight the adversary (which, if specific enough, would also be coded in category 1), and it can include the adversary's ability to conduct war dropping. It could also include allies declaring they will join the United States in fighting or providing other material support during a war. It should not include someone only expressing a preference for such a change, such as a desire to move troops.

The Pentagon ordered about 60,000 more troops to the region, bringing to over 250,000 the number of American forces deployed on land, sea and at airfields within striking distance of Iraq, officials said today.

4. ADPOWUP

The sponsor asserts that the adversary is growing stronger relative to the United States. This includes claims that the adversary is training forces, purchasing or constructing weapons (conventional or unconventional), or overcoming problems of a military nature. In addition, claims the United States' capabilities are dropping go here. Note this category requires the sentence to state or imply some kind of change in the balance of power in the two states. It can include the movement of forces to better combat the United States and its allies, and can also include states and groups declaring they will assist the adversary in fighting. It should not include someone only expressing a preference for such a change, such as a desire to build weapons.

The Bush administration believes that Iraq continues to develop weapons of mass destruction at sites that have been off limits since United Nations inspectors left the country in 1998.

5. USWEAK

The sponsor asserts that the United States and/or its allies are weak or incapable of defeating the adversary in the *current* (not a speculative future) conflict, or certainty of the adversary prevailing in a violent conflict is expressed.

"In this coming war, they (Iraqi forces) will not be depending on missiles," suggested Wamidh Nadhmi, a professor at Baghdad University. "They will depend on urban warfare, where it is difficult for American technology to achieve supremacy."

6. ADWEAK

The sponsor asserts the adversary and/or its allies are weak or incapable of defeating the United States, or certainty of U.S. prevailing in a violent conflict is expressed.

Senator John McCain, the Republican from Arizona who contested Mr. Bush for the nomination in 2000, made a point of saying today on Capitol Hill: "I am very certain that this military engagement will not be very difficult."

BENEFITS – These categories are intended to capture statements that describe the goals of the United States (not the adversary) in the conflict.

7. STUFBENE

The sponsor asserts that the United States' and/or its allies' goal in the conflict is acquire access to resources or land from the adversary, or that that the adversary has significant resources of interest to the United States.

There will be resources that Iraq has to defray some of the costs, but what happens after Saddam Hussein is toppled has yet to be answered in real detail.

8. ADVBENE

The sponsor asserts that the United States' and/or its allies' goal in the conflict is to improve the internal material, political or ideological conditions in the adversary state. This includes claims of spreading democracy, civil liberties or religion, or improving some aspect of humanitarian conditions in the adversary state.

"We have a dysfunctional country, a fractured country and we have an unstable political system," he said. "There is no chance that the country can be reunited under the current system and the current regime. The Kurds have made it very clear that the only way they come back as part a united Iraq is in a new government that respects human rights. There needs to be regime change to pull the country back together."

9. INTLBENE

The sponsor asserts that the United States' and/or its allies' goal in the conflict is to improve international conditions by eliminating a threat posed by the adversary to other states (including threats to the United States if they are NOT specified as existential in nature), pleasing or gaining allies (including a friendly new government in the adversary state), seeing other countries align their behavior with U.S. preferences, or forestalling a wider conflict. General support of "disarming" a state or attacking it based on its support of terrorists or terrorism should go here.

Some hawks inside the administration are convinced that Iraq will serve as a cautionary example of what can happen to other states that refuse to abandon their programs to build weapons of mass destruction, an argument that John R. Bolton, the undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, has made several times recently.

10. SURVBENE

The sponsor asserts the United States' goal is to specifically eliminate an existential threat to itself. Existential threats may include destruction of American cities or the economy, mass death among the civilian population, loss of civil order, loss of national sovereignty, invasion, or annexation by another country.

11. POLIBENE

The sponsor asserts that the goal of American leaders in the conflict is to gain or retain internal political or material power or benefits, such as favorable public opinion or private personal benefit, such as enriching themselves or their allies.

12. OTHBENE

The sponsor asserts a potential American benefit from or goal of the conflict that either doesn't fit into one of the other categories, or is too general to fit within them. General calls for regime change without providing more specific reasons should go here.

13. NOBENE

The sponsor questions, denies or downplays the existence, achievability (under any circumstances) or desirability of any of the above benefits of the conflict. If the sponsor instead describes a cost that is opposite to one of these benefits, code it as one of the categories below.

The conservative challenger to Mr. Schroder in the September elections, Edmund Stoiber, has said that neither he nor Germans see Iraq as a present danger.

Iranian officials have repeatedly denied that they are building nuclear weapons, a statement repeated by Mr. Khatami today in Islamabad, where he met with Pakistan's prime minister, Zafarullah Khan Jamali. "We are very happy that we are going to have that nuclear power plant in Iran," Mr. Khatami said. "We are going to develop it for energy and peaceful purposes. I repeat, peaceful purposes."

COSTS – These categories describe potential risks, losses and costs to the United States if it pursues war as a policy.

14. MILCOST

Through war, the United States risks significant military casualties, financial costs, a long occupation or guerilla war, a “quagmire” or drop in military capabilities and readiness.

And Mr. Aziz's sober warning that "the assault against Iraq will not be a cakewalk" but rather "a fierce war during which the United States will suffer losses they have never sustained for decades," was timed to exploit the concerns expressed by American political and military figures that the task of removing Mr. Hussein's government could devolve into punishing urban warfare and thousands of American casualties.

15. FORNCOST

Through war, the United States risks alienating or destabilizing countries other than the adversary. This includes damaged foreign relations and the adversary launching attacks on nearby states, as well as sparking wider regional conflicts.

Still, the fear is that Mr. Hussein, who set afire oil fields in Kuwait a decade ago, might strike out with chemical, biological or radiological weapons at Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer with the largest capacity to expand its oil production to stabilize oil supplies.

16. HUMCOST

Through war, the United States risks causing significant humanitarian suffering, economic damage, displaced persons and refugee crises, or civil conflict within the adversary state.

The figures Mr. Annan cited filled in a newly specific picture of the tremendous displacement and hardship that the United Nations is anticipating for Iraq's civilians in the event of war.

17. RETRCOST

Through war, the United States risks the adversary or its allies launching attacks on American civilians or the U.S. homeland. General threats of “retaliation” without mention of American civilians or the United States are insufficient to qualify for this, and should be coded as OTHCOST. Threats of attacks on U.S. forces should go in MILCOST.

There is also a growing consensus that Iran's agents would target civilians in the United States, Europe and elsewhere, they said.

18. HOMECOST

Through war, U.S. leaders are risking their political position or lowered public opinion, and/or they are risking damage to the U.S. economy or harm to other American political or security initiatives.

Several Democrats argued that the economic problems would only get worse after a war in Iraq, noting that was what happened to Mr. Bush's father 10 years ago.

19. OTHCOST

Some other cost, or some nonspecific reference to the costs of war, is described.

But while Mr. Moussa was making Iraq's overture to the United Nations, a senior Iraqi official warned that the United States would face "dreadful" consequences -- worse than those of Sept. 11 -- if it continued to "trample whole nations" and "interfere in domestic affairs of other countries."

20. NOCOST

The potential or threat of any of these losses is denied, questioned or downplayed. This includes assurances that the feared cost won't take place. A sentence that both raises a potential cost and downplays it should be coded in one of the above categories as well as this one.

"That means making sure that the airspace over the top of Baghdad is available to our Air Force so that we can use the precision capability of the Air Force to go after discrete targets within the city without doing extensive damage."

UNCERTAINTY – These categories describe expressions of uncertainty about the abilities and intentions of countries in the conflict.

21. USWRONG

The United States is said to be incorrect or uncertain about the adversary's capability and/or resolve to fight a war against it.

Senior intelligence officials acknowledged today that the government had not compiled an updated, cross-agency assessment of Iraq's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons capacities, although the Bush administration is pressing for a quick statement of support for military action against Saddam Hussein.

22. ADWRONG

The adversary is said to be incorrect or uncertain about U.S. ability and/or resolve to fight a war against it.

DESCRIPTIVES

23. USBAD

The United States (or its leaders or some or all of its people) is denounced, described as warmongering, rogue, evil, imperial, untrustworthy or deceitful, or operating outside of norms regarding conflict (such as violating sovereignty, treatment of prisoners, handling of internal conflict, etc.) . Or, the existence of the conflict is blamed primarily on the United States or its leaders.

He added that there was suspicion in the Middle East that the United States had a "hidden agenda" in attacking Iraq and wanted to "reshape the whole Middle East area based on their own interests."

On the subject of United States policy in the Middle East, Mr. Zarif said, "I believe the entire international community considers the behavior of the United States disrespectful, particularly of this administration."

24. ADBAD

The adversary (or its leaders or some or all of its people) is denounced or described as warmongering, rogue, evil, imperial, untrustworthy or deceitful, or operating outside of norms regarding conflict (such as violating sovereignty, treatment of prisoners, handling of internal conflict, use of weapons of mass destruction, etc.) Or, the existence of the conflict is blamed primarily on the adversary.

"We also expect German support for the story that we are telling about this terrible man who has tried to acquire terrible weapons his entire life," Ms. Rice said of President Saddam Hussein.

"Here's the Catch-22 that Saddam Hussein has put himself in," Ari Fleischer, the White House spokesman, said today. "He denied he had these weapons, and then he destroys things he says he never had. If he lies about never having them, how can you trust him when he says he has destroyed them?"

25. THEYDIFF

Differences between the United States' and the adversary's cultures, values, religions, organizing political principles, or demographics are employed or implied, without the use of any negative terms (use BADDIFF if a negative term is employed). Only the adversary need be mentioned, if the term is not one that would be used to describe the United States.

In the Middle East, where the hand of God is never believed to be too far off the tiller of daily events, one explanation for the shuttle disaster quickly gained widespread currency today: divine retribution.

26. BADDIFF

Same as THEYDIFF, but a term that would be regarded as negative or dehumanizing by an average, middle-of-the-road citizen of the United States is applied to the difference.

PREFERENCES AND PREDICTIONS

27. GOWAR

The sponsor expresses preference for war or a belief that war is the best means to achieve goals or forestall suffering, issues a threat to use force (either on offense or defense), or questions, disputes or downplays whether non-violent methods or diplomacy will achieve goals in the conflict. Statements that war is likely or peaceful resolutions are unlikely should also be coded here, as should conditional threats or statements that suggest war is a possibility.

"It's sad, it's a sad thing to have to go to war," Tiffany Vukich, 17, a high school senior, said after she and her parents, Robert and Laurie, both 42 and both Republicans, watched the State of the Union address on the family's big-screen television. "But now, I think it's the right thing."

28. GOPEACE

The sponsor expresses opposition to the war, a preference for peace, diplomatic or political solutions or de-escalation of the conflict, a belief that peace is the best means to achieve goals or avoid suffering, retracts a threat, or questions, disputes or downplays whether violent methods will achieve goals in the conflict. Statements that war is unlikely or that peaceful resolution is likely should also be coded here.

Mr. Bush's top aides have tried to tamp down expectations of imminent military action outside of Afghanistan.

CONTEXT AND HISTORY

29. PASTFITE

Past wars between the United States and the adversary are noted.

Since the Sept. 11 terror attacks, speculation has constantly centered on the Bush administration's desire to complete the campaign that the first President George Bush initiated against Mr. Hussein.

30. GRANDWAR

The conflict is asserted to be part of a grander struggle the United States is engaged in.

There was no immediate reaction from Washington, where President Bush proclaimed Iraq a partner in an "axis of evil" with North Korea and Iran in his State of the Union address last week, raising expectations that Mr. Hussein might be the next target of the war on terrorism.

31. NOTGRAND

Assertions that the conflict is part of a grander struggle are specifically challenged, denied or downplayed.

B. Category Position

When one of the above content categories is found, mark its FIRST position in the story.

- 3. HED: Headline/Subhed
- 2. TOP3: First three paragraphs
- 1. BODY: Remainder of Story
- 0. NP: Not present. This will be used as a default on the codesheet.

Appendix C: Additional Statistical Tables from Content Analysis

Table C.1: Standard deviations for Table 5.19

Category	War SD	Peace SD	Wtd.	Wtd.
			War SD	Peace SD
U.S. Administration	1.72	1.69	1.74	1.71
Republicans	.68	.99	.69	1.03
Democrats	.87	1.08	.83	1.09
Presidential Party	.70	.97	.76	1.01
Opposition Party	.85	1.10	.77	1.11
U.S. Government	1.28	1.37	1.28	1.39
U.S. Civilians	.68	.57	.59	.59
Non-Governmental Organization	.42	.61	.52	.62
U.N./International Bodies	1.01	.76	.93	.73
Alliance	.34	.05	.45	.04
Adversary Government	1.19	1.28	1.25	1.28
Adversary Opposition	.81	.69	1.01	.73
Adversary Civilians	.56	.42	.64	.43
Violent Transnational Organization	.39	.21	.37	.23
Foreign Government	1.48	1.44	1.47	1.46
Foreign Civilians	.59	.61	.55	.59
Experts	1.00	1.31	1.10	1.34
Media	.56	.57	.53	.56
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460

Table C.2: More statistical data for table 5.19

Category	Mann-Whitney U test			Unweighted <i>t</i> test			Weighted <i>t</i> test		
	U value	Z	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i> value	df	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i> value	df	<i>p</i>
U.S. Administration	103,228.0	-2.86	.004	1.98	957	.048	2.12	957	.034
Republicans	109,000.5	-2.64	.008	2.69	803	.007	2.91	795	.004
Democrats	110,794.0	-1.63	.103	1.91	880	.056	2.32	857	.021
Presidential Party	109,741.5	-2.31	.021	2.36	830	.019	2.20	850	.028
Opposition Party	110,057.0	-1.93	.054	2.20	863	.028	2.97	813	.003
U.S. Government	114,363.5	-.13	.901	.61	957	.544	.18	957	.860
U.S. Civilians	112,325.0	-1.51	.131	-1.35	957	.178	-.53	957	.597
Non-Governmental Organization	111,363.5	-1.94	.052	.07	957	.945	-.13	899	.199
U.N./International Bodies	108,922.5	-2.60	.009	.25	957	.012	-1.89	931	.059
Alliance	113,407.0	-2.02	.043	-2.21	518	.028	-2.95	507	.003
Adversary Government	96,331.5	-5.67	.000	3.15	936	.001	2.63	947	.009
Adversary Opposition	111,548.0	-1.74	.082	-1.47	950	.142	-3.09	906	.002
Adversary Civilians	112,689.0	-1.56	.119	-1.32	921	.188	-1.99	874	.047
Violent Transnational Organization	113,697.0	-1.25	.211	-1.23	772	.218	-1.14	830	.257
Foreign Government	103,029.5	-3.00	.003	1.84	957	.067	2.10	957	.036
Foreign Civilians	112,867.5	-1.03	.301	-.20	957	.839	-.41	957	.680
Experts	99,046.0	-4.59	.000	4.22	856	.000	3.65	890	.000
Media	112,825.0	-.92	.360	-.31	957	.760	-.39	957	.697

Table C.3: Standard deviations for Table 5.20

Category	War SD	Peace SD	Wtd.	
			War SD	Peace SD
Any Power	1.60	1.57	1.61	1.59
U.S. and Allied Forces	1.12	1.02	1.10	1.04
Adversary Forces	1.02	1.19	.92	1.21
U.S. and Allied Power Increase	1.14	.76	1.13	.77
Adversary Power Increase	.95	1.18	1.03	1.22
U.S. Military Weakness	.27	.32	.25	.31
Adversary Military Weakness	.59	.34	.68	.32
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460

Table C.4: More statistical data for table 5.20

Category	Mann-Whitney U test			Unweighted <i>t</i> test			Weighted <i>t</i> test		
	U value	Z	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i> value	df	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i> value	df	<i>p</i>
Any Power	108,985.0	-1.51	.132	.48	957	.630	.39	957	.697
U.S. and Allied Forces	113,778.0	-.37	.714	-1.10	957	.272	-.66	957	.513
Adversary Forces	104,486.5	-3.76	.000	2.39	906	.017	3.72	854	.000
U.S. and Allied Power Increase	108,714.0	-2.50	.013	-3.36	872	.001	-3.34	881	.001
Adversary Power Increase	104,288.5	-4.02	.000	2.86	880	.004	2.46	902	.014
U.S. Military Weakness	114,094.5	-.64	.524	.59	957	.553	.65	957	.515
Adversary Military Weakness	110,077.0	-3.37	.001	-2.78	799	.006	-3.80	723	.000

Table C.5: Standard deviations for Table 5.21

Category	War SD		Wtd. Peace SD	
	War SD	Peace SD	War SD	Peace SD
Any Benefit	1.53	1.59	1.54	1.61
Material Benefit	.52	.27	.60	.24
Adversary Populace Benefit	.79	.35	1.04	.37
International Benefit	1.42	1.53	1.33	1.54
U.S. Survival Benefit	.23	.35	.17	.30
Political Benefit	.20	.46	.15	.48
Other Benefit	.79	.98	.84	1.04
No Benefit	.88	1.02	.82	1.00
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460

Table C.6: More statistical data for table 5.21

Category	Mann-Whitney U test			Unweighted <i>t</i> test			Weighted <i>t</i> test		
	U value	Z	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i> value	df	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i> value	df	<i>p</i>
Any Benefit	103,448.5	-2.76	.006	2.23	957	.021	2.43	957	.015
Material Benefit	107,133.0	-4.72	.000	-3.79	765	.000	-5.09	658	.000
Adversary Populace Benefit	104,224.5	-5.22	.000	-4.76	699	.000	-7.22	631	.000
International Benefit	91,968.0	-5.77	.000	4.50	935	.000	6.58	910	.000
U.S. Survival Benefit	114,647.5	-.15	.882	.67	957	.501	.97	957	.330
Political Benefit	112,488.0	-2.66	.008	2.11	617	.035	2.53	538	.012
Other Benefit	113,430.5	-.60	.550	1.21	880	.225	1.29	878	.196
No Benefit	109,953.0	-1.90	.058	1.45	911	.148	1.76	893	.080

Table C.7: Standard deviations for Table 5.22

Category	Wtd.		Wtd.	
	War SD	Peace SD	War SD	Peace SD
Any Cost	1.49	1.15	1.49	1.22
Military Cost	.80	.43	.77	.44
Foreign Cost	1.11	.79	1.15	.83
Humanitarian Cost	.87	.68	.90	.74
Retribution Cost	.63	.44	.58	.45
U.S. Domestic Cost	.62	.58	.53	.62
Other Cost	.52	.60	.56	.65
No Cost	.39	.30	.40	.33
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460

Table C.8: More statistical data for table 5.22

Category	Mann-Whitney U test			Unweighted <i>t</i> test			Weighted <i>t</i> test		
	U value	Z	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i> value	df	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i> value	df	<i>p</i>
Any Cost	84,715.0	-8.37	.000	-6.90	929	.000	-5.61	944	.000
Military Cost	104,678.5	-5.19	.000	-4.19	783	.000	-4.10	802	.000
Foreign Cost	100,217.0	-5.33	.000	-4.40	898	.000	-3.85	907	.000
Humanitarian Cost	107,261.5	-3.59	.000	-2.55	935	.011	-2.20	945	.028
Retribution Cost	112,513.0	-1.54	.124	-1.46	895	.144	-1.15	927	.252
U.S. Domestic Cost	112,560.5	-1.47	.141	-.80	957	.425	.63	957	.529
Other Cost	113,901.5	-.59	.558	.50	957	.617	.64	957	.525
No Cost	112,766.0	-2.18	.030	-1.28	933	.203	-1.10	945	.273

Table C.9: Standard deviations for Table 5.23

Category			Wtd.	Wtd.
	War SD	Peace SD	War SD	Peace SD
Any Information Problem	.31	.55	.28	.52
U.S. Information Problem	.24	.54	.19	.52
Adversary Information Problem	.19	.05	.21	.04
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460

Table C.10: More statistical data for table 5.23

Category	Mann-Whitney U test			Unweighted <i>t</i> test			Weighted <i>t</i> test		
	U value	Z	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i> value	df	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i> value	df	<i>p</i>
Any Information Problem	113,261.5	-1.19	.235	1.77	712	.077	1.83	694	.067
U.S. Information Problem	112,824.0	-1.65	.100	2.22	626	.027	2.42	572	.016
Adversary Information Problem	114,329.0	-.92	.357	-1.12	563	.262	-1.26	538	.208

Table C.11: Standard deviations for Table 5.24

Category	Wtd.		Wtd.	
	War SD	Peace SD	War SD	Peace SD
Any Attitude	1.64	1.64	1.65	1.66
U.S. is Bad	.89	.99	.82	.99
Adversary is Bad	1.42	1.54	1.45	1.56
Adversary is Different	.89	.76	.99	.74
Adversary's Differences are Bad	.53	.52	.60	.50
Go War	1.66	1.40	1.71	1.45
Go Peace	1.30	1.50	1.26	1.55
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460

Table C.12: More statistical data for table 5.24

Category	Mann-Whitney U test			Unweighted <i>t</i> test			Weighted <i>t</i> test		
	U value	Z	p	<i>t</i> value	df	p	<i>t</i> value	df	p
Any Attitude	106,080.5	-2.08	.038	-1.74	957	.082	-1.71	957	.087
U.S. is Bad	108,426.5	-2.13	.033	1.63	927	.104	2.45	895	.015
Adversary is Bad	101,361.0	-3.45	.001	2.73	957	.006	1.49	957	.135
Adversary is Different	113,514.5	-.51	.609	-1.09	951	.276	-2.53	919	.011
Adversary's Differences are Bad	113,418.5	-.80	.422	-.30	957	.764	-1.46	948	.145
Go War	86,530.5	-7.47	.000	-5.88	950	.000	-5.65	951	.000
Go Peace	107,297.5	-2.04	.042	2.18	911	.029	3.58	886	.000

Table C.13: Standard deviations for Table 5.25

Category	War SD	Peace SD	Wtd.	
			War SD	Peace SD
Any Context	1.24	.48	1.18	.50
Past War	.91	.40	.77	.44
Grand Conflict	1.00	.27	1.03	.23
Conflict Isn't Grand	.20	.00	.22	.00
<i>N</i>	499	460	499	460

Table C.14: More statistical data for table 5.25

Category	Mann-Whitney U test			Unweighted <i>t</i> test			Weighted <i>t</i> test		
	U value	Z	p	<i>t</i> value	df	p	<i>t</i> value	df	p
Any Context	89,267.5	-9.76	.000	-8.26	655	.000	-6.88	957	.000
Past War	97,262.0	-7.81	.000	-6.48	696	.000	-4.49	803	.000
Grand Conflict	104,477.5	-6.18	.000	-5.48	574	.000	-5.79	553	.000
Conflict Isn't Grand	113,620.0	-2.15	.031	-1.79	498	.074	-1.65	498	.099