U.S. Arms Sales, Diplomatic Protests, and Patriotism in Taiwan

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Abstract

How do foreign voices shape public opinion? Diplomatic protests often encourage the public in the target country to recognize the difference between themselves and the protester and to hold positive views of its leader, so-called the rally-round-the-flag effect. Due to this rally effect, diplomatic protests can also increase the public’s support for the protested policy of the targeted country. In this article, we argue that citizens would be more supportive for their country’s defense policy if that policy is criticized by neighboring countries, especially by those with political disputes with their country. We examine the theory by addressing the case of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. China insists its One-China Principle and does not recognize the independence of Taiwan. It always opposes U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. South Korea terminated diplomatic relationships with Taiwan and recognized the People’s Republic of China as China in 1992. South Korea also becomes a major business rival of Taiwan in international market. Thus, we hypothesize that these historical legacies would make diplomatic protests from China and South Korea cause the patriotic effect and boost Taiwanese people’s support for the protested policy. Results from an experimental survey conducted in early 2019 not only confirm our hypothesis but also suggest that diplomatic protest can erode pacifism and raise more tensions in East Asia.

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1 Introduction

On 8 July 2019, the U.S. State Department announced that the U.S. would like to proceed with a possible arms sale worth $2 billion to Taiwan. The spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Geng Shuang, said in a press conference that U.S. arms sale to Taiwan “interferes in China’s domestic affairs and harms China’s sovereignty and security interests. China deplores and resolutely opposes it.”\(^1\) A month later, the Trump administration announced another $8 billion sale of F-16 fighter jets to Taiwan. Again, Mr. Geng maintained that “China will take all necessary measures to defend its own interests, including imposing sanctions on the U.S. companies involved in the arm sales.”\(^2\)

The episodes of China’s objection to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan motivate the following research question of this article: how do foreign voices shape public opinion? Specifically, do diplomatic protests of a country against another country’s defense policy affect citizens of the protested country more supportive for the policy and the government? How do the relations between the protesting and protested countries affect the latter’s public response to diplomatic protests? Answers to these questions are important because ordinary citizens’ reaction to other countries’ diplomatic protest may further constrain the government of the protested country’s policy discretion. If the protested policy is related to national security, such as arms sales, it may further deteriorate the security dilemma among countries because citizens’ more support for the protested defense policy not only makes their government less likely to concede its policy position but also intensifies the protesting country’s concerns about the protested country’s military buildup.

To answer these questions, in this article we use the case of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan to explore how citizens react to foreign protests. As U.S. arms sales help to enhance Taiwan’s defense capacity against military attacks from potential enemies, China in particular, we argue that diplomatic protests ferment patriotism among Taiwanese citizens. In addition, the effect of diplomatic protests on inducing patriotism is stronger when the protesting and protested countries are strategic rivals. Specifically, citizens regard diplomatic protests of foreign countries as criticisms against their own countries. Such external hostility would arouse their patriotism in response to foreign protests that threaten their national security. Citizens would be more supportive for their government’s defense policy as well as the incumbent political leaders after seeing diplomatic protests from other countries. As a result, diplomatic protests can cause a security dilemma in the sense that these protests are likely to invoke patriotism and even invite a hard-line policy, which further intensifies the conflicts between the protesting and protested countries.

This paper is structured as follows. In the following section, we elaborate on a theory of diplomatic


\(^2\) China to impose sanctions on U.S. companies in case of arms sales to Taiwan. See the following link: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-08/21/c_138326850.htm (Accessed on October 15, 2019).
protests. We argue that foreign countries’ criticism on a country’s foreign policy would instigate patriotism of the protested country because it strengthens the distinction between in-group and out-group identities. In addition, the effect of diplomatic protests on fermenting patriotism is stronger when the protesting country is the protested country’s strategic rivalry or ally. We test these arguments with the case of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, a country that not only has strategic competition with South Korea but also disputes against China on sovereignty issues. In the empirical sections, we first discuss our research design and then present our results from a experimental survey. We find that both diplomatic protests from South Korea and China against U.S. arms sales to Taiwan instigate Taiwanese citizens’ political support for the arms sale, incumbent president, and defense budget. We discuss the implications of findings in the concluding section.

2 U.S. Arms Sales to Taiwan

Taiwan, with an official name of Republic of China (R.O.C.), has kept purchasing weapons from the U.S. for decades. After the Kuomintang (KMT), the Nationalist Party, retreated from China to Taiwan in the late 1940s, the R.O.C. had signed the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of China with the U.S. in 1954. As this treaty is part of the U.S. security commitment to East Asia countries, it not only strengthened the diplomatic relationship between Taiwan and the U.S. but also helps the KMT government to maintain its legitimacy to represent the whole China in the United Nations (UN). Accordingly, the U.S. became the major source of Taiwan’s military weapons (see Figure 1).

Although the P.R.C. overtook China’s seat in the UN from the R.O.C. in 1971, it is not until 1979 that the U.S.-R.O.C. Mutual Defense Treaty was terminated by the U.S. due to its cut of formal diplomatic relations with the R.O.C. and recognition of the P.R.C. as the only representative of China. Nevertheless, the U.S. also passed the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) to maintain its commercial, cultural, and other relations with Taiwan. In particular, the TRA states that the U.S. “shall provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character and shall maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or social or economic system, of the people of Taiwan.” However, in 1982 the U.S. and the P.R.C. also signed a joint Communiqué in which the U.S. declared its intent to gradually decrease its arms sales to Taiwan. At the same time, the U.S. also passed the “Six Assurances,” including statements that the U.S. “would not agree to set a date certain for ending arms sales to Taiwan” and “would not consult with China in advance before making decisions about United States arms sales to Taiwan.”

3The Y-axis of Figure 1 is the SIPRI trend-indicator value (TIV), not the actual amount of arms sales. In particular, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) develops the TIV that can consistently “represent the transfer of military resources rather than the financial value of the transfer.” In other words, the TIV is best used “for calculating trends in international arms transfers over periods of time, global percentages for suppliers and recipients, and percentages for the volume of transfers to or from particular states.” For the methodology of constructing the TIV, please see the following link: https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers/background#TIV-tables (Accessed on October 19, 2019).
Based on the Sino-U.S. 1982 Joint Communiqué, the P.R.C. use different ways to protest against the U.S. for selling arms to Taiwan, such as verbal objections and suspensions of its military exchanges with the U.S. Nevertheless, China’s diplomatic protests did not stop the U.S. from selling weapons to Taiwan. According to a recent declassified memo sent by then U.S. President Ronald Reagan to his Secretary of State and Defense Minister right after the U.S. signed the 1982 Joint Communique with the P.R.C., “the quality and quantity of the arms provided by the United States to Taiwan depend entirely on the threat posed by China.” As a result, the amount of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, as shown in Figure 1, reduced for a few years after the Sino-U.S. 1982 Joint Communiqué but began to increase during the 1990s.

![Figure 1: U.S. Arms Sales to Taiwan, 1951-2018](source)

In this article, we utilize the case of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan to test our theory about the effects of diplomatic protest on domestic political support. We argue that foreign countries’ diplomatic protest, China in particular, against the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan would increase Taiwanese citizens’ support for the proposed sale, Taiwan defense budget, and the incumbent approval rate, because these diplomatic protests ferment patriotism among Taiwanese people. In addition, we argue that the patriotic effect become stronger when the protesting country is Taiwan’s international political or economic rival, such as China or South Korea, respectively. We elaborate our theory in the next section.
3 A Theory of Diplomatic Protests

Diplomatic protests are often used to the target country’s security policy by mobilizing domestic opposition there. Leaders believe the utility of diplomatic protests to secure national interests. Nevertheless, diplomatic protests do not always achieve their original goals. Diplomatic protests are like double-edged swords and may cause the public’s patriotic reactions and invite the target’s hard-line policies. In this section, we explore the relationship between diplomatic protests and patriotism. We also address the bilateral contexts such that international rivalries and alliance relationships in which diplomatic protests can induce the public’s patriotic reactions in the target country.

3.1 Patriotism

International crises and disputes often disturb the public’s mind and this psychological reaction has political consequences. External shocks triggers patriotism and induces an instantaneous surge of political support, which is called the rally-round-the-flag effect or the rally effect (Mueller 1970). International risks induce people to recognize the differences between the members of a society (in-group) and those of another society (or an out-group). Patriotism, a strong psychological attachment to the in-group identity, unites social solidarity and encourages people to give positive views of their leader (Levy 1989). Several empirical studies confirmed the existence of the rally effect in the U.S. (Parker 1995; Edwards III and Swenson 1997; Nickelsburg and Norpoth 2000), in the U.K. (Lai and Reiter 2005), and in Japan (Kagotani 2015). Patriotism also urges the public to give positive evaluations of the incumbent’s policies in international crises (Norpoth 1991; Parker 1995). Given these circumstances, the opposition parties have difficulties criticizing the leader during international crises (Brody 1991). The opposition parties have incentives to criticize the incumbent for the sake of their extra political support only when the incumbent’s policy choice ruins national interests (Schultz 2001). Thus, patriotism is influential due to the lack of domestic criticism and grant the discretion to the leader’s policy choice. This may invite the leader’s hard-line policies.

We use the same logic to explain the influence of diplomatic protests on the public’s political attitudes in the target country. Diplomatic protests towards the target country’s defense and security policies inform the conflicting interests between the protester and the target. In the target country, the public may recognize diplomatic protests as verbal threats to the country and the difference between themselves and the members of the protesting country, triggering patriotism in the public’s mind. Patriotism is more likely to prevail for the short term and encourage the public in the target country to give positive evaluations of their leader and current policies. The following hypothesis summarizes the patriotic effect of diplomatic protests.

Hypothesis 1 (Patriotism): Diplomatic protests increases more favorable views of defense and
3.2 International Rivals

*Enduring Rivalry* is a concept of specific pairs of countries continuing a series of political disputes Goertz and Diehl (1993). A variety of factors triggers the repetition of disputes in specific dyads. First, territorial concerns often drive rivals to escalate political disputes to military confrontations (Vasquez 1996). Second, a history of past failures to settle dispute induces the initiation of the current dispute (Colaresi and Thompson 2002; Goertz, Jones and Diehl 2005). Unless the one side is not powerful enough to coerce the other side into accepting the settlement of a dispute or foreign imposed regime change, a series of future disputes occurs repeatedly between rivals (Lo, Hashimoto and Reiter 2008; Quackenbush and Venteicher 2008; Senese and Quackenbush 2003).

Rivalries may have a decisive influence over the patriotic effect of diplomatic protests. In the rivalry dyad, the public reinforce the belief about the existence of the differences between their own country and an international rival in the course of repeated disputes. Diplomatic protests in the repeated disputes can induce the public in the target country to take a tougher line and show stronger patriotic reactions.

In the context of international relations in East Asia, we apply this logic to Taiwan’s bilateral relationships with China and South Korea. We regard Taiwan as an ideal case to test the role of international rivalry in shaping public reaction to diplomatic protest. Taiwan and China have been strategic rivals and disputed over sovereignty since 1949. After the KMT lost the civil war to the CCP and retreated to Taiwan in the late 1940s, it was not until 1971 that the CCP replaced the KMT’s representation of China in the United Nations. As the CCP insists on the “One-China Principle,” it constantly suppresses Taiwan’s international space via asking other countries with diplomatic relations with the P.R.C. to cut diplomatic relations with R.O.C. Meanwhile, China also threatens to use its military force against Taiwan if Taiwan declares de jure independence. Most Taiwanese people are concerned of China’s military threat. The military threat of China is also the main reason for Taiwan to purchase weapons from the U.S. and other countries. As we have indicated in the introduction, China has repeatedly opposed arms sales to Taiwan, making such diplomatic protests a good case to test our argument on how the public respond to foreign country’s diplomatic protest.

The relationship between Taiwan and South Korea offers another opportunity to test our argument on role of international rivalry in shaping public reaction to diplomatic protests. Although Taiwan and South Korea do not have disputes over sovereignty, both countries have other political and economic conflicts that foster anti-Korean sentiment among Taiwanese people (Ahn 2019). Unlike many other countries, South
Korea did not cut its formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan until August 1992. Nevertheless, South Korea’s termination of diplomatic relations with Taiwan and recognition of the P.R.C. inflamed anger among Taiwanese people. In particular, South Korea is the last Asian country that broke diplomatic relations with Taiwan, making Taiwanese people feel much more isolated in the region. Second, during the Cold War era South Korea and Taiwan used to fight against their neighboring communist countries, North Korea and China, respectively. Thus, South Korea’s turn to China deepened Taiwanese feeling of being betrayed, instigating more hostility against South Korea among Taiwanese people (Ahn 2019).

In addition to political legacies, the economic competition between Taiwan and South Korea makes them rivals in international markets. While countries are regarded as “developmental states” that use industrial policy to generate economic growth, they were also labelled as “Asian Tigers” along with Singapore and Hong Kong. Nevertheless, South Korea and Taiwan have developed competitive high-tech industries that make both countries economic rivals in the global market, especially in the semi-conductor industry in which Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company and Samsung are the most two leading companies (Chen and Sewell 1996). Due to political and economic reasons, South Korea becomes an international rival of Taiwan.

Based on these discussions, we derive the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2 (International Rivals):** Political disputes between international rivals increase the patriotic effect.

### 3.3 American Allies

The U.S. attempted to contain the spread of the communist block and signed a series of bilateral alliance treaties with East Asian protégés. The maintenance of peace in East Asia depends on whether this American hub-and-spoke network of alliances work well or not. Two treaties of military alliances, the U.S.-Japan security treaty and the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea, provided Japan and South Korea with protection against challenges from communist countries such as China and Russia. An American domestic law, the Taiwan Relations Act, served as a de facto military alliance by arms sales to counter China’s influence in the region. There is no formal alliance treaty among these American protégés in East Asia. But there exists informal relationships like quasi-alliances requiring them to follow U.S. grand strategy. We address the influence of the quasi-alliances on the patriotic effect of diplomatic protests.

We begin by exploring the theories of alliances to explain diplomatic protests from quasi-allies. States
attempt to find the opportunities of alliance formation to achieve power aggregation whenever the distribution of power favors their rivals. Power aggregation counters the power balance favoring the opponents and dampen their territorial challenges, making deterrence work (Morgenthau 1973 [1948]; Waltz 1979). To maintain alliance relationships, a defender and a protégé engage in exchanging interests. Unlike the power aggregation model, the defender does not provide the protégé with a protection from the rival’s challenges. The defender also seek for the protégé’s support for the defender’s attempt to change the status quo (Morrow 1991). In both scenarios, allies must pursue policy coordination to achieve common goals in peacetime. However, strategic incentives inherent in alliance politics – fears of abrogation and risks of entrapment – makes policy coordination more difficult (Snyder 1984). To balance between fear of abrogation and risks of entrapment, allies are required to refrain from going against the partner’s expectations. Diplomatic protests towards the ally’s defense security policies inform the conflicting interests within the alliance. People in the target’s country may recognize diplomatic protests as verbal threats to themselves and the difference between allies, triggering patriotism.

We apply this logic to the situation where a defender has bilateral alliances with two protégés and there is no formal alliance between two protégés. In this trilateral relationship, two protégés are quasi-allies and they are more likely to cooperate with each other only when the defender shows weaker commitments to them (Cha 2000a,b). An illustrative example explains how an unexpected action by a quasi-ally can induce patriotism in the target country. As indicated in the previous section, South Korea unilaterally terminated diplomatic relations with Taiwan and recognized the People’s Republic of China, replacing its anti-communist foreign policy. This incident occurred after the U.S. shifted its attention to the Middle East due to the Gulf War. If the theory of a quasi-alliance is true, the defender’s weaker commitment to the region encourage quasi-allies to strengthen their relationships. South Korea’s foreign policy went against such an expectation of cooperative behavior and caused Taiwanese anti-Korean sentiment. Similarly, diplomatic protests from an quasi-ally can cause patriotism in the targeted country. Recently, President Trump has been requesting financial burden sharing in U.S. alliances and an increase in the partner’s military expenditures, which indicates America’s weak commitment. An American ally’s military buildup for defense is understandable among other American allies. In this context, diplomatic protests must be recognized as an unnecessary action to destroy societal ties within an quasi-alliance relationship, triggering patriotism. Thus, diplomatic protests from a quasi-ally can upset the public in the target country and invite stronger patriotic reactions.

**Hypothesis 3 (American Allies):** Diplomatic protests from American quasi-allies upset the public and increase the patriotic effect.
4 Research Design

To test our hypotheses, we utilize the case of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan via a survey experiment. The Taiwanese survey company smilepoll.tw conducted an internet survey experiment and collected 2,314 respondents from February 12 to March 13, 2019. The gender group distribution is: Male = 48.31% and Female = 51.69%. The respondents are 18 years old or older and vote eligible adults are 20 years older or older in Taiwan. The age group distribution is: teenagers = 2.07%, 20s = 30.73%, 30s = 36.04%, 40s = 18.76%, 50s = 5.7%, and 60s and older = 6.7%.

Our experiment starts with the respondent’s exposure to a newspaper article including the background information and its critics. The first part is about an issue of President Tsai’s defense and security policies, while the second part is about a protest against them. We crafted the six types of manipulated messages. The first type is the message without the second part. The other type consists of both the first and the second parts. In the second paragraph of the following message, “XX” represents the speaker of the message. The speaker is randomly selected from one of the five actors: the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman, the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman, The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) spokesman, and the Kuomintang spokesman. These six types of messages are randomly assigned to each respondent. Specifically, respondents are presented with the following description on their screen before answering questions on their political attitudes: 4

U.S. Arms Sale to Taiwan

The U.S. has approved a $330 million arms sale to Taiwan in another sign of Washington’s support for the government in Taipei amid rising Chinese pressure on the country.

With regard to the U.S. arms sale to Taiwan, XX said “The U.S. should immediately withdraw the arms sale plan and stop military to military relations between the United States and Taiwan so as to avoid further damage to the China-U.S. relations and the peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.”

Next, we ask the respondents about their political attitudes after they read one of the manipulated messages. The first question asks “Do you support the purchase of U.S. arms?” The respondent selects one of the following options from “Do not support at all” (= 0), “Do not support” (= 1), “Do not support somewhat” (= 2), “Support somewhat” (= 3) “Support” (= 4), and “Strongly support” (= 5). The support level of U.S. arms sale is measured by a 6-point scale.

4We would like to emphasize that the U.S. has not announced its intention to sell arms to Taiwan when the survey was executed in the field in early 2019. Thus, our survey is not affected by the recent U.S. proposals of arms sale to Taiwan.
The second question asks “Do you support President Tsai?” The respondent selects one of the following options from “Do not support at all” (= 0), “Do not support” (= 1), “Do not support somewhat” (= 2), “Support somewhat” (= 3) “Support” (= 4), and “Strongly support” (= 5). The presidential approval ratings are measured by a 6-point scale.

The third question asks “Do you support the size of Taiwan’s defense budget?” The respondent selects one of the following options from “Should decrease greatly” (= 0), “Should decrease somewhat” (= 1), “Should maintain the status quo” (= 2), “Should increase somewhat” (= 3), and “Should increase greatly” (= 4). The respondent’s preference on Taiwan’s defense budget is measured by a 5-point scale.

We run a series of OLS models to examine the hypotheses on the patriotic effect of diplomatic protest. We use the answers above (the respondents’ political attitudes on U.S. arms sale, their evaluations of the president, and their preferences on the size of Taiwan’s defense budget) as dependent variables. We also construct three sets of binary independent variables to test hypotheses using three of the six manipulated messages a respondent was randomly assigned in our survey. The message by the Chinese spokesman is the treatment of diplomatic protests and international rivals (T1). The message by the Japanese spokesman indicates the treatment of diplomatic protests and American allies (T2). The message by the South Korean spokesman represents the treatment of diplomatic protests, international rivals, and American allies. The problem is that a simple OLS model with these binary treatment variables

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 T_1 + \beta_2 T_2 + \beta_3 T_3$$

is not able to directly estimate the effects of diplomatic protests, international rivals, and American allies because these effects are confounding. Thus, we need to estimate the following model

$$Y = \beta_0 + (\beta_1 + \beta_2 - \beta_3) \text{DiplomaticProtest} + (\beta_3 - \beta_2) \text{InternationalRivals} + (\beta_3 - \beta_1) \text{AmericanAllies}.$$ 

Diplomatic Protest equals 1 if a respondent receives either T1, T2, or T3, and 0 otherwise. International Rivals is equal to 1 if a respondent is exposed to either T1 or T3, and 0 otherwise. American Allies is equal to 1 if a respondent is assigned to either T2 or T3, and 0 otherwise. This is the baseline model and the benchmark category is those who did not read diplomatic protests from neighboring countries.

We also add several control variables to the baseline model. They are likely to affect the respondent’s political attitudes. Incumbent reflects party identification. We ask the respondents about their support level of Tsai using a 10-point scale. The presidential approval ratings vary from “Strongly negative” (= 1) to “Strongly positive” (= 10). The variable equals 1 if the respondent’s support level is greater than 5, and 0 otherwise. Female controls a gender bias across the respondents. The variable is equal to 1 if the respondent is a female, and 0 otherwise. Age controls a generation gap across the respondents. In the appendix, we present summary statistics for the variables used in the study.
5 Empirical Results

We examine the patriotic effect of diplomatic protests on Taiwanese defense and security policies and President Tsai’s approval ratings. Table 1 shows the results of two OLS models for three different dependent variables. The baseline model includes our independent variables only (Diplomatic Protest, International Rivals, and American Allies) and the benchmark is the respondent groups that read either DPP’s or KMT’s treatment messages and no treatment message. The other model is the baseline model with the possible control variables of party support, gender, and age. Due to the length limit, We focus on reporting the results of our independent variables and will not address those of control variables.

Table 1: Results on Taiwanese Patriotic Reactions (OLS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arms Sale</th>
<th>Presidential Approval</th>
<th>Defense Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Model 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(S.E.)</td>
<td>(S.E.)</td>
<td>(S.E.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic Protest</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>-0.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.122)</td>
<td>(0.115)</td>
<td>(0.140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Rivals</td>
<td>0.172*</td>
<td>0.147</td>
<td>0.182*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.096)</td>
<td>(0.090)</td>
<td>(0.110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Allies</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.095)</td>
<td>(0.089)</td>
<td>(0.109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.798***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.052)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.335***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.050)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.043)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.008***</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.002)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.170***</td>
<td>2.782***</td>
<td>2.163***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.036)</td>
<td>(0.091)</td>
<td>(0.042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F statistic</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>52.16</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Observations</td>
<td>2,314</td>
<td>2,314</td>
<td>2,314</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Figure 2 highlights the effects of our independent variables. The thick and thin lines extending from each estimate represent the 90 and 95 percent confidence intervals. The results are consistent between two different models. First, diplomatic protests themselves have no correlation with three different dependent variables. Second, diplomatic protests by Taiwan’s rivals have the positive effect on three different dependent variables. According to the results of the benchmark models, diplomatic protests induces Taiwanese patriotic reactions and increase political support for U.S. sale of fighter jets and Tsai’s approval ratings by 0.17 and 0.18 points,
respectively. Diplomatic protests also encourage the Taiwanese public to support military buildup and the public’s policy preference shifts from negative to positive by 0.16 points. Third, diplomatic protests by American allies have no correlation with three different cases. Thus, only diplomatic protests by Taiwan’s rival can invoke patriotism and invite hard-line policies.

![Figure 2: The Effect of Diplomatic Protests](image)

6 Conclusion

Countries often publicly criticize other countries’ foreign policies that may threaten the former’s national interest. In this article, we investigate how foreign countries’ diplomatic protests affect public opinion in protested countries. We argue that the mass public, on average, would become more patriotic after seeing other countries criticizing their country’s defense policy, thereby becoming more supportive of the protested policy and their government. The patriotic effect is stronger when the protesting country is an international rival or an ally of the protested country. We test our argument with the case of U.S. arms sale to Taiwan via a survey experiment conducted in Taiwan in early 2018. We find that when respondents learn that Taiwan’s strategic or economic rival, China and South Korea respectively, criticizes Taiwan’s purchase of
U.S. weapons, they are more likely to support Taiwan’s defense policy and render higher approval to the president. In other words, diplomatic protest would ferment patriotism that further boosts ordinary citizens' support for the government and its foreign policy.

Our findings have one important implication to security studies. Specifically, diplomatic protests instigate patriotism that further enhances popular support for the protested deal of arms sale as well as the presidential approval. Thus, the political leader of the protested country would stick to the protested deal. As one country’s military buildup may raise concerns among its neighboring countries, its rivals in particular, diplomatic protests against another country’s defense policy would further facilitate arm races that further lead to security dilemma. In other words, China and South Korea’s objections to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan would make Taiwanese people more supportive of the proposed deal, making those rival countries more difficult to escape security dilemma in East Asia.
References


Appendix

Summary Statistics

Table 2 presents summary statistics for the variables used in the study.

Table 2: Summary Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arms Trade</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential Approval</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense Budget</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic Protest</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Rivals</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Allies</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>12.11</td>
<td>18</td>
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