State Visits and Leader Survival

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Abstract

Why do political leaders travel abroad? In this paper, we propose an informational mechanism linking in-person diplomacy to leader survival. A foreign power visits an incumbent in order to reap a future policy concession; the visit is not worth the effort unless the incumbent remains in power long enough to deliver on the deal. A diplomatic visit thus provides a visible and credible signal of the visitor's high confidence in the incumbent's stability in office. Domestic opponents, facing incomplete information as to the incumbent's strength, observe the signal and are deterred from mounting a challenge. Using data on U.S. diplomatic visits from 1960-2013, we find strong empirical support for our predictions: a visit with the U.S. President substantially reduces the risk of a leader's removal from office.

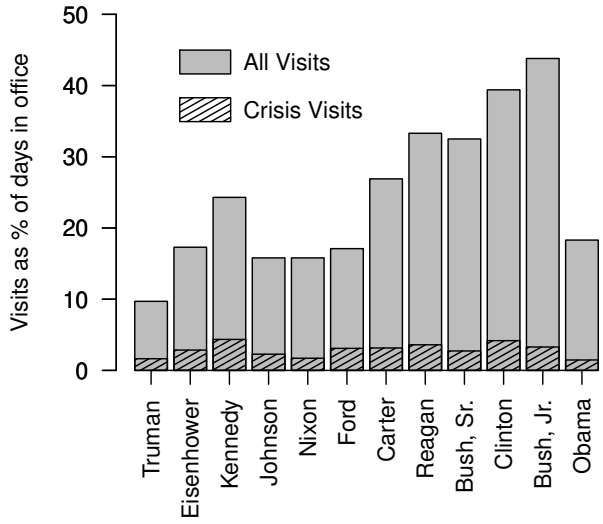
Word count: 9,987

Why do political leaders travel abroad? Recent U.S. presidents have spent one third of their days in office visiting or hosting foreign heads of state (Figure 1); other world leaders conduct visits with similar frequency (Nitsch 2007). Top-level diplomatic visits are the culmination of intensive planning by leaders and their staffs, with great care given to every detail of the exchange and its potential implications. Among political actors and observers, these events seem to wield an outsize influence, often prompting policy and political activism and captivating the attention of the popular press. Yet the very practice of face-to-face diplomacy involves behavior on the part of political leaders that political scientists should find puzzling.

First, why are diplomatic visits conducted by leaders themselves, rather than by their agents? Given the high opportunity costs of leaders' time, and the disparity in policy-specific knowledge between heads of state and the specialists who staff their bureaucracies, the notion that leaders are productively engaging in discussion over substantive matters when they meet in person strains credibility. Second, why are diplomatic visits conducted face-to-face, despite the proliferation of technology that facilitates long-distance communication? The general upward trend in frequency of visits over time, reported in Figure 1, suggests that in-person visits are serving a function beyond mere exchanging of ideas and information, which can increasingly be done via phone call or video conference. Relatedly, why do visits so often involve a public component, such as a joint press conference, a photographed handshake, or a tour of an iconic landmark or monument? And finally, when leaders of weaker states are offered a visit with a major world power, why do they find the visit itself to be a thing of value—so much so that they are willing to make a material concession in order to obtain it?

In this paper, we propose a novel theory to resolve these questions, centered around the publicness of a visit, the information it reveals, and the impact of that information on domestic political contestation. In doing so, we overcome a major limitation of the existing research on top-level diplomatic visits, namely its almost singular focus on diplomacy in the context of interstate conflicts and crises. The shaded bars in Figure 1 represent the proportion of U.S. presidential visits conducted with foreign leaders in the midst of

Figure 1: Diplomatic Visits by U.S. Presidents



Note: Gray bars represent total days spent visiting abroad, plus total days spent hosting visitors, divided by total days in office. Diagonal lines indicate presidential visits conducted with a leader who is experiencing an international crisis, as defined by Brecher et al. (2017)

international crises, as defined by the International Crisis Behavior Project (Brecher et al. 2017).[1] An overwhelming majority of top-level U.S. visits occur as part of the routine conduct of diplomatic relations, outside the context of crisis situations, and thus remain largely unaccounted for by existing theories of in-person diplomacy. To explain this pervasive and puzzling phenomenon, we develop a theory that relates diplomatic exchange to political survival. With evidence from U.S. diplomatic visits from 1960-2013, we show that a visit with the U.S. President dramatically reduces an incumbent's risk of removal from office.

Our theory conceptualizes the state visit—defined here as any face-to-face diplomatic meeting between foreign leaders[2]—as a signal of the recipient leader's strength in the face of domestic opposition. Across the spectrum of regime types, an individual's decision of

[1]Specifically, we code a U.S. visit with a foreign leader as occurring during a crisis if that leader's country is listed as an actor in any crisis at any point in the same calendar year as the visit.

[2]Our use of the term "state visit" is a slight abuse of terminology. In diplomatic circles, state visits carry a distinct meaning from other forms of bilateral exchange between leaders, such as "official visits", "working visits", and "private visits". Our usage here is simply intended to capture any in-person meeting between political leaders of different states which features some public component.

whether or not to challenge an incumbent leader requires making an assessment of the leader's strength under incomplete information. For a citizen participating in a protest, an elite member orchestrating a coup, or an interest group or voting bloc switching political loyalties, a challenge against the incumbent is beneficial if it succeeds but costly if it fails. The likely outcome of such a challenge depends on the strength of the incumbent's hold on power, which a potential challenger cannot know with certainty.

Interstate diplomacy always occurs in the shadow of this domestic competition. Consider a foreign power who wishes to reduce an incumbent's risk of removal. The foreign power might hope to extract some future concession from the incumbent, or perceive the incumbent to be more closely aligned on relevant policy matters as compared to his likely replacement—or simply prefer to avoid the uncertainty and instability associated with regime change. In any case, because a visit entails a substantial opportunity cost for the visitor—as well as a potential reputational cost, in the case of an adverse outcome—observers cannot dismiss the visit as mere "cheap talk". Rather, the visit represents a decision by the visitor, made on the basis of his private information, to make a costly investment of time and reputation in order to reap a future benefit, the enjoyment of which depends on his diplomatic counterpart remaining in office.

Two interconnected mechanisms induce a relationship between state visits and an incumbent's survival in office. First, a *selection* process leads the foreign power to conduct visits with leaders who are ex ante more secure in office. Second, as a consequence of the selection mechanism and the information it reveals, a state visit performs a *deterrent* function, which strengthens a leader's hold on power. This deterrent effect follows from the belief among the leader's domestic opponents that the visiting power is privy to some relevant facts to which they themselves may not be—a belief that is especially well-founded with regards to a foreign power with a $75 billion annual foreign intelligence budget, as has been the case for the United States in the 21st century (DeVine, 2018).[3]

[3]This informational structure complements existing theories of domestic opponents revealing private information to foreign observers; see Schultz (1998). Note that our theory does not assume the foreign power to be better informed than the domestic opponents, but simply that it is (in part) independently informed.

Upon observing the signal of the visit, potential challengers lower their expectation of the probability that a challenge against the incumbent will be successful, and therefore become less likely to take part in one. In short, state visits are both cause and consequence of leader survival.

World powers, of course, have a variety of means for supporting their allies' survival in office.[4] Why would in-person diplomacy be the weapon of choice in deterring domestic opposition? One basic advantage of the state visit over other policy instruments is its visibility and intuitive comprehensibility to an information-constrained domestic audience.[5] Whereas the significance of an arrangement regarding military training or bilateral investment, for instance, can be obscured by complexity and lack of media coverage, the pomp and ceremony accompanying a state visit convey a fairly unambiguous message of mutual support among leaders. Further, to the extent that a world leader suffers reputational costs for openly supporting incumbents who are subsequently removed from office, public attention is a necessary condition for such costs to be realized. The visibility of the visit both enables it to serve as a signal to the target audience, and raises the prospect of costs for the visitor which make the signal credible. The theorized signaling mechanism, however, need not depend on any sort of premeditation or deliberate communication between sender and receiver. The information conveyed by the visit arises naturally from the foreign power's incentive to invest diplomatic capital in relations with stable incumbents.

Our theoretical model gives rise to the central empirical prediction that visits from a foreign power should enhance the recipient leader's survival in office. This prediction receives strong support from an analysis of U.S. diplomatic activity from 1960 to 2013: a leader's risk of removal is reduced by an estimated 60-70% following a visit to the U.S., or a visit from the U.S. President to that leader's home country. The effect persists when conditioning on a wide range of publicly observable measures of leader strength, lending support to the notion that visits serve to reveal the visitor's private information. Visits

[4] See McManus and Yarhi-Milo (2017) for a discussion of the menu of options available to signal support for proteges in the face of external (rather than internal) threats.

[5] Previous research has considered the public nature of diplomatic visits; see, for instance, Goldsmith and Horiuchi (2009).

reduce the risk of both regular and irregular removal, for leaders who do and do not receive bilateral U.S. aid, and their impact persists in both election and non-election years. Visits are systematically reciprocated with policy concessions, in the form of UNGA votes and receipts of U.S. exports. And consistent with our theorized informational mechanism, a visit's impact is highest when the recipient appears to be the least secure in office. These findings demonstrate that in-person diplomacy is a powerful yet underexamined instrument of statecraft through which world leaders can influence political developments abroad.

Related Literature

Existing scientific research on in-person diplomatic visits is sparse. A limited number of empirical studies have treated state visits as observable measures of latent quantities of interest, using them as "indicators of foreign policy objectives" (Ekmekci and Yildirim 2013) or as denoting which countries a leader hopes to "cultivate relations with" (Kastner and Saunders 2012). Other articles consider whether leader visits correlate with trade activity (Nitsch 2007; Yeo and Lee 2009). Lebovic and Saunders (2016) provide a rigorous empirical analysis of characteristics that make certain countries more or less attractive targets of diplomatic visits by U.S. Presidents. Yet these studies do not consider why top-level U.S. officials would ever choose to engage in face-to-face diplomatic visits in the first place, and thus leave unresolved the motivating puzzle put forward at the outset of this article: why leaders do not delegate diplomatic activity to their agents, why they conduct visits publicly and in person, and why they treat the visit as a thing of material value.

A further limitation of the existing body of research on diplomatic visits is its almost exclusive focus on diplomatic activity in the context of international hostilities (Holmes 2013; Holmes and Yarhi-Milo 2016; Wong 2016; McManus and Yarhi-Milo 2017; Druckman and Wallensteen 2017; McManus 2018). As Figure 1 indicates, crisis diplomacy can only account for a small and decreasing share of diplomatic visits that occur. While in-

person diplomacy may be important for understanding international crises, international crises are certainly not sufficient for explaining in-person diplomacy. Further, most leaders' primary threat to survival in office arises not from foreign military conflict, but from removal by domestic opponents.[6] By analyzing the relationship between diplomatic visits and domestic political survival, our theory focuses on what has proven to be the predominant risk faced by leaders, and the overriding concern driving their decision-making, across regime types and throughout modern history.

State Visits and Leader Survival

We begin with an informal presentation of our theoretical argument, illustrated by a series of case studies. Throughout the discussion, we differentiate between a foreign power who grants a visit, and a domestic incumbent who receives it; our focus is on the political survival of the latter. The primary distinction of interest in our theory pertains to characteristics of the two leaders and the countries they lead, rather than the location of the visit itself, so we apply the same terminology to refer to the respective leaders regardless of where the visit occurs. After formalizing our argument in the subsequent section, we will return to a more precise discussion of the nature of the relationship between the two leaders and the scope conditions under which our theory should apply.

Visits as Exchange

State visits, especially those granted by powerful states to weaker leaders, are often highly valued by the recipient. As such, visits can be proffered as one end of an exchange between the two states. One prominent beneficiary of this tactic was Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, who was known to place considerable stock in state visits with his European counterparts. In 1978, the British government advised the Queen that granting a state visit was a "mandatory" component of an arms deal with Ceausescu; a trade deal in the

[6] According to the Archigos dataset (Goemans, Gleditsch, and Chiozza 2009), only 2% of national leaders since 1875 have been removed by foreign countries or by actors with foreign support.

automotive industry between France and Romania was likewise smoothed out by a state visit, which French President d'Estaing later described as an "unavoidable calamity" (Goldstein 2008). A series of diplomatic visits in 2007 between French President Sarkozy and Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi reveal a similar type of exchange taking place. Publicly, these visits culminated in the announcement of economic deals including Libya's purchase of €10 billion of Airbus planes and a grant of exclusive negotiating rights to French weapons manufacturers for Libya's future arms purchases (Murphy and Gehmlich 2007); more recently it has been alleged (though not yet adjudicated) that preceding the visits, the Libyan government contributed €50 million—more than twice the total cap on campaign expenditures—to Sarkozy's 2007 election campaign (McAuley 2018). These substantial concessions by Gaddafi do not seem to have purchased anything from Sarkozy beyond the visits themselves. Incidentally, a state visit also played a role in Gaddafi's ultimate removal in 2011. When the Obama administration sought UNSC approval for military intervention in Libya, the small African nation of Gabon provided a crucial vote in support of Resolution 1973, which passed with just one vote more than required. In return, Obama granted Gabonese President Ali Bongo Ondimba a White House visit in June 2011, hosting him at the president's private guest residence. Bongo publicly called for Gaddafi to step down during the visit, being the first African leader to do so, and providing an important source of support and legitimation for a major foreign policy priority of the Obama administration (O'Grady 2016).

The pattern that emerges across these examples is that of an incumbent leader making some material concession to a foreign power in exchange for a diplomatic visit. A natural question that arises, then, is why these leaders find a visit to be something of value. We propose that the answer can be found in the visit's impact on leader survival. In political settings like those governed by Causescu, Gaddafi, and Bongo, citizens or ruling coalition members who wish to overthrow their leader are incompletely informed as to the leader's ability to withstand a challenge to power. Taking subversive action against the incumbent, such as protesting or participating in a coup, pays off if the attempt is successful and the leader is removed; if the leader survives, unsuccessful challengers should

expect to suffer retribution. The decision of whether or not to take part in an opposition effort thus depends on one's belief of the incumbent's strength in office. In this context, any credible, public signal of the leader's strength can serve to deter potential opponents from taking action. So it is clear to see why an incumbent would place considerable value on such a signal.

An in-person diplomatic visit provides a credible and public signal of the visitor's high assessment of the recipient leader's strength because of the conditional costs and benefits associated with the visit. Whatever future benefit the visitor hopes to gain from the visit—be it a direct concession, as in Causescu's grant of Romanian market access to foreign exporters; a mutually beneficial agreement, as in Gaddafi's purchase of Airbus planes; or a more diffuse commitment of support in foreign policy matters, as characterized the U.S.'s relationship with Gabon for the remainder of Obama's tenure—its enjoyment will generally be contingent on the recipient of the visit remaining in office. That the foreign power in each case was willing to expend some effort in order to reap some conditional benefit demonstrated their confidence that their diplomatic counterpart would stay in office long enough to deliver that benefit.

This sort of public vote of confidence in an incumbent will influence his domestic opponents' assessment of his strength insofar as they believe the sender of the signal to have access to some relevant information that they themselves do not observe directly. It is worth noting that domestic opponents need not believe the foreign power to be *better* informed than they are as to their own leader's strength, but simply that he be *independently* informed, drawing his inferences (at least in part) from a separate set of sources and observations. When assessing signals sent by a major world leader, who oversees massive intelligence and diplomatic bureaucracies tasked with gathering information on foreign governments and political developments, such a belief on the part of domestic opponents is certainly well founded. So by our theory, the aforementioned visits played an important role in suppressing, for some time, the discontent that ultimately manifested in Libya's 2011 rebellion, and in securing Bongo's hold on power shortly after he entered office in the wake of the previous president's unexpected death due to cardiac

failure (O'Grady 2016). Had d'Estaing believed Causescu to be less secure in office, a visit with him would not have been an "unavoidable calamity," but an entirely avoidable one—and the decision to avoid it would have been far less discouraging to Causescu's domestic opponents.

Costs of a Visit

A crucial feature enabling the state visit to serve as a credible signal of incumbent strength is that it imposes costs on the visitor. These costs can take various forms. First, there is a simple opportunity cost, which is borne regardless of the outcome of the visit: traveling abroad entails a considerable investment of a leader's time, in addition to that of his policy aides and security personnel, which cannot then be spent pursuing other political objectives. As will become clear through our formal model, the central claims relating diplomatic visits to leader survival are supported if this opportunity cost is the only cost that the foreign power faces. Yet we can also conceive of the visiting leader facing the prospect of some reputational cost, imposed by his own domestic audience or by other international observers, if the recipient of the visit is removed from office shortly after the visit. We should note that a number of factors render these costs difficult to observe and quantify explicitly: reputational costs can be diffuse, and should rarely be borne on the equilibrium path of play (Schultz 2001). But we might gain some understanding of these costs by considering those cases when a visit notably does *not* occur.

One telling example can be found in U.S. diplomatic relations with Nicaragua during the latter half of the Cold War. U.S. presidents exchanged visits with Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza DeBayle in 1967, 1968, 1970 and 1971, and Nixon sent his Secretary of State to Managua in 1973; but in the face of an increasing challenge to power from the Sandinista National Liberation Front, deteriorating economic conditions, and worsening human rights abuses by the Somoza government, visits were cut off for the remainder of Somoza's tenure. Importantly, however, U.S. bilateral aid and covert assistance were maintained at high levels through Somoza's removal in 1979. It does not seem to be the case that U.S. presidents no longer wanted Somoza to remain in office

after 1973; rather, what they wanted to avoid was any public demonstration of *wanting* him to remain in office after that point.

A similar pattern can be observed in recent U.S. relations with Egypt. Prior to the unanticipated revolution of January 2011, Egypt was a frequent recipient of U.S. diplomatic visits, accompanied by broad declarations of partnership and support and regular deliveries of military assistance. Yet with the outbreak of large-scale protests, despite deep interest in the political outcome, the Obama administration was careful not to engage directly with Mubarak. President Obama did not meet with Mubarak during this time, nor did his Secretary of State, nor any other current State Department officials; instead, the administration sent a former ambassador, who had been out of government service for over a decade, as an envoy to communicate U.S. views (Stolberg 2011). This tactic, we argue, was employed so as to avoid any impression of showing support to the imminently collapsing Mubarak regime. In contrast, Obama did not hesitate to extol his strong relationship with King Abdullah II of Jordan during a televised visit in the Oval Office in May of 2011, amidst several months of major antigovernment protests throughout the kingdom. Sure enough, King Abdullah proved capable of weathering that particular political storm.

Generalizing from these examples, we suggest that powerful foreign leaders anticipate facing some reputational cost for their diplomatic engagements with incumbents who are soon to be removed. On the one hand, we might think of this cost as a sort of amplification of the opportunity cost of a visit. When the recipient of the visit is removed from office shortly after the visit, the visitor's domestic audience may draw unfavorable inferences about their own leader's competence and punish him accordingly. U.S. presidents did not want to be seen investing energy in their relations with Somoza or Mubarak, or in trying to keep them in power, when it would soon be revealed that their efforts were for nought. Alternatively, the reputational punishment may be driven by the audience's normative concerns. While voters in the U.S., for instance, generally prefer to promote democracy and human rights abroad, they understand that other priorities can override

these cosmopolitan motives.[7] diplomatic engagement with dictators is often accepted as a necessary evil. However, once an undemocratic leader is removed from office, any support he received from the U.S. president appears, in retrospect, to have been less necessary and less morally justifiable. World leaders, not wanting to find themselves on the "wrong side of history," will avoid public displays of support to illegitimate regimes on the verge of collapse. Thus the combination of Somoza's human rights violations and his tenuous hold on power rendered him a prime candidate for material assistance but a toxic partner for diplomatic visits.

Formal Model

We now turn to a formalization of our argument linking diplomatic visits to leader survival. Due to space constraints, we offer a stylized treatment here, with a full analysis deferred to the supplemental appendix.

Our model features two strategic actors. The first, labeled F for *Foreign Leader*, can either visit or not visit the incumbent who is at risk of removal. The second, labeled C for *Citizen*, can attempt to remove the incumbent, or abstain from doing so. This C player might represent a group of citizens who can participate in a protest or rebellion; a member or faction of a ruling coalition who can take part in a coup; an interest group or voting bloc within a political coalition that can endorse an electoral challenger; or any other actor who may be pivotal in unseating an incumbent. Our model of the domestic interaction between the citizen and incumbent draws from the literature on global games of regime change, in which individual agents must coordinate under incomplete information regarding a state variable, θ, in order to upend a status quo (Carlsson and Van Damme 1993; Morris and Shin 2003; Dewan and Myatt 2007; Little 2012; Casper and Tyson 2014; Authors 2019). We simplify our model to include only a single citizen; the substantive intuition is similar to that of the many-agent game, though in the latter case the impact of a diplomatic visit would be amplified by the citizens' strategic coordination.

[7] For discussion of U.S. public opinion towards democracy promotion, see Tomz and Weeks (2013) and Brancati (2014).

Whether a challenge against the incumbent succeeds depends on the state variable, θ: if C attempts to remove the incumbent and $\theta < 0$, regime change (RC) occurs; but if C attempts removal and $\theta \geq 0$, or if C does not attempt removal, the status quo (SQ) is maintained. This latent θ, which we refer to as regime strength, captures a multitude of incumbent characteristics—his control over resources or over the security apparatus, his latent popularity among the elites or masses, his ability to promote economic growth, or even the degree of foreign backing he enjoys—and reduces them to a single dimension for analytical tractability. In keeping with the global games literature, neither F nor C observes θ directly, but rather they receive noisy public and private signals. The sequence of the game is as follows: both players observe their signals and form beliefs about θ; F decides whether or not to visit; and, having observed F's decision, C decides whether or not to challenge the incumbent.

The players' payoffs are represented as follows:

			Foreign	*Status*	*Regime*
Citizen	$\theta < 0$	$\theta \geq 0$	*Power*	*Quo*	*Change*
Challenge	δ	$-\kappa$	*Visit*	$\psi + \eta - \omega$	$-\lambda - \omega$
Abstain	0	0	*Not Visit*	ψ	0

An individual who participates in a successful challenge enjoys a benefit δ, which can represent either selective benefits awarded by the incoming leadership, or the expressive utility of participating in political change. An unsuccessful challenge against the ruler yields (in expectation) a retaliation cost of κ. The foreign power's payoff is likewise a function of the action he takes and the outcome of the domestic power struggle. F enjoys an unconditional benefit ψ from the incumbent retaining office, regardless of whether or not F visits; this can either reflect a genuine affinity for or policy alignment with the incumbent, as compared to his likely replacement, or a simple preference for avoiding instability and disruption of the status quo. The η term represents the additional payoff from whatever deal, concession, or future favor the incumbent can offer in exchange for the visit. Regardless of whether the incumbent survives in office, F pays a cost of ω for visiting, representing the opportunity cost of F's time and resources that the visit con-

sumed. F pays an additional reputational cost of λ if the incumbent is removed following the visit. From this payoff structure, we observe that a citizen will only participate in a challenge when she is sufficiently confident it will succeed, and a foreign leader will only visit when he is sufficiently confident the incumbent will survive.[8]

Of central interest in our model is the impact of a diplomatic visit on the citizen's posterior belief of regime strength. Given that F wants to visit strong incumbents, and given that F's decision is based partly on his private information, F's decision of whether or not to visit has the effect of credibly revealing that private information. The citizen incorporates this revelation into her own private assessment of regime strength; and for a range of citizen types, the observation of a visit deters her from challenging the incumbent when she otherwise would.

Hypotheses

Equilibrium analysis yields a number of testable empirical implications, which we discuss here and derive formally in the appendix.

> *Hypothesis 1 (Selection).* The foreign power is more likely to visit (i) incumbents who he believes, on the basis of private and public information, to be stronger in office; (ii) incumbents with greater policy concessions to offer; and (iii) incumbents with whom F has a higher baseline affinity.

Because the foreign power faces conditional costs and benefits from a visit, the desirability of the visit increases in the size of the benefits and in the likelihood of the incumbent remaining in office long enough to deliver them. An important implication of this hypothesis is that, after perfectly conditioning on all public information of regime strength and all measures of costs, benefits, and baseline affinity, we would still expect to observe

[8] A separate possibility is that F visits incumbents whom he intends to support materially, rather than (or in addition to) incumbents whom he believes to be sufficiently secure in office. This consideration can be incorporated our theory, but is not fully consistent with our empirical findings; see "Visits and Policy Concessions" below.

variation in F's visit decision that is driven by F's private information. This leads to our second hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 2 (Deterrence).* A visit from a foreign power reduces an incumbent's risk of removal from office.

A visit credibly reveals F's confidence in the incumbent's survival, and because F has some private information, this revelation deters (some subset of) the incumbent's opponents from mounting a challenge.

The next two hypotheses relate to factors that moderate the effects of visits on regime survival.

> *Hypothesis 3 (Ex ante likelihood).* A visit has a greater impact on regime survival when public information indicates that a visit is ex ante less likely to occur.

This relationship is depicted graphically in Figure A1 in the appendix, and the intuition is straightforward. If publicly observable conditions indicate that the incumbent is very secure in office, and that a visit is thus likely to occur, the occurrence of a visit is unsurprising; so the domestic opponents do not substantially revise their posterior beliefs of regime strength relative to their prior beliefs, and the visit reduces the risk of removal only slightly. If, on the other hand, prior conditions dictate that the foreign power is extremely unlikely to visit, the occurrence of the visit is highly informative, as the citizens infer that the foreign power must have observed an especially positive private signal of regime strength. A visit under such conditions should have a significantly greater effect in reducing the incumbent's risk of removal. Relatedly:

> *Hypothesis 4 (Precision of private information).* A visit has a greater impact on regime survival when the visitor has more precise private information on regime strength.

A standard logic of Bayesian updating implies that a more precise signal receives relatively more weight in one's posterior beliefs. When the citizens know that the foreign power has

particularly precise private information, his decision of whether or not to visit becomes a particularly informative public signal, which will be more influential in shifting the citizens' posterior beliefs of regime strength. Finally:

> *Hypothesis 5 (Policy concessions).* Conditional on surviving in office, the recipient of a visit reciprocates the visitor with a policy concession.

That visits constitute one end of a material exchange between leaders is central to our explanation of why visits occur with the frequency that they do, and the conditional nature of that exchange explains why visits provide credible public signals of incumbent strength.

Scope

Having formalized our theoretical argument, we can now consider more explicitly the scope of its applicability. First, in what types of political setting does a "citizen" face a payoff structure like the one we have presented? Our theory would seem most directly applicable to an authoritarian context, where the status quo is generally undesirable and the costs of an unsuccessful challenge are severe. However, this payoff structure is not restricted to autocratic systems. A similar logic drives the decisions of individual voters and communities in democratic settings in which targeted provision of public benefits is conditioned on past political support. Schwartz (1987) models an individual's decision to vote as being driven not by her belief in her potential pivotality in the election outcome, but rather by her (far more realistic) belief that her vote may be pivotal in determining the size of rewards that the electoral winner later delivers to her precinct or district. For a voter in this situation, regardless of her true ideological position, it is ex-post preferable to have been supportive of the winning candidate. Gottlieb (2016) and Adida, Gottlieb, Kramon, and McClendon (2016) likewise theorize voters in developing democracies as facing coordination dilemmas in moving away from inefficient clientelistic equilibria, and show that public information helps overcome these dilemmas. A diplomatic visit, we argue, can serve a similar role in coordinating voters' decisions. It is easy to see how the incentive structure presented here also applies to organized interest groups, or to parties

or voting blocs within a governing coalition. The necessary condition for our model's applicability is that the citizen in a given context has an incentivize to support whichever candidate proves successful, but that she must make her decision of whom to support under incomplete information

The next question to consider is what types of foreign leader can be represented by our model's F player. The model first requires that the foreign power have some private information about the incumbent's strength. Recall that F's action can be informative and influential even if his private information is less precise than the private signal observed by the domestic opponents. That the U.S. federal government, for instance, has spent $75 billion per year in intelligence over the last decade (DeVine 2018)—the time period for which these data are publicly available—suggests that its private signals should actually be quite precise, and hence, that a U.S. diplomatic visit should be quite informative.

Additionally, the model requires that the foreign power have a wide range of foreign policy objectives which a concession (η) from another leader can help accomplish. The formal results do not depend on a strictly positive value of ψ, meaning that our theory can account for visits that occur when the foreign power has no baseline affinity for the incumbent. In fact, a sufficient condition for the equilibrium to hold is simply that $\eta > \omega > 0$: a visit is ex-post beneficial for the visitor if and only if the incumbent survives. While our model allows for F to be susceptible to a reputational cost for backing failed incumbents, the results do not require it; the central claims hold if the foreign power is only constrained by the opportunity cost of his time.

Intuitively, it would seem that if the above conditions hold for any major power, they would do so to the fullest degree for the U.S. As such, we focus our empirical analysis on diplomatic visits of the U.S. President. Identifying the full set of leaders for which these conditions are satisfied is an empirical question which we leave to future research.

Empirical Analysis

Our theory gives rise to the central empirical implication that leaders who receive diplomatic visits from major foreign powers face a lower risk of removal from office than those who do not. This prediction arises from two intrinsically related mechanisms: a selection effect, whereby stronger leaders are more likely to receive a visit, and a deterrent effect, whereby the visit itself enhances the recipient leader's survival. The remainder of the paper seeks to provide empirical evidence in support of these two mechanisms, as well the three additional hypotheses presented above.

Data and Estimation

We test our theoretical predictions with data on diplomatic visits by U.S. Presidents from 1960 to 2013. These data are available on the website of the State Department's Office of the Historian, with visits listed separately by travels of the President abroad, and visits of foreign leaders to the U.S.[9] We construct our main independent variables of interest as a series of indicator variables at the leader-year level: *Visit in US*, *Visit from US Pres.*, and a pooled measure, *Any Visit*, which takes on a value of 1 if either type of visit occurs. In the cases that a visit occurs during a leader transition year, we assign the visit to the incoming leader if the start date of the visit falls after the date of transition, or if it falls before the transition date but the description of the visit specifies that the meeting was held with the incoming leader. The primary dependent variable in our analysis is leader survival in office, for which we use Goemans et al. (2009)'s Archigos dataset.

We seek to operationalize a range of other quantities from our theoretical model. First, our empirical analysis must, to the extent possible, take account of the publicly observable information regarding regime strength. If we could condition perfectly on

[9]The State Department further classifies some visits as "state visits", "working visits", "official visits", and so on. In our main analyses, we pool these categories of visits together, under the assumption that the distinctions are largely unnoticed or unappreciated by the relevant domestic audiences. In Table A8 in the appendix, we separate the visits by classification, and show that their effects are similar.

all factors that constitute this public information, then any systematic relationship that remained between visits and leader survival would be attributable to the visitor's private information and the revelation thereof. To this end, the subsequent analyses include controls for GDP growth, income, and population; political institutions; leader age and resource rents, which have been found to be strong predictors of survival in office;[10] and incidence of protests, strikes, riots, and government purges, all of which indicate some degree of political instability. Because we wish to identify the *informational* impact of visits, independent of any material benefits that may accompany them, we will include controls for trade with and aid from the visiting foreign power, as well as the recipient's status as a mutual defense ally with the foreign power. We also want to avoid any spurious correlation that would arise from foreign powers refraining from visiting an incumbent during the latter's election year, so we control for the occurrence of elections for the office of the national leader.

From Archigos's record of leaders' dates of birth, we create the control variable *Relative Age*, which is normalized by subtracting from a leader's age in a given year the life expectancy in Sweden at that time, as a proxy for life expectancy under the best available medical care. We use Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, and Morrow (2003)'s Selectorate (S) and Winning Coalition (W) size as measures of political institutions. W represents the relative number of supporters a leader needs to remain in office, and S denotes the pool of potential replacements for the winning coalition. A larger W corresponds to more democratic systems, and a lower W/S ratio indicates that a leader has a more secure hold on power.[11] From Hyde and Marinov (2012)'s NELDA dataset, we create a dummy variable indicating whether an election occurred for the office of the national leader during a given leader-year observation (attributing an election only to the outgoing leader in the case of a transition). For the remaining data sources, see Table A1 in the appendix.

[10] On leader age, see Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2018); on resource rents, see Wright, Frantz, and Geddes (2015).

[11] Robustness checks using the Polity IV measure are reported in Table A4 of the online appendix, and yield consistent results.

Our unit of observation is the leader-year. To test the first hypothesis regarding the selective assignment of visits, we use a set logit models. For Hypotheses 2 through 4, the primary outcome of interest is leader survival, so we conduct hazard analyses to estimate the impact of state visits. Specifically, we use a Weibull proportional hazards model, of the form $h(t_j) = pt_j^{p-1}e^{(X'_{jt}\beta)}$, where leaders are indexed by j, t indicates a leader's year in office, X_j is a vector of covariates, and p is a shape parameter which is estimated as a function of W, the winning coalition size. In contrast to the more common Cox proportional hazards model, the Weibull model allows a leader's baseline hazard rate, $h_0(t_j) = pt_j^{p-1}$, to vary by regime type. This flexibility is especially important given that a democrat's risk of removal increases or remains flat over time, while an autocrat's hold on power is weakest in the early years of his tenure but strengthens over time.[12] Finally, we examine whether visits are reciprocated with policy concessions using a series of fixed-effect OLS regression models.

Main Results: Selection and Deterrence

We first consider the factors that predict U.S. diplomatic visits, as per Hypothesis 1. The three columns of Table 1 report the predictors of visits from the U.S. President, visits to the U.S., and the pooled measure of visits in either location. The results across all three models are largely consistent with our theoretical predictions. U.S. Presidents are more willing to grant visits to countries with larger economies, to those that receive more imports from the U.S., and to those serving on the U.N. Security Council, as those are the countries with more valuable concessions to offer. The U.S. conducts more visits with leaders for whom they have a stronger baseline affinity, as reflected in UNGA ideal point distance and bilateral economic and military aid. Presidents are reluctant to conduct visits with incumbents whose survival in office is uncertain, as indicated by the incumbent's age, election timing, and measures of instability,[13] but eager to visit

[12] See appendix for comparison of the estimates produced by the Cox and Weibull models.

[13] The instability measure used here is an inverse covariance weighted index, constructed from (logged) counts of protests, riots, strikes, purges (see appendix for details). Using this composite measure is more informative for present purposes than including all individual components, due to the

leaders whose security in office is buoyed by high economic growth. A country's winning coalition size (a close analog to measures of democracy or autocracy) has no direct effect on the likelihood of visits; however, holding W constant, a larger selectorate size—which enhances a leader's security in office—does increase the likelihood of a visit. That visits are positively predicted by imports *from* the US, but negatively predicted by exports *to* the U.S., suggests that visits do not merely follow economic activity, but rather serve as a thing of value offered by the President in exchange for a grant of market access. Perhaps surprisingly, U.S. allies are consistently *less* likely to receive diplomatic visits than are non-allied leaders, ceteris paribus, lending credence to our claim that diplomatic activity is more concerned with domestic deterrence than international deterrence.[14]

The tests of our second hypothesis—visits enhance the recipient's survival—are reported in Table 2. Columns 1 and 2 report the effects of visit differentiated by location. These results show that visits to the U.S. and visits from the U.S. President are strong predictors of leader survival in office, significant at $p < 0.001$. Columns 4 and 5 pool these different types of visit into a single explanatory variable, *Any Visit*. In all models, the magnitude of the effects is substantial: the exponentiated coefficients yield proportional hazard estimates ranging from 0.47 to 0.28, meaning that, all else equal, a visit is associated with a 53-72% reduction in the risk of removal from office. For comparison, the magnitude by which an election affects the risk of removal is only slightly larger than that of a U.S. diplomatic visit. As reported in the online appendix, and discussed further below, these results are robust to a range of alternative measures and specifications, and hold across various subsets of the sample.

Table 3 considers the effect of diplomatic visits on different means of leader removal, as coded by the Archigos dataset. Regular removals are defined as cases in which "the leader is removed in accordance with explicit rules or established conventions of his or her particular country," with all other removals coded as irregular. Visits dramatically reduce the risk of both regular and irregular removal, and the impact is substantially

component variables' high collinearity.

[14]We should be cautious in interpreting this coefficient, however, as the model includes several variables which may be "post-treatment" with respect to defense alliances.

Table 1: Predictors of U.S. Presidential Visits (Logit)

DV:	Visit From U.S. Pres. (1)	Visit In U.S. (2)	Any Visit (3)
Rel. Age	-0.009	-0.018***	-0.018***
	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Winning Coalition Size (W)	-0.623	0.243	0.193
	(0.479)	(0.330)	(0.315)
Selectorate Size (S)	0.501	0.636**	0.535*
	(0.482)	(0.225)	(0.224)
Election	-0.304+	-0.557***	-0.596***
	(0.184)	(0.132)	(0.123)
Ln(Pop)	0.084	-0.011	-0.006
	(0.103)	(0.089)	(0.084)
Ln(GDP)	0.271*	0.170+	0.203*
	(0.125)	(0.089)	(0.090)
Growth	0.027**	0.019**	0.021**
	(0.011)	(0.006)	(0.007)
Instability$_{t-1}$	-0.625+	-0.493**	-0.647***
	(0.331)	(0.180)	(0.178)
UGNA Ideal Pt. Dist.$_{t-1}$	-0.433***	-0.494***	-0.515***
	(0.125)	(0.099)	(0.097)
UNSC (rotating)	-0.040	0.388**	0.404**
	(0.186)	(0.126)	(0.128)
Ally$_{t-1}$	-0.313+	-0.312*	-0.317*
	(0.190)	(0.158)	(0.153)
Ln(Imports from US$_{t-1}$)	0.389**	0.404***	0.415***
	(0.119)	(0.068)	(0.070)
Ln(Exports to US$_{t-1}$)	-0.052	-0.114*	-0.105*
	(0.088)	(0.049)	(0.050)
Ln(Econ Aid$_{t-1}$)	0.005	0.052***	0.051***
	(0.019)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Ln(Mil Aid$_{t-1}$)	0.035**	0.014	0.017+
	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Resource Rents (% GDP)	-0.003	-0.010	-0.012
	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Observations	5259	5352	5352

Note: Observations are leader-years. All models include year fixed effects. (The MLE procedure in Column 1 automatically drops observations from 1976 because no presidential visits abroad were recorded that year.) Standard errors clustered by country. $+p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$

larger for irregular removal (though less precisely estimated, given the infrequency of irregular removal). This finding is consistent with the notion that coordination dilemmas are especially acute when it comes to removing a leader by irregular means, and that public signals are especially important in overcoming the inherent risk and uncertainty that accompany such an effort.

Table 2: Weibull Hazard Analysis of Leader Removal

	By Visit Type		Pooled	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Visit from US Pres.	-0.753***	-0.972***		
	(0.196)	(0.214)		
Visit to US	-0.944***	-1.144***		
	(0.111)	(0.112)		
Any Visit			-1.057***	-1.286***
			(0.112)	(0.117)
Election	1.566***	1.549***	1.566***	1.552***
	(0.103)	(0.117)	(0.103)	(0.117)
Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Country FE	N	Y	N	Y
Year FE	N	Y	N	Y
Ln(p)				
W	1.099***	0.735***	1.109***	0.754***
	(0.288)	(0.190)	(0.285)	(0.190)
Const.	-1.018***	-0.407**	-1.024***	-0.417**
	(0.240)	(0.143)	(0.239)	(0.144)
Observations	5610	5610	5610	5610
Number of Leaders	1062	1062	1062	1062
Failures	855	855	855	855
LogLikelihood	-928.194	-658.993	-926.142	-658.130

Note: Observations are leader-years. Failures are removal from office by any means. Covariates included but not reported: Rel. Age, W, S, Ln(Population), Ln(GDP), Growth, Ln(Riots$_{t-1}$), Ln(Purges$_{t-1}$), Ln(Strikes$_{t-1}$), Ln(Protests$_{t-1}$), Ln(Imports from US$_{t-1}$), Ln(Exports to US$_{t-1}$), Ln(Econ Aid$_{t-1}$), Ln(Mil Aid$_{t-1}$), Ally$_{t-1}$, Resource Rents (% GDP). Full specification reported in appendix. Standard errors clustered by country. $^{*}p < 0.05$,** $p < 0.01$,*** $p < 0.001$.

The Informational Mechanism

To examine more thoroughly the informational mechanism linking visits to regime survival, we seek to test Hypotheses 3 and 4. First, the impact of a visit on leader survival is predicted to be greatest when a visit is ex ante least likely to occur (because the regime is believed to be weak), and lowest when a visit is most expected. Empirical testing of this hypothesized relationship is limited to some degree by the lack of any direct measure of the ex ante belief of incumbent strength. We can, however, employ various proxy measures. Table 4 uses the incidence of strikes, protests, riots, and purges—in particular, a composite index of these incidents, normalized with a mean of zero and standard deviation of one—as indicators of the common prior knowledge of regime instability. We find that, in the absence of a visit, instability increases the risk of removal; but if a visit occurs in the midst of political instability, the impact of the visit is substantially larger than the impact of a visit granted to a regime perceived to be stable ex ante.

Hypothesis 4 predicts that a visit will have a greater impact on regime survival when

Table 3: Weibull Hazard Analysis of Leader Removal, by Means of Removal

	Any Removal (1)	Irregular (2)	Regular (3)
Visit from US Pres.	-0.972***	-1.691*	-0.948***
	(0.214)	(0.797)	(0.232)
Visit to US	-1.144***	-2.019**	-1.130***
	(0.112)	(0.641)	(0.114)
Controls	Y	Y	Y
Country FE	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y
Ln(p)			
W	0.735***	-1.433**	1.130***
	(0.190)	(0.463)	(0.195)
Const.	-0.407**	0.468***	-0.728***
	(0.143)	(0.112)	(0.166)
Observations	5610	5610	5610
Number of Leaders	1062	1062	1062
Failures	855	135	718
LogLikelihood	-658.993	-149.920	-541.710

Note: Observations are leader-years. All controls from Table 2 included but not reported. Standard errors clustered by country. $^{*}p < 0.05$,** $p < 0.01$,*** $p < 0.001$.

the visiting foreign power has more precise private information about the incumbent's strength. This concept of precision is likewise difficult to operationalize. Here we utilize a measure of prior CIA involvement in a given country; in particular, we use an indicator for whether the CIA covertly supported a leader in a given country at any point prior to the year of analysis, as coded by Berger, Easterly, Nunn, and Satyanath (2013), and interact it with the visit variables. The basic assumption is that the U.S. has more accurate intelligence about political affairs in those countries in which U.S. intelligence agencies have a history of covert involvement. To isolate the conditional effect of private information from the conditional effect of material assistance, these models also include interactions of the visit variables with both (lagged) economic and military aid. Our prediction receives some support from Table 5. U.S. Presidential visits have a greater impact on an incumbent's survival when the choice to visit is supported by better U.S. intelligence. In both Tables 4 and 5, the interactive effects of visits in the U.S. with the moderator of interest are statistically significant; the interaction with visits outside the U.S., however, are correctly signed but fall short of standard thresholds of significance.

Table 4: Weibull Hazard Analysis of Leader Removal, by Regime Instability

AnyVisit	-1.298***	
	(0.119)	
Instability_{t-1}	0.120*	0.124*
	(0.050)	(0.050)
Any Visit × Instability_{t-1}	-0.269^{+}	
	(0.139)	
Visit from U.S. Pres.		-0.994***
		(0.213)
Visit from U.S. Pres.× Instability_{t-1}		-0.249
		(0.205)
Visit in U.S.		-1.162***
		(0.114)
Visit in U.S.× Instability_{t-1}		-0.294*
		(0.147)
Ln(p)		
W	0.746***	0.727***
	(0.193)	(0.193)
Const.	-0.409**	-0.399**
	(0.145)	(0.144)
Observations	5610	5610
Number of Leaders	1062	1062
Failures	855	855
LogLikelihood	-655.647	-655.778

Note: Observations are leader-years. Failure is removal by any means. Instability is index of strikes, protests, riots, and purges. All controls from Table 2 (except for individual instability measures) included but not reported. Standard errors clustered by country. $+p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$

Visits and Policy Concessions

As a further test of our theory's implications, we examine whether visits systematically yield policy concessions from the recipient leader. The first three columns of Table 6 report the results of separate tests with three outcomes: Voeten, Strezhnev, and Bailey (2017)'s measures of ideal point distance from the U.S. in U.N. General Assembly voting, using both the measure based on all UNGA votes and the measure based only on the subset of votes the U.S. State Department has identified as important; and the volume of imports received from the U.S. Note that the outcome variables are measured with a one-year lead relative to the regressors, and that the units in the panel structure are leaders rather than countries; this provides us with an estimate of concessions following visits, conditional on the visit recipient remaining in office, which is precisely our theoretical quantity of interest. All three models find visits to be reciprocated with concessions.

Table 5: Weibull Hazard Analysis of Leader Removal, by CIA Involvement

Any Visit	-1.177***	
	(0.181)	
CIA involvement	-0.257	-0.281
	(0.457)	(0.457)
Any Visit	-0.753+	
× CIA involvement	(0.400)	
Visit from U.S. Pres.		-0.866***
		(0.258)
Visit from U.S. Pres.		-0.376
× CIA involvement		(0.778)
Visit in U.S.		-0.969***
		(0.155)
Visit in U.S.		-0.836*
×CIA involvement		(0.420)
Ln(p)		
W	0.750***	0.722***
	(0.190)	(0.189)
Const.	-0.415**	-0.401**
	(0.144)	(0.142)
Observations	5610	5610
Number of Leaders	1062	1062
Failures	855	855
LogLikelihood	-654.986	-654.724

Note: Observations are leader-years. Failure is removal by any means. All controls from Table 2 included but not reported, as well as interactions between visit variables and military and economic aid (lagged and logged). Standard errors clustered by country. $+p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$

While the concessions reaped from diplomatic visits may often be case-specific and difficult to observe or quantify, we are able to identify concessions in these domains that apply broadly across countries in their relations with the U.S.

The latter three columns of Table 6, however, provide more nuanced insight into the bilateral exchange that a diplomatic visit entails. Each of these outcomes—exports to the U.S., and bilateral economic and military aid from the U.S.—represents a material benefit that the U.S. can offer the recipient leader along with the visit; and each one increases following a visit *to* the U.S., but not following a visit *from* the U.S. In light of this observation, we can interpret a visit from the U.S. President as a more pure case of our theorized exchange: the U.S. President visits an incumbent, gives that incumbent little in the way of material support, but reaches an agreement for a future policy concession from the incumbent—and as a result, the incumbent's risk of removal is substantially

Table 6: Policy Concessions Following a Visit (OLS)

	UNGA Ideal Pt. Dist.$_{t+1}$ (1)	UNGA Ideal Pt. Dist. (Imp.)$_{t+1}$ (2)	Imports from US$_{t+1}$ (ln) (3)	Exports to US$_{t+1}$ (ln) (4)	Econ Aid from US$_{t+1}$ (ln) (5)	Mil Aid from US$_{t+1}$ (ln) (6)
Visit from US Pres.	-0.017^{+} (0.010)	-0.046*** (0.012)	0.040* (0.018)	0.025 (0.026)	-0.044 (0.214)	0.037 (0.214)
Visit to US	-0.024** (0.008)	-0.034*** (0.009)	0.034* (0.015)	0.042* (0.019)	0.171^{+} (0.099)	0.493*** (0.140)
Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Country FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observations	5094	3504	5173	5173	5163	5173
R^2	0.962	0.971	0.969	0.965	0.817	0.745

Note: Observations are leader-years. Controls included but not reported: W, S, Ln(Population), Ln(GDP), Growth, Ln(Econ. Aid$_{t-1}$), Ln(Mil. Aid$_{t-1}$), Ally$_{t-1}$, Ln(Imports from US$_{t-1}$), Ln(Exports to US$_{t-1}$), UNGA Ideal Pt. Dist.$_{t-1}$ (measured by "important" votes for Model 2). Standard errors clustered by country. $+p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$

decreased. This sequence of events is fully consistent with our theory, and difficult to reconcile with other candidate explanations. The survival benefits of a visit to the U.S., on the other hand, reflect a confluence of factors: the revelation of the U.S. President's private information, as well as expectation among the incumbent's constituents of future material benefits from the U.S. This may help account for the fact visits to the U.S. have a similar (or slightly larger) coefficient than do visits from the U.S. (see Tables 2 and 3), despite the fact that a U.S. President traveling to the incumbent's country might incur a greater opportunity cost and thus carry a more informative signal.

That a visit to the U.S. may occur as part of a mutual exchange of material goods, however, does not obviate the importance of our theorized informational mechanism. At a basic level, an account focusing only on the material exchange would still need to provide some explanation as to why the leaders choose to publicize that exchange through a state visit. There may well be complementarities between public visits and material support; indeed, in related work the authors show theoretically how publicity can serve as a force multiplier for material support, drawing attention to it and discouraging opposition efforts to a greater extent than would discreetly delivered assistance (Authors 2019). In any case, however, the role of the visit itself is fundamentally informational. As a robustness check we split the sample by leaders who do and do not receive any bilateral military or economic aid from the U.S., and find that the effects of visits (both in and

out of the U.S.) persist across each subsample (see Table A2 in the appendix).

Robustness and Alternative Explanations

The main results reported in Table 2 are robust to a range of alternative specifications, including: using a Cox rather than a Weibull proportional hazards model (Table A4); replacing the winning coalition (W) measure with Polity score (Table A5); measuring covariates in t rather than $t-1$ (Table A6); imputing missing values (Table A7); and disaggregating visits by their State Department classification (Table A8). In addition, we conduct an instrumental variable analysis that leverages exogenous shifts in priorities between first- and second-term presidents (Tables A9 and A10). Results of all robustness tests are consistent with those reported in the main tables.

Given the robust evidence of a relationship between state visits and leader survival, and specific evidence consistent with our theorized mechanism, we finally consider whether other potential explanations could account for the same empirical findings. As our study is, to our knowledge, the first to explicitly examine the impact of diplomatic visits on domestic political survival, we cannot compare our theory directly to existing arguments in the literature. However, we can consider alternative explanations that arise from intuition or from related empirical work.

One possible concern is that relationship between diplomatic visits and leader survival might be confounded by other forms of U.S. interference in other countries' domestic affairs, particularly electoral interference (Levin 2016). It does not seem that this can explain our results: all of our specifications control for the occurrence of elections, and as reported in Table A3, the effects of visits are maintained when we split the sample by leader-years that are experiencing an election and those that are not (and, in fact, are estimated to be substantially larger during non-election years).

Another alternative explanation would attribute the effects of visits on regime survival to international rather than domestic deterrence. McManus (2018) finds that diplomatic visits from the U.S. President, when accompanied by public statements of support, decrease the risk of being targeted in a militarized interstate dispute (MID). One might

argue that this decreased risk of interstate conflict translates into an increased likelihood of survival in office, through domestic political processes that reward successful avoidance of military disputes. This phenomenon also cannot fully explain our findings. First, being targeted in a MID is an extremely rare event. McManus finds that a visit reduces the risk from a baseline of about 1% to about 0.6-0.8%; it seems mathematically implausible that this effect of visits on interstate disputes could account for a substantial portion of our estimated effect of visits on domestic political survival. Further, McManus finds that a visit only affects interstate disputes when the visit occurs outside the U.S., in the recipient's home country; the effects on domestic political survival, however, are found here to hold across visits in or out of the U.S.

Conclusion

Political leaders' time is severely limited and extremely valuable. When they spend substantial portions of their tenures traveling to foreign countries and engaging in seemingly symbolic acts of in-person diplomacy, analysts of international politics should take that behavior seriously. This is what we have endeavored to do in the present study.

We put forward a rationalist explanation for state visits, built from an account of foreign powers' incentives to invest in relationships with strong incumbents and challengers' incentives to participate in successful opposition efforts. A foreign power selectively assigns visits to incumbents who are more likely to survive in office, and this selection process publicly reveals the foreign power's private assessment of regime strength. Because domestic challengers are incompletely informed as to the incumbent's strength, they respond to the visit by lowering their expectation of the probability that a challenge will prove successful, and become less likely to take action. This incentive structure and informational environment can characterize political competition across institutional contexts, whether a challenge against the incumbent entails orchestrating a coup, participating in a mass protest, or withdrawing electoral support. State visits enhance regime survival because they deter potential challengers, who must balance risks and rewards

under fundamental uncertainty.

Our findings speak to broader questions of how major world powers can influence political contestation abroad. We contribute to the body of "second-image reversed" accounts of international determinants of domestic politics (Gourevitch 1978) with a novel interpretation of a widely practiced form of statecraft, placing leaders' survival incentives at the core of our theory. Akin to such widely studied phenomena as development aid, loans, arms transfers, and military intervention, the U.S. President's choice to invest time and reputation into symbolic support for a foreign leader proves to be a powerful instrument for securing that leader's hold on power. The ability of world leaders to shape foreign political developments through their diplomatic engagements is a largely unexplored feature of international politics, and one that is rich with opportunities for future research.

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State Visits and Leader Survival: Supplementary Appendix

April 30, 2019

Contents

1 Appendix: Formal Model

Here we present and fully analyze our formal model.[1]

Recall from the main text that the model consists of two players—the citizen, C, and foreign leader, F—whose payoffs can be represented as follows:

Citizen	$\theta < 0$	$\theta \geq 0$	*Foreign Power*	*Status Quo*	*Regime Change*
Challenge	δ	$-\kappa$	*Visit*	$\psi + \eta - \omega$	$-\lambda - \omega$
Abstain	0	0	*Not Visit*	ψ	0

From this payoff structure, we observe that a citizen will only want to participate in a removal attempt when she is sufficiently confident it will succeed, and a foreign leader will only visit when he is sufficiently confident the incumbent will survive. Neither player, however, can know with certainty which outcome will come to pass. We model this uncertainty through noisy signals of regime strength, θ. Suppose C and F share a common prior belief about θ, distributed normally with mean Q and precision α: that is, $\theta \mid Q \sim N(Q, \frac{1}{\alpha})$.[2] C and F each then observe independent private signals of regime strength: C observes $Z \sim N(\theta, \frac{1}{\beta})$, and F observes $Y \sim N(\theta, \frac{1}{\gamma})$. After observing Y, F decides whether or not to visit, and upon observing F's action, C further updates his belief of θ and decides whether or not to attempt leader removal.

To summarize, the sequence of play is:

1. C and F observe private signals Y and Z, respectively;
2. F chooses between *Visit* and *Not Visit*;
3. Having observed F's action, C choses between *Remove* and *Abstain*;
4. Regime change occurs if and only if C attempts removal and $\theta < 0$.

1.1 Analysis

Perfect Bayesian Equilibria of this game are characterized by the strategy profile of threshold signals (y, z_V, z_{NV}). F's cutoff strategy dictates that he play $Visit$ if

[1] For a more general formal treatment of international signaling in global games of regime change, see Authors (2019)

[2] The precision of a belief is the inverse of the variance of the corresponding probability distribution.

and only if his private information of regime strength is sufficiently high: that is, $Visit$ if and only if $Y > y$. C's cutoff strategy dictates that she choose *Remove* following $Visit$ if and only if $Z < z_V$, and following *No Visit*, choose *Remove* if and only if $Z < z_{NV}$.

We first consider C's decision to attempt to remove the leader following a visit. Given F's threshold strategy, the occurrence of a visit indicates to C that the private signal that F observed was higher than his cutoff signal, i.e. $Y > y$. C incorporates this information into her belief of incumbent strength, along with her previously observed private signal Z. The probability that C assigns to the regime being susceptible to a removal attempt following a visit can be denoted $P_{CV}(Z, y) = Pr(\theta < 0 \mid Z, Y > y)$. Conversely, the absence of a visit informs C that $Y \leq y$, so we denote by $P_{CNV}(Z, y) = Pr(\theta < 0 \mid Z, Y \leq y)$ the probability C assigns to the regime being weak following *No Visit*. By C's cutoff strategy, the signal z_V makes her indifferent between *Remove* and *Abstain* following $Visit$, while the signal z_{NV} makes her indifferent between her possible actions following *No Visit*; that is,

$$P_{CV}(z_V, y) = \frac{\kappa}{\kappa + \delta}, \quad \text{and} \tag{1}$$

$$P_{CNV}(z_{NV}, y) = \frac{\kappa}{\kappa + \delta}. \tag{2}$$

The key insight of the analysis is that $P_{CV}(Z, y) < P_{CNV}(Z, y)$, for a given Z; this is an intuitive consequence of the fact that, all else equal, a visit informs C that F received a higher private signal of regime strength, while the absence of a visit informs her that F observed a lower signal. Because both $P_{CV}(Z, y)$ and $P_{CNV}(Z, y)$ are decreasing in Z, it follows from the indifference conditions above that $z_V < z_{NV}$. Therefore, there exists a range of private signals $Z \in [z_V, z_{NV})$ for which C would have challenged the incumbent absent a visit, but abstains from doing so when a visit does occur. For this range of signals, the visit deters domestic opposition because the visit reveals something about F's private information.

Next, consider F's incentive to visit. From F's perspective, the expected likelihood of regime change is a function of his belief of regime strength θ, and the probability that C will challenge the regime, the latter of which is determined in part by F's action. Let $P_{FV}(Y, z_V) = Pr(\theta < 0 \,\&\, Z < z_V \mid Y, Visit)$ be F's subjective probability that regime change will occur following a visit, given his private signal Y. The analogous belief following no visit is defined as $P_{FNV}(Y, z_{NV}) = Pr(\theta < 0 \,\&\, Z < z_{NV} \mid Y, \textit{No Visit})$. Given that $z_V < z_{NV}$ by C's strategy, it follows that $P_{FV}(Y, z_V) < P_{FNV}(Y, z_{NV})$ for fixed Y.

The threshold signal y is the signal of regime strength that makes F indifferent between visiting and not visiting. That is, y satisfies the following equation:

$$\big(1 - P_{FV}(y, z_V)\big)\eta + \big(P_{FNV}(y, z_{NV}) - P_{FV}(y, z_V)\big)\psi = P_{FV}(y, z_V)\lambda + \omega. \tag{3}$$

The lefthand side of this equation represents the conditional benefits, η, times the probability that the regime will survive to deliver them, plus the unconditional benefits, ψ, times the increased likelihood of survival as a result of the visit; the righthand side represents the reputational cost, λ, times the probability that it will be incurred, plus the opportunity cost of a visit, ω. F's cutoff strategy of $Visit$ if and only if $Y > y$ is supported by the monotonicity of F's expected payoff from visiting with respect to his private signal, which holds whenever the conditional benefits of a visit outweigh the opportunity costs ($\eta > \omega$).

Because C is willing to challenge the incumbent for a wider range of signals following no visit than following a visit ($z_V < z_{NV}$), a visit made in anticipation of regime survival can prove, in some cases, to be self-fulfilling. The larger the gap between z_V and z_{NV} (and consequently, the larger the gap between $P_{FNV}(Y, z_{NV})$ and $P_{FV}(Y, z_V)$), the more F can afford to "bluff", or to visit when his private signal indicates some weakness on the part of the incumbent. However, F is constrained in his ability to use diplomatic visits to manipulate C's beliefs. The opportunity and reputational costs keep F relatively honest in whom he chooses to visit, and thus enable F's visits to serve as informative signals of regime strength.

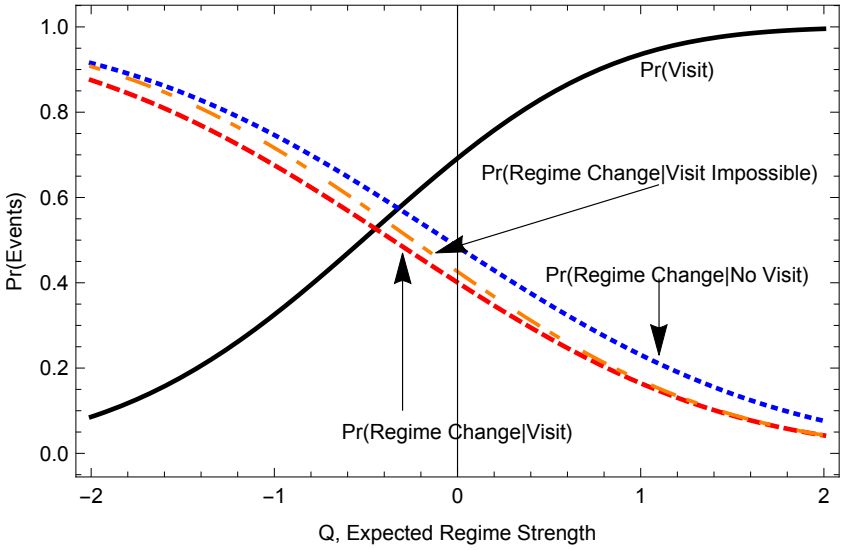
In the next subsection, we calculate each player's posterior beliefs explicitly, and formally prove the following result:

Proposition 1 *Provided that $\eta > \omega$, there exists a Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium characterized by a strategy profile (y, z_V, z_{NV}) that solves Equations (1), (2) and (3). In equilibrium, F visits if and only if $Y > y$; following a visit, C attempts removal if and only if $Z < z_V$; and absent a visit, C attempts removal if and only if $Z < z_{NV}$. For signals $Z \in [z_V, z_{NV})$, a visit deters C from attempting removal when she otherwise would.*

Further analysis reveals an important source of heterogeneity in the effects of state visits on incumbent survival. Considering F's indifference condition (Equation (3)), we see that when F enjoys greater benefits (η and ψ) and incurs smaller costs (λ and ω) from a visit, he is willing to visit for a wider range of private signals. This greater willingness to visit renders the visit less informative, thus diminishing its impact on C's belief, and ultimately its impact on regime survival. A similar line of reasoning shows that when the common prior belief of regime strength (Q) is higher, the occurrence of a visit is not particularly revealing of F's private information, and thus does less to improve regime survival. Conversely, the visit has the highest impact when prior conditions suggested that it was unlikely to occur.

This relationship between a visit's impact and its ex ante likelihood of occurring is depicted in Figure A1. The downward sloping lines depict the probability of regime change under three separate conditions. The middle of the three lines

Figure A1: Impact of State Visits on Regime Survival



Note: Probability of visit occurring, and of leader removal, as a function of common prior belief of regime strength. Parameters are set as follows: $\alpha = 1/2$, $\beta = 2$, $\gamma = 1$, $\eta = 1$, $\psi = 2$, $\lambda = 1$, $\omega = 0.1$, $\kappa = 2$ and $\delta = 2$.

represents the baseline probability of regime change, against which we can compare the effect of a visit or the absence of a visit. We can think of this baseline as the hypothetical condition in which diplomatic visits are impossible, or are entirely uninformative—as would be the case if F received no private signal, or if he simply assigned his visits randomly. The lowest downward sloping line shows the probability of regime change following a visit. This probability is closest to the baseline probability at the right end of the figure, when Q is highest; on the lefthand side, this probability is substantially lower than the baseline probability, demonstrating that a visit has the greatest impact when it is least expected. The figure was constructed with F receiving a less precise signal than C receives (that is, with $\gamma < \beta$), to emphasize that our theoretical claims do not rely on the foreign power having better information than the domestic opposition. Graphing these same probabilities as a function of other parameters that predict visits, rather than just Q as depicted here, would reveal a similar pattern.

1.2 Bayesian Updating

In the previous subsection we characterized results in terms of $P_{CV}(Z, y)$, $P_{CNV}(Z, y)$, $P_{FV}(Y, z_V)$ and $P_{FNV}(Y, z_{NV})$. Here we derive these probabilities.

Let $\Phi(x) = \int_{-\infty}^{x} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{z^2}{2}} dz$ represent the CDF of a standard normal random variable and let $\phi(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{x^2}{2}}$ represent the associated probability density. From standard results, having seen the signal Z, C believes that θ is distributed normally with mean $\mu_C = \frac{\alpha Q + \beta Z}{\alpha + \beta}$ and variance $\frac{1}{\alpha+\beta}$ so the pdf of C's beliefs are $\sqrt{\alpha+\beta}\phi(\sqrt{\alpha+\beta}(\theta - \mu_C))$

Consider an arbitrary threshold strategy, $\bar{y}$, such that no visit occurs if $Y < \bar{y}$. Via Bayes rule, the pdf of C's beliefs are

$$g(\theta|\text{non-visit }, Z, \bar{y}) = \frac{\sqrt{\alpha+\beta}\phi(\sqrt{\alpha+\beta}(\theta - \mu_C))\Phi(\sqrt{\gamma}(\bar{y} - \theta))}{Pr(Y < \bar{y}|Z)} \tag{4}$$

The denominator is the integral of the numerator with respect to θ from $-\infty$ to ∞, which equals $\Phi(\sqrt{\frac{\alpha\gamma}{\alpha+\gamma}}(\bar{y} - \mu_C))$. Hence

$$P_{CNV}(Z, \bar{y}) = Pr(\theta < 0|Z, Y < \bar{y}) = \int_{-\infty}^{0} \frac{\sqrt{\alpha+\beta}\phi(\sqrt{\alpha+\beta}(\theta - \mu_C))\Phi(\sqrt{\gamma}(\bar{y} - \theta))}{\Phi(\sqrt{\frac{\alpha\gamma}{\alpha+\gamma}}(\bar{y} - \mu_C))} d\theta$$

Similarly

$$P_{CV}(Z, \bar{y}) = Pr(\theta < 0|Z, Y \geq \bar{y}) = \int_{-\infty}^{0} \frac{\sqrt{\alpha+\beta}\phi(\sqrt{\alpha+\beta}(\theta - \mu_C))\Phi(\sqrt{\gamma}(\theta - \bar{y}))}{\Phi(\sqrt{\frac{\alpha\gamma}{\alpha+\gamma}}(\mu_C - \bar{y}))} d\theta$$

Turning to F's beliefs, having seen Y, F believes θ is normally distributed with mean $\mu_F = \frac{\alpha Q + \gamma Y}{\alpha+\gamma}$ and variance $\frac{1}{\alpha+\gamma}$. Suppose C use the threshold strategies $\hat{z}_V$ and $\hat{z}_{NV}$. Via Bayes rule,

$$P_{FV}(Y, \hat{z}_V) = Pr(\theta < 0 \& Z < \hat{z}_V) = \int_{-\infty}^{0} \sqrt{\alpha+\gamma}\phi(\sqrt{\alpha+\gamma}(\theta - \mu_F))\Phi(\sqrt{\beta}(\hat{z}_V - \theta))d\theta$$

and

$$P_{FNV}(Y, \hat{z}_{NV}) = Pr(\theta < 0 \& Z < \hat{z}_{NV}) = \int_{-\infty}^{0} \sqrt{\alpha+\gamma}\phi(\sqrt{\alpha+\gamma}(\theta - \mu_F))\Phi(\sqrt{\beta}(\hat{z}_{NV} - \theta))d\theta$$

1.3 Existence of Equilibria

Proof of Proposition 1:

Consider an arbitrary threshold strategy, $\bar{y}$ such that F visits if and only if she see a signal $Y > \bar{y}$. We now find best responses for C to visits and non-visits.

For a citizen who sees signal Z and no visit, the probability that the regime fails if she attempts removal is given by $P_{CNV}(Z, \bar{y})$. Consider limits: as $Z \to -\infty$, $P_{CNV}(Z, \bar{y}) \to 1$; as $Z \to \infty$, $P_{CNV}(Z, \bar{y}) \to 0$. Since $P_{CNV}(Z, \bar{y})$ is continuous and monotonic in Z there exists a unique Z that satisfies $P_{CNV}(Z, \bar{y}) = \frac{\kappa}{\kappa+\delta}$. Define $\hat{z}_{NV}(\bar{y})$ as this unique signal that makes C indifferent between remove and abstain given F's strategy $\bar{y}$. Using an analogous argument let $\hat{z}_V(\bar{y})$ be the signal that makes C indifferent between removal or abstain following F's visit. For any $\bar{y}$ we have a unique pair of threshold strategies $\hat{z}_V(\bar{y})$ and $\hat{z}_{NV}(\bar{y})$. Further $\hat{z}_V(\bar{y}) < \hat{z}_{NV}(\bar{y})$ and both are continuous and decreasing in $\bar{y}$.

Next consider F's best responses to C's use of the threshold strategies $\hat{z}_V(\bar{y})$ and $\hat{z}_{NV}(\bar{y})$. If F saw signal Y, then difference between the expected payoffs for visit and no visit is:

$$\begin{aligned} FI(Y, \bar{y}) = \quad & \psi\big(P_{FNV}(Y, \hat{z}_{NV}(\bar{y})) - P_{FV}(Y, \hat{z}_V(\bar{y}))\big) - \omega \\ & +\eta\big(1 - P_{FV}(Y, \hat{z}_V(\bar{y}))\big) - \lambda\big(P_{FV}(Y, \hat{z}_V(\bar{y}))\big) \end{aligned}$$

This expression is a generalization of equation 3. Note that $FI(Y, \bar{y})$ is continuous and differentiable in both terms.

Now consider limits. As $Y \to -\infty$, $P_{FV}(Y, \hat{z}_V(\bar{y})) \to 1$ and $P_{FNV}(Y, \hat{z}_{NV}(\bar{y})) \to 1$; therefore $FI(Y, \bar{y}) \to -\omega - \lambda < 0$. As $Y \to \infty$, $P_{FV}(Y, \hat{z}_V(\bar{y})) \to 0$ and $P_{FNV}(Y, \hat{z}_{NV}(\bar{y})) \to 0$; therefore $FI(Y, \bar{y}) \to -\omega + \eta$. Hence provided $\eta > \omega$, there exists some Y such that $FI(Y, \bar{y}) = 0$. Let $\hat{Y}(\bar{y})$ be the smallest such Y. If F used the threshold strategy $\bar{y}$, then F would be indifferent between visit and no visit if his signal was $\hat{Y}(\bar{y})$. Consider the limits: As $\bar{y} \to -\infty$, $\hat{Y}(\bar{y})$ is finite and as $\bar{y} \to \infty$, $\hat{Y}(\bar{y})$ is finite.

Hence $\hat{Y}(\bar{y})$ intersects the 45 degree line and a fixed point exist: $\hat{Y}(\bar{y}) = \bar{y}$ ■

2 Appendix: Empirical Analysis

2.1 Data notes and sources

Table A1: Data Sources

Variable	Source
Diplomatic visits	U.S. Department of State (2018)
Leader age and removal	Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza (2009)
GDP, population, growth, resource rents	World Bank
Protests, strikes, riots, purges	Banks and Wilson (2017)
UNGA voting	Voeten, Strezhnev and Bailey (2017)
US bilateral aid	Greenbook (2017)
US bilateral trade	Barbieri, Keshk and Pollins (2009)
Elections	Hyde and Marinov (2012)
Winning coalition (W) and Selectorate (S)	Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson and Morrow (2003)
Military alliances	Gibler (2008)
CIA involvement	Berger, Easterly, Nunn and Satyanath (2013)

Additional details on variable codings:

- Election variable: Specifically, we include elections on the basis of the *nelda*20 variable: "Was the office of the incumbent leader contested in this election," for which the creators of the NELDA dataset refer to the Archigos coding of national leaders.

- Instability index: for some analyses, we use an index of instability. This is constructed as an inverse covariance weighted index of lagged log values of strikes, riots, protests, and purges. The intuition behind this index is that if two component variables u and v are highly correlated (ρ_{uv} is high), but ρ_{uw} and ρ_{vw} are low, then w should be given more weight in the index than u and v, because w is contributing more independent information. See O'Brien (1984) and Anderson (2008) for the methodology behind the index construction.

2.2 Robustness checks

We first report the full specification of Table 2, which was abridged in the main text due to space limitations.

To check the robustness of our empirical results, we also include the following analyses:

Table A2 repeats the analyses in Table 2, splitting the sample on the basis of whether or not a given leader-year is a recipient of bilateral U.S. aid. In Table A3, we split the sample by whether there is an election in a given country and year. Visits are estimated to have a significant impact on leader survival across each subsample. Effects for aid recipients are slightly larger in magnitude than for non-aid recipients, but the difference is statistically indistinguishable. Effects of visits during non-election years are larger than during election years.

Table A4 replicates Table 2, but using the more common Cox Proportional Hazard model, rather than the Weibull model that we use throughout the main text. Theoretically, we would expect the Weibull model to give a more conservative estimate of the impact of a visit, because it allows more variation in the outcome to be explained by regime type. As it turns out, the results of the Cox model are almost identical to the Weibull model. The Cox model was unable to converge when using country fixed effects, so column 2 uses only year fixed effects.

Table A5 likewise replicates Table 2, but replaces the W measure of political institutions with the *polity*2 variable from the Polity IV dataset. The *polity*2 variable was rescaled to take on values from 0 to 1 (rather than -10 to 10, as in the original dataset) for comparability with our models using the W variable.

Table A6 includes all contemporaneous covariates, measured in the same year as visits. In all of the main text specifications, many of the control variables—including the instability measures (riots, strikes, purges, protests), and bilateral aid, trade, and alliance with the US—are lagged by one year. This is because we would expect these factors to respond to respond to some degree to the visits themselves, so including them without a lag may introduce post-treatment bias. In particular, the instability measures are precisely what we expect to mediate the relationship between visits and leader removal (at least when it comes to removal by irregular means). For robustness we conduct an additional set of tests with all of the aforementioned covariates not lagged. As we see in Table A6, the coefficients on the visit variables are slightly smaller in magnitude, as compared to the same coefficients in Table 2, but remain statistically significant. Because these controls are generally meant to proxy for Q, the common prior belief of *pre-visit* leader strength, we prefer to lag the controls by one year.

Table A7 repeats the analysis of Table 2, after multiple imputation of missing values of covariates using Honaker, King, Blackwell et al. (2011)'s `Amelia` package in `R`. The results are extremely similar to those reported in Table 2.

Table 2 (full): Weibull Hazard Analysis of Leader Removal

	By Visit Type (No FE)	By Visit Type (FE)	Pooled (No FE)	Pooled (FE)
Visit from US Pres.	-0.753***	-0.972***		
	(0.196)	(0.214)		
Visit to US	-0.944***	-1.144***		
	(0.111)	(0.112)		
Any Visit			-1.057***	-1.286***
			(0.112)	(0.117)
Rel. Age	0.012**	0.018**	0.012**	0.018**
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.006)
W	-1.322+	-0.976+	-1.343+	-1.006*
	(0.721)	(0.502)	(0.714)	(0.502)
S	-0.720*	-1.040***	-0.715*	-1.035***
	(0.291)	(0.243)	(0.290)	(0.245)
Election	1.566***	1.549***	1.566***	1.552***
	(0.103)	(0.117)	(0.103)	(0.117)
Ln(Pop)	-0.061	0.486	-0.066	0.495
	(0.066)	(0.387)	(0.066)	(0.403)
Ln(GDP)	0.136+	-0.006	0.139+	-0.004
	(0.077)	(0.252)	(0.077)	(0.252)
Growth	-0.029**	-0.038**	-0.029**	-0.037**
	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.013)
Ln(Riots$_{t-1}$)	0.024	0.033	0.028	0.041
	(0.081)	(0.086)	(0.081)	(0.082)
Ln(Purges$_{t-1}$)	-0.162	0.025	-0.156	0.022
	(0.169)	(0.162)	(0.169)	(0.162)
Ln(Strikes$_{t-1}$)	0.051	0.089	0.054	0.102
	(0.132)	(0.148)	(0.132)	(0.151)
Ln(Protests$_{t-1}$)	0.104	0.090	0.097	0.082
	(0.086)	(0.088)	(0.086)	(0.087)
Ln(Imports from US$_{t-1}$)	-0.086	0.084	-0.086	0.088
	(0.057)	(0.077)	(0.057)	(0.077)
Ln(Exports to US$_{t-1}$)	0.045	0.001	0.044	0.000
	(0.040)	(0.058)	(0.040)	(0.058)
Ln(Econ Aid$_{t-1}$)	0.013	0.004	0.014+	0.005
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Ln(Mil Aid$_{t-1}$)	0.010	0.011	0.010	0.011
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)
Ally$_{t-1}$	0.259*	0.191	0.259*	0.145
	(0.123)	(0.353)	(0.122)	(0.359)
Resource Rents (% GDP)	-0.009	0.020*	-0.009	0.019+
	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.010)
Country FE	N	Y	N	Y
Year FE	N	Y	N	Y
Ln(p)				
W	1.099***	0.735***	1.109***	0.754***
	(0.288)	(0.190)	(0.285)	(0.190)
Const.	-1.018***	-0.407**	-1.024***	-0.417**
	(0.240)	(0.143)	(0.239)	(0.144)
Observations	5610	5610	5610	5610
Number of Leaders	1062	1062	1062	1062
Failures	855	855	855	855
LogLikelihood	-928.194	-658.993	-926.142	-658.130

Note: SE clustered by country. $+p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$

Table A2: Weibull Hazard Analysis of Leader Removal, by Aid Recipient Status

	Mil Aid Non Recip	Mil Aid Recip	Econ Aid Non Recip	Econ Aid Recip
Visit from US Pres.	-0.925**	-1.054***	-0.818**	-1.110***
	(0.289)	(0.294)	(0.263)	(0.304)
Visit to US	-1.023***	-1.243***	-1.017***	-1.262***
	(0.193)	(0.145)	(0.182)	(0.150)
Controls	Y	Y	Y	Y
Country FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ln(p)				
W	0.913*	0.613*	0.770**	0.807**
	(0.356)	(0.290)	(0.235)	(0.264)
Const.	-0.509	-0.264	-0.331+	-0.444*
	(0.322)	(0.196)	(0.196)	(0.184)
Observations	1850	3768	1071	4536
Number of Leaders	434	814	264	901
Failures	260	595	170	685
LogLikelihood	-161.351	-397.055	-77.429	-505.922

Note: All controls from Table 2 included but not reported. SE clustered by country. $+p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$

Table A3: Weibull Hazard Analysis of Leader Removal, by Election Year

	Election Year	Non-Election Year
Visit from US Pres.	-0.593*	-1.533***
	(0.284)	(0.340)
Visit to US	-0.859***	-1.319***
	(0.166)	(0.191)
Controls	Y	Y
Country FE	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y
Ln(p)		
W	1.175*	0.514*
	(0.481)	(0.247)
Const.	-0.884*	-0.204
	(0.410)	(0.171)
Observations	930	4680
Number of Leaders	621	968
Failures	401	454
LogLikelihood	80.373	-551.403

Note: All controls from Table 2 included but not reported. SE clustered by country. $+p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$

Table A4: Cox Hazard Analysis of Leader Removal

	By Type (no FE)	By Type (FE)
Visit from US Pres.	-0.733***	-0.815***
	(0.191)	(0.197)
Visit to US	-0.919***	-0.910***
	(0.106)	(0.112)
Rel. Age	0.013**	0.014***
	(0.004)	(0.004)
W	0.621	0.458
	(0.378)	(0.386)
S	-0.906***	-0.944***
	(0.258)	(0.253)
Election	1.556***	1.573***
	(0.104)	(0.104)
Ln(Pop)	-0.068	-0.059
	(0.068)	(0.071)
Ln(GDP)	0.121	0.139+
	(0.079)	(0.083)
Growth	-0.030**	-0.029**
	(0.009)	(0.010)
Ln(Riots$_{t-1}$)	0.046	0.094
	(0.080)	(0.085)
Ln(Purges$_{t-1}$)	-0.058	-0.034
	(0.155)	(0.169)
Ln(Strikes$_{t-1}$)	0.072	0.109
	(0.121)	(0.132)
Ln(Protests$_{t-1}$)	0.096	0.070
	(0.087)	(0.086)
Ln(Imports from US$_{t-1}$)	-0.077	-0.107+
	(0.056)	(0.059)
Ln(Exports to US$_{t-1}$)	0.042	0.039
	(0.041)	(0.041)
Ln(Econ Aid$_{t-1}$)	0.008	0.000
	(0.008)	(0.009)
Ln(Mil Aid$_{t-1}$)	0.012	0.010
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Ally$_{t-1}$	0.287*	0.382**
	(0.118)	(0.128)
Resource Rents (% GDP)	-0.010	-0.012
	(0.008)	(0.008)
Country FE	N	N
Year FE	N	Y
Observations	5610	5610
Number of Leaders	1062	1062
Failures	855	855
LogLikelihood	-4669.606	-4632.058

Note: SE clustered by country. $+p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$

Table A5: Weibull Hazard Analysis of Leader Removal (Polity)

	By Type (no FE)	By Type (FE)
Visit from US Pres.	-0.762***	-0.999***
	(0.199)	(0.219)
Visit to US	-0.960***	-1.176***
	(0.110)	(0.115)
Polity	0.066	-0.049
	(0.518)	(0.482)
S	-1.122***	-1.238***
	(0.205)	(0.211)
Controls	Y	Y
Country FE	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y
Ln(p)		
Polity	0.755***	0.657***
	(0.194)	(0.153)
Const.	-0.699***	-0.324**
	(0.167)	(0.122)
Observations	5334	5334
Number of Leaders	1000	1000
Failures	801	801
LogLikelihood	-803.337	-582.154

Note: Replication of Table 2, with Polity replacing W.

Table A6: Weibull Hazard Analysis of Leader Removal (Contemporaneous Covariates)

	By Type (no FE)	By Type (FE)
Visit from US Pres.	-0.536**	-0.791***
	(0.179)	(0.190)
Visit to US	-1.050***	-1.168***
	(0.126)	(0.111)
Rel. Age	0.008*	0.017**
	(0.004)	(0.005)
W	-0.235	-0.328
	(0.366)	(0.397)
S	-0.645***	-0.870***
	(0.195)	(0.190)
Election	1.582***	1.585***
	(0.109)	(0.112)
Ln(Pop)	-0.108+	0.256
	(0.063)	(0.348)
Ln(GDP)	0.149+	0.149
	(0.078)	(0.231)
Growth	-0.024***	-0.029**
	(0.006)	(0.009)
Ln(Riots)	-0.023	0.081
	(0.080)	(0.110)
Ln(Purges)	0.434**	0.608***
	(0.149)	(0.155)
Ln(Strikes)	0.245*	0.137
	(0.115)	(0.135)
Ln(Protests)	0.180*	0.238**
	(0.077)	(0.090)
Ln(Imports from US)	-0.088+	-0.016
	(0.050)	(0.080)
Ln(Exports to US)	0.065+	-0.034
	(0.036)	(0.057)
Ln(Econ Aid)	0.013	0.010
	(0.008)	(0.008)
Ln(Mil Aid)	0.006	0.008
	(0.007)	(0.009)
Ally	0.076	0.161
	(0.150)	(0.291)
Resource Rents (% GDP)	-0.014+	0.015*
	(0.008)	(0.007)
Country FE	N	Y
Year FE	N	Y
Ln(p)		
W	0.557***	0.542***
	(0.108)	(0.159)
Const.	-0.591***	-0.344***
	(0.080)	(0.101)
Observations	6553	6553
Number of Leaders	1238	1238
Failures	1004	1004
LogLikelihood	-1463.114	-1181.429

Note: Replication of Table 2 specifications, with all covariates measured in same year as visits and removal, rather than $t-1$.

Table A7: Weibull Hazard Analysis of Leader Removal, by Type of Visit (Imputed)

	By Visit Type (No FE)	By Visit Type (FE)	Pooled (No FE)	Pooled (FE)
Visit from US Pres.	-0.704***	-0.962***		
	(0.198)	(0.214)		
Visit to US	-0.900***	-1.160***		
	(0.110)	(0.114)		
Any Visit			-1.002***	-1.295***
			(0.113)	(0.118)
Rel. Age	0.013**	0.019***	0.013**	0.019***
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.006)
W	-1.295^{+}	-0.952^{+}	-1.312*	-0.977*
	(0.666)	(0.497)	(0.661)	(0.496)
S	-0.664*	-1.039***	-0.659*	-1.036***
	(0.269)	(0.227)	(0.268)	(0.229)
Election	1.570***	1.552***	1.569***	1.554***
	(0.101)	(0.117)	(0.100)	(0.117)
Ln(Pop)	-0.030	0.193	-0.032	0.204
	(0.062)	(0.337)	(0.062)	(0.350)
Ln(GDP)	0.101	0.219	0.104	0.221
	(0.073)	(0.178)	(0.073)	(0.179)
Growth	-0.030***	-0.042***	-0.029***	-0.041***
	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.012)
Ln(Riots$_{t-1}$)	0.063	0.011	0.068	0.019
	(0.086)	(0.081)	(0.086)	(0.078)
Ln(Purges$_{t-1}$)	-0.146	0.128	-0.142	0.125
	(0.160)	(0.151)	(0.160)	(0.151)
Ln(Strikes$_{t-1}$)	0.083	0.133	0.085	0.145
	(0.129)	(0.132)	(0.130)	(0.134)
Ln(Protests$_{t-1}$)	0.034	0.083	0.028	0.076
	(0.102)	(0.090)	(0.102)	(0.089)
Ln(Imports	-0.085	0.010	-0.085	0.012
from US$_{t-1}$)	(0.054)	(0.072)	(0.054)	(0.073)
Ln(Exports	0.032	-0.028	0.031	-0.029
to US$_{t-1}$)	(0.037)	(0.049)	(0.037)	(0.049)
Ln(Econ Aid$_{t-1}$)	0.008	0.004	0.009	0.005
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Ln(Mil Aid$_{t-1}$)	0.009	0.011	0.009	0.011
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)
Ally$_{t-1}$	0.347**	0.172	0.348**	0.126
	(0.126)	(0.337)	(0.127)	(0.343)
Resource Rents	-0.009	0.015	-0.010	0.014
(% GDP)	(0.007)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.010)
Country FE	N	Y	N	Y
Year FE	N	Y	N	Y
Ln(p)				
W	1.042***	0.762***	1.050***	0.780***
	(0.266)	(0.194)	(0.264)	(0.193)
Const.	-0.974***	-0.427**	-0.979***	-0.435**
	(0.222)	(0.148)	(0.221)	(0.148)
Observations	6159	6159	6159	6159
Number of Leaders	1142	1142	1142	1142
Failures	919	919	919	919
LogLikelihood	-1023.042	-742.824	-1020.836	-741.594

Note: Replication of Table 2, with missing covariate values multiply imputed.

Table A8: Weibull Hazard Analysis of Leader Removal, Disaggregated by Visit Type

Visit from US	-0.735***	-0.954***
	(0.195)	(0.221)
Private Visit	-0.799***	-0.959***
	(0.125)	(0.136)
Public Visit	-0.973***	-1.202***
	(0.178)	(0.203)
Controls	Y	Y
Country FE	N	Y
Year FE	N	Y
Ln(p)		
W	1.089***	0.714***
	(0.292)	(0.191)
Const.	-1.012***	-0.396**
	(0.242)	(0.143)
Observations	5610	5610
Number of Leaders	1062	1062
Failures	855	855
LogLikelihood	-926.464	-656.059

Note: All controls from Table 2 included but not reported. SE clustered by country.
$+p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$

Visit Classifications

In the main analyses, we only separate U.S. presidential visits on the basis of whether they occur in the U.S. or in the recipient leader's home country. For some visits in the U.S., the State Department records designate visits as "state visits", "working visits", "official visits", "private visits", and so on. We assume that the differences between these designations of visits are not particularly salient to the relevant domestic audiences, if they are noticed at all; even private visits in the Oval Office are often photographed and televised, at least in part. To probe the validity of this assumption, in Table A8, we separate visits in the U.S. into "private" visits, which include visits with official designation as "private visit" or "working visit"; versus "public visits", which include all other visits. This results in a roughly even split of 1190 private visits and 1241 public visits. As we see in Table A8, both classes of visits have large and significant effects on leader survival, and both effects are very similar in magnitude; the effect of a public visit is slightly larger, but the two are not statistically distinguishable. The State Department only systematically classifies visits in the U.S. by visit type, so we are unable to conduct a similar analysis for visits outside the U.S.

2.3 Instrumental Variable Analysis

To examine whether diplomatic visits have an independent, causal effect on regime survival, we employ an instrumental variable approach. We use the shifting priorities of U.S. Presidents between their first and second term as an exogenous source of variation in their visit patterns. In a study of U.S. Secretary of State travel activity, Lebovic (2018) argues that while "administrations have acted with significant latitude, especially in a presidential first term", diplomatic priorities shift in the second term, as "U.S. diplomacy eventually bows to U.S. strategic interests, whatever the aspirations and beliefs that U.S. presidents bring to office. A consequence... is a second-term contraction in the secretarys travel circuit to favor countries of strategic interest." Lebovic's claim was made with specific regards to Secretary of State activity, but we argue and show that it applies to Presidential visits as well.

To exploit this shift in priorities, we implement an IV design analogous to that employed by Werker, Ahmed and Cohen (2009), by Nunn and Qian (2014), and by Dreher and Langlotz (2017): we interact two exogenous variables, one that varies cross-sectionally and another that is cross-sectionally invariant, and use the interaction to instrument visits; neither component term of the interaction necessarily satisfies the second-stage exclusion restriction, but after conditioning on both component terms, the interaction does satisfy the exclusion restriction. Specifically, we interact an indicator for whether the U.S. President is in his second term, with a foreign country's (log) population, and use the interaction as an excludable instrument after controlling for the two component terms. Both component terms are exogenous to visits (it seems highly unlikely that visits cause a meaningful change in the recipient country's population). So the conditions needed to satisfy the assumptions of the IV design are a strong first-stage relationship between visits and the interaction of second-term and population, and an exclusion restriction—that the shift in presidential priorities does not affect leader survival through any means other than diplomatic activity. Because both the endogenous regressor (visits) and the outcome (leader removal) are binary, we use an IV probit model.

The first-stage relationship is analogous to a difference-in-differences estimator: countries with larger populations have a different probability of receiving a U.S. diplomatic visit as compared to countries with smaller populations, and this difference in probability changes from the first to the second term of a U.S. administration. This relationship is shown in Panel B of Table A9. Across the various specifications, a recipient country's population is a significantly stronger predictor of receiving a U.S. diplomatic visit in the president's second term than in his first term. Considering the first panel of Table A9, we see that, across specifications, visits are found to significantly decrease the risk of the recipient leader's removal from office.

Table A9: IV Probit

	Sparse	FE	Controls	FE and Controls
PANEL A: Second Stage				
DV: Leader Removal				
Any Visit	-2.002***	-2.111***	-2.403***	-2.515***
	(0.294)	(0.417)	(0.266)	(0.423)
Ln(Pop)	0.125***	-0.184	0.033	-0.122
	(0.023)	(0.131)	(0.022)	(0.134)
Second Term	-0.007	-0.384+	-0.064+	-0.255
	(0.023)	(0.226)	(0.034)	(0.285)
Leader Tenure	-0.026***	-0.000	-0.017*	-0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.004)
W			0.506***	0.348**
			(0.123)	(0.128)
S			-0.283	-0.475+
			(0.187)	(0.266)
Election			0.511+	0.678+
			(0.287)	(0.397)
Rel. Age			0.003	0.011
			(0.005)	(0.007)
Growth			-0.007	-0.010
			(0.006)	(0.008)
Ln(Econ Aid$_{t-1}$)			0.001	0.013*
			(0.004)	(0.006)
Ln(Mil Aid$_{t-1}$)			0.010*	0.005
			(0.005)	(0.004)
Ln(Imports from US$_{t-1}$)			0.114***	0.063+
			(0.030)	(0.035)
Ln(Exports to US$_{t-1}$)			0.010	0.043+
			(0.020)	(0.026)
Country FE	N	Y	N	Y
Year FE	N	Y	N	Y
PANEL B: First Stage				
DV: AnyVisit				
Second Term	0.019***	0.021***	0.014**	0.013**
× Ln(Pop)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Ln(Pop)	0.045***	-0.034	0.017*	-0.063+
	(0.008)	(0.038)	(0.008)	(0.034)
Second Term	-0.307***	-0.447***	-0.260**	-0.400***
	(0.080)	(0.100)	(0.080)	(0.108)
Leader Tenure	-0.004**	-0.002*	0.000	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
W			0.168***	0.143***
			(0.032)	(0.034)
S			0.034+	0.035+
			(0.020)	(0.020)
Election			-0.070***	-0.080***
			(0.018)	(0.017)
Rel. Age			-0.003**	-0.002*
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Growth			0.002*	0.002*
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Ln(Econ Aid$_{t-1}$)			0.002	0.005***
			(0.001)	(0.002)
Ln(Mil Aid$_{t-1}$)			0.001	-0.000
			(0.001)	(0.001)
Ln(Imports from US$_{t-1}$)			0.054***	0.028**
			(0.008)	(0.009)
Ln(Exports to US$_{t-1}$)			-0.004	0.015*
			(0.006)	(0.007)
Country FE	N	Y	N	Y
Year FE	N	Y	N	Y
N	9912	9756	7813	7550

Note: SE clustered by country. $+p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$

Table A10: Exclusion Restriction Placebo

	Mil Aid	Econ Aid
Second Term	0.006	0.037
× Ln(Pop)	(0.055)	(0.058)
Ln(Pop)	0.966*	-0.466
	(0.384)	(0.514)
Second Term	-1.469	-1.416
	(1.105)	(1.270)
N	7813	7803

Note: Includes all covariates from Column 4 of Table A9, and country and year FE. SE clustered by country. $+p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001$

Because both population and second-term are exogenous to visits, control variables are not needed to satisfy independent assignment of the instrument. Control variables may, however, be useful for satisfying the exclusion restriction—that is, in blocking any relationship between the instrument and leader survival working through a pathway other than visits. Of course, even with control variables, the exclusion restriction is an assumption, and cannot be proven definitively. In Table A10 we offer some evidence in support of the assumption. One plausible alternative pathway relating shifting presidential priorities in the second term to leader survival, aside from diplomatic visits, would be material forms of support: in the same way that a second-term president prioritizes visiting larger countries, he might also prioritize giving aid to larger countries. However, this does not appear to be the case. Regressing military aid and economic aid (separately) on the instrument and all covariates from Column 4 of Table A9, we find no differential effect of population on aid receipts across the first and second term. We cannot rule out all possible alternative causal pathways, but these two seem the most plausible, and show no relationship with the instrument.

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