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# Foreign Policy Belief Systems in Comparative Perspective: The United States and Costa Rica

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The hierarchical model of foreign policy belief systems (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987) stipulates that attitudes toward specific foreign policies (e.g., defense spending or support for new weapon systems) are constrained by more general foreign policy beliefs (postures and images of other nations) which, in turn, are constrained by even more general core values (e.g., patriotism). In this way, U.S. citizens were found to exhibit consistency and structure in their foreign policy attitudes, despite possessing little information in the domain. To test the generalizability of the hierarchical model, we deliberately selected a polity which poses a dramatic contrast to the citizens in the United States—Costa Rica; here we found individuals who are far more pacific and isolationist in their beliefs relative to North Americans. To what degree do Costa Ricans and North Americans exhibit a common belief *structure*, despite possessing different attitudes? Analysis of analogous models in the two countries reveals that the most important structuring dimension in the United States—militarism—does not serve to constrain specific foreign policy beliefs of Costa Ricans, probably because of their nation's lack of experience in dealing with national security issues. However, anti-communism and, importantly, *images of salient nations* (e.g., Cuba, Nicaragua, and the U.S.) do structure Costa Ricans' policy attitudes, leading us to conclude that, as found in the U.S., general beliefs provide constraint to foreign policy belief systems abroad.

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The literature on Americans' foreign policy attitudes has for many years centered not on exploring the direction of such opinions, but on whether such attitudes even exist in a meaningful sense. Since the publication of Almond's (1950) and Converse's (1964) works, the pervasive assumption has been that foreign policy attitudes are based on exceedingly little information (Erskine, 1963), are lacking in structure and stability (Converse, 1964), and are unrelated to important political choices such as the vote (e.g., Stokes, 1966).

More recent studies, however, have challenged this conventional wisdom. A string of research (e.g., Bardes and Oldendick, 1978; Bennett, 1974; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987a; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1990; Maggioletto and Wittkopf, 1981; Wittkopf, 1990) has found that foreign policy attitudes are, in fact, structured meaningfully. Such attitudes have also been found to be fairly stable over time (Achen, 1975; Peffley and Hurwitz, 1992), and when they do change, to respond in a systematic and reasonable way to international events (e.g., Page and Shapiro, 1992; Peffley and Hurwitz, 1992). Just as important, foreign policy attitudes have been linked to political decisions such as presidential support (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987b; Krosnick and Kinder, 1990) and the vote choice (e.g., Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida, 1989).<sup>1</sup>

While this newer literature suggests that Americans have a rational basis for their opinions on foreign policy issues, it does not contend that foreign policy attitudes are based on an in-depth knowledge of the issues or a nuanced *Weltanschauung*. Rather, Americans are seen as guided by a *cognitive miser model* (see, e.g., Fiske and Taylor, 1992), which holds that individuals rely on cognitive shortcuts, or *heuristics*, to simplify the processing of complex or ambiguous information.<sup>2</sup>

Which heuristics are likely to aid in the processing of foreign policy information?<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere we have provided evidence to suggest that Americans derive foreign policy attitudes from more general beliefs. Specifically, we have argued that respondents' attitudes on *specific* foreign policy issues are constrained (or predicted) by, first, *foreign policy postures*, and those, in turn, by a set of *core values*.

#### *Foreign Policy Postures*

Earlier, Hurwitz and Peffley (1987a) determined that Americans' attitudes on a host of specific foreign policy issues are closely predicted by more general foreign policy postures. These postures are the individual's generalized preferences for the conduct of foreign policy, but do not indicate which specific policies should be adopted. Three key postures were found to be strong predictors of attitudes on specific foreign policy issues: *militarism*, or a general preference for a "tough," or militant (rather than diplomatic or negotiated), approach to relations with other nations; *anti-communism*; and *isolationism*. The specific foreign policy issues examined in that study were defense spending, use of U.S. troops in Central America, the development of nuclear weapons systems, and trade with the former Soviet Union. It was found that strongly militaristic and anti-communistic individuals were likely to prefer higher levels of defense expenditures, nuclear weapons systems, and U.S. involvement in Central America; whereas isolationists were predisposed to oppose trade with the Soviets.

<sup>1</sup>For a thoughtful and extensive review of revisionist research in this area see Holsti (1992).

<sup>2</sup>Among the various policy domains, the foreign policy arena is exceptionally complex. Events are remote, the actors and locations are numerous, and the information available to mass publics is incomplete and often withheld from public consumption.

<sup>3</sup>We have argued elsewhere (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987a) that the heuristics that are applicable in many political domains, such as liberal-conservative ideology, partisanship, social class, or self-interest, are generally irrelevant in the foreign policy domain.

A set of more general beliefs, or *core values*, was found to underlie these foreign policy postures. Specifically, core values such as patriotism and a belief in the morality/immorality of warfare were found to predict foreign policy postures, such that strongly patriotic individuals were more militaristic, anti-communist, and isolationist, whereas those seeing warfare as moral were more tough-minded in their approach to foreign affairs. The consistency between general beliefs (postures and core values) and specific attitudes led the authors to conclude that these beliefs exercise a high degree of vertical constraint over their foreign policy beliefs, resulting in a hierarchical model of such beliefs.

Such hierarchical models, in which general, abstract idea elements—postures and core values—structure more specific policy beliefs, have undermined the earlier view that foreign policy beliefs in the United States lacked structure and predictability.<sup>4</sup> The generalizeability of the findings, however, is limited in two important ways. First, they are based on local probability samples conducted in the Lexington, Kentucky, vicinity rather than on national survey data. Although it can be argued that such localized samples probably do not seriously misrepresent the parameters for the United States, they tell us little or nothing about foreign policy belief systems abroad, especially in countries very different from the U.S. This inability to assume the validity of the hierarchical model in comparative context is the second and most serious limitation of the prior work. In the absence of comparative data, we do not know if this hierarchical model serves as a universal one that characterizes the structure of foreign policy beliefs of citizens in diverse contexts or, alternatively, characterizes only, or mainly, the North American electorate, whose unique history, global role, and culture may render such a structure irrelevant in most other contexts.

In this study, we test the generalizeability of the hierarchical model of foreign policy belief systems. The local data utilized in the previous research is replaced by national sample data from the American National Election Study (ANES). A comparative dimension for the test is provided by using a polity explicitly selected for the contrast it poses to the North American context—Costa Rica.

Our goal is far more ambitious than merely determining whether or not the same attitudinal structure we found to exist in the United States can be replicated in Costa Rica. Indeed, we would be surprised to learn that the magnitude of the coefficients that link specific policy attitudes with more general postures and values is similar across the two polities, for, doubtless, the relative salience of particular values and postures is expected to vary across nations. Because of historical and experiential reasons detailed below, we expect certain general beliefs to be more central in one context than in another and, consequently, to play a more powerful role in structuring more specific policy attitudes in that context.

Rather, we are far more concerned with examining the transnational reach of our theoretical premise that, in formulating and understanding complex policy views in the face of limited information and motivation, individuals rely on more general and abstract beliefs to provide structure for their specific policy attitudes.

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<sup>4</sup>A hierarchical model, in which general, abstract beliefs predict or constrain more specific policy beliefs, is perfectly consistent with Converse's *conceptualization* of constraint, which, he argued, results when "a few crowning postures . . . serve[d] as a sort of glue to bind together many more specific attitudes and beliefs . . ." (1964:211). Our objection lies chiefly with Converse's *operationalization* of constraint, which errs in our view by focusing on *horizontal* constraint, or correlations between pairs of specific policy attitudes within and across different policy domains. The core assumption behind this traditional operationalization of constraint—that specific attitudes must be constrained by a single, liberal-conservative dimension—has received little, if any, support in the U.S. context, where citizens are often described as being "innocent" of such sweeping ideologies. In testing hierarchical models, by contrast, researchers have focused on *vertical* linkages between multiple abstract orientations like postures and specific attitudes within a given policy domain like foreign affairs.

North American and Costa Rican citizens may know virtually none of the details of Star Wars or the U.S. invasion of Panama, respectively. Yet, if these same citizens have general predispositions to respond militarily (rather than diplomatically) or to seek (rather than avoid) international entanglements, they may be able to adopt positions on the specific issues in a quasi-logical and exceedingly economical fashion, even without having a base of detailed information on the particular policies.

Thus, while the power of any given general belief to structure any given specific policy attitude may differ across nations, it is our goal to determine if the vertical constraint in foreign policy belief systems that we have previously found in the United States also characterizes a very different citizenry. In other words, we seek to determine whether such general-belief-to-specific-policy-attitude linkages are more than a U.S. phenomenon. If so, we may have identified a common heuristic which permits citizens in many cultural contexts to structure their attitudes even on the basis of little information.

### **The Contrast of Costa Rica**

A least-similar systems design would have provided the most stringent test of the generalizeability of the hierarchical model of foreign policy belief systems. However, such a design would be meaningless if the mass public were completely uninformed on foreign policy matters as a result of censorship of the press. Hence, we needed to find a political system different from that of the U.S., but one that was open enough for the mass public to have access to information upon which they could formulate foreign policy beliefs.

For our purposes, Costa Rica provides an ideal contrast. For most of the 20th century Costa Rica has been a democracy, building on a tradition that can be traced back to the early years of independence from Spain (Seligson, 1987b). By numerous accounts, Costa Rica's democracy is among the strongest, if not *the* strongest, in the Third World (Bollen, 1980; Gastil, 1991; Johnson, 1977; Seligson, 1987a). As a result, freedom of the press, radio, and TV is vigorously defended in Costa Rica, and the government censorship so common in much of the Third World is nonexistent.

Free mass media would have little impact in shaping mass attitudes if it were not widely accessible to the average citizen. But in Costa Rica, education levels are extraordinarily high by Third World standards. Education in Costa Rica has long been valued; compulsory primary education was mandated 90 years before the State of Mississippi did so, and the proportion of college-age individuals enrolled in higher education exceeds that of the United Kingdom and Switzerland (World Bank, 1989:221). Furthermore, for a middle-income and highly urbanized country, TV and radio ownership is extremely high. In the sample evaluated in this study, 82 percent of the respondents read a daily newspaper and all but 6 percent watched a daily TV news program.

Costa Rica differs in many important ways, beyond the obvious difference that the U.S. is among the world's largest, richest, most powerful nations, whereas Costa Rica is one of the world's smallest, least powerful nations, with an economy that is smaller than that of any of the major cities in the U.S. But from an attitudinal perspective, the one on which this paper focuses, perhaps the most dramatic difference between the two nations is that Costa Rica has a long tradition of anti-militarism bordering on pacifism. This tradition became enshrined in the 1949 Constitution, in which the army was formally abolished. Beginning in the early 1950s, military expenditures were reprogrammed into increased investment in education and welfare, so that levels of education and health care come close to matching those found in the industrialized nations.

Costa Rica's anti-militarist posture has isolated it from some aspects of national security issues that have so predominated political dialogue in the U.S. With no budget for an army, there is no legislative debate on heavy arms purchases, military base construction and closures, the draft, and other related issues that have been so prominent in the U.S. This does not mean that Costa Ricans are not concerned about national security. Indeed, a 1989 Gallup poll revealed that 56 percent of Costa Rica felt seriously threatened by the Sandinista government in Nicaragua and 52 percent of the respondents felt seriously threatened by the Noriega regime in Panama. Costa Ricans have become convinced, however, that their own national security lies in the hands of its allies rather than its own, poorly equipped national police forces.<sup>5</sup>

Another important U.S.–Costa Rican attitudinal difference is apparent in the views of the two polities concerning the appropriateness of international involvement. A great majority of North Americans long ago abandoned isolationist preferences, possibly because of the role forced on the United States by history (Wittkopf, 1990). Costa Ricans, however, have exhibited and continue to exhibit isolationist proclivities, sometimes bordering on xenophobia, preferring to avoid involvement with other nations, especially their neighbors in Central America. In the early 1960s, for example, when all of the other Central American nations had joined the Central American Common Market, Costa Rica reluctantly joined only some years later. More recently, when the other nations in the region have been actively pressing for the incorporation of Central America into the emerging North American Free Trade Area, Costa Rica has consistently opted for a bilateral treaty with the United States. Today, when all of the other nations in the region have ratified the creation of a Central American Parliament, Costa Rica has not, and is unlikely to do so for the foreseeable future. Proposals by Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to move toward political integration of the region have been reacted to very negatively in the Costa Rican press, and senior administration officials have put themselves on record in speeches given throughout Central America that they would oppose such a move. Costa Ricans fear that involvement with their neighbors, all of whom have had far more violent recent histories, punctuated by oppressive military regimes, coups, and open insurrection, would drag them into similar conflicts. When they *have* been involved with their neighbors it has been to encourage the overthrow of dictatorships (such as Somoza in Nicaragua and, later, the Sandinistas in that same country) so as to reduce threats to their own security.

A further difference between the U.S. and Costa Rica is that whereas the former has up until recent months lived in a bipolar world in which the former Soviet Union and its allies have been the singular focus of its attention, the world of foreign relations of Costa Rica has been far more complex. Costa Rica has not escaped the Cold War, and has regularly supported the U.S. in the United Nations. At the same time, however, Costa Rica is a Latin American nation, with historical and cultural ties to its neighbors. In many cases Costa Rica found itself siding with its Latin neighbors opposing U.S. intervention in the hemisphere. This clash became most evident during the Reagan administration when Costa Rica under President Oscar Arias openly opposed the U.S. support for the Nicaraguan Contras while endorsing Latin American peace plans such as the so-called Contadora

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<sup>5</sup>In the late 1970s, for example, when it was feared that Nicaragua's President Somoza would follow through on his threat to attack northern Costa Rica in order to rout out Sandinista guerrillas based there, the Venezuelan air force landed a small force of its planes in Costa Rica as a show of force to deter Somoza. Popular perception on this issue is revealed in a July 1989 national Gallup poll; nearly two-thirds of the sample strongly believed that the U.S. would defend Costa Rica if attacked by either Nicaragua or Panama. Indeed, only 3 percent of the sample believed that the U.S. would not defend the country (CID-Gallup, 1989:45).

Initiative. Arias later proposed his own peace plan (for which he won the Nobel Peace Prize) which essentially excluded U.S. participation, relying instead on the actions of Central American nations alone. Costa Rica also has economic interests, such as trade with Cuba, that have not always been in accord with U.S. policy.

### **An Analysis of Belief System Structures in the U.S. and Costa Rica**

Our intention is to contrast the *structures* of foreign policy belief systems among Costa Ricans and North Americans given our strong *a priori* suspicion that the two polities differ fundamentally in the content of their beliefs. Do the populations share common structures even in the face of different beliefs? Do people rely on similar sets of heuristics (i.e., core values and postures) to organize attitudes toward very different foreign policy issues in the two countries?

In the following analysis, we estimate analogous hierarchical models for both nations in which more abstract idea elements are assumed to constrain more specific ones. Thus, opinions on specific foreign policy issues are constrained by general postures and core values. General postures, in turn, are constrained by core values:

Core Values ———> General Postures ———> Specific Policy Attitudes

More specifically, the analysis of foreign policy belief systems will proceed in two stages. First, for both of the countries, specific foreign policy attitudes will be regressed on militarism, anti-communism, and isolationism to determine whether the same three postures found to constrain policy attitudes in the U.S. also serve such a purpose in Costa Rica. In addition, while the influence of core values on policy attitudes is expected to be primarily indirect—via postures—we allow for a direct influence as well. Second, in an effort to explore the antecedents of the three postures in the two countries, the postures are regressed on a host of core values, the measurement of which is discussed below.

The comparisons between North Americans and Costa Ricans are based on data obtained from two probability samples: the ANES 1987 Pilot Study<sup>6</sup> and a survey conducted in the greater metropolitan region of San José, Costa Rica,<sup>7</sup> respectively. In order to be confident that the concepts and questions used in the United States would be understood in Costa Rica, we first reviewed the items with two Costa Rican professors expert in survey research. One of the authors (Seligson), who has spent over five years living in Costa Rica since first beginning to research the country in the late 1960s, then spent two months in Costa Rica undertaking a series of pre-tests, followed by a larger set of pilot interviews. Those interviews were coded and preliminary statistical analysis undertaken, after which further refinements of the instrument were made.

#### *Measures of Foreign Policy Postures*

As noted above, we found substantial linkages in the Lexington samples between broad, abstract foreign policy postures on the one hand, and more specific foreign policy attitudes on the other hand. Whether such postures—militarism, anti-com-

<sup>6</sup>In this national survey, the Center for Political Studies/Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan contacted 457 respondents by telephone for the 1986 National Election Study. Three hundred and sixty of these individuals were re-interviewed between June 2 and July 2, 1987, when a large battery of questions dealing with foreign affairs was administered.

<sup>7</sup>The Department of Statistics at the University of Costa Rica contacted 597 individuals in door-to-door interviews (in October and November 1990) lasting approximately 30 minutes.

munism, and isolationism—serve the same function of predicting foreign policy attitudes constraining more specific idea elements in a context outside of the United States is a question addressed below. As will be seen, dramatic differences emerge in the distribution of opinion on the first two postural dimensions (militarism and isolationism), with smaller differences on the third (anti-communism).

*Militarism.* The most profound postural difference between nations is evident on the militarism dimension. The postwar debate in the U.S. has seen an electorate divided between advocates of a strong, “tough,” militant foreign policy and proponents of strategies of negotiation and diplomacy; in Table 1 items A.1–3 demonstrate support for both mentalities in the ANES sample. Costa Ricans, in contrast, reveal both their pacifism and their historical avoidance of armed conflict in items A.1 and 2. Not only do large majorities prefer diplomatic solutions, but proponents of a more militant international posture are few and far between; Costa Ricans are virtually unanimous in rejecting military strength as a means of keeping the peace, with 99.3 percent of the sample favoring negotiations as the preferred method.

Cross-national differences are even more impressive in several items pertaining to the morality (or immorality) of warfare as a foreign policy instrument (items A.4–6). Caution must be exercised in the interpretation of these results, for the U.S. items were not included on the ANES pilot study. (Rather, the data are taken from a February 1986 probability survey [N = 501] conducted in the Lexington, Kentucky, region.) Nonetheless, we find a striking contrast in the percentages of North Americans and Costa Ricans who agree that it is “acceptable to kill our enemies in order to defend our country” (72.1 vs. 36.8 percent, respectively) and who disagree that “a person who loves his neighbor ought to refuse to fight in any war” (84.1 and 31.2 percent, respectively). These items clearly underscore the pacific nature of the Costa Rican polity.<sup>8</sup>

*Isolationism.* We previously (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987a) found the isolationism dimension—defined as a general desire that the government avoid any ties or entanglements with other countries—to be predictive of foreign trade, U.S.–U.S.S.R. cultural relations, and other policy attitudes in the United States. It can be seen in Table 1 that the two polities differ fundamentally in their isolationist tendencies. While North Americans reject isolationism (see items B.1 and 4) by a wide margin (more than seven out of ten disagree that the U.S. “would be better off if we just stayed home”), an overwhelming majority of Costa Ricans embrace isolationist sentiments (items B.1 and 3). As noted above, the nation was the last in the region to join the Central American Common Market, and has yet to ratify the Central American Parliament; such attitudes seem perfectly consistent with this history.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Pacifism among Costa Ricans does not extend to refusing to fight “if our country needs our support in war times.” Given their nation’s historical avoidance of conflict, citizens doubtless believe that the conditions under which the government would go to war would be so dire that few could imagine refusing to participate.

<sup>9</sup>Another interesting difference between the two polities with regard to isolationism is that, while in the United States there has long been a positive association between political sophistication and internationalism (such that more informed and educated individuals have been more supportive of international involvement), the relationship in Costa Rica is inverse—i.e., isolationist tendencies are more common among the *more* sophisticated (the Pearson correlation coefficient between a three-item political information scale and the isolationism scale is  $r = .267$ ). We speculate that this difference is due to the tendency common in both nations for the more enlightened citizens to be more aware of elite positions on international issues. In the U.S., mainstream elite policy has, for most of the present century, encouraged an expansive international role for the U.S. government. In Costa Rica, on the other hand, elites have been in the forefront of opposition to Central American unification, warning of the dangers of increased Costa Rican involvement with neighboring nations.



TABLE 1. A Comparison of Costa Rican and North American Postural Beliefs

	C.R.	U.S.
<b>A. Militarism</b> (Percentage non-militaristic (1–3) and militaristic (4–6))		
1. **Which do you think is the better way for us to keep peace—by having a very strong military so other countries won't attack us, or by working out our disagreements at the bargaining table? (% selecting second option)	99.3%	54.3%
2. **Some people feel that in dealing with other nations our government should be strong and tough. Others feel that our government should be understanding and flexible. (% flexible)	73.6	40.3
3. *The only way to settle disputes with our adversaries is to negotiate with them, not by using military force. (% Agree)		73.9
4. *It is certainly acceptable to kill one's enemy when fighting for one's country. (% Agree)	36.8	72.1#
5. *A person who loves his fellow man should refuse to fight in any war. (% Disagree)	31.2	84.1#
6. *If our country needs our support in war times, we must be ready to fight for it. (% Agree)	86.7	
<b>B. Isolationism</b> (Percentage internationalist)		
1. *We shouldn't risk our nation's happiness and well-being by getting involved in the politics of other nations. (% Disagree)	18.3%	65.6%
2. **Some people say that Costa Rican politicians should not concern themselves with Central American affairs, but rather that they should concentrate on resolving the problems that we have here in Costa Rica. Others say that our politicians should concern themselves with Central American affairs because everything that happens in Central America affects life in Costa Rica. (% selecting second option)	60.6	
3. *Costa Rica should not risk its tranquility and well-being by participating in Central American affairs. (% Disagree)	25.1	
4. *This country would be better off if we just stayed home and did not concern ourselves with problems in other parts of the world. (% Disagree)		72.2
<b>C. Anti-Communism</b> (Percentage anti-Communist)		
1. *Any time a country goes Communist, it should be considered a threat to the vital interests and security of Costa Rica (the United States). (% Agree)	75.7%	66.6%
2. *Costa Rica (the United States) should do everything it can to prevent the spread of communism to any other part of Central America (the world). (% Agree)	85.2	73.0
3. *Communism can be an acceptable form of government for some countries in the world. (% Disagree)	69.8	

#Items appearing on February 1986 Lexington Survey.

\*Respondents were asked if they "agree strongly," "agree somewhat," "disagree somewhat," or "disagree strongly," with the statements. Those volunteering uncertainty were assigned to the scale mean.

\*\*Respondents were asked with which statement they agreed and, as a follow-up question, whether they held the opinion "strongly" or "not very strongly."

*Anti-Communism.* The one area of commonality between foreign policy beliefs in the two nations is their mutual disdain for communism, and especially the spread of the form of government throughout the world. Whereas Costa Ricans (items C.1–3) are perhaps even more virulent in their anti-communist beliefs than are North Americans (items C.1 and 2), large majorities of both samples consider communism to be a threat which is unacceptable, the expansion of which must be contained.

We have established that the Costa Rican political environment poses a substantial contrast to that in the United States. Not surprisingly, given the fundamentally different experiences of the two nations in their international relations, we find important attitudinal differences between the two samples in all three key foreign policy postures: citizens are somewhat more anti-Communist, and substantially more isolationist and pacific than are North Americans. Moreover, when we add the inexperience of Costa Ricans in dealing with matters of security policy and the extraordinary citizen consensus on many foreign policy matters, we believe that Costa Rica provides a stringent test of the generalizability of a hierarchical model of foreign policy belief systems developed in the U.S. context.

In terms of operationalization of the three postures, two of them—*isolationism* and *anti-communism*—are operationalized exactly as specified in Table 1. Because of the almost consensual responses to the Costa Rican militarism items A.1 and 2, however, only items A.4–6 are used to construct the Militarism Scale for that sample (the North American indicator consists of items A.1–3). The wording of items in Table 1 reflects the ANES (i.e., English) version; the versions on the San José questionnaire may deviate somewhat as translated into Spanish.

#### *Measures of Core Values*

*Patriotism.* Patriotism is conceptualized as an affective bond for one's nation which engenders pride and support (see items II.A.1 and 2 [Costa Rica] and II.A.3–5 [U.S.] in the Appendix). In a general sense, the value is expected to translate into postural preferences advantageous toward the in-group and its allies; and a common manifestation of in-group loyalty is hostility toward out-groups and policies that are sympathetic toward such out-groups (Levinson, 1957). Thus, our Patriotism Scale is expected, as in the U.S. context, to serve as an important antecedent of all of the postures. In prior studies (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987a; 1990), a strong bond with the United States was found to translate into preferences for an aggressive (i.e., militaristic) pursuit of national interests; into an intense anti-communism, presumably out of the belief in the superiority of the "American way of life"; and into an isolationist posture, quite possibly because of the tendency of ethnocentrists to adopt parochial or self-centered views of the world.

*Religiosity.* Two other core values were also found to play an important role in predicting foreign policy postures in earlier work (e.g., Hurwitz and Peffley, 1990): religiosity and moral traditionalism. We found, for instance, religiosity to be an important antecedent of anti-communism. This linkage is not surprising given the historical salience of anti-Communist rhetoric to many religious groups; moreover, the perceived atheistic (and even anti-religious) policies of Communist nations may be repellent to many for whom religion plays a significant role in their lives. See items II.B.1–3 (Costa Rica) and II.B.1, 3, and 4 (U.S.) of the Appendix for the component items of the religiosity scale.<sup>10</sup>

*Moral Traditionalism.* A construct which has been found to be related to, yet conceptually distinct from, religiosity is moral traditionalism, or a "preference for traditional patterns of family and social morality that reflects a reverence for the past" (Conover and Feldman, 1986:2). Possibly because militant anti-communism has long been part of the moral traditionalist agenda (Heinz, 1983; Himmelstein, 1983), Conover and Feldman (1986) found moral conservatism to be associated

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<sup>10</sup>Our measure of religiosity relies on the strategy used by Conover and Feldman (1986), who specified the construct as comprising both fundamentalist beliefs (e.g., taking the Bible literally) and religious importance.

with preferences for a tougher stance in dealing with the former Soviet Union—a nation that could be perceived as morally and spiritually bankrupt. Three Likert items (section II.C.1–3 in the Appendix) comprise the Moral Traditionalism Scale for both nations.

*Ideology.* Finally, we include the ANES 7-point ideological (i.e., liberal-conservative) self-placement measure<sup>11</sup> in the subsequent analyses, both as a control variable—i.e., to investigate the possibility that several of the values and postures are related to specific foreign policy beliefs because of their mutual association with ideology—and because of the regional tendency to define right-wing politics partly on the basis of anti-communism.

#### *Specific Foreign Policy Attitudes*

Our primary concern in this paper is to determine if specific foreign policy beliefs in Costa Rica result from the same constellations of underlying postures and core values as they do in the United States. To this end, we have constructed several different policy attitude scales designed to represent the important domains of the Costa Rican and U.S. foreign policy agendas.

*Costa Rican Policies.* The *Military Policy Scale* (Appendix, items III.A.1–3) consists of three security-related policies: support for military service, light arms acquisition, and heavy weapons acquisition. The three-item (III.B.1–3) *Unification Policy Scale* taps support for various forms of Central American integration or unification such as a common currency, the creation of a single regional country, and the establishment of a Central American Parliament. The *United States Involvement Policy Scale* is constructed to tap attitudes regarding U.S. intervention in the region—specifically, support for American soldiers to help Costa Rica combat drug trafficking and for the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989 (III.C.1 and 2). And finally, a single-item *Cuban Trade Policy Scale* (III.D.1) measures support for Costa Rican trade with this Caribbean neighbor.

*U.S. Policies.* The issues on the U.S. foreign policy agenda obviously differ from those that are salient in Central America. We selected five policy domains from the ANES Pilot Study which, we believe, are representative of the agenda as of 1987. The *Defense Spending Policy Scale* is captured with a single item pertaining to the appropriate level of Pentagon funding (Appendix, item IV.A.1). The three-item (IV.B.1–3) *Nuclear Policy Scale* incorporates questions regarding support for augmenting the nuclear arsenal, the Strategic Defense Initiative, and a nuclear arms agreement. Items pertaining to sending U.S. troops to Central America, U.S. involvement in regional affairs, and aid to the Contras comprise the *Central American Military Policy Scale* (IV.C.1–3). The *Soviet Trade Policy Scale* and the *Import Policy Scale* are both measured with single indicators regarding trade with the former U.S.S.R. (IV.D.1) and support for import restrictions (IV.E.1), respectively.

#### *Methodology*

We use EQS (Bentler, 1989), a structural equations program, to estimate the hierarchical model of foreign policy attitudes in the two countries. EQS is roughly comparable to the better-known LISREL procedure (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1989),

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<sup>11</sup>The ideology scale on the Costa Rican survey is anchored by “left” and “right” descriptors rather than by liberalism-conservatism, as found on the ANES survey.

in that both computer programs are capable of deriving maximum likelihood estimates of the epistemic correlations between multiple indicators and latent variables on the one hand, and the structural coefficients connecting the latent variables on the other hand. The latter coefficients are our estimates of constraint, which are corrected for attenuation due to random measurement error.<sup>12</sup>

*The Determinants of Specific Foreign Policy Attitudes*

The entries in Table 2 are unstandardized coefficients obtained from regressing the policy attitudes on postures and core values in Costa Rica (Part A) and the United States (Part B).<sup>13</sup> The indicators have been rescaled so that the lowest value of the scale is 0 and the highest value of the scale is 1.0, which has the effect of calibrating the latent variables to the same 0 to 1 metric. Thus, the coefficients may be used to make comparisons both within and across countries. In addition, the indicators have been recoded so that higher values correspond to increasing degrees of, say, patriotism or militarism, in the case of the values and postures, and greater acceptance of, say, Cuban trade policy, in the case of policy attitudes.

Judging from the goodness-of-fit statistics presented in Table 2, the hypothesized models for the policy attitudes provide an acceptable fit to the data in both countries. The two more reliable and robust fit indices provided by EQS—the Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index and the Comparative Fit Index—are close to or exceed .9, a desirable level.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the estimated epistemic correlations between indicators and latent attitudinal variables presented in the Appendix reveal the indicators to be fairly reliable measures of the theoretical constructs.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>EQS and LISREL are alternative computer programs for estimating structural equations models that generate essentially identical results. Thus, the maximum likelihood estimates reported below would not be different if we had used LISREL.

<sup>13</sup>The system of structural equations linking latent policy variables to core values and postures may be thought of as a system of “seemingly unrelated regressions” where the endogenous (policy) variables are not causally linked, but the disturbances of the equations are correlated because omitted variables, presumably unrelated to the independent variables in each equation, may still affect the dependent variables in more than one equation (Hargens, 1988). Using EQS, one is able to estimate covariance paths linking the error terms of the endogenous variables, and this is done in both the policy attitudes model in Table 2 and the postures model in Table 3. In practical terms, this has the effect of producing more conservative estimates of the impact of core values and postures, since spurious sources of covariance between similar policy attitudes (e.g., attitudes toward defense spending and nuclear weapons in the U.S.) will not be attributed to the independent variables.

<sup>14</sup>Among the more than 30 different indices proposed to assess the fit of covariance structure models, EQS produces the four presented in the Goodness of Fit Summary, where the measures are displayed in order of increasing reliability in indicating model fit. The first measure, the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio, is widely reported (e.g., Carmines and McIver [1983] recommend a ratio of 3.0 as being indicative of an acceptable model fit), but is notoriously unreliable and has been supplanted with a variety of alternative fit indices, the logic of which is to compare the fit of a null or baseline model (in EQS this corresponds to uncorrelated measured variables) and the fit of the hypothesized model. In practice, these indices tend to range between 0 and 1.0, with .9 being the usual threshold for deeming an acceptable fit between hypothesized model and sample data. In simulation studies comparing a large number of fit indices, the second index—the Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index—tends to underestimate fit in moderate to small samples (i.e., less than 1,000 cases), while the last two measures in the table—the Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index and the Comparative Fit Index—have proven to be among the most reliable and robust measures across different models and sample sizes (Marsh, Balla, and McDonald, 1988; Bentler, 1990). Again, the two most reliable measures in Table 2 (the non-normed and comparative fit indices) indicate an acceptable fit between the data and the model. While it is always possible to improve the fit of covariance structure models by estimating increasingly trivial parameters (e.g., correlated error terms), we have avoided this strategy to retain a fairly parsimonious model.

<sup>15</sup>Whereas the epistemic correlations reported in the Appendix were generated from the EQS models predicting policy attitudes (Table 2), the coefficients remain essentially unchanged in subsequent EQS models reported in Tables 3 and 4.

TABLE 2. The Determinants of Foreign Policy Attitudes in Costa Rica (A) and the United States (B)

<b>A: Costa Rica</b>					
	<i>Military Policy</i>	<i>Unification Policy</i>	<i>U.S. Policy</i>	<i>Cuba Policy</i>	
<b>Postures</b>					
Isolationism	.169**	-.146	.197*	.198	
Militarism	.378**	.194*	.338**	-.183	
Anti-communism	-.070	-.094	.381**	.465**	
<b>Core Values</b>					
Ideology	.034	.026	.187**	.146*	
Patriotism	.165**	.229**	.220**	.025	
Religiosity	.115	-.219*	.381**	.228	
Moral Traditionalism	-.031	.349	-.250	-.331	
R <sup>2</sup>	.122	.056	.338	.073	
Chi-square = 468; df = 274; chi-square/df = 1.71					
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index = .891					
<b>B: United States</b>					
	<i>Defense Spending Policy</i>	<i>Nuclear Policy</i>	<i>Central American Policy</i>	<i>Soviet Trade Policy</i>	<i>Import Policy</i>
<b>Postures</b>					
Isolationism	.028	-.016	.214**	-.461**	-.108
Militarism	1.244**	.905**	.572**	.234*	.068
Anti-communism	.376**	.203*	.522**	.501**	.433**
<b>Core Values</b>					
Ideology	-.146*	-.028	.029	-.084	-.178*
Patriotism	.060	.098	.125	-.005	-.047
Religiosity	.085	.183	.207	-.418*	.175
Moral Traditionalism	.095	.083	.012	-.157	.205*
R <sup>2</sup>	.360	.478	.490	.103	.040
Chi-square = 424; df = 266; chi-square/df = 1.59					
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index = .902					

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ 

Entries are unstandardized coefficients. Low levels of each variable correspond to anti-isolationism, militarism, anti-communism, right-wing attitudes, patriotism, religiosity, moral conservatism, arms acquisition (C.R.), anti-unification (C.R.), U.S. involvement (C.R.), anti-trade with Cuba (C.R.), defense spending (U.S.), nuclear arsenal build-up (U.S.), U.S. involvement in Central America (U.S.), anti-Soviet trade (U.S.), and import restriction (U.S.).

Space constraints preclude an exhaustive discussion of the results; still, several findings are notable. Most generally, foreign policy postures in both nations are consistent, in predictable ways, with more specific foreign policy attitudes. Those with more "tough-minded," or military-oriented, postures and strong anti-Communists are typically more likely to advocate more "hawkish" policies, whereas isolationists are somewhat more hesitant to interact with foreign nations.

Cross-national differences in belief structure, however, are just as revealing as the similarities. For, put simply, the role of postural beliefs is considerably stronger in the United States than in Costa Rica. In terms of the R<sup>2</sup>s for the policy attitudes in the two samples, for example, we are far more successful in predicting policy attitudes in the U.S. (average R<sup>2</sup> = .294, or .443 if trade and import policies are excluded) than in Costa Rica (.147). While the coefficient of determination is a function of the performance of the core value variables as well, the chief reason for this difference is the greater explanatory power of the postures in the United States relative to Costa Rica.

Consistent with earlier findings based on Lexington, Kentucky, data (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987a; 1990), we find militarism to play the greatest role in structuring

the specific policy attitudes of North Americans. The coefficients associated with the construct are, by a large margin, the largest in three of the equations: more militant individuals are far more likely to support higher levels of defense spending, the augmentation of our nuclear arsenal, and a heightened U.S. role in Central America, relative to those who are predisposed to a more diplomatic orientation. The only equations in which militarism is not dominant—Soviet trade and import restrictions—are perfectly consistent with our conceptualization of the posture, as the dependent variables in these cases are policy attitudes that are nonmilitary in nature.

Anti-communism also plays an important role in the U.S. context. Until very recently, North American foreign policy was dominated by the Cold War concern of the Soviet (and Communist) threat. Thus, it is not surprising to find that attitudes on a diverse set of policies are driven by views of that form of government. We find, consistent with prior work, that intense anti-communism translates into preferences for higher levels of defense spending, a stronger nuclear arsenal, and a more prominent U.S. role in Central America; all three policies, in the minds of respondents, are seen as important for the purpose of minimizing the Communist threat. And, not surprisingly, anti-Communists are far more critical of trade with the former Soviet Union. Clearly, the impact of this postural dimension is pervasive to the belief systems of U.S. respondents.

We note, finally, a more limited, albeit still important, role of the third posture: isolationism is an important contributor to two of the equations. As expected, isolationists, or those who disdain U.S. involvement with other nations, are significantly less likely to advocate a major U.S. role in Central America and/or a resumption of trade with the former Soviet Union. It can also be seen that the variable is not related to military issues that do not call for international entanglements—i.e., it is significant in neither the defense spending nor the nuclear policy equations.

In Costa Rica militarism is also the most important predictor of foreign policy attitudes in two of the equations. It has a consistently significant impact, as more militant respondents are found to be far more likely to advocate weapon acquisitions and establishing military service for youth, and far more supportive of the U.S. role in the region (including its invasion of Panama and sending soldiers to Costa Rica to help combat drug trafficking). As well, there is a modest tendency for less “tough-minded” respondents to be more supportive of unification policies, presumably because of their higher level of support for inter-nation diplomacy. (Although the variable does not contribute to the Cuba policy equation, the result is easily explained by the nonmilitary nature of the dependent variable.) Despite the significance of the coefficients, however, their magnitude is far lower than in the U.S. case.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, militarism is less closely linked to anti-communism at the zero-order level in Costa Rica ( $r = .052$ ) than in the United States ( $r = .332$ ), suggesting that militarism is incorporated more fully into the foreign policy belief systems of North Americans than of Costa Ricans. As intensely as anti-communism runs among Costa Ricans,<sup>17</sup> its containment is not given the militaristic cast that it has acquired in the United States; unlike those to the north, in other words, Costa

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<sup>16</sup>Although the mean unstandardized militarism coefficient in the U.S. is .605, it is only .273 in Costa Rica.

<sup>17</sup>The existence of a small leftist minority has provided a target for strong anti-Communist sentiments. Although Communists are regularly elected to the legislature, their numbers have never been great, and since the late 1940s have not exceeded 3.3 percent of the vote in presidential elections. A 1980 survey of urban Costa Ricans, using the Sullivan (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1979, 1982) “least-liked group” indicator, found that the Communist party, leftist labor unions, and leftist student groups were the groups least liked by 84.4 percent of the population (Caspi and Seligson, 1983:391). But while levels of animosity toward communism may be comparable in Costa Rica and the U.S., it is likely that the nature of the belief differs. In the United States anti-communism has traditionally translated into a willingness to contain it militarily, but the extraordinary passivism (discussed previously) of the Costa Rican culture has, we argue, unlinked it from any militaristic connections.

Ricans apparently do not believe that efforts to prevent its spread should include the use of military force. Obviously the pacifistic views of Costa Ricans are heavily influencing this result.

Anti-Communists in Costa Rica are substantially more likely to advocate a large role for the United States (the major world opponent of communism) in Costa Rican affairs, and substantially less likely to advocate trade relations with Cuba (the major regional practitioner of communism). It is not surprising to find that anti-communism is unrelated to military policy attitudes, in light of the finding noted above that anti-communism and militarism are not strongly related at the postural level. Thus, while anti-communism among North Americans translates into more hawkish national security preferences, Costa Ricans simply do not advocate military methods of countering the threat, no matter how noxious they find communism.

And finally, we note the relatively unimportant role of the isolationism dimension in Table 2A. Relative to advocates of a more internationalist posture, isolationists are modestly more approving of policies designed to strengthen Costa Rica's military and of policies associated with a more prominent role for the United States (i.e., the U.S. invasion of Panama and U.S. assistance to combat drug trafficking)—findings that may appear to contradict the assumption that isolationists disapprove of policies that foster relations with other nations, including a more active military. Quite likely, such policies are viewed as means of remedying internal problems (such as drug abuse and drug-related crime) or of providing protection to Costa Rica, rather than as mechanisms of international involvement. Regarding the importance of isolationism, however, it must also be noted that the magnitude of these coefficients is small though significant at the .05 level. And, perhaps more revealingly, isolationism fails to predict attitudes in the one equation in which, theoretically, it should play its most important role: although the coefficient is in the right direction, isolationists are not significantly less supportive of regional unification than are more internationalist respondents. The historical interest in Central America of restoring the United Provinces of Central America may, quite possibly, appeal broadly to citizens regardless of their more general preferences of avoiding international ties or entanglements.

In light of our previous discussion, the relatively weaker impact of the isolationism dimension in Costa Rica is not surprising. Not only are the coefficients associated with the dimension attenuated due to the lack of variance which Costa Rican citizens exhibit on the posture, but, more important, the concept of internationalism simply lacks the salience and scope in Costa Rica that it has in North America. In the U.S., due to the nation's broader international experiences and opportunities, its greater resources, and the far greater demands placed on its military, internationalism is a concept that is salient and crystallized in the minds of citizens to a greater degree than in Costa Rica.

In our previous research based on local data we found that core values constrain specific policy attitudes mainly indirectly (i.e., via postures). As shown in Table 2, our Kentucky findings parallel those found in the expanded United States sample. While the coefficients for the direct effects of some of the values reach statistical significance, the effects are trivial relative to those exerted by the postures. Thus, as expected, there is little role for core values as direct determinants of policy attitudes in the U.S.

In Costa Rica, on the other hand, core values are more likely to emerge as significant predictors of policy attitudes. In the U.S. involvement policy equation, for example, support for North American involvement comes disproportionately from conservatives, strong patriots, and the more religious respondents. Clearly, the role of values as direct determinants of policy attitudes in Costa Rica deserves more attention.

In summary, we find in Table 2 that the specific foreign policy attitudes of respondents in both nations are constrained by their more general postural beliefs. In both contexts, anti-communism provides an important structure to specific foreign policy attitudes. And whereas the militarism dimension is predictive of certain Costa Rican policy attitudes, it is considerably more dominant to the foreign policy belief systems of North Americans.

*The Influence of Core Values on Foreign Policy Postures*

The prior research with the Kentucky samples has shown that core values have a direct effect on postures. We regress in Table 3 the three postures on ideology and the core values of patriotism, moral traditionalism, and religiosity in Costa Rica (A) and the United States (B). The purpose of this analysis is to determine the degree to which postures are predicted by more fundamental values, which is an indication that such postures are ingrained in a larger network of interconnected beliefs in the mass public.<sup>18</sup>

In Costa Rica, only beliefs pertaining to communism are closely related to more fundamental core values. Strongly anti-Communist respondents are significantly more likely to come from the right wing of the ideological spectrum, to express deeply patriotic sentiments (as an attachment toward one's own country translates into an antipathy toward an adversary), and to adhere to conservative moral values (possibly because of the "Godless" and immoral character of Communist systems that is often portrayed in democratic countries). A very respectable 25 percent of the variance in anti-Communist beliefs is explained by these four values, indicating a relatively close linkage between elements of the belief systems.

The additional findings in panel A of Table 3 show that strong patriots are significantly more likely to advocate a hard-line approach to foreign affairs, while those with more traditional social values are somewhat more isolationist in their orientations.<sup>19</sup> Otherwise, militarism and isolationism are related only tenuously to the predictors in panel A.

Turning to the U.S. data in panel B of Table 3, we find some similarities with Costa Rica. In both countries, moral traditionalism is associated with more intensively anti-Communist beliefs. Moreover, patriotism emerges in both contexts as a clearly important element of foreign policy belief systems; individuals with strong affective ties toward their nation are far more likely to express both anti-Communist and hard-line military beliefs, presumably because of the patriot's twin convictions in the superiority of his or her system of government and in the need militantly to defend it.

Yet, we find the cross-national differences to be just as revealing as the similarities. Most obviously, while the militarism dimension is firmly linked to the values of North Americans, it is essentially unrelated to the values of Costa Ricans, with the exception of its aforementioned association with patriotism. In the U.S., highly militant respondents come disproportionately from the right wing of the political and moral traditionalism spectrum; in Costa Rica, on the other hand, the political

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<sup>18</sup>Although it is possible, in theory, to estimate the impact of values on postures in the same model that estimates the impact of postures and values on policy attitudes (i.e., combine models in Tables 2 and 3), in practice, EQS was unable to estimate such a model, no doubt because the number of partially overlapping structural paths EQS is called upon to estimate is excessive (28 paths in the policy attitudes model + 12 paths in the postures model = 40 paths). Therefore, it was necessary to estimate a model for postures (Table 3) separately from the model for policy attitudes (Table 2).

<sup>19</sup>Conover and Feldman (1986) contend that moral traditionalists tend to be intolerant not only of other social lifestyles, but of other cultures as well.



TABLE 3. The Determinants of Foreign Policy Postures in Costa Rica (A) and the United States (B)

<b>A: Costa Rica</b>	<i>Isolationism</i>	<i>Militarism</i>	<i>Anti-Communism</i>
Ideology	.053	.006	.264**
Patriotism	.022	.234**	.294**
Religiosity	.084	-.057	.011
Moral Traditionalism	.246**	-.071	.687**
R <sup>2</sup>	.068	.040	.238
Chi-square = 183; df = 118; chi-square/df = 1.55			
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index = .945			
<b>B: United States</b>	<i>Isolationism</i>	<i>Militarism</i>	<i>Anti-Communism</i>
Ideology	.092	.232**	.037
Patriotism	.116	.434**	.278**
Fundamentalism	.025	-.285	.313*
Moral Traditionalism	-.087	-.159**	.103*
R <sup>2</sup>	.006	.101	.148
Chi-square = 274; df = 100; chi-square/df = 2.74			
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index = .893			

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

Entries are unstandardized coefficients. See Table 2 for variable definition.

and moral tradition does not include a militaristic orientation as an important component of the agenda. This difference between countries is not surprising given the much greater salience militarism has in the U.S. as compared to Costa Rica.

This is not to suggest, however, that other postures are disconnected from the belief systems of Costa Ricans. For one, while isolationism is not linked to core values in the U.S., it is associated with morally traditional values in Costa Rica. Second, and more important, we actually find closer connections between anti-communism and core values among Costa Ricans than among North Americans. Not only do we explain more of the variance in the anti-communism responses in the former sample than in the latter, we also find anti-communism to be far more highly related to both the political and the moral right wing in Costa Rica, relative to the United States.

We now have a clearer idea as to why postures were more clearly related to foreign policy attitudes in the U.S. than in Costa Rica. Militarism emerged as the single most important construct both in the present study and in prior analyses (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987a, 1990). In all likelihood, the U.S. population relies on this tough-flexible dimension to structure its policy attitudes because of the salience of national security issues on the political agenda. The United States has an extraordinary degree of experience with discussions of Pentagon budgets, weapons systems, the employment of troops abroad, and other matters of military policy. It stands to reason, consequently, that the public would begin to rely on an attitudinal continuum that helps structure such policy concerns.

Further evidence of this conclusion can be seen in Table 2, panel B, where our ability to explain nonsecurity policy attitudes in the U.S. (e.g., Soviet trade and import restrictions) is considerably diminished. In all likelihood, individuals have higher levels of motivation to structure or organize idea elements that are important to them (see, for instance, Festinger, 1968; Judd and Krosnick, 1989), and life-and-death issues are, almost by definition, of obvious salience to almost all citizens. Yet, Costa Ricans, as noted above, have substantially less experience with security matters. With little history of war, with a tradition of looking to others for

their defense, without an armed service, it is unlikely that the crucial matters of defense and war so common to North Americans would be salient, and therefore crystallized in the minds of Costa Ricans. Thus, comparatively lower associations between military policies and postures in the Costa Rican equations can almost certainly be attributed to the lesser importance of military security issues there than in the U.S.

### *International Images*

Does the relative unimportance of the militarism posture in Costa Rica necessitate the conclusion that Costa Ricans are incapable of structuring their foreign policy beliefs? Clearly, the answer is negative. For, in the first place, we have just demonstrated the pervasiveness of another posture—anti-communism—in the belief systems of the citizens: anti-Communitistic beliefs are closely related to both core values (at the more general level) and policy attitudes (at the more specific level).

In the second place, it is possible that general beliefs other than these three postures may serve to organize the foreign policy attitudes of Costa Ricans. In our prior research in the U.S., another set of general beliefs has been found to help predict foreign policy attitudes. We have shown (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1990; Peffley and Hurwitz, 1992) that, given the central place of national security issues in the U.S., images of *enemy* nations which may threaten U.S. security (e.g., the former U.S.S.R.) are especially important in guiding preferences on these issues. Since we have shown in this paper that security concerns are not central in Costa Rica, we wonder if images can still play a role in predicting foreign policy attitudes. For example, non-enemy stereotypes may also shape foreign policy preferences, as research on images of allied, colonial, or imperialist nations has shown (e.g., Cottam, 1977; Herrmann, 1985). These more diverse images may likely play a role in Costa Rica, which finds itself in a multipolar environment, where several countries—including the United States, Nicaragua, and Cuba—have been major players at various points in the country's history.

The image heuristic would seem to be a useful one for citizens in a variety of international environments, since, by definition, foreign policies are formulated as a response to other nations, the perceived characteristics of which should influence the nature of the policy response. But while national images have been a major staple of analysts' attempts to explain elite decision making,<sup>20</sup> there have been few traditional survey studies documenting the importance of the heuristic for ordinary citizens who, because they operate under greater uncertainty than experts, would seem to be more in need of just such a simplifying heuristic. Thus, demonstrating the importance of national images in Costa Rica would help to extend the utility of the construct to non-enemy images outside the U.S. context.

To assess images of the governments of the United States, Cuba, and Nicaragua, the Costa Rican respondents were presented with a battery of 5-point semantic differentials, including "trustworthy-untrustworthy," "dishonest-honest," "friend-enemy," "responsible-irresponsible," "good-bad," and "threatening-not threatening."<sup>21</sup> Responses to these items were used to construct latent variables of images

<sup>20</sup>See, for example, works by Cottam (1977), Herrmann (1986), Holsti (1967), and Jervis (1976).

<sup>21</sup>It should be noted that all of the semantic differentials refer to perceived *external* characteristics of the countries in question. Two semantic differentials tapping the *internal* characteristics of the countries—"repressive-free" and "authoritarian-democratic"—were dropped from the image variable because they were unimportant in shaping overall impressions of the countries (as indicated by low epistemic correlations) and in shaping policy responses (as indicated by additional item analyses). Consistent with our past research, then, not only are the external traits of other countries more crystallized in the minds of ordinary citizens, they are more important than internal characteristics in driving foreign policy responses (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1990).

of these three countries. Unfortunately, the ANES survey did not include items measuring Americans' images of foreign nations, precluding an analysis of parallel models. Our prior analyses (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1990; Peffley and Hurwitz, 1992) of Lexington survey data, however, have led us to conclude that perceptions of the primary U.S. antagonist (i.e., the former Soviet Union) are closely related to a wide range of foreign policy attitudes, independent of the role of postures.

To determine whether international images help predict Costa Ricans' policy attitudes, the three image variables were added to the four policy equations estimated in Table 2, panel A. The revised equations are exhibited in Table 4.

TABLE 4. Postures, Core Values, and Images as Determinants of Costa Rica's Foreign Policy Attitudes

	<i>Military Policy</i>	<i>Unification Policy</i>	<i>U.S. Policy</i>	<i>Cuba Policy</i>
<b>Postures</b>				
Isolationism	.163*	-.138	.158*	.183
Militarism	.368**	.232*	.192*	-.231*
Anti-communism	-.154	-.155	.275**	.263*
<b>Core Values</b>				
Ideology	.033	.032	.076	.100
Patriotism	.144*	.219**	.217**	-.016
Religiosity	.085	-.163	.229**	.259*
Moral Traditionalism	-.013	.319	-.234	-.331
<b>National Images</b>				
United States	.005	.052	-.411**	-.203*
Cuba	-.115*	.230**	.066	.484**
Nicaragua	.052	-.044	.006	.138*
R <sup>2</sup>	.121	.076	.389	.112
Chi-square = 1375; df = 859; chi-square/df = 1.60				
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index = .908				

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

Entries are unstandardized coefficients. See Table 2 for variable definition.

Quite clearly, respondents' perceptions of one or more of the three nations are important predictors of each of the four policy attitudes. The most impressive results, predictably, are in the two equations pertaining explicitly to foreign countries. In deciding whether Costa Rica should initiate trade relations with Cuba, for example, negative images of the neighbor are strongly associated with a desire to keep trade barriers intact. We also find that positive images of Cuba's friends (i.e., Nicaragua) and foes (i.e., the U.S.) are brought into play when determining whether to resume relations with that country. Positive images of the U.S. are associated with opposition to trade, perhaps because of U.S. resistance to trade; and, in addition, negative images of Nicaragua condition opposition to resumed relations with a country that was, until recently, aligned with Nicaragua. While the coefficients for U.S. and Nicaraguan images are not especially large, these results do demonstrate how policy attitudes are shaped by a fairly complex array of alliances and images in Costa Rica's multipolar international environment. And just as policy attitudes toward Cuba are shaped predominantly by images of that country, so are attitudes toward U.S. policy in Central America strongly associated with images of the U.S., with more negative images spurring much more critical assessments of U.S. actions in the region.

We note, finally, the significant, though more modest, impact of perceptions of an enemy nation—Cuba—on citizen attitudes regarding militarization and unification.<sup>22</sup> Specifically, more hostile images of Cuba tend to increase support for a harder line on military policy, no doubt because the country has historically posed a significant threat of subversion to Costa Rica, as indicated earlier.<sup>23</sup> While the magnitude of these coefficients is generally modest, the results clearly demonstrate the importance of images as beliefs with the capacity to drive foreign policy attitudes.

### Conclusions

We have attempted in this paper to explore the generalizeability of our earlier findings that citizens organize their foreign policy beliefs hierarchically by using more general beliefs (i.e., postures, core values, and national images) to structure their more specific policy attitudes. In our replication of the hierarchical model, we selected a nation that we expected would pose a dramatic contrast to the United States. As noted, Costa Ricans have little experience with national security matters, which are historically less salient in that country. Moreover, their international stage is more eclectic than is the case for North Americans, in the sense that, whereas North Americans have typically designed policies in response to a single nation (i.e., the former Soviet Union), Costa Ricans must take into account a more complete and varied set of nations. Furthermore, consistent with our expectations, we found Costa Ricans to differ fundamentally from North Americans in their foreign policy-related beliefs: they are substantially less militaristic, far more isolationist, and slightly more anti-Communist than the respondents to the ANES survey.

Given these differences, we anticipated great difficulties in attempting to replicate the hierarchical model of foreign policy belief systems. Yet, we find that even in this least-similar-systems test, the model generalizes: while there are some important differences between the two nations in the relative explanatory power of certain postures and values, we find that, in both contexts, general beliefs serve to constrain more specific foreign policy attitudes.

Clearly, Costa Ricans have the capacity to structure their attitudes in this policy domain. In the U.S. policy equations (see Tables 2 (panel A) and 4), for example, well over one-third of the variance in responses is explained by the respondents' more general beliefs. These results point to an impressive degree of constraint, at least in this one policy area. Yet, we also find, despite support for the fundamental importance of general beliefs in both nations, that the particular heuristics which have been demonstrated to be so important to North Americans are not necessarily salient to Costa Ricans. In the U.S., we are quite successful in explaining military policy attitudes, largely because of the impressive role played by the militarism dimension. Militarism, as an independent variable (Table 2, panel B), is an important determinant of defense spending, nuclear, and Central American policy attitudes; as a dependent variable (Table 3, panel B), it is constrained by more general core values. In short, militarism is well integrated into the belief systems of North Americans. And, it is important to note, we are substantially less successful in

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<sup>22</sup>On the 5-point semantic differential anchored by friend (1) and enemy (5), the mean response to Cuba among Costa Ricans is 4.04.

<sup>23</sup>The reason that Nicaraguan images are not more important for military and other policies must be that the government of Nicaragua changed dramatically prior to interviewing, making such fuzzy images an unlikely candidate for playing a major role in structuring foreign policy attitudes.

predicting policy attitudes of a nonmilitary nature (e.g., Soviet trade and import policies) in the U.S., given the essential irrelevance of militarism in these matters.

We find far less evidence, however, to support the salience of the militarism dimension in Costa Rica, where it appears to be only weakly integrated into citizen belief systems. We have frequently discussed the almost consensual endorsement of passivism and the lack of experience of the Costa Rican citizens in dealing with national security concerns, and it seems that these conditions have fostered an agenda in which general militaristic beliefs play only a limited role in organizing foreign policy attitudes. Costa Ricans have a great deal of experience, however, with the issue of communism, given the proximity of various neighbors with Communist governments and/or movements. And, importantly, we find the anti-communism posture to be a potent predictor of two sets of policy attitudes (U.S. and Cuban policies) and, as well, to be closely connected to more general core values.

We also find another heuristic to play an important role in structuring the policy attitudes of Costa Ricans: images of salient nations. Quite clearly, Table 4 demonstrates that Costa Ricans formulate their attitudes toward U.S. and Cuban policies in large part by incorporating their views of the relevant nations into their decisional calculi. We regret our inability to explore more systematically the relative importance of national images in the two nations. The ANES survey did not include U.S. citizens' images of the former U.S.S.R., and, consequently, we can only assume that our prior work based on Lexington samples (e.g., Hurwitz and Peffley, 1990; Peffley and Hurwitz, 1992)—in which we found strong evidence that the foreign policy attitudes of North Americans are driven in large part by their images of the enemy (i.e., the former Soviet Union)—would generalize to a national sample. It is of interest to learn, therefore, that national images serve an analogous role to citizens of a different country.

Thus, although the salient actors with whom citizens must relate vary across nations, it seems likely that individuals in all countries will rely on the images of these nations in developing their foreign policy attitudes. An important lesson from our analysis of Costa Ricans is that citizens are not limited to forming impressions of a single nation, as we found in the United States during the Cold War era. As the salience of the former U.S.S.R. recedes and other nations such as Japan, Germany, and Iraq become more prominent, we will need to turn our attention to examining the images that North Americans hold of these various countries, and to exploring how these images are linked to various policy attitudes. Of course, a more systematic strategy for studying a diverse set of images, beyond the enemy stereotype, will be needed (e.g., see Herrmann, 1985).

We were not, however, successful in all cases in Costa Rica. For example, we had limited ability to predict unification policy in Costa Rica, suggesting that there may be some postures or core values in that country that are not found in the U.S. that might ultimately help us predict these attitudes more successfully. In future studies this possibility should be explored. Perhaps further insight can be obtained from the extensive studies of the European cases to determine what sets of values there predict attitudes toward the Common Market (Inglehart, 1990).

Thus, we have learned that attitudinal structure is quite likely to be functional in the sense that it develops to meet the particular needs of a particular citizenry. Citizens of the United States have had to deal, at least during the present century, with a variety of national security and military issues, thanks in large part to the prominent global role played by their government. In response, North Americans have relied very heavily on the militarism dimension to structure their more specific policy attitudes. But due to the essential irrelevance of the dimension in Costa Rica, militarism was not found to play a comparable role in Costa Rica. Instead, due to the chronic issue of communism in their region, citizens of the nation appear to utilize anti-communism as the salient heuristic. An important lesson for students of public opinion in the United States is that, as the foreign

policy agenda changes in the post-Cold War era, new postural dimensions may begin to emerge to enable citizens to process whatever issues dominate the political landscape.

Presently, we know only that the new international stage will be substantially more complex, especially for the United States. Unless a new superpower nation comes to the forefront to replace the former Soviet bloc, the landscape for North American citizens will become increasingly variegated and, of course, devoid of the Communist threat that has haunted the U.S. during the postwar era.

**Appendix: Epistemic Correlations of Survey Items**

<b>I. FOREIGN POLICY POSTURES</b>	<b>C.R.</b>	<b>U.S.</b>
<b>A. Militarism</b>		
1. **Which do you think is the better way for us to keep peace—by having a very strong military so other countries won't attack us, or by working out our disagreements at the bargaining table?		.672
2. **Some people feel that in dealing with other nations our government should be strong and tough. Others feel that our government should be understanding and flexible.		.562
3. *The only way to settle disputes with our adversaries is to negotiate with them, not by using military force.		.415
4. *It is certainly acceptable to kill one's enemy when fighting for one's country.	.480	
5. *A person who loves his fellow man should refuse to fight in any war.	.342	
6. *If our country needs our support in war times, we must be ready to fight for it.	.496	
<b>B. Isolationism</b>		
1. *We shouldn't risk our nation's happiness and well-being by getting involved in the politics of other nations.	.793	.740
2. **Some people say that Costa Rican politicians should not concern themselves with Central American affairs, but rather that they should concentrate on resolving the problems that we have here in Costa Rica. Others say that our politicians should concern themselves with Central American affairs because everything that happens in Central America affects life in Costa Rica.	.386	
3. *Costa Rica should not risk its tranquility and well-being by participating in Central American affairs.	.742	
4. *This country would be better off if we just stayed home and did not concern ourselves with problems in other parts of the world.		.906
<b>C. Anti-Communism</b>		
1. *Any time a country goes Communist, it should be considered a threat to the vital interests and security of Costa Rica [the United States].	.687	.741
2. *Costa Rica [the United States] should do everything it can to prevent the spread of communism to any other part of Central America [the world].	.706	.639

3. \*Communism can be an acceptable form of government for some countries in the world. .348

## II. CORE VALUES

### A. Patriotism

1. \*\*\*To what extent are you proud to live under the Costa Rican political system? .931
2. \*\*\*To what extent do you think that you should support the Costa Rican political system? .698
3. How proud are you to be an American? Extremely proud, very proud, somewhat proud, or not very proud? .759
4. How strong is your love for your country? Extremely strong, very strong, somewhat strong, or not very strong? .692
5. How angry does it make you feel when you hear someone criticizing the United States? Extremely angry, very angry, somewhat angry, or not very angry? .623

### B. Religiosity

1. \*\*\*\*\*The Bible is the word of God and all that it says is literally true. .774 .593
2. \*Eternal life is only possible for those who believe in Jesus Christ as God and savior. .702
3. \*\*\*\*\*Do you consider religion to be an important part of your life, or not? .383 .555
4. Do you go to church/synagogue every week, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never? .673

### C. Moral Traditionalism

1. \*Changes in lifestyles, such as divorce and men and women living together without being married, are signs of increasing moral decay. .483 .804
2. \*There is too much sexual freedom and loose living today. .609 .682
3. \*We should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards, even if they are very different from our own. .274 .481

## III. SPECIFIC FOREIGN POLICY ATTITUDES—COSTA RICA

### A. Military Policy

Armed violence still continues throughout Central America. Some people say that Costa Rica should take precautions in order to protect itself. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly that Costa Rica should:

1. Establish military service for youth. .668
2. Buy more light arms, such as rifles, for the Civil Guard. .425
3. Buy heavy weapons, such as tanks, for the Civil Guard. .632

### B. Unification Policy

1. \*In the future, it would be a good idea if all Central American nations would use the same currency. .437

2. \*Costa Rica's goal should be the creation of a single Central American country. .604
  3. Have you heard of the Central American Parliament? a. IF "YES": Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the Legislative Assembly approving the Central American Parliament? b. IF "NO": The Central American Parliament is a legislative assembly comprised of 20 representatives from each of the Central American countries. Issues of Central American interest will be debated. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the Legislative Assembly approving the Central American Parliament? .559
- C. United States Policy**
1. \*Costa Rica should ask the United States to deploy a group of soldiers here to help us combat drug trafficking. .457
  2. \*The United States did well to invade Panama and capture Noriega. .712
- D. Cuban Policy**
1. \*Our government should initiate trade relations with Cuba. 1.000<sup>a</sup>

#### IV. SPECIFIC FOREIGN POLICY ATTITUDES—UNITED STATES

- A. Defense Spending Policy**
1. \*\*Some people believe we should spend much less money for defense. Others feel defense spending should be greatly increased. 1.000<sup>a</sup>
- B. Nuclear Policy**
1. Would you strongly favor, not so strongly favor, not so strongly oppose, or strongly oppose the U.S. building more nuclear weapons? .679
  2. Would you strongly favor, not so strongly favor, not so strongly oppose, or strongly oppose the United States developing a space-based Star Wars system intended to protect against nuclear attack? .588
  3. Most people think we must prevent nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union by reaching a nuclear arms agreement. Some think the best way to do this is to negotiate with the Soviets as soon as possible; others think that the best way is first to build up our nuclear arms so that we can then negotiate from a position of strength. Which do you think is the better way to prevent nuclear war—negotiate as soon as possible, or first build up our nuclear arms? .564
- C. Central American Military Policy**
1. Would you strongly favor, not so strongly favor, not so strongly oppose, or strongly oppose sending U.S. troops to Central America to stop the spread of communism? .622



2. \*\*\*\*Some people think the United States should become much less involved in the internal affairs of Central American countries. Others believe that the U.S. government should become much more involved in this part of the world. .579
3. If you had a say in making up the federal budget this year, would you like to see spending for aid to the Contras in Nicaragua increased, decreased, or kept about the same? .572

#### D. Soviet Trade Policy

1. Would you strongly favor, not so strongly favor, not so strongly oppose, or strongly oppose promoting increased trade between the United States and the Soviet Union? 1.000<sup>a</sup>

#### E. Import Restriction Policy

1. Some people have suggested placing new limits on imports in order to protect American jobs. Others say that such limits would raise consumer prices and hurt American exports. Do you favor placing new limits or not? 1.000<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Single-indicator epistemic correlations were constrained to equal 1.000.

\* Respondents were asked if they "agree strongly," "agree somewhat," "disagree somewhat," or "disagree strongly" with the statements. Those volunteering uncertainty were assigned to the scale mean.

\*\* Respondents were asked with which statement they agreed and, as a follow-up question, were asked if they held the opinion "strongly" or "not very strongly."

\*\*\* Respondents were asked to answer on a 1 ("not at all") to 7 ("very much") scale.

\*\*\*\* Respondents were asked to answer on a 1 to 7 scale, with end points defined by the two expressed views.

\*\*\*\*\* In the U.S. survey, response categories were dichotomous. For the Costa Rican survey, see \* above.

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