

# Republican Elites and Foreign Policy Attitudes

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In the 2000 presidential campaign, then-candidate George W. Bush called for a “humbler” foreign policy. Yet, as President, Bush surprised both domestic and international audiences with a series of actions overtly hostile to existing multilateral policy instruments: declaring the Kyoto Protocol “dead”; de-signing the treaty in support of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and punishing countries that failed to sign immunity agreements with the United States; undermining enforcement protocols for the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions; and withdrawing from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. These policy changes all occurred before 11 September 2001, frequently cited as the “shock” that caused the dramatic U.S. shift toward a policy of unilateralism and the aggressive use of national power. At the same time, public opinion polls seemingly show the American public to be in favor of multilateralism and international institutions. A number of analysts, scholars, and pundits argue that these policies were therefore out of step with and imposed upon the mass public.<sup>1</sup> Did the Bush administration, in fact, pursue these policies with the broad support of the American people or despite their opposition?

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, David Skidmore, “Understanding the Unilateralist Turn in U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1 (July 2005): 207–228; Benjamin I. Page and Marshall M. Bouton, *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from Our Leaders but Don't Get* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 99–120; Steven Kull, “Public Attitudes toward Multilateralism” in Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman, eds., *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002); Nina Hachigian and Mona Sutphen, *The Next American Century: How the U.S. Can Thrive as Other Powers Rise* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008); Antonia Chayes, “How American Treaty Behavior Threatens National Security,” *International Security* 33 (Summer 2008): 45–81.

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Observers of U.S. foreign policy are split between two basic views on this question. Many scholars have coalesced around what might be called an *elite capture* view: the basic policy preferences of the American public have been consistently multilateral and internationalist, and the foreign policy direction taken under Republican governance was the result of a minority of opinion capturing U.S. foreign policy. The second perspective, what might be called the *growing convergence* hypothesis, suggests that the American public is generally less internationalist than most foreign policy leaders and permitted this departure—in other words, the views of the wider public and Republican Party elites converged.

We assess this debate using evidence from two long-running surveys on U.S. foreign policy opinion. We begin by looking at the policy priorities of the American people using data from the American National Election Studies (ANES), a survey regularly conducted around U.S. elections. We then examine trends in the substantive content of American public and elite foreign policy attitudes through periodic surveys conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (prior to September 2006, the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, but hereafter referred to as CCGA). On the basis of this survey data, we find that neither argument fully addresses the puzzle. A focus on convergence or divergence misses a larger point. On the question of policy priorities, the ANES data show that foreign policy concerns were not highly salient to the public through the 1990s. The public consistently rated domestic policy issues as more important than foreign policy issues: less than 5 percent of the public in 1992, 1994, and 1996 rated foreign policy concerns as their top issue and less than 11 percent did in 1998 and 2000. After 11 September 2001, the public again began to rate foreign policy issues as high in importance, but this actually did not strongly become manifest until the 2004 elections.

In terms of trends in foreign policy attitudes, the CCGA data show that in the period from 1982 to 2004, the American public was less internationalist than commonly thought. The public was less supportive of international engagement than were elites from both parties on a number of indicators, including support for free trade, foreign aid spending, and deployment of military forces. Even on those aspects of hard power where the public and Republicans have been more in tune, Republicans have generally been more supportive of defense spending and maintaining U.S. military primacy. On the dimension of support for the United Nations, however, the public has generally been more supportive than have Republican Party leaders. If the foreign policy behavior of Republican elites changed in the 1990s and thereafter, neither the convergence argument nor the capture argument explains why. The public was not focused on foreign policy throughout the 1990s and was only weakly internationalist, but in those areas in which the Republicans moved most aggressively against internationalism (e.g., on multilateralism), the public did not follow.

This paper is organized as follows. The first section defines internationalism and outlines a typology for understanding and measuring shifts in foreign

policy attitudes. The second section examines the state of the existing literature on this question and outlines the competing hypotheses. The third section describes our methods and the two types of data we employ, the ANES and CCGA surveys. In the fourth section, we discuss our findings as they relate to the hypotheses. We also explore how our results fit with competing claims that the American public is broadly multilateralist, which appears to contradict the evidence in the CCGA surveys that the public is weakly internationalist. In the final section, we identify some broader questions raised by these findings. Namely, how did hardliners displace traditional internationalists within the Republican Party? We suggest that this development may have been facilitated by “dual slack,” the combination of unipolarity and public inattention to foreign policy.

### DEFINING INTERNATIONALISM

Recent events have led scholars to investigate whether “internationalism,” the vision of American global engagement that largely united the U.S. foreign policy establishment from the end of the second World War through the end of the Cold War, is suffering a permanent decline. In this context, internationalism refers to the idea that the United States, unlike after World War I, could best achieve security and economic growth by remaining engaged in international politics.<sup>2</sup> More specifically, consensus support for “liberal internationalism,” or what has also been referred to as “establishment internationalism,” emerged out of the shadows of the depression and World War II and included two strands of international engagement, one based on more cooperative elements (support for international institutions, foreign assistance, and free trade) and the other based on more coercive means (defense spending, military superiority, and the use of force). Several recent studies have examined whether this consensus is now eroding. Charles Kupchan and Peter Trubowitz argue that the coalition underlying this consensus is becoming irretrievably frayed.<sup>3</sup> Joshua Busby and Jonathan Monten find some deviations from internationalist positions based on congressional voting patterns, the biographies of a cross-section of foreign elites, and the content of presidential State of the Union addresses and party platforms, but they also find a reservoir of sustained

<sup>2</sup> See Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America During World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967). See also Charles Kupchan, *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002); Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Charles Kupchan and Peter Trubowitz, “Dead Center: The Demise of Liberal Internationalism in The United States,” *International Security* 32 (Fall 2007): 7–44; Charles Kupchan and Peter Trubowitz, “Grand Strategy for a Divided America,” *Foreign Affairs* 86 (July/August 2007): 71–83.

rhetoric in support of traditional internationalist sentiments.<sup>4</sup> Stephen Chaudoin, Helen Milner, and Dustin Tingley find that bipartisan support for liberal internationalism in Congress remains robust and did not decline after either the Vietnam War or the end of the Cold War.<sup>5</sup>

A key but unexamined aspect of this debate is whether the Republican Party, once an integral component of this internationalist coalition, has turned disproportionately away from internationalism in comparison to the wider public.<sup>6</sup> Throughout the post-war period, Republican leaders represented a consistent pillar of support for international engagement, not only by supporting high levels of defense spending, but also by consistently supporting active U.S. leadership in international institutions and multilateral forums as well as non-coercive instruments of international engagement such as free trade and foreign assistance.<sup>7</sup> Republican leaders such as Wendell Wilkie and Arthur Vandenberg were instrumental in building bipartisan support for continued U.S. international engagement as World War II ended and support grew for returning to pre-war isolation. Although created by Democratic presidents, the administration of Dwight Eisenhower continued to support an active international role for the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); as Eisenhower argued in the 1954 State of the Union address:

It [the UN] has given uniquely valuable services in many places where violence threatened. It is the only real world forum where we have the opportunity for international presentation and rebuttal.... The United Nations deserves our continued firm support.<sup>8</sup>

This view in the Republican Party was not just a byproduct of the early Cold War. George H.W. Bush, for example, insisted the United States acquire the legitimacy of UN Security Council approval before launching offensive

<sup>4</sup> Joshua Busby and Jonathan Monten, "Without Heirs? Assessing the Decline of Establishment Internationalism in U.S. Foreign Policy," *Perspectives on Politics* 6 (Fall 2008): 451–472.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Chaudoin, Helen Milner, and Dustin Tingley, "The Center Holds: Liberal Internationalism Survives," *International Security* 35 (Summer 2010): 75–94.

<sup>6</sup> Jacob Heilbrunn, "End of the Establishment: Where Have All the Serious Republicans Gone?" *Foreign Policy* (July/August 2010); Jack Snyder, Robert Shapiro, and Yaeli Bloch-Elkon, "Free Hand Abroad. Divide and Rule at Home," *World Politics* 61 (January 2009): 155–187; Kupchan and Trubowitz, "Dead Center," 7–44; Miroslav Nincic and Monti N. Datta, "Of Paradise, Power, and Pachyderms," *Political Science Quarterly* 122 (Summer 2007): 239–256.

<sup>7</sup> Kupchan and Trubowitz, "Dead Center," 8–9; Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*; Colin Dueck, *Hard Line: The Republican Party and U.S. Foreign Policy since World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made: Acheson, Bohlen, Harriman, Kennan, Lovett and McCloy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986); Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America during World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967).

<sup>8</sup> John Woolley and Gerhard Peters, "The American Presidency Project," University of California, accessed at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/print.php?pid=10096>, 24 January 2012.

military operations against Iraq in the first Gulf War.<sup>9</sup> Beginning in the 1990s, however, Republican politicians increasingly questioned the influence of these multilateral institutions and whether the United States should participate in them. A new wave of conservative intellectuals began arguing that these institutions undercut U.S. sovereignty and freedom of action, and threatened U.S. interests by presenting themselves as the arbiters of international legitimacy.<sup>10</sup> Few put their disdain for international institutions as pointedly as John Bolton, who stated in 1994: "There are 38 floors to the UN building in New York. If you lost 10 of them, it wouldn't make a bit of difference."<sup>11</sup> Influential conservatives dismissed other instruments of international engagement as well. Jesse Helms, the powerful Republican Senator who chaired the Foreign Relations Committee from 1995 to 2001, likened foreign aid to "throwing money down foreign rat holes."<sup>12</sup> Have Republicans changed more than the American public, or has the public also become less internationalist? Do the attitudes of Republican leaders, the Party rank and file, and the mass public track together?<sup>13</sup>

We can better understand shifts in the different constituencies for internationalism by looking at the typology of U.S. foreign policy attitudes developed by Eugene Wittkopf, and later used by Ole Holsti and James Rosenau.<sup>14</sup> Wittkopf's work recognized that Americans had opinions not only about

<sup>9</sup> Although later interviews with his advisers made clear that Bush would have initiated the intervention without UN sanction if necessary. See *Frontline Gulf War Oral History*, accessed at [www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gulf/oral/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gulf/oral/), 24 January 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Jeremy A. Rabkin, *The Case for Sovereignty: Why the World Should Welcome American Independence* (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 2004); John R. Bolton, "Should We Take Global Governance Seriously?" *Chicago Journal of International Law* 1 (Fall 2000): 205–221.

<sup>11</sup> Democracy Now!, "John Bolton in His Own Words: Bush's UN Ambassador Nominee Condemns United Nations," 31 March 2005, accessed at [http://www.democracynow.org/2005/3/31/john\\_bolton\\_in\\_his\\_own\\_words](http://www.democracynow.org/2005/3/31/john_bolton_in_his_own_words), 24 January 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Kathy Kiehl, "Importance of Foreign Aid Is Hitting Home," *USA Today*, 3 December 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Recent work by Fordham and earlier work by Trubowitz seek to explain the regional distribution of foreign policy opinion based on economic interests, one of several possible influences on foreign policy opinion. Benjamin O. Fordham, "Economic Interests and Public Support for American Global Activism," *International Organization* 62 (January 2008): 163–182; Peter Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Dustin Tingley and Helen Milner, "Who Supports Global Economic Engagement? The Sources of Preferences in American Foreign Economic Policy," *International Organization* 65 (Winter 2011): 37–68.

<sup>14</sup> Eugene R. Wittkopf, "On the Foreign Policy Beliefs of the American People: A Critique and Some Evidence," *International Studies Quarterly* 30 (1986): 425–445; Ole R. Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Eugene R. Wittkopf, "What Americans Really Think About Foreign Policy," *Washington Quarterly* 19 (Summer 1996): 91–106; Eugene R. Wittkopf, *Faces of Internationalism: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990); Ole Holsti and James N. Rosenau, "The Political Foundations of Elites' Domestic and Foreign-Policy Beliefs," in E. R. Wittkopf and J. M. McCormick, eds., *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), p. 33–50.

FIGURE 1  
Representation of Wittkopf's Framework

	MI (Sticks)	No Sticks (No MI)	Sticks (MI)
CI (Carrots)			
Carrots (CI)		Accommodationist <i>Carrots, No sticks</i>	Internationalist <i>Carrots, Sticks</i>
No Carrots (No CI)		Isolationist <i>No carrots, no sticks</i>	Hardliner <i>No carrots, Sticks</i>

whether the United States should engage internationally, but also *how* the United States should engage internationally. He identified two dimensions: *cooperative internationalism* and *militant internationalism*. Cooperative internationalism was focused on consensual forms of international engagement such as treaties, trade agreements, and foreign assistance. Militant internationalism was identified with a competitive strain of international engagement in which the United States was prepared to use coercive or punitive measures such as force or sanctions to deal with international problems. We can think of these as carrots and sticks. Dichotomizing yields the typology presented in Figure 1. While *internationalists* prefer both carrots and sticks and *isolationists* prefer neither, others are selective internationalists and favor some means but not others. *Accommodationists* favor carrots but not sticks, whereas *hardliners* prefer sticks but not carrots.

The coalition supporting internationalism in the early Cold War era, comprising *internationalists* and *accommodationists*, was broadly in agreement about non-coercive instruments and multilateral means (carrots) whereas *internationalists* were much more supportive of coercive instruments (sticks). *Internationalists* and *accommodationists* tended to support foreign assistance, freer trade, and cooperative international institutions to deal with post-WWII security problems, including the United Nations and NATO. Based on this four-part framework, has the balance between these cohorts shifted in the GOP compared to the wider public?

#### EXISTING ARGUMENTS AND HYPOTHESES

A number of analysts, pundits, and scholars have suggested that the George W. Bush administration's foreign policies were out of step and imposed upon the mass public, reflecting a trend in the Republican Party away from a previous bipartisan consensus for internationalism. This perspective argues that the American public has strongly and consistently supported international engagement, and that U.S. foreign policy was therefore "captured" or hijacked by a minority viewpoint.<sup>15</sup> Benjamin Page and Marshall Bouton conclude that "the

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin I. Page and Dukhong Kim, "'Go It Alone' Won't Go with the American Public" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA., 28–31 August 2003).

evidence from three decades of Chicago Council on Foreign Relations surveys indicate[s] that such strong support for international cooperation has been an enduring feature of U.S. public opinion," and that Americans "prefer cooperative, multilateral, and diplomatic methods as the chief means to pursue their foreign policy goals."<sup>16</sup> Many observers believe these recent snapshots reflect a long-running trend. Holsti cites continuous public support since the end of World War II for U.S. engagement with the world and the rejection of isolationism, although, as previously described, this finding does not distinguish between a preference for international engagement through unilateral and multilateral means.<sup>17</sup>

In one of the strongest statements of this view to date, Benjamin Page presents data from the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Chicago Council surveys to show that the American public strongly supports multilateral instruments such as the United Nations, the Kyoto Protocol, and the International Criminal Court, and that a significantly larger share of Americans are prepared to use force when multilateral partners are involved. Using Chicago Council data from 1974 to 2002, he makes the broader point that foreign policy disagreement between elites and the mass public has been pervasive over the last 20 years.<sup>18</sup> If the general public is more supportive of multilateral instruments like the Kyoto Protocol, the implication is that they have consistently been more multilateralist than elites. This line of critique goes back to Page's earlier work in *The Rational Public*.<sup>19</sup> Page has extended this work on public opinion to the foreign policy arena, suggesting that public preferences are not "disorganized" or "vacillating" but rather show remarkable "consistency" and coherence over time.<sup>20</sup> From a normative perspective, he argues that American elites should listen to the public more, particularly with respect to supporting multilateral means in the foreign policy arena.

<sup>16</sup> Page and Bouton, *The Foreign Policy Disconnect* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 139. Similar conclusions were reached by WorldPublicOpinion.org, "Comprehensive Analysis of Polls Reveals Americans' Attitudes on US Role in the World," 3 August 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*. Based on Figure 1, hardliners, internationalists, and accommodationists can all claim a preference for international engagement, albeit with different combinations of means.

<sup>18</sup> Benjamin I. Page, "The Foreign Policy Disconnect: Multilateralist Public, Unilateralist Officials," (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Chicago, IL, 2007). For a critique, see Matthew Baum, "Review of the Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from Our Leaders but Don't Get," *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (June 2007): 373–375.

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992). An older view holds that the U.S. public's attitudes on foreign policy are unstructured, uninformed, and prone to abrupt change. See Ole Holsti, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to the Almond-Lippmann Consensus," *International Studies Quarterly* 36 (December 1992): 439–466; Daniel Drezner, "Mind the Gap," *National Interest Online*, 3 January 2007, accessed at <http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=13286>, 24 January 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Page and Bouton, *The Foreign Policy Disconnect*, 1.

A related argument is that Republican leaders have taken advantage of increasing partisan polarization around foreign policy issues to pursue a more unilateralist agenda.<sup>21</sup> According to most measures, bipartisanship in U.S. politics has typically been higher in foreign policy, and especially national security issues, than in domestic policy issues.<sup>22</sup> However, several scholars argue that greater polarization along party lines is now entering foreign policy debates. According to Robert Shapiro and Yaeli Bloch-Elkon, "Both elite opinion and public attitudes and perceptions in the United States have indeed become more polarized in the area of foreign policy. Such increasing divisiveness in leaders' opinions...may work against existing support in the United States for international cooperation and institutions."<sup>23</sup>

Another variant on the capture view is that after 11 September 2001, Republicans pursued national security as a wedge issue.<sup>24</sup> Given the "free hand" afforded by unipolarity in the international system and increasing polarization in domestic politics, the Bush administration exploited these conditions to pursue an agenda that privileged unilateral action and the aggressive use of military power while downplaying the cooperative and soft power elements of U.S. foreign policy. A weakness in this argument is that the unilateral shift within the Republican Party began before 11 September 2001, and arguably even earlier, in the 1990s, although by 2001, Republicans were in a better position to implement these ideas in response to the crisis created by September 11.

Not all scholars subscribe to the elite capture view, arguing instead that this view overstates the differences between Republican elites and the public. Daniel Drezner notes that many surveys overstate public support for multilateralism: when faced with a trade-off or when push comes to shove, most Americans will support unilateral actions in the pursuit of clear national interests.<sup>25</sup> Several public opinion surveys have also shown that to the extent Americans consistently support multilateral cooperation, it is based on the belief that allies facilitate greater burden-sharing. Bruce Stokes and Andrew Kohut find that the U.S. public shows consistently weaker support

<sup>21</sup> Robert Shapiro and Yaeli Bloch-Elkon, "Partisan Conflict, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy" (paper presented at the Inequality & Social Policy Seminar, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 12 December 2005); Robert Shapiro and Yaeli Bloch-Elkon, "Foreign Policy, Meet the People," *The National Interest* 97 (September/October 2008): 37–42; Kupchan and Trubowitz, "Dead Center," 9.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph M. Parent and Joseph Bafumi, "Correspondence: Of Polarity and Polarization," *International Security* 33 (Summer 2008): 170–173; Peter Trubowitz and Nicole Mellow, "'Going Bipartisan': Politics by Other Means," *Political Science Quarterly* 120 (Fall 2005): 433–453; Nicole Mellow and Peter Trubowitz, "Red Versus Blue: American Electoral Geography and Congressional Bipartisanship, 1898–2002," *Political Geography* 24 (August 2005): 659–677.

<sup>23</sup> Shapiro and Bloch-Elkon, "Partisan Conflict," 39.

<sup>24</sup> Snyder, Shapiro, and Bloch-Elkon, "Free Hand Abroad."

<sup>25</sup> Drezner, "Mind the Gap"; Daniel Drezner, "The Realist Tradition in American Public Opinion," *Perspectives on Politics* 6 (March 2008): 51–70.

for multilateralism in comparison to European publics, and argue that “in case after case, Americans are multilateralist in principle and unilateralists in practice.”<sup>26</sup> In the economic sphere, many public opinion studies show a longstanding public support for protectionism in comparison with elites.<sup>27</sup>

In light of these debates about capture and convergence, we explore several hypotheses. The first involves the salience of foreign policy issues in the 1990s, when the Republican Party gained control of the U.S. Congress, and after 2000, when George W. Bush was elected president. The second set of propositions involves the distance of the American public’s foreign policy attitudes in comparison to those of U.S. elites, particularly Republican Party leaders, and whether this divide is growing.

With respect to issue salience, Republicans may have been elected to a majority in Congress in the 1990s and George W. Bush to the presidency in 2000 largely on domestic issues or for reasons other than foreign policy. In other words, the general public was not paying much attention to foreign policy issues, and these issues were not decisive in their electoral calculus. If these intuitions are right, we should observe that the ANES survey respondents identified domestic priorities as more salient than foreign policy priorities in the 1990s when the anti-internationalist behavior by Republican elites first began to emerge (see H1).

H1 Salience: We should observe domestic policy to be more salient than foreign policy in pre- and post-election surveys of the American people in the elections of the post-Cold War and pre-September 11 period (1990–2000).

In terms of trends in foreign policy attitudes, there are at least two competing sets of hypotheses. The first view is that Americans continued to be internationalists throughout this period. From the elite capture perspective, Republican elites were able to impose their beliefs upon the public. Republicans succeeded *despite* opposition from the mass public. If this view is correct, we should observe an increasing gap between the foreign policy preferences of Republican Party elites and the attitudes of the broader public (see H2). The second perspective, “growing convergence,” suggests that the American public was only weakly supportive of the internationalist position in this period. In this view, the public was typically focused on domestic policy and was less internationalist than most foreign policy leaders, and as a result, permitted the anti-internationalist turn under Republican leadership. We should therefore observe the gap between the attitudes of Republican leaders and the

<sup>26</sup> Andrew Kohut and Bruce Stokes, *America Against the World: How We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked* (New York: Times Books, 2006). Nincic and Datta argue this difference is concentrated primarily within the Republican Party. Nincic and Datta, “Of Paradise, Power, and Pachyderms.”

<sup>27</sup> Drezner, “The Realist Tradition in American Public Opinion”; Page and Bouton, *The Foreign Policy Disconnect*; Bryan Douglas Caplan, *The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

wider public narrowing in this period (see H3). A slightly different view of convergence sees the opinions of Republican leaders converging with those of the Republican public but not the wider public (see H4).

A related issue is the distance between the foreign policy attitudes of the two major parties. Potentially consistent with both perspectives is the view that the disconnect between Republican and Democratic Party elites is also growing. If this is correct, we should find evidence of Republican leaders becoming less internationalist in this period—either away from or toward the views of the general public—but unambiguously away from the views of Democratic leaders. Thus, we should find a growing disconnect between the attitudes of Republican and Democratic elites, with a sharp turn in the 1980s or 1990s by Republican elites away from support for at least some aspects of internationalist foreign policy (see H5).

H2 Capture: We should observe in the period 1990–2000 a growing gap between the foreign policy preferences of Republican leaders and those of the mass public.

H3 Convergence: We should observe in the period 1990–2000 growing convergence between the foreign policy preferences of Republican leaders and the mass public.

H4 Republican Convergence: We should observe a growing convergence between the foreign policy preferences of Republican leaders and the Republican public.

H5 Elite Divergence: We should observe in the period 1990–2000 a growing disconnect between the foreign policy preferences of Republican and Democratic leaders.

## DATA AND METHODS

We use two data sources to help gain traction on these questions. First, we use the American National Election Studies survey to assess voter preferences before and after national elections. These polls, administered since the 1950s, provide a window into the policy priorities of voters. Second, we use periodic surveys conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (previously the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations) to track attitudes on the substantive content of public and elite foreign policy attitudes. This public survey, initially conducted quadrennially, was designed to investigate the foreign policy opinions and attitudes of a representative sample of the general U.S. public. The CCGA “leader” surveys are drawn from a broad cross-section of U.S. elites, representing government, academia, business and labor, the media, religious institutions, special interest groups, and private foreign policy organizations.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Information on the sampling criteria for elite participants is limited. See, for example, the Technical Appendix to the various study years. In 2002, for example, the survey included 65 interviews with Representatives and Senators, 34 interviews with administration officials at the assistant secretary level

### *Issue Salience*

Since 1960, ANES surveys have recorded what voters report to be the “most important national problem.”<sup>29</sup> To measure issue salience, we include data on this question through 2000. Because this question was not asked in the 2002 and 2004 ANES surveys, we use pre-election and exit polls from these elections where comparable questions were asked. In 2002, the Pew Research Center asked voters in the weekend before the mid-term congressional election both an open-ended and a fixed list question about their priorities, “What one issue will be most important to you in deciding how to vote in the race for Congress this year?” We used the open-ended results here, although results for the fixed-list question are similar.<sup>30</sup> In 2004, the Pew Research Center conducted an exit poll asking voters both fixed-list and open-ended questions about “what mattered most in your vote.” We again used the open-ended results, excluding those respondents who failed to identify a top concern.<sup>31</sup>

### *Foreign Policy Attitudes*

We constructed two tests to assess whether the attitudes of Republican elites have shifted disproportionately in relation to those of the U.S. public since the end of the Cold War, as the elite capture argument contends. First, we use the

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or senior staffers. 38 interviews with vice presidents of international affairs from Fortune 1000 companies, 59 interviews with television and radio news directors, network newscasters, newspaper editors and columnists, 32 interviews with presidents of the largest labor unions, 75 interviews with presidents and faculty who teach in the area of foreign affairs, 50 interviews with religious leaders of different faiths; 23 interviews were conducted with presidents from large special interest groups, and 21 interviews were conducted with presidents from major private foreign policy organizations. Different professional publications were used to derive lists of possible interviewees. The codebook for CCFR/CCGA data is available on the University of Michigan's Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Web page, <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu> under the “American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy” series. Page and Barabas discuss what is known about the criteria, its virtues, and defects. They note that some actors are not included, such as military officers serving on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. See Benjamin I. Page and Jason Barabas, “Foreign Policy Gaps between Citizens and Leaders,” *International Studies Quarterly* 44 (September 2000): 343–344.

<sup>29</sup> The question and methodology has varied slightly over time. In some years, respondents identified multiple concerns. Where responses were not coded in order of importance, the first issue identified was listed as the top issue. A fuller exploration of the question methodology is available under variable VCF0875 at <http://nsda.berkeley.edu/D3/NES2004C/Doc/hcbk.htm>.

<sup>30</sup> Pew Research Center For The People & The Press. “November 2002 Election Weekend Survey,” 3 November 2002, accessed at <http://www.people-press.org/2002/11/03/november-2002-election-weekend-survey/>, 24 January 2012.

<sup>31</sup> The fixed-list results from the Pew survey for foreign policy were similar. Additional exit poll data for 2004 with fixed-list questions are available from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Pew Research Center For The People & The Press, “Voters Liked Campaign 2004, but Too Much ‘Mud-Slinging,’” 11 November 2004, accessed at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=233>.

CCGA surveys to look directly at the question of whether the distance between Republican elites and the public over international engagement has increased or decreased since the 1980s. We look at both the individual indicators of cooperative and militant internationalism, and shifts in the size of the four foreign policy cohorts shown in Figure 1. Second, we look in greater depth at the narrower question of whether Republican elites and the public have become more or less divided with respect to the appropriate level of multilateralism in U.S. foreign policy over the same time period.

The CCGA data are useful in addressing our questions in several ways. First, data are available for both the general public and elites on similar sets of questions, allowing comparisons of opinion shifts between the two groups. Second, the surveys include both changing questions about new issues and the same questions asked continuously over time, allowing us to track changes in attitudes. The CCGA surveys date back to 1975. We used seven iterations of the survey for both elites and mass publics: 1982, 1986, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2004. Since 2004, no elite surveys have been conducted. Although mass public surveys are available for 2006 and 2008, we do not extend our analysis of public attitudes beyond 2004 because we are primarily interested in the comparison with GOP leaders.

*Internationalism.* For the CCGA data on internationalism, we sought to identify questions that were asked continuously in the surveys to assess changes in the size of the cohort supportive of the internationalist position over this 22-year period. We identified questions that were asked of both mass publics and elites over this period, although in some cases, variations in the questions made this problematic both within the surveys of the general public as well as between the general public and elite surveys.

To construct a broad measure of internationalism based on the Wittkopf scheme, we chose two dimensions to reflect the internationalist position. First, we identified questions that reflected support for “carrots,” or policies consistent with cooperative internationalism. Second, we identified questions that reflected support for “sticks,” the more-militant side of internationalism. Our intent was to identify changes in the size of the four cohorts: *internationalists*, *accommodationists*, *hardliners*, and *isolationists*.

We identified three questions that might indicate support for the non-coercive instruments of U.S. power (i.e., the “carrots”): foreign aid spending, strengthening the UN, and reducing tariffs. The UN question is one of the few questions about multilateralism that was asked consistently across all years of the survey. We also identified three questions that measure support for “sticks,” all relating to the use of hard military power. First, we took favorable opinion on sustained or enhanced defense spending as indicative of support for coercive instruments. A second question asked how important maintaining military power superiority (*vis à vis* the Soviet Union during the Cold War and after its dissolution *vis à vis* the rest of the world) should be as a foreign

policy goal. Finally, we included a third question identifying an individual's willingness to use military power. This question asked the public's willingness to support the use of U.S. troops in different scenarios. While it had a number of sub-options, we used a question relating to support for the use of U.S. troops in South Korea if invaded by the North. We chose this sub-option among other choices both because it was asked consistently over time, and because this scenario was highly plausible given U.S. relations with North Korea and the deployment of U.S. forces in the region.<sup>32</sup>

To operationalize our approach, we created six dichotomous variables to represent whether the answer represented an internationalist response, three assessing the level of support for cooperative internationalism and three for militant internationalism (see Appendix A for a detailed description of the questions and coding).<sup>33</sup>

Our intent was ultimately to identify changes in the size of the four cohorts: *internationalists*, *accommodationists*, *hardliners*, and *isolationists*. To that end, we aggregated the six measures to create indices for both carrots and sticks.<sup>34</sup> Combining carrots and sticks yielded the following:

- *Internationalists* were those who had a score of 2 (on a three-point scale) or higher on our indices of support for both carrots and sticks.
- *Accommodationists* were those who had a score of 2 or higher on our index of support for carrots but lower than 2 for sticks.
- *Hardliners* had a score lower than 2 on our index of support for carrots but 2 or higher for sticks.
- *Isolationists* were those who had a score lower than 2 on both our indices of support for carrots and sticks.

For the carrots and sticks indices, we only report values for respondents who received all three of these questions. Thus, at the level of cohorts, we only

<sup>32</sup> For example, the Clinton administration considered using force to preemptively strike North Korean nuclear facilities in 1994. The other options changed over time but included scenarios such as: if Iraq invaded Saudi Arabia, if Arab forces invaded Israel, if Russia invaded Ukraine, if Russia invaded Western Europe, if Russia invaded Poland, if civil war broke out in South Africa, and if the people of Cuba sought to overthrow the Castro regime.

<sup>33</sup> For four of the questions—on foreign aid, support for the UN, defense spending, and matching power—we collapsed categories of answers into internationalist and non-internationalist responses. We have also prepared a more-detailed appendix of results for these questions with all answers broken out. Results are available upon request and support the conclusions we draw from the simplified dichotomies.

<sup>34</sup> A similar approach was employed by Ronald Asmus, Philip Everts, and Pierangelo Isernia, "Power, War, and Public Opinion: Thoughts on the Nature and Structure of the Trans-Atlantic Divide," German Marshall Fund, accessed at [http://www.gmfus.org/galleries/ct\\_publication\\_attachments/TTAsmusPower\\_War\\_and\\_Public\\_Opinion.pdf](http://www.gmfus.org/galleries/ct_publication_attachments/TTAsmusPower_War_and_Public_Opinion.pdf), 24 January 2012. They use German Marshall Fund opinion polls in the United States and Europe to identify cross-country variations in the size of the constituencies that supported the Iraq war. Their categories were hawks, pragmatists, doves, and isolationists.

report data on respondents who received all six questions. While the Wittkopf conceptual distinction between militant and cooperative internationalism may strike some readers as dated, using their scheme and maintaining some conceptual continuity permits some modest comparisons with Wittkopf's earlier work as well the extensions by Holsti and Rosenau.

*Multilateralism.* Finally, we assess whether the preferences of Republican elites and the public are diverging on the question of multilateralism. Unfortunately, the evidence from the Chicago Council studies until the 2000s is meager. The only consistent questions on multilateralism asked in CCGA surveys prior to 2002 concern strengthening the UN (where we consistently find greater support among the public than among Republican elites), arms control (until 1990), and strengthening the U.S. commitment to NATO.

The surveys also ask questions about other important multilateral issues, but only in certain years. For example, the CCGA included questions beginning in 1994 about whether the United States should participate in UN peacekeeping operations. In 2002 and 2004, the CCGA asked respondents for the first time about a number of international treaties such as the International Criminal Court and the Kyoto Protocol.

We therefore compare GOP and public attitudes toward what we identify to be the major multilateral issues of the period, and assess whether the distance between the groups increased in the 1990s and 2000s compared to earlier periods. In the 1980s, the key multilateralism questions involved support for international arms control. Beginning in the 1990s, respondents were asked about their support for UN peacekeeping. After 2002, the CCGA surveys include questions on whether the United States should participate in a set of new international treaties and institutions, including the ICC, an agreement to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, and treaties limiting the use of landmines and nuclear testing. While these shifting questions do not all directly measure attitudes toward the same issue, they do allow us to compare whether the underlying gap between the GOP and the public over multilateral issues has widened before and after the end of the Cold War.

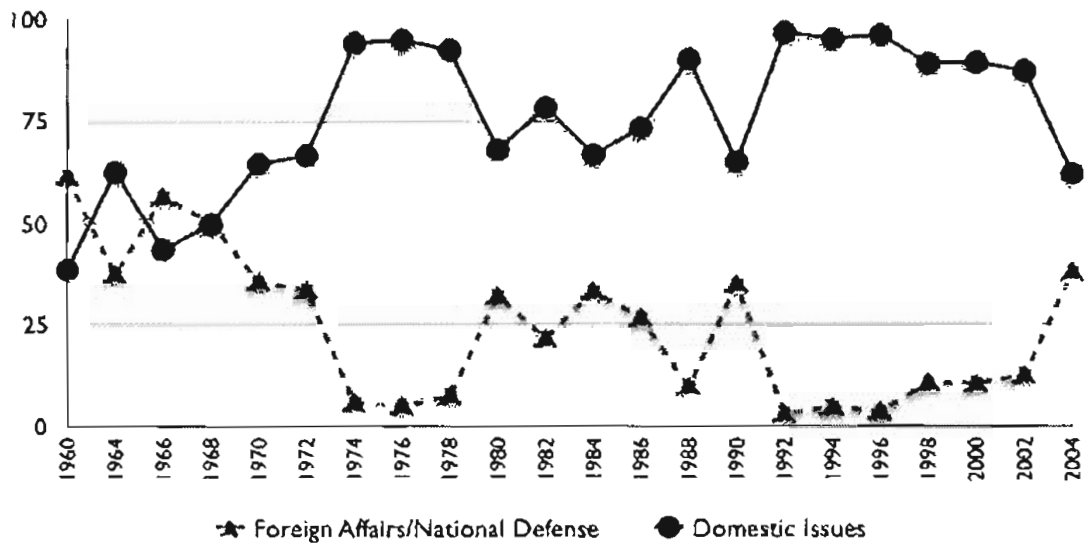
## RESULTS

We present our findings in three sub-sections. The first presents the results on issue salience, the second on trends in internationalism, and the last section provides a more detailed assessment of attitudes toward multilateralism.

### *Issue Salience*

With respect to hypothesis 1, the ANES data confirm that domestic politics were more salient than foreign policy issues in the 1990s and early 2000s. In Figure 2, we collapse all issues into two categories, either domestic issues or

FIGURE 2  
Trends in U.S. Public Opinion—Most Important National Problem



foreign affairs/defense issues. The figure shows that foreign policy concerns were ranked as the most important or one of the most important issues facing the country through the early 1970s, declining from a high of more than 60 percent in 1960 to less than 10 percent in 1974. There was some fluctuation in the 1980s and 1990s, with foreign policy concerns rising above 25 percent on several occasions before falling again in the post-Cold War elections of 1992, 1996, and 1998 to less than 5 percent. By 2000, foreign policy concerns rose to 10 percent, but domestic issues still accounted for the most important problem among the remaining 90 percent (the top category of issues in 2000 was social welfare, accounting for 43.5 percent of the total).

After September 11 and the U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, foreign policy concerns again increased in importance. In the weekend before the 2002 mid-term election, the Pew Research Center asked people an open-ended question: "What one issue will be most important to you in deciding how to vote in the race for Congress this year?" Fifty-five percent identified a domestic issue as their top concern and 9.5 percent a foreign policy issue; 23.6 percent didn't know, and 11.9 percent said party control of Congress, character/integrity of the candidate, or other. Excluding don't know/refused, the domestic percentage was 72 percent, 24 percent of whom cited economic issues or taxes as their top concern. Adding the party control/character as a domestic issue, 87.5 percent cited domestic issues as their top priority, with only 12.5 percent citing a foreign policy issue as the main one determining their vote choice.<sup>35</sup> In 2004, for those who expressed a preference,

<sup>35</sup> Pew Research Center For The People & The Press, "November 2002 Election Weekend Survey."

TABLE 1  
*Strengthening the UN as a Foreign Policy Goal*

	1975	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2004
Rank	11 out of 18	9 out of 14	9 out of 14	14 out of 16	11 out of 16	11 out of 17	11 out of 20	9 out of 14
Proportion "Very Important"	44%	46%	46%	46%	51%	44%	56%	38%
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	73% (American jobs)	77% (jobs)	79% (jobs)	68% (jobs)	86% (illegal drugs)	82% (nuclear weapons)	91% (combat terrorism)	77.5% (jobs)

Source: Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

foreign policy concerns became the most salient, comprising the top concern for 37.9 percent of the public, with 26.3 percent citing Iraq, 9.4 percent citing terrorism, and another 2.1 percent citing other foreign policy issues.<sup>36</sup>

These findings are comparable to those from the Gallup organization's polls identifying the "most important problem" facing the country. The three categories in Gallup polls that clearly are related to foreign policy—defense, foreign trade, and international affairs and foreign aid—collectively constituted less than 7 percent of the top problems between 1992 and 1998 for those who expressed a preference.<sup>37</sup>

The low salience among the electorate of foreign policy in general also extends to the specific issue of multilateralism. When asked about foreign policy goals in the CCGA surveys, the public rarely identified the goal of strengthening the United Nations as being "very important." Instead, a much higher proportion of the population consistently cited other international goals issues such as protecting American jobs, combating terrorism, preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, and stopping illegal drugs as "very important." As Table 1 shows, strengthening the UN is rarely in the top half of foreign policy goals.

An examination of the ANES data by party shows that most voters of both parties were not especially attuned to foreign policy in the 1990s. Republicans were less interested than Democrats in foreign policy. Fewer than 5 percent of self-identified Republicans identified foreign policy issues as their top concern in 1992, 1994, and 1996, and only about 10 percent did in 1998 and 2000.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> The fixed-list version of this survey produced largely similar results for foreign policy. Pew Research Center For The People & The Press, "Voters Liked Campaign 2004, but Too Much 'Mud-Slinging.'"

<sup>37</sup> These percentages exclude those who could or would not identify a problem. Contact the authors for detailed results. Gallup opinion poll data available from Jens T. Feeley, Bryan D. Jones, and Heather Larsen, "Public Agendas: Annualized Most Important Problem Polling Data, 1939–2001," Seattle, WA: University of Washington, accessed at <http://www.policyagendas.org/page/datasets-codebooks>, 24 January 2012 (Portions of this data originally compiled by the Gallup Organization).

<sup>38</sup> Results available upon request.

### *Trends in Internationalism*

With respect to the second set of hypotheses, the evidence does not unambiguously support either the “elite capture” or the “growing convergence” perspective. We can appreciate the dimensions over which Republican leaders differ from (or are similar to) the mass public, Democratic leaders, and the Republican Party base first by looking at the individual questions that comprise our indices for carrots and sticks, and next by changes in cohort size.

*Republican leaders vs. the public.* In looking at the pattern of responses from Republican leaders and the public across all measures, two general facts stand out. First, elites of both parties—including Republicans—have consistently been more internationalist than the public. This has generally been the case for both cooperative and militant forms of internationalism for most years in the survey. Second, the public’s foreign policy attitudes did not shift as much as did those of elites (of both parties) in response to the events surrounding the end of the Cold War. Leaders responded to the end of the Cold War with a desire to cut back on international engagement, reducing their support for foreign aid and defense spending.<sup>39</sup> Public attitudes, however, were relatively unchanged by this historic transition and retained stable and typically lower levels of support for carrots and sticks. For example, 1990 represented the only year in which the public supported spending more on defense to a greater degree than did Republican elites (see Table 2).<sup>40</sup>

On the soft power dimensions of internationalism, Republican elite views converged in some ways with those of the public beginning in 1990. On foreign aid, the CCGA surveys suggest that Republican leaders became less supportive of foreign aid spending in the early to mid-1990s, before embracing foreign aid spending in greater proportions in the late 1990s (see Figure 3).<sup>41</sup> On the issue of tariffs, Republican elites and the mass public largely remained far apart throughout this period, with Republican elites much more supportive of reducing tariffs and free trade measures (see Figure 4).

The key exception to this trend is multilateralism. On one dimension of support for cooperative internationalism—support for the United Nations—Republican elites became less internationalist than the mass public (see Figure 5). The mass public throughout the 1990s and early 2000s was much more

<sup>39</sup> Independents constituted a sizable percentage of elites. Figures including Independents are available upon request.

<sup>40</sup> For similar findings on gaps, see Page and Barabas, “Foreign Policy Gaps between Citizens and Leaders,” 343–344.

<sup>41</sup> The questions for the 1980s probably somewhat overstate Republican leader support for foreign aid, since the question asked about support for foreign aid in general rather than the more focused question on whether spending should be increased/sustained or cut back.

TABLE 2  
*Percentage Point Gap between Republican Leaders and the Public*

	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2004
<b>CARROTS</b>							
Foreign aid spending <sup>a</sup>	58	40	25	17	23	26	49
Tariff reductions <sup>b</sup>	48	44	38	54	33	52	51
United Nations	-12	-26	-9	-19	-26	-35	-29
<b>STICKS</b>							
Troops to Korea	34	43	25	47	50	54	48
Defense spending	11	25	-20	12	23	9	19
Matching military power	14	11	-6	8	7	1	9

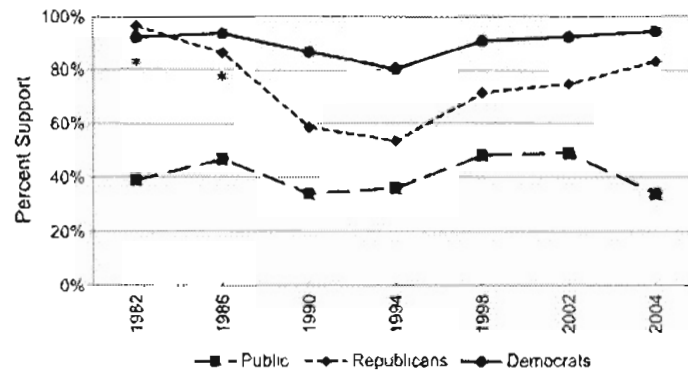
Source: Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Note: Chi square difference between Republican leaders and the public statistically significant for foreign aid at the  $p < .01$  level for all years (except 1982 and 1986, when the question asked was not strictly comparable); tariffs at the  $p < .01$  level for all years (except 2002, when the question was not strictly comparable); the UN at the  $p < .03$  for all years; Korea at the  $p < .01$  level for all years; defense spending at the  $p < .05$  level for 1982, 1994, and 2002, and at the  $p < .01$  for all other years; matching military power at the  $p < .02$  for 1982, 1984, 1986, 1998, and 2004; and insignificant for all other years.

<sup>a</sup>In 1982 and 1986, the question to Republican leaders pertained to support for foreign aid in principle.

<sup>b</sup>In 2002, Republican leaders were asked about their support for free trade. In 2004, both leaders and the mass public were asked about whether NAFTA had been good for the U.S. economy.

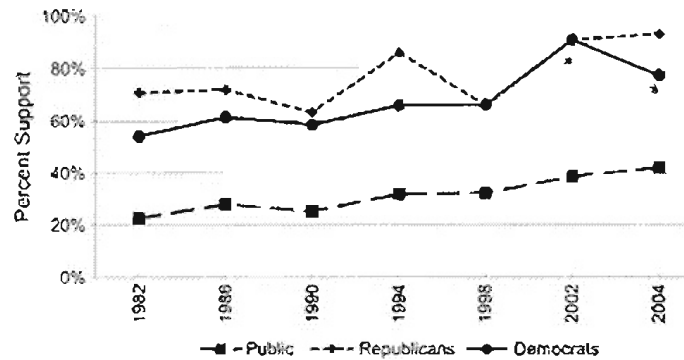
FIGURE 3  
*Leader (by Party) vs. Public Support for Foreign Aid*



Note: \*In 1982 and 1986, the leader opinion survey asked about approval of foreign aid rather than whether the level of foreign aid spending should be increased, decreased, or remain the same.

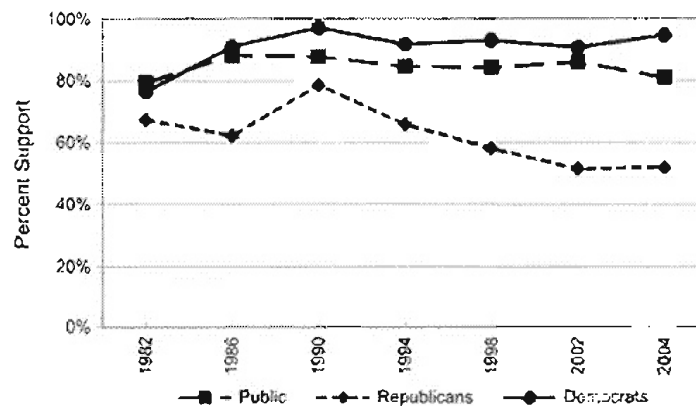
supportive of the United Nations than were Republican leaders, suggesting that the “elite capture” school has some basis of support on this dimension. Indeed, the gap between Republican leaders and the public on support for the UN has remained above twenty-five percentage points over the last three surveys (see Table 2). Here, the views of Democratic leaders were much closer to those of the public.

FIGURE 4  
*Leader (by Party) vs. Public Support for Eliminating Tariffs*



Note: \*In 2002, the leader survey asked about support for free trade rather than whether the respondent favored or opposed reducing tariffs. In 2004, leaders and the publics were asked about their attitudes towards NAFTA.

FIGURE 5  
*Leader (by Party) vs. Public Support for the United Nations*



In the aggregate, Republican elite support and mass public support for cooperative elements of internationalism (carrots) appear to have converged in the 1990s. However, this masks the fact that each had opposed offsetting elements: Republican elites supported free trade but not the UN whereas the mass public supported the UN but not free trade. Beginning in 1998, Republican elites became more supportive of foreign aid, driving a wedge between them and the public on their attitudes toward carrots (see Figure 6, which shows the percent that support two or more carrots).

On the hard-power dimensions of international engagement, the CCGA data show that a gap opened up between Republican elites and the public after

FIGURE 6  
*Leaders (by Party) vs. Public Support of Two or More Carrots*

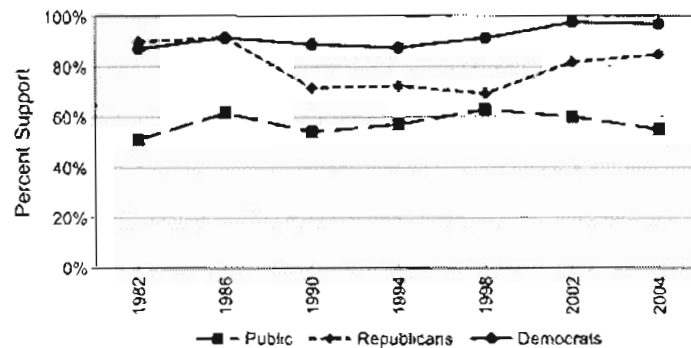
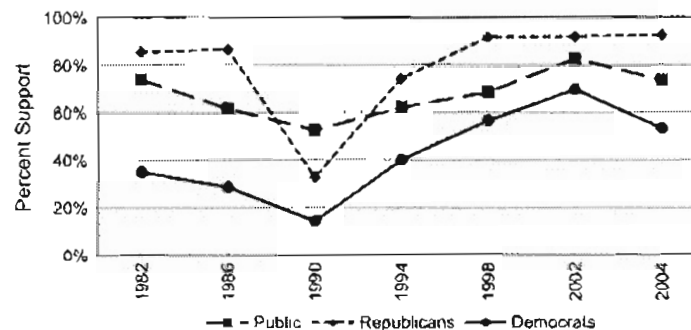


FIGURE 7  
*Leader (by Party) vs. Public Support for Defense Spending*



1990 on two of the three dimensions. On the issue of increasing defense spending, Republican elites have been more internationalist than the public but roughly similar on the question of whether the United States should match the military power of rivals (see Figures 7 and 8).

The distance between Republican elites and the public in this period was greatest on the issue of deploying U.S. military forces to defend South Korea. Republican elite support was more than 40 percentage points higher than that of the public on this measure for the last four iterations of the surveys (see Figure 9).

To confirm that the gap on the use-of-force question was not just an artifact of having chosen Korea as our example for our index, we calculated the average level of support for using force across all scenarios asked in each survey year. In all the survey years, elites and mass publics were asked about their willingness to send U.S. troops for seven or more scenarios. We found that Republican leaders were nearly 17 percentage points more supportive of

FIGURE 8  
*Leader (by Party) vs. Public Support for Matching Power*

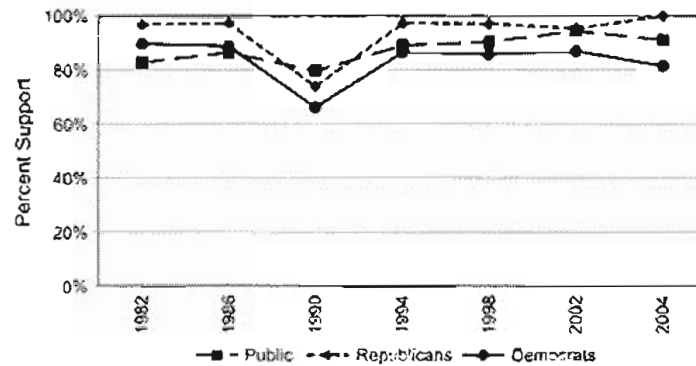
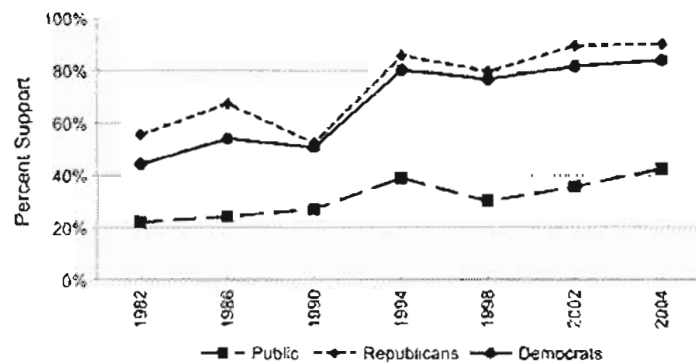


FIGURE 9  
*Leader (by Party) vs. Public Support for Troops to Korea*



sending troops than the public on average across all scenarios in surveys between 1982 and 2004; this difference reached a peak in 1998 at 25 percentage points (see Table 3).<sup>42</sup>

This gap between Republican elites and the public on hard power is further confirmed by looking at “sticks” in the aggregate. After converging around 1990, the gap between Republican elites and the public increased to nearly 20 percentage points in 1994 and 1998 and remained above 10 percentage points in 2002 and 2004 (see Figure 10 for the percentage of respondents who supported two or more sticks).

*Republican leaders vs. the Republican public.* As we suggested in hypothesis H4, a variant of the convergence argument might be that Republican elites are catering to the tastes of their Party: Republican leaders were doing what

<sup>42</sup> Full results available upon request.

TABLE 3

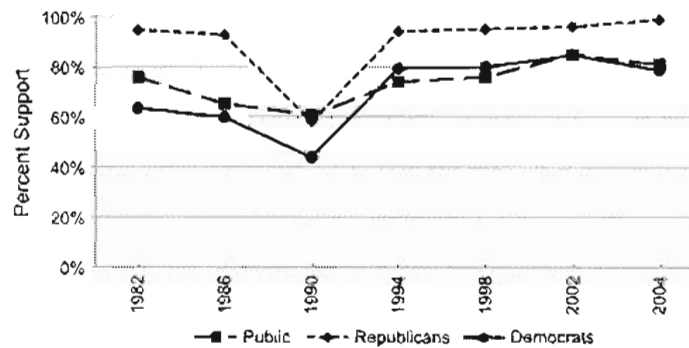
*Percentage Point Gap between Leaders and Public in Willingness to Send Troops across All Scenarios*

	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2004
Leader–public gap	3	20	9	18	23	7	14
Republican leader–public gap	9	22	12	21	25	10	19

Source: Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

FIGURE 10

*Leader (by Party) vs. Public Support for Two or More Sticks*



democratically elected politicians do, which is following the policy preferences of the Party rank and file that elected them. In looking at individual policy instruments, the CCGA data suggest a more mixed picture (see Table 4).<sup>43</sup>

On the cooperative internationalism indicators, Republican elites and the Republican public remained far apart on most issues, with the public less internationalist than Party elites. On the issue of foreign aid, more than a twenty-five point gap persisted between Republican elites and the Republican public in years when both were asked comparable questions on spending on foreign aid. This widened to more than fifty percentage points in 2004. On trade issues, more than forty percentage points separated Republican elites from their base across most years.<sup>44</sup> The exception to this pattern is again

<sup>43</sup> This excludes 1994; the general public survey did not ask about partisanship.

<sup>44</sup> Table 4 shows that in 2002, there was no significant difference between Republican elites and Party members. However, the comparison with 2002 may be problematic, since elites, unlike the mass public, were not asked about their support for tariffs. We are comparing the responses of the public (asked about support for tariff reductions) and elites (asked about free trade). Republican elites were generally much more supportive than was the general public of free trade without conditions and compensation for displaced workers, 36 percent to 16 percent, a twenty-point gap. The gap between Republican elites and Republican partisans was smaller, about 10 percent (36 percent to 26 percent). The disparity between Republican elites and partisan and general publics on trade is still meaningful.

TABLE 4  
*Percentage Point Gap between Republican Leaders and Republican Public*

	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2004
<b>CARROTS</b>							
Foreign aid spending <sup>a</sup>	53	55	27		27	25	53
Tariff reductions <sup>b</sup>	50	45	39		33	58	53
United Nations	-7	-26	7		-25	-22	-12
<b>STICKS</b>							
Troops to Korea	27	37	19		47	43	42
Defense spending	1	7	-32		15	2	4
Matching military power	8	6	-20		6	-1	4

Source: Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Note: Chi square difference between Republican leaders and the Republican public statistically significant for foreign aid at the  $p < .01$  level for all years for questions that are comparable from 1990–2004; tariffs for all years at the  $p < .01$  level (except 2002, when the question was not strictly comparable); the UN at the  $p < .01$  level for 1986, 1998, and 2002, and at the  $p < .05$  level for 2004; Korea at the  $p < .01$  level for all years; defense spending at the  $p < .01$  for 1990 and 1998; matching military power at the  $p < .01$  level for 1990, at the  $p < .05$  for 1982 and 1990, and at the  $p < .10$  for 2004; and insignificant for all others years.

<sup>a</sup>In 1982 and 1986, the question to Republican leaders pertained to support for foreign aid in principle.

<sup>b</sup>In 2002, Republican leaders were asked about their support for free trade. In 2004, both leaders and the public were asked about whether NAFTA had been good for the U.S. economy.

multilateralism. On the question of strengthening the UN, the Republican public has been more internationalist than the Party leadership. Here, the gap grew to 25 percentage points in 1998 and 22 percentage points in 2002 before closing a bit in 2004.

On sticks, Republican elites and the Republican public have been much closer. In most years, there has been no statistically significant difference between the two groups on the importance of maintaining or expanding defense spending. Republican elite and public differences on achieving military power parity with the Soviets (and after 1994, maintaining global military superiority) have been narrow. The Republican public, however, was far less willing to support deploying military forces to South Korea during a crisis. This difference reached a peak in 1998 (47 percentage points) and 2002 (43 percentage points), and declined somewhat in the 2004 survey.

The view that the foreign policy attitudes of Republican elites were responding to the preferences of their Party base, therefore, has some supporting evidence but is not without problems of its own. First, Party elites converged with the Republican mass public on some but not all issues. In general, within-Party differences have been narrower on sticks than on carrots. On the cooperative

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First, there is an enduring gap over all other years in the surveys. Second, in the 2002 survey, there is a large difference between mass and elite support for globalization. In 2002, nearly 87 percent of Republican elites said globalization was mostly a good thing, compared to only 61 percent of the general public and only 58 percent of the Republican public.

side, there has been a large and durable gap on the issues of foreign aid and the UN (although in opposite directions, in terms of internationalism). Second, as discussed above, an examination of ANES data by party shows that the Republican public was not particularly interested in foreign policy issues in the 1990s, and even less interested than Democrats. Thus, Republican elites, if they were responsive to the views of their constituents during the 1990s, were by issue salience responding to the views of a minority.

A final response to the argument that Republican leaders were following the wider Party is that these leaders also made a series of concrete policy decisions that appear to be contrary to the policy preferences of the Party base. During the late 1990s, under Senator Jesse Helms's leadership, Congressional Republicans suspended U.S. funding for the United Nations, despite higher support for the UN in the Republican public. Republican members of Congress enabled President Bill Clinton to secure a margin of victory for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993 and Chinese membership in the World Trade Organization in 2000, despite lower Party support for reducing tariffs. Furthermore, despite the fact that less than a majority of the Republican public supported defending South Korea in the event of a North Korean invasion in the 2002 and 2004 surveys, Republican President George W. Bush escalated tensions with North Korea by labeling its government part of the "axis of evil" after 11 September 2001. Thus, it is hard to argue that Republican Party leaders were responding to Republican public opinion on either foreign policy issue salience or these specific international issues like the United Nations, trade, and North Korea.

*Republican elites vs. Democratic elites.* The CCGA data also provide insight into whether the distance between the foreign policy attitudes of Republican and Democratic elites has increased (H5). On the soft power side, there is some evidence of greater polarization among elites. On the issue of reducing tariffs, for example, there was a statistically significant difference between Democrats and Republicans in 1982 and 1994 but not in 1986, 1990, or 1994. In 2002, on the issue of free trade, there was no statistically significant difference between Democrats and Republicans when one collapses the categories of answers between support for free trade and opposition to free trade. However, if one disaggregates unqualified support for free trade and those who support free trade only with compensation for workers, Republicans were more supportive of unqualified free trade than were Democrats by a wide and statistically significant margin (36 percent to 11 percent). Similarly, in 2004, Republican elites were more supportive of NAFTA than were Democrats.

Elite foreign policy attitudes have also diverged on the issue of foreign aid. In 1982 and 1986, there was no statistically significant difference between party elites on the question of support for foreign aid in principle. On more specific questions about spending priorities, however, Democrats have generally been

TABLE 5  
*Percentage Point Gap between Republican and Democratic Leaders*

	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2004
<b>CARROTS</b>							
Foreign aid spending <sup>a</sup>	1	-5	-28	-27	-19	-20	-12
Tariff reductions <sup>b</sup>	15	9	5	20	0	2	16
United Nations	-10	-29	-19	-26	-35	-39	-43
All carrots	3	0	-17	-15	-22	-16	-12
<b>STICKS</b>							
Troops to Korea	11	14	2	5	2	7	6
Defense spending	53	56	19	34	35	24	39
Matching military power	5	9	8	11	11	8	18
All sticks	31	33	14	15	15	11	20

Source: Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Note: Chi square difference between Republican and Democratic leaders statistically significant for foreign aid at the  $p < .10$  level for 1986, and at the  $p < .01$  for 1990–2004; tariffs at the  $p < .05$  level for 1982, and at the  $p < .01$  level for 1994 and 2004; the UN at the  $p < .01$  level for 1990–2004, and at the  $p < .02$  for 1986; all carrots at the  $p < .01$  level for 1990 and for 1998–2004, and at the  $p < .10$  level for 1994; defense spending at the  $p < .01$  level for all years; matching military power at the  $p < .10$  level for 1982, 1986, 1994, and 2002, and at the  $p < .01$  level for 1998 and 2004; Korea at the  $p < .10$  level for 1986 and 2002; sticks at the  $p < .01$  level for 1982, 1986, and 1998–2004, and at the  $p < .10$  level for 1990 and 1994; and insignificant for all other years.

<sup>a</sup>In 1982 and 1986, the question pertained to support for foreign aid in principle.

<sup>b</sup>In 2002, respondents were asked about their support for free trade. In 2004, respondents were asked about whether NAFTA had been good for the U.S. economy.

more supportive of foreign aid, as Republican leaders' support dropped in the early 1990s, becoming closer to the general public. Since 1994, the gap in attitudes toward foreign aid among party elites has remained but has narrowed. Large and persistent differences have also characterized party elite views toward multilateralism, as measured by the importance of strengthening the United Nations as a foreign policy goal. After partially converging in 1990 (possibly due to either the Gulf War or the end of the Cold War) to an approximate 18-percentage-point gap, elite attitudes toward the UN have diverged, driven largely by the sharp drop in Republican support beginning in 1994, away from majorities in both the public and Democratic elites.

On the militant internationalism side, Democratic leaders have been much less supportive of defense spending and matching the military power of geo-political rivals than either the public or Republican leaders. Public attitudes toward defense spending have generally been in between those of Republican and Democratic leaders. Differences between Democratic and Republican leaders were less stark on the issue of defending South Korea (see Table 5).

While Republicans have been more supportive of carrots than the mass public, Republican support for the soft power instruments of international engagement (particularly on foreign aid) eroded beginning in 1990, leading to a partial convergence toward public attitudes and a persistent gap with

Democratic leaders. The proportion of Democratic leaders supportive of carrots at a very high level (two or more) was above 80 percent in the early 1980s, and rose to above 90 percent after 1998. The proportion of Republican leaders who strongly supported carrots declined from above 90 percent in 1990 to 69 percent by 1998. While Republican support moved closer to the views of the public, the proportion of the public that favored carrots at a very high level hovered around 50–60 percent throughout the 20-year period. The desire to cut back on the coercive instruments of international engagement did not last following the first Gulf War, particularly among Republicans, leading to a widening divergence between Republican leaders and both the public and Democratic leaders (see Table 5, which includes the percentage point gap in support of two or more internationalist positions within each basket).

These data suggest several conclusions on foreign policy attitudes among party elites. First, the leadership of both parties has been consistently more internationalist than the public. Second, partisan differences have generally been greater on sticks over this period. Only on the issue of troops to South Korea were partisan differences largely negligible. Finally, with respect to H5, we observe a persistent divide rather than a growing disconnect between Republican and Democratic leaders on a number of dimensions of internationalism, including foreign aid, support for the UN, defense spending, and matching military power.

*Evaluating shifts in cohort sizes.* Another way we can evaluate the differences between leaders and the public is by looking at relative shifts in the size of four foreign policy cohorts (*internationalists*, *isolationists*, *hardliners*, and *accommodationists*) across groups. As described, we allocate respondents into one of four categories based on whether they score 2 or higher on a 3-point scale for both carrots and sticks. Combining these yields the four categories shown in Figure 1.<sup>45</sup> Among all elites, internationalists accounted for the majority across all years except 1990, and grew to include more than three fourths of all elites in 2002 (80 percent) and 2004 (78 percent). Also notable is a small spike in hardliners in the mid-1990s, which declined to 7 percent of all elites in 2004.<sup>46</sup>

Among the general public over this 20-year period, internationalists and hardliners together were the dominant cohorts, with internationalists more numerous.<sup>47</sup> Among Republican leaders, we find a high proportion of internationalists across

<sup>45</sup> Creating indices of respondents with relatively high scores (2 or higher) on either dimension or both required dropping respondents who were not asked all six questions. As we parse further by partisanship, the numbers in any particular category are further reduced. The results reported in this section are therefore based on a smaller sample size than in the previous section.

<sup>46</sup> Contact the authors for complete data on all elites.

<sup>47</sup> Contact the authors for a comparison of our estimates with earlier studies by Wittkopf and Holsti/Rosenau.

most years of the survey, similar to Democratic leaders. However, like the mass public, we find a higher and growing proportion of hardliners in 1994 and 1998. After 1998, the proportion of hardliners among Republican elites decreased to 16 percent in 2004. In the wake of September 11, Republican elites became more supportive of foreign aid, pushing more of them into the internationalist camp. Given that the cohort sizes for Republican leaders are derived from a limited sample (only respondents who answered all six questions were included), we have to be cautious about these findings (see Table 6).

When we compare the shifts in the cohort size among Republican leaders with their public partisans (excluding 1994, when no data were available on partisanship in the general public survey), we find that internationalists have consistently made up about a third of all the Republican public, compared to a majority among Republican elites in almost all years since 1982. The Republican public has also had a higher proportion of hardliners, with a sharp increase in hardliners after 1998. At the same time, hardliners never exceeded more than a third of the Republican leaders in the CCGA surveys (except for 1994, when the sample size was exceedingly small). Thus, a hardline position under the Bush administration may have been in sync with a large plurality of Republicans at the mass level, but was not representative of elite views (see Table 6).

What conclusions can we draw from this disparate evidence? If the data we report here are accurate (and we have some reason to be cautious due to the smaller sample sizes of elite respondents), the American people have never been overwhelmingly internationalist, particularly with respect to issues like reducing tariffs, support for foreign aid, or deploying military forces abroad. Foreign policy elites of both parties have been much more internationalist than the American people on many dimensions related to internationalism. While Democratic leaders have been more enthusiastic about carrots, Republican leaders have been more supportive of sticks. On one important dimension of cooperative internationalism, free trade, Republican elites have been marginally more supportive of internationalism than have Democrats.

### *Trends in Multilateralism*

Several opinion studies taken since 2002 have highlighted multilateralism as the source of a growing gap between the public and Republican elites over foreign policy, as well as a source of increasing partisan differences.<sup>48</sup> Evaluating this empirical claim over a longer time period is difficult because the CCGA surveys ask very few of the same multilateralism questions across all survey years. On the question of support for NATO, asked consistently since 1982, elites and the mass public have supported sustaining the U.S. commitment to NATO in nearly the same proportions in most years, except 1990,

<sup>48</sup> Page and Bouton, *The Foreign Policy Disconnect*; Shapiro and Bloch-Elkon, "Foreign Policy, Meet the People;" Shapiro and Bloch-Elkon, "Partisan Conflict."

TABLE 6  
Size of Cohorts over Time Using Our Indices

	Hardliners			Isolationists			Internationalists			Accommodationists		
	Public	Republican	Republican Elites	Public	Republican	Republican Elites	Public	Republican	Republican Elites	Public	Republican	Republican Elites
1982	38%	48%	24%	11%	6%	2%	38%	36%	72%	13%	10%	2%
1986	25%	34%	7%	15%	7%	1%	41%	46%	85%	20%	13%	6%
1990	29%	36%	17%	18%	16%	10%	33%	37%	41%	20%	11%	31%
1994	31%		50%	11%		8%	44%		42%	14%		0%
1998	29%	35%	29%	9%	7%	2%	48%	47%	66%	14%	11%	3%
2002	37%	42%	16%	5%	1%	2%	50%	31%	80%	9%	26%	2%
2004	36%	55%	16%	9%	4%	0%	44%	37%	83%	11%	4%	1%

*Note:* Note corresponds to all items in the table. The percentage of hardliners, isolationists, accommodationists and internationalists may not add up to 100 (for the following: the public, Republican public, or Republican elites) due to rounding. With sample weights, the number of respondents among the public who answered all six questions in each year was: 1,957 (1982), 998 (1986), 1,936 (1990), 1,705 (1994), 2,820 (1998), 2,79 (2002), 962 (2004). The number of Republican members of the mass public who answered all six questions in each year was: 485 (1982), 278 (1986), 584 (1990), 692 (1998), 97 (2002), 224 (2004). No question on partisanship was asked in 1994. The number of Republican elites who answered all six questions ranged from a minimum of 12 in 1994 to 103 in 2002, was: 46 (1982), 58 (1990), 12 (1994), 101 (1998), 103 (2002), 95 (2004).

TABLE 7  
Support for NATO

	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2004
Public	67%	82%	60%	61%	67%	82%	72%
All Leaders	86%	85%	38%	63%	71%	77%	83%
Republican leaders	90%	84%	51%	63%	75%	78%	81%
Republican leaders–public gap (percentage point)*	23	2	–9	2	8	–4	9

Source: Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Note: Chi square difference between leaders and the public statistically significant for 1982, 1990, and 2004 at the  $p < .01$  level, 2002 at the  $p < .05$  level.

\*Chi square difference between Republican leaders and the public statistically significant for 1982 at the  $p < .01$  level, 1998 at the  $p < .10$  level, and 2004 at the  $p < .05$  level.

when elite support dipped after the end of the Cold War (see Table 7). A similar pattern held for Republican elites.<sup>49</sup>

On support for participating in UN peacekeeping missions, also one of the few multilateralism issues asked in CCGA surveys prior to 2002, elites and the mass public, including Republican leaders, have largely supported the deployment of U.S. troops for peacekeeping missions in similarly high proportions.<sup>50</sup> On the issue of arms control, a frequent question included on early CCGA surveys, more than 90 percent of elites, including Republicans, supported negotiating arms control agreements with the Soviet Union in 1986 and 1990, compared to just over 80 percent of the mass public.<sup>51</sup>

In the 2002 and 2004 surveys, in the midst of the George W. Bush administration, the CCGA surveys began including a raft of questions about new issues involving international institutions and multilateralism. On these newer issues, Republican elites in the early 2000s were much less supportive than were other leaders or the mass public (Table 8). On two issues—the International Criminal Court and the Kyoto Protocol—large gaps emerged between Republican elites and the public, including a 50-percentage-point difference on the Kyoto issue in 2002 and a 40-percentage-point difference on the ICC in 2004. A narrower but still substantial gap also separated Republican elites and the public on whether the United States should sign treaties banning the use of landmines and nuclear testing. Here, majorities of Republican elites

<sup>49</sup> Respondents were asked whether the United States should expand its commitment to NATO, maintain its commitment, decrease its commitment, or withdraw from NATO. We recorded expand or maintain commitment for NATO as “support” and decrease, withdraw, don’t know, or refuse as unsupportive of NATO.

<sup>50</sup> This question asked whether or not U.S. troops should participate in UN peacekeeping missions. In 1994, the public had the option of responding yes, no, or that it depends on the circumstances. In that year, elites were only given the option of saying yes or no. Public support for that year includes yes and “it depends” answers. In subsequent years, only yes answers are coded as support for both elites and the mass publics.

<sup>51</sup> Full results available upon request.

TABLE 8  
*Support for Multilateralism*

	1994	2002	2004
<i>Participate in UN peacekeeping</i>			
All leaders	87%	80%	84%
Republican leaders	88%	69%	72%
Public	74%	65%	78%
Republican leaders–public gap (percentage point)*	14	4	–6
<i>Ban nuclear tests</i>			
All leaders		83%	84%
Republican leaders		60%	60%
Public		85%	87%
Republican leaders–public gap (percentage point)*		–25	–27
<i>Landmines ban</i>			
All leaders		75%	78%
Republican leaders		51%	52%
Public		80%	80%
Republican leaders–public gap (percentage point)*		–29	–27
<i>ICC</i>			
All leaders		66%	69%
Republican leaders		39%	35%
Public		76%	76%
Republican leaders–public gap (percentage point)*		–37	–41
<i>Kyoto Protocol</i>			
All leaders		64%	71%
Republican leaders		24%	27%
Public		75%	71%
Republican leaders–public gap (percentage point)*		–51	–56

Source: Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

Note: Chi square difference between public and leaders statistically significant for all years at the  $p < .01$  level, except for the landmines ban in 2004 and the nuclear test ban in 2002 and 2004 (not significant); 2002 landmines significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

\*Chi square difference between public and Republican leaders statistically significant for all years at the  $p < .01$  level, except for peacekeeping in 2002 (not significant).

supported these treaties, but public support ranged between 25 to 30 percentage points higher (see Table 8).

Many advocates of the “elite capture” view cite multilateralism—and, in particular, newer instruments of multilateral cooperation, such as the ICC and climate treaties—as evidence that Republican elites are out of step with the public. How can we square evidence that the public is more multilateralist than Republican elites with the fact Republican elites are, on many other dimensions, more internationalist than the public? Several points deserve mention.

First, looking only at questions about support for multilateral instruments fails to capture the importance attached to multilateralism relative to other policy concerns. Even if the public is broadly supportive of multilateralism, this has generally been a weakly salient concern for them (see Table 1). Even as foreign policy issues became more salient after 2001, protecting the nation against terrorism has trumped concerns about strengthening the United Nations

and other international organizations. This was not unique to questions about the United Nations. For example, in 2002, “strengthening international law and institutions” was identified by 44 percent of the public as a “very important goal,” but the proportion of people who identified this issue as very important was higher for 15 other goals. Indeed, only 4 goals had lower proportions. Even after the Iraq War seemingly demonstrating the poverty of the hardliner approach, John Kerry attempted to make unilateralism an issue in the 2004 elections and lost.<sup>52</sup> Barack Obama attempted to make multilateralism an electoral issue in 2008, but his victory was not primarily driven by his platform on multilateralism. By November 2008, the domestic ramifications of the emerging global financial crisis were more decisive factors in the outcome of the election than even the Iraq war.<sup>53</sup>

Second, it could be that what constitutes internationalism and multilateral cooperation has changed over time, particularly since the Cold War receded and newer issues like climate change have risen in importance. For example, G. John Ikenberry argues that “older multilateralism came with escape clauses, veto rights, and weighted voting mechanisms that allowed the United States and other major states to protect their interests and gave room for maneuvering. The new multilateralism is more legally binding in character.”<sup>54</sup> While this may be true on some issues, the essential elements of internationalism, both on the cooperative side (foreign assistance, support for the United Nations, and free trade) and for the harder instruments of national power (defense spending, military power, and troop deployments), have retained their significance and coherence as indicators of the internationalist position, even as new issues have arisen.

Third, the public’s support for the United Nations is often cited as evidence of the inherent multilateralism of the American public.<sup>55</sup> However, a less-charitable interpretation of public attitudes toward multilateral engagement is that the American public supports multilateral means as a way to burden-share or, in some cases, free ride on the actions of others.<sup>56</sup> Support for the UN

<sup>52</sup> Exit poll data suggest that Kerry was marginally successful in convincing people to vote for him (and against President Bush) by invoking the Iraq war and multilateralism. Voters who prioritized the Iraq war as their top concern were less likely to support Bush. In this instance, however, it is hard to disentangle the perception of failure in Iraq from unilateralism. Gary Langer and Jon Cohen, “Voters and Values in the 2004 Election,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69 (Special Issue 2005): 744–759.

<sup>53</sup> Pew Research Center For The People & The Press, “Inside Obama’s Sweeping Victory,” 5 November 2008, accessed at <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1023/exit-poll-analysis-2008>, 24 January 2012.

<sup>54</sup> G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Order and Imperial Ambition: Essays on American Power and World Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006), 271. See also G. John Ikenberry, “Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order,” *Perspectives on Politics* 7 (March 2009): 71–87.

<sup>55</sup> WorldPublicOpinion.org, “Americans Strongly Support UN in Principle, Despite Reservations About Performance,” 9 May 2007, accessed at <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/brunitedstatescanadara/356.php>, 24 January 2012.

<sup>56</sup> Drezner, “Mind the Gap”; Kohut and Stokes, *America Against the World*, 182.

may be less internationalist than at first glance and more consistent with the argument that the American people have more grandiose goals than they are willing to pay for.<sup>57</sup>

## CONCLUSION

We started by positing that there was a behavioral turn by Republican congressional leaders to more unilateralist and more hardline foreign policy positions in the 1990s and extended under the Bush presidency after 2000. We asked whether the foreign policy views of the Republican Party's elite were diverging from those of the wider public or converging toward them. On the basis of survey data from the ANES and the CCGA, we found that both the elite capture argument and the convergence argument miss key parts of the story. In terms of the salience of foreign policy issues, the ANES surveys suggest that the public was not primarily concerned about foreign policy issues during the 1990s. Even if the public does support some dimensions of internationalism like the United Nations, either they did not attach that much importance to them or were not paying much attention. This may have given elites some license to pursue their own views on these issues without many political repercussions, or it meant that they were responsive to especially vocal minorities.

In terms of foreign policy views, our analysis of the CCGA data provides evidence that the divergence in foreign policy attitudes between Republican elites and the public began before September 11, but not always in the direction posited by the elite capture claim. Overall, all elites—including Republican elites—have been consistently more internationalist than the public. On the hard-power elements of internationalism, Republican elites began diverging from the public in the mid-1990s, driven largely by differing attitudes on the issue of deploying U.S. military forces to defend South Korea (and other conflict scenarios). However, Republican elites were also more internationalist on the instruments of cooperative internationalism, particularly with respect to support for free trade and foreign assistance, than was the general public and their own partisan base. The key exception was multilateralism, where the growing hostility of Republican elites to multilateral cooperation placed them increasingly in the minority.

These findings suggest that arguments about “elite capture” or “convergence” miss something important. The landscape of elite and mass public opinion on foreign policy is more nuanced. Elites of all types tend to be more internationalist than the mass public, though Republicans are closer to the mass public in some issue areas (e.g., foreign aid). In other areas, like support for the UN, Republicans became less-internationalist in recent iterations of CCGA surveys, moving away from the public's position. Yet, unlike

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*.

Democratic elites, Republican leaders are overwhelmingly supportive of internationalism on defense spending and military power, positions closer to those of the public.

These findings raise several further questions for the direction of U.S. foreign policy. First, if the apparent shift in Republican foreign policy governance was not driven by either growing convergence with the public or the ability of Republicans to capture foreign policy institutions despite holding unrepresentative views, what does explain this change? One possible explanation is what might be called “dual slack.” Both the international system and domestic public opinion created a permissive context for the new Republican hardline foreign policy.<sup>58</sup> As others have argued, the post-Cold War environment, in which the United States had no rival challenger and unprecedented power capabilities, provided systemic slack for U.S. foreign policy improvisation.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, domestic public opinion also provided permissive scope for Republican elites to push a more-hardline and, in some respects, more-isolationist foreign policy agenda. The American public was focused on domestic issues throughout the 1990s. Elites may have come to power in Congress largely as a result of successful mobilization on domestic policy. The rising electoral success of the Republican Party in this period may therefore have brought to power people with different foreign policy ideas than their predecessors. Once in power, congressional foreign policy leaders like Jesse Helms were able to use their position as veto players to shift the tenor of American foreign policy by blocking international spending and treaty commitments. While policies like these conflicted with mass public support for the UN, the American public was not paying much attention to foreign policy issues, and multilateralism, in particular, was only weakly salient to them. Moreover, on other issues like foreign aid, the American public was already much less internationalist than elites, giving Republican hardliners scope to pursue a unilateralist agenda. With the capture of the presidency in 2000, according to this argument, unilateralists were empowered in the executive branch and Congress and have been able to overpower internationalists.<sup>60</sup> This argument is suggestive and requires further evidence but is plausible in light of our findings.

<sup>58</sup> See Andrew Moravcsik, “The Paradox of US Human Rights Policy,” in Michael Ignatieff, ed., *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 147–197.

<sup>59</sup> Stephen G. Brooks and William Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, “American Primacy in Perspective,” *Foreign Affairs* 81 (July/August 2002): 20–33; and G. John Ikenberry, ed., *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

<sup>60</sup> For the view that foreign policy was a more-important factor in elections in the 1970s and 1980s, see John H. Aldrich, John L. Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida, “Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting: Do Presidential Candidates ‘Waltz before a Blind Audience’?” *American Political Science Review* 83 (March 1989): 123–141. Because our focus is on the 1990s and after, we do not see these perspectives

A second question concerns the relationship between elite and public opinion in contemporary U.S. foreign policy. The debate between the elite capture and convergence perspectives is rooted in a more-longstanding literature about the relationship between elite and public opinion on foreign policy. Are elite attitudes and policy decisions responsive to public opinion, or does the public take its cues from elites? Can elites pursue policies in the face of consistent public opposition? Whether elites are responsive to public opinion on foreign policy—or the reverse—remains contested in the literature.<sup>61</sup> If elites typically follow the will of the public on foreign policy or, conversely, heavily manipulate public opinion, then persistent gaps in elite and mass attitudes like those we and others have found would be curious anomalies. If, however, elites are able to ignore public opinion, then long-running gaps between elite and mass opinion are less puzzling. For low-salience issues, the public may be paying so little attention that they do not pick up on elite cues. This could in part explain the persistent gaps between elites and mass publics on some dimensions of foreign policy attitudes—on free trade, the use of force in South Korea, and the United Nations. At the same time, because people lack information about many foreign policy issues, they may be especially open to elite influence if they do pay minimal attention. The ability for elites to push an agenda that conflicts with the public's views or that does not have strong public support depends in part on how important the concerns are. We implicitly accept the view that public opinion ultimately does have some impact on elite behavior on U.S. foreign policy, but these effects may not be instantaneous, as leaders may ignore public opinion for some time without electoral punishment. Explaining the mix of convergent opinion on some issues and long-running gaps between elite and mass attitudes is an interesting area for future scholarship.

A third issue raised by these findings is the question of what is driving recent changes in foreign policy attitudes within the Republican Party. As mentioned earlier, Republicans were once an important part of the internationalist coalition that emerged after World War II. This coalition was based on support

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as incompatible. For a post-September 11 perspective, see also John H. Aldrich, Christopher Gelpi, Peter Feaver, Jason Reifler, and Kristin Thompson, "Foreign Policy and the Electoral Connection," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (June 2006): 477–502.

<sup>61</sup> For a view that suggests public opinion can be shaped by elites under some conditions, see John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). For a view of more minimal effects, see Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, "Public-Elite Interactions: Puzzles in Search of Researchers" in Robert Y. Shapiro, Lawrence R. Jacobs, and George C. Edwards III, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). In terms of elite responses to public opinion, earlier research found that foreign policy decisions largely tracked shifts in public opinion. See Page and Shapiro, *The Rational Public*. More recent studies undermine this conclusion. See Lawrence R. Jacobs and Benjamin I. Page, "Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy?" *American Political Science Review* 99 (February 2005), 1–17; Jennifer Cunningham and Michael K. Moore, "Elite and Mass Foreign Policy Opinions: Who Is Leading This Parade?" *Social Science Quarterly* 78 (September 1997), 641–656.

for a grand strategy of international engagement that broadly incorporated both hard and soft power.<sup>62</sup> Even into the 1980s, a majority of Republican elites scored high on measures of both carrots and sticks. With the exception of free trade, over the last 20 years, Republican elites have been tilting toward hard-power instruments alone. Further research might explore if a faction of Republican elites displaced traditionalist internationalists within the Party.

In the meantime, by looking at patterns of issue salience and foreign policy attitudes, it becomes clear that neither the convergence hypothesis nor the elite capture argument can fully explain the observed changes. Republican elites have become closer to the mass public on some measures of internationalism (foreign aid and defense spending), but they are further away on others (the UN, troops to Korea). In our view, the low domestic salience of foreign affairs and the low security threat of the 1990s created a permissive context for Republican elites with strong preferences to establish their views within the Party. Given that Republican elite attitudes were closer to the general public's views, however, this was not quite elite capture. The door was already open.

#### APPENDIX A: INDICATORS OF COOPERATIVE AND MILITANT INTERNATIONALISM

To construct a scale measuring support for internationalism, we created six dichotomous variables drawing on questions from the quadrennial CCGA survey of elite and public foreign policy attitudes. For each variable, a score of 1 indicates support for the internationalist position, while a score of 0 indicates support for the anti-internationalist position.

##### CARROTS (COOPERATIVE INTERNATIONALISM)

*Foreign Aid:* Respondents were asked if they thought foreign aid spending should be expanded, kept the same, or cut back.<sup>63</sup> Expanding spending and keep spending at the same levels were defined as the internationalist position (and given a score of 1), and cutting back spending as non-internationalist (and given a score of 0).<sup>64</sup> In 1982 and 1986, the question wording was phrased as "economic aid to other nations."

<sup>62</sup> This point is made most persuasively by Kupchan and Trubowitz, "Dead Center."

<sup>63</sup> For foreign aid, in the early years of the survey this question referred to "economic aid to other nations."

<sup>64</sup> In 1982 and 1986, elites were not asked about their spending preferences on foreign aid. We instead used a question about support for foreign aid that only had a dichotomous answer of favoring or opposing "economic aid to other nations." Whether or not elites support foreign aid in principle probably tracks higher than their preferences for what to do with the level of foreign aid spending.

*Strengthening the UN:* Respondents were asked how important “strengthening the UN” should be as a foreign policy goal. “Very important” and “somewhat important” were defined as the internationalist position (and given a score of 1 whereas “not important” was given a score of zero).

*Tariffs:* Respondents were asked if they favored or opposed cutting tariffs. Those who responded in favor were recorded as internationalists (a score of 1, whereas those who opposed or said they did not know were recorded as anti-internationalist (a score of 0). In the years of the survey in which this question was not asked of both groups, we looked for the best available substitute question. In 2002, elites were not asked the question about tariffs, but were asked whether they favored free trade. Two answers were recorded as supportive of internationalism: those who “favor[ed] free trade” but said “it is necessary for government to have programs to help workers who lose their jobs,” and those who favored free trade but said such programs were not necessary. For this question and for this year, we identified two questions as free trade answers—favoring free trade but saying programs to help workers were unnecessary, and favoring free trade only with job-retraining programs (both receiving a score of 1); and opposition to free trade as the non-international position was given a score of zero. In 2004, neither elites nor the mass public was asked the question about tariffs. For both elites and mass publics, we instead substituted a question about NAFTA, where people were asked if NAFTA was “good” (scored a 1) or “bad” (scored a 0) for the U.S. economy.

#### STICKS (MILITANT INTERNATIONALISM)

*Defense Spending:* Respondents were asked if they thought defense spending should be expanded, kept the same, or cut back. Expanding spending and keeping spending the same were defined as internationalist answers (given a score of 1), and cutting back spending was defined as non-internationalist (and given a score of 0).

*Military Superiority:* Prior to 1994, respondents were asked how important “matching Soviet military power” should be as a foreign policy goal. Beginning in 1994, this question was changed to “maintaining superior military power worldwide.” “Very important” and “somewhat important” were identified as the internationalist position and given a score of 1, and “not important” was given a score of zero as the non-internationalist position.

*Defending South Korea:* Respondents were asked if they favored sending troops to South Korea if North Korea invaded. Those who responded in favor were recorded as internationalist (a score of 1). Those who opposed were coded as anti-internationalist (a score of 0).

For all individual questions, “don’t know” and “refused” answers were included where these were recorded as a separate response. On questions such as tariffs and deploying U.S. forces in a conflict with North Korea, for example, a sizable proportion of the public was either unable or unwilling

to express an opinion in several years of the survey. For all years of the CCGA public survey, we use the sampling weight variable to make the results nationally representative. After 2002, the CCGA surveys changed their survey method and began combining telephone surveys with in-person surveys. In 2004, the mode was again changed to a Web-based survey.<sup>65</sup>

Where possible, we also tracked how these attitudes varied with partisan affiliation across time for both elites and mass publics. In the 1994 public survey, respondents were not asked about their partisanship. There are also gaps in tracking partisanship in the elite surveys. Between 1982 and 1994, members of Congress and executive branch officials were not asked their partisan affiliation.

One notable aspect of this approach is that tests of internal consistency—using Cronbach's alpha—show that items we have chosen to represent cooperative and militant internationalism are only moderately inter-related for elites or the public. The militant internationalism scale tends to have a higher alpha than the cooperative internationalism scale, and the scores for elites tend to be higher than for the public.<sup>66</sup> For elites, the averaged alpha across all years in this period is .27 for the cooperative items and .43 for the militant items. For the public, Cronbach's weighted alpha scores averaged .11 for the cooperative index and .31 for the militant index for this time period.<sup>67</sup>

These results highlight two aspects of our approach to measuring changes in foreign policy attitudes. First, it is not surprising that this measure of internal consistency is higher for elites than for the public. Elites are better informed about the relevant policy issues, and their opinions are more likely to be underpinned by a coherent ideological point of view, resulting in greater consistency.

Second, our indices of cooperative and militant internationalism were not derived from an inductive process in which we looked for high correlations among survey items and selected those items. Instead, we looked for questions in the CCGA surveys that captured the main aspects of the post-World War II internationalist agenda in the United States, in order to compare how attitudes have shifted toward this agenda among different groups. As we described earlier, this agenda was developed by elite U.S. foreign policy-makers in the late 1940s and 1950s coming out of the shadow of the depression and the second World War. That brand of internationalism included support for cooperative elements and more-coercive ones. We chose questions for each strand that reflected core elements of cooperative internationalism (support for free trade, international institutions, and foreign assistance) and core

<sup>65</sup> Page and Bouton document some changes in responses due to the mode of survey. Page and Bouton, *The Foreign Policy Disconnect*, 34.

<sup>66</sup> Contact the authors for Cronbach's alpha scores for elites.

<sup>67</sup> We used the weighted alpha function (alphawgt) for the mass public, taking into account sample weights. Full results available upon request.

elements of militant internationalism (support for military spending, expanded military power, and willingness to use force). We also wanted questions that were asked consistently across CCGA surveys from 1982 to 2004. The low levels of internal consistency among the cooperative and militant internationalism questions in elite and mass public opinion in this period do not negate the historical truth that support for free trade, the UN, and foreign assistance (on the less-coercive side) and support for defense spending, matching power, and use of force (on the coercive side) were all central components of the traditional internationalist agenda.