The Pull of Humanitarian Interventionism:
Examining the Effects of Media Frames and Political Values
on People's Choice of Resolution

JOVAN MILOJEVICH
University of California, Irvine, USA

PETER BEATTIE
Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

The media create frames to transmit information to the public, and the frames can have varying effects on public opinion depending on how they combine with people's values and deep-seated cultural narratives. This study examines the effects of media frames and values on people's choice of resolution of conflict. The results show that neither values nor exposure to frames are associated with outcome. Participants overwhelmingly chose the humanitarian intervention option regardless of frame exposure and even in contrast to their own political values, demonstrating the influence of the mainstream media's dominant, humanitarian interventionist frame on public opinion.

Keywords: media framing, American exceptionalism, foreign policy values, humanitarian interventionism, cultural resonance

In early 2013, the Syrian crisis was growing worse by the day, and violence was escalating at a rapid pace. Then–U.S. president Barack Obama was weighing the option of a full-scale military intervention, based on humanitarian grounds, in the troubled state. Islamic State was wreaking havoc throughout the country; however, it was Syrian president Bashar al-Assad who was primarily making the headlines in the United States for alleged atrocities and violations of the Geneva Accords and human rights. The seemingly perpetual beat of war drums in the United States did not take long to sound off, and they grew louder each day President Obama did not declare war on Assad. The media played along, and, generally, so did the political elite. Even former U.S. president Bill Clinton contributed by stating that if Obama chose not to go to war because Congress voted against it, he would risk "looking like a total wuss" (Voorhees, 2013)—a feeble and desperate attempt to demean the president into taking the United States to war. Former secretary of state Hillary Clinton and Senator John McCain, never ones to shy away from a military confrontation (Johnstone, 2015; Landler, 2016), echoed Bill Clinton's sentiment as they were both displeased with Obama's foreign policy decision making on Syria (Landler, 2016; Voorhees, 2013). Highly emotive phrases—popular in interventionist frames—such as, "History will judge us," "We don't want to be on the wrong side of history," "We cannot look the other way," "The world is watching us," and "What will

Jovan Milojevich: jovan.milojevich@duke.edu
Peter Beattie: pbeattie@cuhk.edu.hk
Date submitted: 2017–08–21

the world think," dominated the headlines and news reports. Then–secretary of state John Kerry touched on almost all of these in his speech at a State Department briefing in August 2013, at a time when President Obama was deliberating possible recourses in response to an alleged chemical attack by Assad's forces. Kerry stated,

> As previous storms in history have gathered, when unspeakable crimes were within our power to stop them, we have been warned against the temptations of looking the other way. . . . What we choose to do or not do matters in real ways to our own security. Some cite the risk of doing things. But we need to ask, "What is the risk of doing nothing?" . . . So our concern is not just about some far-off land oceans away. That's not what this is about. Our concern with the cause of the defenseless people of Syria is about choices that will directly affect our role in the world and our interests in the world. It is also profoundly about who we are. We are the United States of America. We are the country that has tried, not always successfully, but always tried to honor a set of universal values around which we have organized our lives and our aspirations. . . . My friends, it matters here if nothing is done. It matters if the world speaks out in condemnation and then nothing happens. History would judge us all extraordinarily harshly if we turned a blind eye to a dictator's wanton use of weapons of mass destruction.[1]

Several scholars have discredited Kerry's claim of Assad's use of chemical weapons as well as the larger narrative about Assad (Davidson, 2016; Gowans, 2017). Nonetheless, Kerry's highly emotive speech fits perfectly into the humanitarian interventionist frame and taps into deep-seated cultural narratives in the United States—an "exceptionally ideological country" (Johnstone, 2015, p. 15)—which makes the frame, as well as the speech, so powerful. Influential frames often tap into deep-seated cultural narratives, prodding people to construe an issue or conflict in accordance with widely held beliefs, such as, "My country always seeks to do good around the world" (Lakoff, 2011, p. 105). Furthermore, frames that tap into deep-seated cultural narratives have a

> natural advantage because their ideas and language resonate with a broader political culture. Resonances increase the appeal of a frame by making it appear natural and familiar. Those who respond to the larger cultural theme will find it easier to respond to a frame with the same sonorities. (Gamson, 1992, p. 135)

One of the main cultural themes in the United States is the nationalism theme, with the global responsibility nationalism theme—which emerged after World War II—being the most dominant. As Gamson (1992) articulates, "With the advent of World War II and the cold war, public discourse fully embraced the global responsibility theme" (p. 142), and the American public threw its support behind the United Nations and the idea of collective security. Democrats and Republicans alike "embraced a dominant U.S. role in the creation of political-military alliances, not only in Europe but in other regions as well" (Gamson, 1992, p. 142). The global responsibility theme was the dominant theme during the Cold War

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[1] The full transcript of John Kerry's speech can be viewed online ("Full Transcript," 2013).

and the framing of the U.S. doctrine of containment, and it continues to be the dominant theme today in the framing of the humanitarian interventionist doctrine.

Prior to World War II, the "America first" nationalist theme was the most dominant; however, the global responsibility (then) countertheme was still quite prevalent. When the America first theme was dominant, the kind of isolationism that it supported "was never incompatible with expansionism in what was regarded as U.S. turf" (Gamson, 1992, p. 141); therefore, the global responsibility (at that time) countertheme actually supported the America first theme rather than countering it. The Monroe Doctrine is evidence of this compatibility, because it reinforced American isolationism—by telling European powers to stay out of the Americas—yet supported U.S. expansionism. The global responsibility countertheme was "reflected in the idea of America's international mission as a light unto nations" (Gamson, 1992, pp. 141–142), with the belief that the "expansion of American influence in the world would bring enlightenment to backward peoples and confer upon them the bounties of Christianity and American political genius" (p. 142). The global responsibility (then) countertheme clearly embodied the notion of American exceptionalism, just as it does today as the dominant nationalism theme. Nevertheless, we would like to make it clear that we are not claiming that deep-seated cultural narratives in the United States are necessarily pro–humanitarian interventionist. What we are claiming, and will substantiate throughout this section, is that the U.S. media and political elites have tapped into a deep-seated cultural narrative to gain support for pro–humanitarian intervention policy options.

Many Americans believe, just as Kerry and other political elites publicly pronounce, that their country does try to honor a set of *universal values* around which they have organized their lives and aspirations and that these values include the notion that the United States *is* the leading "defender of democracy and human rights" around the world and that it *is* "exceptional." Regardless of whether political elites actually believe this or whether it is simply rhetoric on their part, the mere invocation of this notion to justify war (much of the time conducted illegally—without United Nations or congressional approval) is troubling on its own. For instance, American exceptionalism "originally meant that the U.S. had a God-given duty to impose its government and 'way of life' on lands not already under its control" (Pestana, 2016, para. 3), and it was, therefore, used to justify American imperialism. In more recent times, however, American exceptionalism has morphed into a more idealistic notion, being viewed as a

> belief that the American political system is unique in its form, and that the American people have an exceptional commitment to liberty and democracy. By virtue of this, American exceptionalists assert that America has a providential mission to spread its values around the world. American power is viewed as naturally good, leading to the proliferation of freedom and democracy. (Britton, 2006, p. 128)

Kaplan and Kristol (2003) offer a similar definition, defining American exceptionalism as a

> belief in the uniqueness and the virtue of the American political system that, when translated into foreign policy terms, offers the United States as a model for the world. It is a model because faith in the universal ideal of freedom, not blood and soil nationalism, is what defines the American idea. (p. 64)

The State Department's purpose and mission statement further supports the idealistic notion of American exceptionalism. It reads as follows: "The Department's mission is to shape and sustain a peaceful, prosperous, just, and democratic world and foster conditions for stability and progress for the benefit of the American people and people everywhere."[2] Furthermore, a former White House reporter discerned that "American exceptionalism in recent decades has centered around the exercise of American power and influence in the world" (Jaffe, 2015, para. 8). Obama, for example, has also publicly commented many times on American exceptionalism while discussing the country's role in the world, and, in doing so, he clearly demonstrated his support for humanitarian interventionism.[3] The following quotes come from Obama's commencement speech at West Point in 2014:

> I believe in American exceptionalism with every fiber of my being. . . . America must always lead on the world stage. If we don't, no one else will. . . . It is absolutely true that in the 21st century, American isolationism is not an option.[4]

It is certainly not a new development for government officials and the media to use frames that tap into the country's cultural narratives (i.e., American exceptionalism) to try to shape public opinion on (foreign policy) issues (Britton, 2006).

Framing Effects and Values

The combination of frames and values has been shown to generate strong effects on shaping attitudes and opinions on U.S. foreign policy issues (Lakoff, 2011). Furthermore, studies have shown that framing is fairly effective regarding unacquainted events or issues, or when linking familiar issues with existing beliefs, attitudes, and values (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009). In addition, values have been found to manipulate the effects of frames, with frames that underline the fundamental concerns of one's values being the most persuasive (Nelson & Garst, 2005). Frames can also be strategically created to exploit competing sets of values (Nelson, Gwiasda, & Lyons, 2011) or to trigger particular values in the processing of a news story (Shah, Domke, & Wackman, 1996).

A pertinent example of some of these framing effects in a real-world political context is the issue of climate change. A 2012 study on shifts in public opinion on climate change found that elite cues and media coverage had stronger effects on public opinion than extreme weather or scientific advances in understanding the issue (Brulle, Carmichael, & Jenkins, 2012). Foreign policy issues are affected in a similar manner, as opinions on foreign policy that do not receive support among political elites tend to get ignored

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[2] The Trump administration has since changed it. For a timeline of the original statement and the new one, see Raimondo (2017).

[3] It should be noted that the humanitarian intervention justification for war emerged decades before Obama's presidency. As Stedman (1992) and others (Chandler, 2006; Johnstone, 2002; Parenti, 2000) have argued, the Cold War pretext for war (doctrine of containment) disintegrated along with the Soviet Union and opened the door for the "new interventionists" (Stedman, 1992) to propagate and implement their interventionist doctrine.

[4] The speech can be viewed in full at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxWUG2o-w-k. A video and the transcript of the speech can also be found online (Traywick, 2014).

by the mainstream media, resulting in an uninformed public and leaving alternative policy options beyond consideration (Powlick & Katz, 1998). Since (at least) the end of the Cold War, the media have transmitted elite cues—the political elite in the United States has been generally supportive of humanitarian (military) interventionism—with the theme of the need to protect human rights and democracy prevailing, and often omitted important information that could have more accurately explained the conflicts (Atwood, 2010; Bricmont, 2006; Chomsky, 2016; Seymour, 2014).

Foreign Policy and the Humanitarian Interventionist Frame

The humanitarian interventionist frame has been a constant presence in the media over the past few decades. Generally, the structure consists of the four main elements (or functions) of a news frame, as described by Entman (2004): (1) defining problematic effects/conditions, (2) identifying the cause/agent, (3) endorsing a remedy, and (4) conveying moral judgment. The following is an illustration of the general humanitarian interventionist frame according to Entman's four elements: (1) "Group A is being oppressed and suffering human rights abuses"; (2) "Dictator A and his hardline, ultra-nationalist government is using the military to violate human rights and suppress democracy in Country A"; (3) "Dictator A can only be stopped by the threat or use of military force"; and (4) "We cannot afford to do nothing while military aggression, democracy suppression, and human rights abuses continue" (p. 24). Although this is the general structure of the humanitarian interventionist frame, certain elements can be highlighted over others. In addition, once the cause/agent has been identified, the demonization process generally begins, which consists of associating the leader with a former, ruthless dictator (e.g., the "new Hitler") and using highly emotive words and phrases to describe him, such as "mass murderer" or "genocidal." Furthermore, mixed into the frame are highly emotive terms such as "ethnic cleansing," "genocide," and "crimes against humanity" to achieve the desired effect.[5]

The identification and targeting of the enemy leadership is imperative to the humanitarian intervention frame and "provides the focal point towards which the war effort can be targeted. Once the leader is identified, the character and perception of that individual can be cultivated and presented to the public to support the policy aims of government" (Willcox, 2005, p. 92). This usually takes two forms:

> First, the war or crisis is specifically personalized with the enemy leader so that the introduction of their name becomes synonymous with the conflict. Second, the individual, once directly associated with the conflict, is demonized, provoking negative connotations through the invoking of their name. (Willcox, 2005, p. 92)

The demonization of the targeted leader

> is in keeping with the narrative formula of casting the combatants in the roles of "good" and "evil." The extension of the leader figure's persona as the personification of evil, or

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[5] For more on the "Hitlerization" of targeted leaders and the use of highly emotive terms such as genocide, see Johnstone (2015, pp. 98–101) as well as Herman and Chomsky (2002).

simply as "the bad guy," is aided by the identification with established historical figures
that are clearly recognizable as undesirable. (Willcox, 2005, pp. 102–106)[6]

Adolf Hitler, for obvious reasons, is the most common historical figure utilized in this technique, which is often referred to as the "Hitlerization" of the leader. This method "makes the demonization easier and offers a benchmark with which to compare personality characteristics. Reference to historical characters, especially Nazis, is a theme that runs throughout conflict coverage and is often intertwined with the other themes" (Willcox, 2005, p. 106). The other highly emotive themes previously listed, such as, "History will judge us," are mixed into the frame, and, although the author of the article designs the frame, the various themes of the frame can be expressed by political leaders, experts, the author of the article, official sources, or any combination of them. Invoking "our values" and "our interests" is also vital to this frame. As Johnstone (2015) points out, "Our political leaders never cease assuring us that our foreign policy is determined by 'our values' and 'our interests'" (p. 15), both of which were focal points of John Kerry's speech. Johnstone (2015) notes that Hillary Clinton is not immune to this approach; she often repeats these terms "as if 'our interests' and 'our values' were divine commandments guiding us like icebreakers through a recalcitrant world" (p. 15). From the Persian Gulf War in the early 1990s to the present conflicts in Syria and Ukraine, the humanitarian interventionist frame has permeated and dominated mainstream media news coverage of conflicts as these outlets resolutely fixate on transmitting the prointerventionist cues of the political elite (Raimondo, 2016; Stedman, 1992). For various reasons, which will be explained, we chose to use the Ukrainian conflict for our study.

The crisis in Ukraine that began in late 2013 is a prime example of the way the humanitarian intervention frame has been utilized by the mainstream media to explain and contextualize events around the world to the general public. Some of the less mainstream media outlets, such as *Democracy Now!* or antiwar.com, presented the crisis in different ways—from the history of the conflict to the motivations of the adversaries, and from the reasons why Americans should be concerned to the strategy the U.S. government should follow in resolving it—providing viewers and readers with more nuanced information and helping them to better understand the complexities of the crisis. In contrast, the mainstream media largely dumbed down the crisis, framing it in simple and easy-to-understand terms and frequently using the good-versus-evil binary opposition (Boyd-Barrett, 2016, 2017). This approach supports the findings of studies on framing and the media that suggest the media (1) tend to report and stay close to the government's official version of events (Herman & Chomsky, 2002; Lawrence, 2010) while ignoring opinions on foreign policy that do not receive support among political elites (Powlick & Katz, 1998) and (2) consistently favor one side over another (Entman, 2004; Entman & Rojecki, 2000), especially when it comes to U.S. foreign policy (Entman, 2004). Consequently, few perspectives of the crisis in Ukraine have been presented to the general public by the mainstream news. As a result, the mass media have essentially reduced the crisis to a simplistic and insufficient explanation. As Mearsheimer (2014) affirms, "According to the prevailing wisdom in the West, the Ukraine crisis can be blamed almost entirely on Russian aggression" (p. 77).

The Russians were classified as the "bad guys," trying to dominate the region through aggression and expansionism, while the Ukrainians were deemed the "good guys," fighting for freedom and democracy

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[6] See Hammond (2000) for more on the good-versus-evil frame.

and resisting Russia's attempt to expand its power and control over them (Golstein, 2014). Alleged violations of international law, specifically human rights violations, by Russia were the main themes in this frame (Boyd-Barrett, 2016, 2017). Furthermore, the mainstream media, echoing the stance of the political elite, displayed moral outrage at what was happening and promulgated the stance that "we" (Americans and the United States) needed to do something to protect human rights and democracy in Ukraine.[7] Western mainstream media have ceaselessly pushed the anti-Russia/pro–humanitarian interventionist frame, making it the dominant frame on the Ukrainian conflict in the mainstream news (Boyd-Barrett, 2016, 2017; Golstein, 2014; Roman, Wanta, & Buniak, 2017). Due to the dominant anti-Russia/pro–humanitarian interventionist frame of the Ukrainian crisis in the mainstream media as well as news reports from online sources, which have provided alternative and often conflicting narratives to explain the conflict, the Ukraine case was ideal for our study. Nonetheless, to ensure that our results were not skewed by extraneous factors unique to the Ukraine conflict (e.g., prejudice against Russia or the European Union), we provided a masked case with no country names for half the sample and were also careful to avoid other potential issues with our stimulus materials—such as cues about the political party of sources or the credibility of the media outlet—which could affect the results.

The study focused on one specific posttreatment question: Which course of action should the United States take with regard to conflict resolution? Based on previous studies on the media and media frames, we expected

H1:   *The mainstream media's omnipresent humanitarian interventionist frame would overwhelm the effects of our experimental frames, such that participants' political values would not have a significant effect on their preferred course of action.*

H2:   *Exposure to frames would not evince an overwhelming effect.*

H3:   *Being primed with the humanitarian interventionist frame—both via exposure to that single frame and in our multiple-frame treatment, which included it—would overwhelm other considerations and be associated with a greater likelihood of preferring the humanitarian interventionist course of action.*

Method

Foreign Policy Scale

To measure foreign policy values, we used a two-dimensional scale producing four foreign policy orientations, combining aspects of the scales used by Hurwitz and Peffley (1987) and Holsti and Rosenau

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[7] Some scholars (Gilboa, 2005; Maren, 1994; Sharkey, 1993) have attributed this perspective of the need to do something to the "CNN effect," a phenomenon that has been described as follows: "Citizens, shocked by dramatic, real-time television images of suffering and hardship, may demand that their leaders 'do something' to alleviate the problem, thereby pressuring politicians to act in circumstances where they otherwise would not" (Baum & Potter, 2008, pp. 51–52).

(1990). Our scale involved a left–right dimension (supports vs. opposes helping out-groups/foreigners as well as in-groups/fellow citizens) and an interventionism–isolationism dimension (supports vs. opposes foreign military intervention), producing four orientations: left-wing isolationism (LISO), left-wing interventionism (LINT), right-wing interventionism (RINT), and right-wing isolationism (RISO). (For the sake of comparison with Holsti and Rosenau's classifications, LISO corresponds with accommodationists, LINT with internationalists, RINT with hard-liners, and RISO with isolationists.) Left-wing isolationists tend to believe in a more open, inclusive framework for international relations; to be more idealistic; and to want to help the world become a better place through diplomacy and economic aid. Left-wing interventionists also believe in a more open, inclusive framework for international relations and are idealistic, but they differ from left-wing isolationists in that they are agreeable to the possible use of military force. Right-wing interventionists tend to believe that the United States needs to be directly involved in world affairs and should use its economic, diplomatic, and military power to maintain world order and protect its national interests around the world. Right-wing isolationists tend to believe that the United States should maintain its dominant position as the world's most powerful nation by protecting the homeland, avoiding foreign entanglements, and focusing on strengthening its economy. A more detailed description of the four orientations is provided in Appendix A; https://osf.io/wg68q/.

Foreign policy value orientations could be divided into a nearly infinite number of classifications, and although our four-orientation classification is tractable and coherent, it sacrifices distinctions that exist within each orientation. Therefore, these four orientations should not be taken as measuring something essential or irremediable about the ways people think about foreign policy, but rather as one way to organize a highly diverse set of values and ideational influences. As such, we would not expect everyone to adhere strictly and exclusively to one of these four orientations but to have an orientation that is a hybrid of the four. Our classification was also chosen to provide a good fit with our review of press coverage of the conflict in Ukraine: The sources we examined in April 2015 could fairly comfortably fit within these four orientations (see Appendix A).

Participants

We collected two separate, independent Mechanical Turk (MTurk) samples. The first sample (n = 111) was collected to rate the persuasiveness and familiarity of the articles we designed. The second MTurk sample was for the experiment (n = 556, after eliminating participants who failed the attention check or spent less than 15 seconds reading the article); 52% were women, 76% were White, and their ages ranged from 17 to 77 years (M = 36.1 years, SD = 13.01 years). All participants were randomly assigned to control, LISO, LINT, RINT, RISO, and multiple-frame conditions in either Ukraine or masked format. The sample size was more than adequate according to a priori power analysis—conducted using G*Power—indicating that a sample size of 291 subjects would be required to have 95% power for detecting small to medium effects with three predictors when employing a .05 criterion of statistical significance (Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996).

Materials

We designed newspaper articles that summarized the main points of each of the LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO frames; a control article that presented bland facts about the conflict without an overarching

frame; and a four-frames-in-one article that contained the major points of all four frames (separated by introductory language, e.g., "another group of foreign policy experts argues"). To provide viewpoint diversity, the frames differed in key areas of narrative and interpretation according to the central concerns of each value orientation (Baden & Springer, 2017). To avoid recency and primacy effects, we created two versions of the four-frames-in-one article: one in which the two interventionist frames were presented first and another in which the two isolationist frames were presented first. We sought to limit, if not eliminate, additional influences as much as possible to analyze framing effects in isolation: No cues were provided about the identity or political party of the "experts" expressing their views, nor were cues provided about the ideological bent or credibility of the media outlet. In addition, to ensure that the results were not skewed by extraneous factors unique to the Ukraine conflict (e.g., prejudice against Russia or the European Union), we created masked versions of all six articles, replacing all mentions of the countries and organizations involved with Country A, Country B, Country C, Political Coalition D, and so on.

Procedures

Participants in the initial sample group (n = 111) were asked to describe their perspective on the Ukraine conflict in a few sentences, then to read one of the articles we designed, and finally to rate it in terms of familiarity (how often they have seen this sort of argument before in the media) and how persuasive they found it. Based on our review of media coverage of the Ukraine crisis, we expected the LISO frame to be least familiar, because we found it only in relatively marginal sources such as *Democracy Now!* and *The Nation*.

The following procedures were utilized for the experiment (n = 556). Using and combining elements of past scales to measure foreign policy values, we created five multiple-choice questions, each of which had four answers corresponding to LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO foreign policy values (see Appendix B; https://osf.io/wg68q/). Each participant therefore had five opportunities to define his or her foreign policy values according to these four orientations, which we then used to assign the participants to one of the (foreign policy values) categories. Each participant was placed in the category that corresponded with the majority of the participant's responses (three or more out of five). For instance, if a participant chose the LINT answer for at least three of the five questions, then he or she was assigned to the LINT values category. For those who did not answer at least three of the questions with the same value, we used the following formula: Those who chose at least three out of five questions for both left versus right and interventionist versus isolationist were placed in one of the respective groups. For example, LINT-LINT-RINT-RISO-LISO was classified as LINT (three of five were left-wing and three of five were interventionist). Participants were also asked to place their political orientation on a 100-point, left/liberal to right/conservative scale, to indicate where they primarily receive their news from, and to answer standard demographic questions.[8]

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[8] Almost all participants (96.6%) listed mainstream news sources. About 85% listed at least two mainstream media news outlets, such as CNN, Fox News, *The New York Times*, MSNBC, and *The Washington Post*, whereas the remaining participants listed nonspecific news sources (almost all listed multiple sources), such as cable television programs, mainstream newspapers, and local TV news.

Using a between-subjects design, we randomly assigned participants to read the control article, one of the single-frame articles, or the multiple-frame article, in either Ukraine or masked format. After reading their assigned article, participants were asked which choice of resolution to the (Ukraine or masked) conflict they favored; each answer corresponded to one of the foreign policy values/frames— LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO.[9]

Results

Pretest Results

We individually coded participants' open-ended statements as corresponding to the LISO, LINT, RINT, or RISO frame, or whether they did not match any of the four frames. The interrater reliability for the coders was $\kappa = .788$ ($p = .001$). Averaging the two coders' results, a majority (63.9%) of participants' open-ended statements were unclear or did not match any of the four frames; 13.5% corresponded to RINT, 11.7% corresponded to RISO, 7.2% corresponded to LINT, and 3.6% corresponded to the LISO frame. Similarly, the mean ratings (from 0 to 10) for familiarity with and prior exposure to the frames were 5.8 for LINT, 5.3 for RINT, 4.6 for RISO, and 3.8 for LISO. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) found marginally significant differences between these four means, $F(3, 107) = 2.192$, $p = .093$, and a significant difference between the mean familiarity for LISO versus mean familiarity for the other three frames as a group, $t(109) = -2.108$, $p = .037$. Hence, the LISO frame was the least familiar to pretest participants. However, the mean persuasiveness or strength ratings (from 0 to 10) for each of the four frames were between 6 and 7, with a one-way ANOVA finding no significant differences between them, $F(3, 107) = 0.844$, $p = .473$. Each of the four frames were viewed as equally persuasive, regardless of the LISO frame being significantly less familiar to pretest participants than the other frames.

Initial Analyses of the Experiment

To examine whether factors other than those we intended to test were affecting the results (e.g., a strong identification with Ukraine or Russia or subtle racial/ethnic, partisan, or expertise cues), we began by testing for differences in level of opinion change between the Ukraine and masked conditions. A one-way ANOVA found no significant differences in opinion change between the Ukraine and masked conditions, $F(11, 544) = 0.663$, $p = ns$. Furthermore, we ran a chi-square to test for differences in outcome for posttreatment choice of conflict resolution (humanitarian military intervention versus nonhumanitarian military intervention) between the Ukraine and masked conditions, and found no significant differences, $\chi^2(1) = 1.610$, $p = ns$. Therefore, we included both the Ukraine and the masked conditions in our main analyses.

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[9] The main difference between the interventionist options is that the LINT option calls for a humanitarian military intervention if human rights abuses continue, and the RINT option calls for a military intervention if Ukraine's sovereignty continues to be violated. Right and left isolationist options should be more discernible. For further clarification of all options, the (posttreatment) question and answers can be viewed in Appendix C: https://osf.io/wg68q/.

Further preliminary analyses were conducted to examine potential confounding variables and covariates. These included age, gender, income, education, self-reported political orientation, and race/ethnicity. Results indicated that there was a significant association between gender and outcome (dependent variable: RISO option), $\chi^2(1) = 5.412$, $p < .05$; self-reported political orientation and outcome [(dependent variable: LINT option), $\chi^2(1) = 14.187$, $p < .001$ and (dependent variable: RINT option)], $\chi^2(1) = 30.837$, $p < .001$; and income and outcome (dependent variable: RINT option), $\chi^2(1) = 3.943$, $p < .05$. As a result, these variables were included in further analyses.

In addition, a descriptive statistic was run to examine whether values were distributed relatively evenly across the treatment conditions. As shown in Table 1, the distribution of values across the treatment conditions was relatively balanced. There were, however, slight imbalances within the control and RINT treatments. LINT values made up 42.1% of the control treatment, which was proportionately much more than the other five treatments. Furthermore, RINT values made up only 7.4% of the control treatment (the lowest across all treatments), while the RINT treatment contained nearly double that amount (14.6%)—which was the highest percentage of RINT values across all treatments.

Table 1. Distribution of Values Within Treatments.

Values Groups	LISO		LINT		RINT		RISO		TOTAL	
Treatments										
Control	32	33.7%	40	42.1%	7	7.4%	16	16.8%	**95**	100%
	14.8%		23.8%		11.1%		14.7%		17.1%	
LISO	43	43.9%	30	30.6%	12	12.2%	13	13.3%	**98**	100%
	19.9%		17.9%		19.0%		11.9%		17.6%	
LINT	31	38.8%	24	30.0%	9	11.3%	16	20.0%	**80**	100%
	14.4%		14.3%		14.3%		14.7%		14.4%	
RINT	39	37.9%	23	22.3%	15	14.6%	26	25.2%	**103**	100%
	18.1%		13.7%		23.8%		23.9%		18.5%	
RISO	37	40.7%	29	31.9%	9	9.9%	16	17.6%	**91**	100%
	17.1%		17.3%		14.3%		14.7%		16.4%	
Multiple Frames	34	38.2%	22	24.7%	11	12.4%	22	24.7%	**89**	100%
	15.7%		13.1%		17.5%		20.2%		16.0%	
Total	**216**	38.8%	**168**	30.2%	**63**	11.3%	**109**	19.6%	**556**	100%
	100%		100%		100%		100%		100%	

Tests of Hypotheses

First, we ran a chi-square test to examine whether there was a difference between those who identified as LINT—in favor of humanitarian military intervention—before the treatment (30.2%), which was based on their responses to all five of the pretreatment questions, and those who chose a humanitarian military intervention as a resolution for the conflicts (both the Ukrainian and masked conflicts) to the posttreatment question asking for their choice of resolution (50.7%). The difference between those who chose before-treatment LINT values and those who chose the posttreatment LINT option for resolution (the humanitarian military intervention option) was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 4.745$, $p < .05$. Pretreatment LINT supporters went from 30% of the total participants to 50% indicating their support for the LINT choice of conflict resolution. This increase is important to note considering that participants were randomly assigned to treatment conditions. Table 2 further depicts the discrepancies between values and posttreatment preferences of those who received the control treatment.

Table 2. Comparison of Pretreatment Values and Posttreatment Preferences of the Control Group.

Outcome	LISO		LINT		RINT		RISO		TOTAL	
Values Groups										
LISO	8	25.0%	19	59.4%	2	6.3%	3	9.4%	**32**	*100%*
	36.4%		*38.0%*		*20.0%*		*23.1%*		*33.7%*	
LINT	8	20.0%	22	55.0%	5	12.5%	5	12.5%	**40**	*100%*
	36.4%		*44.0%*		*50.0%*		*38.5%*		*42.1%*	
RINT	1	14.3%	3	42.9%	2	28.6%	1	14.3%	**7**	*100%*
	4.5%		*6.0%*		*20.0%*		*7.7%*		*7.4%*	
RISO	5	31.3%	6	37.5%	1	6.3%	4	25.0%	**16**	*100%*
	22.7%		*12.0%*		*10.0%*		*30.8%*		*16.8%*	
Total	**22**	23.2%	**50**	52.6%	**10**	10.5%	**13**	13.7%	**95**	*100%*
	100%		*100%*		*100%*		*100%*		*100%*	

As shown in Table 2, the dominant choice for conflict resolution for all value groups was the LINT option. Just more than half of the participants (52.6%) in the control group chose the LINT option for conflict resolution. LINT also had the largest increase in overall support—a 10.5% increase. RINT support also increased (3.1%), while LISO decreased 10.5% and RISO decreased 3.1%. Furthermore, 25% of those with LISO values preferred the LISO option, 55% of those with LINT values preferred the LINT option, 28.6% of those with RINT values preferred the RINT option, and 25% of those with RISO values preferred the RISO option. Overall, interventionist values were more stable than isolationist values.

We tested for possible effects of values by running analyses of those who received the multiple-frames treatment (n = 89). Because competing frames tend to limit one-sided framing effects and allow people to develop opinions more in line with their values (Aklin & Urpelainen, 2013; Hansen, 2007; Wise & Brewer, 2010), the multiple-frames treatment should have, at least theoretically, increased the likelihood of participants choosing an option that matched their values. We ran two chi-square analyses to test for differences between values groups on outcome. The first analysis tested for differences between isolationist values (left and right) and interventionist values (left and right) on outcome—ISO options versus INT options. The second analysis tested for differences between right-wing and left-wing values on outcome—ISO options versus INT options.

As shown in Table 3, the results of the first chi-square analysis reveal no significant difference between those with isolationist values and those with interventionist values on outcome, $\chi^2(1)$ = 0.627, p = ns. Both values groups predominately preferred an interventionist option. Although those with interventionist values mainly chose an option within their values (75.8% chose an interventionist option), those with isolationist values mainly chose outside their values—67.9% chose an interventionist option. Furthermore, as the vast majority of isolationists preferred an interventionist option—32 isolationists preferred LINT while six preferred RINT—the total support for intervention increased from 37.1% pretreatment to 70.8% posttreatment. In addition, those with interventionist values preferred the LINT option over the RINT option (17 to eight).

Table 3. Comparison of Values and Outcome of the Multiple-Frames Treatment Group.

Outcome	LISO		LINT		RINT		RISO		TOTAL	
Values Groups										
LISO	7	20.6%	22	64.7%	4	11.8%	1	2.9%	**34**	*100%*
	43.8%		*44.9%*		*28.6%*		*10.0%*		*38.2%*	
LINT	5	22.7%	14	63.6%	3	13.6%	0	0.0%	**22**	*100%*
	31.3%		*28.6%*		*21.4%*		*0.0%*		*24.7%*	
RINT	1	9.1%	3	27.3%	5	45.5%	2	18.2%	**11**	*100%*
	6.3%		*6.1%*		*35.7%*		*20.0%*		*12.4%*	
RISO	3	13.6%	10	45.5%	2	9.1%	7	31.8%	**22**	*100%*
	18.8%		*20.4%*		*14.3%*		*70.0%*		*24.7%*	
Total	**16**	18.0%	**49**	55.1%	**14**	15.7%	**19**	11.2%	**89**	*100%*
	100%		*100%*		*100%*		*100%*		*100%*	

Note. ISO/INT: $\chi^2 (1)$ = .627, *n.s.;* R/L: $\chi^2 (1)$ = 2.629, *n.s.*; Outcome = ISO-options combined and INT options combined

The results of the second chi-square analysis reveal no significant difference between those with right-wing values and those with left-wing values on outcome, $\chi^2(1)$ = 2.629, *p = ns.* Both values groups predominately chose an interventionist option. 60.6% of those with right-wing values chose an intervention option, while 76.8% of those with left-wing values chose an intervention option. Furthermore, the vast majority of those on both sides preferred LINT over RINT. Those with right-wing values preferred LINT over RINT, 13 to seven, while those with left-wing values preferred LINT over RINT, 36 to seven. The results thus far support H1 and H3.

Next, we tested for framing effects on outcome. Table 4 shows the support each posttreatment option (LISO, LINT, RINT, and RISO) received based on the treatment received (control, LISO, LINT, RINT, RISO, and multiple frames).

Table 4. Comparison of Treatment Conditions on Outcome.

Outcome	LISO		LINT		RINT		RISO		TOTAL	
Treatment Conditions										
CONTROL	22	23.2%	50	52.6%	10	10.5%	13	13.7%	**95**	*100%*
	21.6%		*17.7%*		*11.4%*		*15.5%*		*17.1%*	
LISO	23	23.5%	38	38.8%	15	15.3%	22	22.4%	**98**	*100%*
	22.5%		*13.5%*		*17.0%*		*26.2%*		*17.6%*	
LINT	7	8.8%	54	67.5%	12	15.0%	7	8.8%	**80**	*100%*
	6.9%		*19.1%*		*13.6%*		*8.3%*		*14.4%*	
RINT	14	13.6%	54	52.4%	26	25.2%	9	8.7%	**103**	*100%*
	13.7%		*19.1%*		*29.5%*		*10.7%*		*18.5%*	
RISO	20	22.0%	37	40.7%	11	12.1%	23	25.3%	**91**	*100%*
	19.6%		*13.1%*		*12.5%*		*27.4%*		*16.4%*	
Multiple Frames	16	18.0%	49	55.1%	14	15.7%	10	11.2%	**89**	*100%*
	15.7%		*17.4%*		*15.9%*		*11.9%*		*16.0%*	
Total	**102**	*18.3%*	**282**	*50.7%*	**88**	*15.8%*	**84**	*15.1%*	**556**	*100%*
	100%		*100%*		*100%*		*100%*		*100%*	

As shown in Table 4, LINT was the dominant choice for conflict resolution for all six treatments. The LINT treatment had the strongest effect when compared with the control treatment. Table 4 also indicates that, along with LINT, RINT may have had a significant effect on pulling participants toward its frame for choice of conflict resolution. Support for the LINT option was 14.9% greater among those who received the LINT treatment than among those who received the control treatment, while support for the RINT option was 14.7% greater among those who received the RINT treatment than among those who received the control treatment. It should be noted that, although values were distributed relatively evenly across treatment conditions (see Table 1), the slight imbalances within the control and RINT treatments partly explain the preferences reported posttreatment.

To test whether these differences were significant, we ran four binary logistic regressions with the respective response options as the dependent variables and controlled for Ukraine versus masked

conditions, gender, income, self-reported political views, values, and treatment conditions (the control treatment was the reference treatment).

As shown in Table 5, the models were statistically significant. Model 1 explained 10.1% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in choice of resolution and correctly classified 81.7% of cases. Model 2 explained 14.6% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in choice of resolution and correctly classified 62.9% of cases. Model 3 explained 23.0% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in choice of resolution and correctly classified 85.4% of cases. Model 4 explained 19.0% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in choice of resolution and correctly classified 84.7% of cases. Participants who received the LINT treatment were significantly more likely than those who received the control treatment to choose the LINT option ($OR = 2.170$). In addition, participants who received the RINT treatment were significantly more likely than those who received the control treatment to choose the RINT option ($OR = 2.935$).

The results of the binary logistic regressions indicate that only the interventionist conditions had a significant effect on outcome and that neither isolationist treatment was associated with outcome, which supports our hypotheses that exposure to frames would not evince an overwhelming effect on outcome (H2) and that exposure to the LINT frame would be associated with a greater likelihood of preferring the humanitarian interventionist course of action (H3). Although both interventionist treatments had significant effects on outcome, there was not a significant difference between the LINT and RINT treatments on outcome, $\chi^2(3) = 4.928$, *ns*. Those who received the RINT treatment preferred the LINT option over the RINT option by slightly more than a two-to-one ratio (see Table 3). LINT was clearly the dominant preference for both groups.

Discussion

The study reported in this article expands on the findings of our main, overarching study (Beattie and Milojevich, 2017) by focusing on one specific posttreatment question—concerning the course of action the United States should take with regard to conflict resolution. We expected that the mainstream media's humanitarian military intervention frame would be associated with outcome (choice of conflict resolution). Therefore, we expected that participants' political values would not have a significant effect on their preferred course of action, nor would exposure to frames evince an overwhelming effect—(H1) and (H2). We also expected that being primed with the humanitarian interventionist frame—via exposure to that single frame or the multiple-frame treatment—would overwhelm other considerations and be associated with a greater likelihood of preferring the humanitarian interventionist course of action—(H3). Our results provided support for all three hypotheses.

Table 5. Summary of Logistic Regression Analyses.

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	DV: Post-Treatment LISO Option			DV: Post-Treatment LINT Option			DV: Post-Treatment RINT Option			DV: Post-Treatment RISO Option		
	B	$SE\,B$	e^B	B	$SE\,B$	e^B	B	$SE\,B$	e^B	B	$SE\,B$	e^B
Treatment – Control												
LISO	-.024	.352	.977	-.642*	.304	.526	.497	.465	1.643	.686	.412	1.987
LINT	-1.199*	.473	.301	.775*	.330	2.170	.439	.487	1.551	-.687	.519	.503
RINT	-.643	.391	.526	.150	.301	1.162	1.077*	.437	2.935	-.699	.483	.497
RISO	-.100	.363	.905	-.500	.308	.606	.211	.490	1.235	.795	.411	2.214
Multiple Frames	-.376	.381	.687	.245	.313	1.278	.483	.477	1.620	-.383	.476	.682
Condition	-.950**	.237	.387	.317	.182	1.372	-.079	.257	.924	.640*	.262	1.896
Values Group A	-.146	.246	.864	-.049	.192	.952	1.215**	.271	3.371	-1.045**	.296	.352
Values Group B	.492	.289	1.635	.955**	.211	2.705	-1.226**	.273	.294	-.957**	.278	.384
Gender	.173	.236	1.188	.156	.185	1.169	-.021	.262	.980	-.483	.264	.617
Income	-.115	.234	.891	.036	.185	1.036	-.162	.267	.851	.274	.261	1.316
Political Views	-.174	.246	.840	-.487*	.194	.614	.978**	.308	2.660	.403	.284	1.497
Constant	-1.576**			-.771*			-2.129**			-.902		
χ^2	35.598**			64.439**			80.067**			64.055**		
df	11			11			11			11		

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Note. Condition: Masked = 0, Ukraine = 1; Values Group A: ISO = 0, INT = 1; Values Group B: RIGHT = 0, LEFT = 1; Political Views (self-reported): Conservative = 0, Liberal = 1.

Generally, exposure to single frames pulls opinions toward the position of the frame; however, this study finds that exposure to single frames is generally not associated with outcome. Overall, exposure to the various frames did not significantly pull participants toward the matching option for conflict resolution, nor did exposure to the multiple-frames treatment keep people closer to their values, as LINT was the dominant option for all the conditions. The results indicate that the substantial support the LINT option received largely contributed to the domination of the interventionist options. Interventionist and

left-wing values held steady, whereas isolationist and right-wing values[10] were much less predictable. The inclusion of the LINT frame within the multiple-frames condition seems to have triggered the "we need to do something" pro–human rights schema that has been developed as a result of frequent exposure to the mainstream media's pro–humanitarian intervention frame, thus overwhelming the other frames. Considering that schemas tend to moderate the effects of framing (Shen, 2004) and well-developed, elaborate schemas make it much less likely that people will be influenced by frames that contradict them (Shen & Edwards, 2005), this is the most likely scenario.

By examining a specific and key aspect of citizens' opinions on foreign policy in isolation and including values and (both) single and multiple frames in the design, this study greatly contributes to the literature on framing. The study not only adds something unique to this topic but supports the existing literature on framing. For instance, the results of our previous study were shown to

> reinforce two recurring normative concerns with media framing: first, media reports that rely on one frame of an issue influence readers to adopt that frame, regardless of the reader's values; and second, perspectives on an issue that do not commonly appear in media presentations may suffer a handicap, such that when finally exposed to uncommon perspectives, readers may be inclined to reject them due to their unfamiliarity. (Beattie & Milojevich, 2017, p. 15)

Although the results of the present study show something different, they still touch on these same normative concerns regarding media frames. The mainstream media's staunch support of the government's prointerventionist foreign policy has seemingly influenced how Americans think their government should act in response to foreign conflicts or crises.

This phenomena occurs even when exposed to other, equally persuasive single frames. Furthermore, when exposed to the multiple-frames treatment condition, the participants were more inclined to reject the frames they were less familiar with as well as contravene their own values when choosing a conflict resolution policy. Due to the limited exposure the policy options of the other frames (specifically the isolationist options) have received in the mainstream media, as well as the overexposure of the humanitarian interventionist frame (LINT), these frames were not able to have the same effect on public opinion as the humanitarian interventionist frame, regardless of the type of frame (single or multiple) in which they were presented. Nevertheless, the posttreatment RINT option (for conflict resolution) also increased from its pretreatment support.

The overall preference for RINT also increased—however, not nearly at the same rate as LINT. The humanitarian interventionist frame of the mainstream media may offer the best explanation for this outcome. As discussed above, the mainstream media and U.S. political leaders have inextricably linked "our values" with "our interests" when it comes to U.S. foreign policy and the support of humanitarian

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[10] 85.7% of those with left-wing values preferred a left option (LISO or LINT), while 48.5% of those with right-wing values preferred a right option (RISO or RINT). Therefore, the vast majority of those with left-wing values stayed within the left, and the majority of those on the right moved to the left.

interventionism. As described in the Method section, the protection of "our (national) interests" is generally linked to right-wing interventionism. Yet the media and political elites have essentially hijacked "our interests" from the right and interspersed it with "our values" in the humanitarian interventionist frame to become all-inclusive with regard to foreign policy issues. The protection of human rights (or global responsibility) theme is the main theme of this frame; however, "our interests"—purposely left vague (Johnstone, 2015)—is usually present at some point in the frame. Just as the global responsibility (then) countertheme supported the America first dominant theme before World War II, the right-wing interventionist theme that we must protect our national interests supports the left-wing interventionist theme that we must protect human rights.

Furthermore, and as Stephen Walt (2015) has pointed out, there is an "enduring alliance between Democratic liberal interventionists and Republican neoconservatives" (para. 16). When it comes to foreign policy, there is little, if any, political divide in the United States. Political leaders on the right and left have united in their interventionist foreign policy, and the mainstream media outlets on both sides of the divide have largely agreed on how to package it. Therefore, it is not surprising that support for both of the interventionist options increased. Nevertheless, LINT was by far the dominant policy choice in terms of total support and showed the greatest increase from its pretreatment support. LINT's increase was almost five times greater than that of RINT. In addition, two of every four participants who received the RINT treatment preferred the LINT option, compared with only one of four preferring the RINT option.

Limitations and Implications

Because we used MTurk for data collection, the sample differed in several respects from a nationally representative sample, so our results are not broadly generalizable. Although MTurk samples are more diverse than college student samples and other Internet samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011), its subject pool tends to be more liberal and younger than the general U.S. population and includes a disproportionately large percentage of White participants (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012). As such, the results of this study cannot necessarily be generalized to the nation or beyond. However, generalizability is a concern only in that the particular characteristics of this sample might have caused the results we found (e.g., if participants had more exposure to news media narratives than the population overall). Future work is needed to replicate and extend these findings to other, more nationally representative samples.

The main implication is that political leaders can promote a one-sided foreign policy as a response to foreign conflicts if the media continue to push a humanitarian (military) interventionist agenda, effectively leaving all other policy options off the table without any resistance from a public unaware of or less exposed to other proposed options. The response of the media and (many among) the political elite to President Donald Trump's military action in the ongoing conflict in Syria is a prime example of this implication. An analysis by Media Lens shows the overwhelming support given by the mainstream press to Trump's military action in Syria (the launching of 59 Tomahawk missiles on various targets on April 6, 2017).[11] President Trump did not wait for an independent investigation into the alleged

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[11] The Media Lens analysis can be viewed online (http://www.medialens.org/).

chemical attacks to get a better understanding of what occurred before deciding on a course of action. Instead, he chose to conduct a military operation immediately following the devastating incident, in complete violation of domestic as well as international law.[12]

Former president Barack Obama, although involved in his share of military actions as the commander in chief, refrained from attacking Syria in order not to violate domestic and international law as he sought congressional approval to use military force, which Congress was not willing to provide because it cited a lack of evidence of war crimes committed by the Assad regime (S. Res. 21, 2013). With the Iraq "WMDs" fiasco perhaps in the back of their minds, it seems as if neither Obama nor members of Congress were willing to risk taking responsibility for possibly leading the United States down a disastrous road that ultimately could have ended with a highly contentious confrontation with Russia over an unproven claim. Nonetheless, Obama has been and continues to be highly criticized for his inaction in Syria. In a CNN interview in September 2016, when asked whether he regretted his inaction in Syria, Obama mentioned—as part of his very long response highlighting various aspects of the conflict that have largely been ignored by the mainstream media and political elite—that a part of his decision not to take action was to avoid "violating international law" and the possible repercussions of doing so, and that unless Syria was put on a "diplomatic and political track," there would be a limit to what the United States could do (CNN, 2016). Unfortunately, diplomatic and political solutions to the Syrian conflict have not been a part of public discourse in the United States among the media, political leaders, and constituents— not during Obama's presidency nor during Trump's.

In the wake of the attack on Syria, President Trump, perhaps feeling galvanized and empowered by the overwhelming support he received from political leaders and the mainstream media, ordered the dropping of the largest nonnuclear bomb in the United States' arsenal, known as the *massive ordnance air blast* or MOAB (commonly referred to as the "Mother of All Bombs"; GlobalSecurity.org, n.d.), on a target in Afghanistan on April 13, 2017. It was the largest nonnuclear bomb ever used in a military operation, and it was ordered by the current commander in chief of the United States, someone who openly expressed his willingness to commit war crimes (e.g., targeting enemy family members for assassination and using torture methods during interrogation) during his election campaign. The future looks bleak for those seeking peaceful solutions to conflict. We can only hope that the media will begin doing a better job of informing the public of the repercussions of President Trump's foreign policy in order to promote a more enlightened and productive public discourse

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[12] President Trump did not receive congressional nor UN approval to launch the attack.

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