

Faith Matters: Religious Affiliation and Public Opinion About Barack Obama's Foreign Policy in the "Greater" Middle East*

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Objectives. Despite the obvious relevance of religious themes and symbols in U.S. foreign policy since September 11, 2001, scholars know little about whether or how religious affiliation and behavior affect foreign policy attitudes. In this study, we endeavor to fill this gap in the literature. *Methods.* We analyze the relationship between religious affiliation and public opinion about several dimensions of U.S. foreign policy in the Greater Middle East under President Barack Obama using pooled data from three surveys conducted in 2009 by the Pew Research Center. *Results.* Our analysis indicates that the "faith factor" is a powerful force driving American attitudes about Obama's foreign policy. Specifically, seculars, mainline Protestants, and Catholics variously stand out as more moderate and more supportive of Obama when compared to evangelical Protestants. *Conclusions.* Our findings demonstrate that even when other determinants of foreign policy public opinion are controlled, religious affiliation has a powerful and independent impact on a wide array of foreign policy attitudes. Religion's impact on foreign policy attitudes thus is limited neither to the period immediately following September 11 nor to the administration of George W. Bush.

Scholars continue to wrestle with questions of whether and how religion should be included in studies of public opinion about foreign policy issues. Religious variables recently have been used to generate new insights in other areas of study, including social networks and political tolerance (e.g., Djupe and Gilbert, 2009; Eisenstein, 2006), and the "religion and politics" subfield is thriving (Wald and Wilcox, 2006). On the other hand, as Wald and Wilcox conclude in their analysis of political scientists' overall treatment of religion: "Apart from economics and geography, it is hard to find a social science [discipline] that has given less attention to religion than

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political science" (2006:523)—despite the fact that a vast majority of Americans think of themselves as religious people and participate frequently in religious activities (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2010). Americans also frequently use religious and moral lenses in their evaluation of candidates and elected officials (e.g., Campbell, 2007). By extension, it is imperative to ask whether religious variables also play a role in shaping American attitudes about public policy issues in general, and about foreign policy issues in particular.

Our study is motivated by a series of questions about the relationship between Americans' personal religious characteristics and their foreign policy attitudes. Might religious differences give rise to different foreign policy perspectives among American citizens? More specifically, how are Americans reacting to President Barack Obama's foreign policy strategies and objectives in the wake of the religious overtones of his predecessor's foreign policy? Does religion affect foreign policy attitudes regarding Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Israel in similar ways? If religiously committed Americans view the whole of politics in a systematically different (and conservative) manner than do more nominally religious and secular Americans—and they do (e.g., Green, 2007; Layman, 2001; Smidt et al., 2010)—it stands to reason that religious variables also should bear an observable relationship to foreign policy attitudes, especially in the post-9/11 era.

An increasingly voluminous literature documents the strong relationship between religious variables and attitudes about public policy issues (e.g., Campbell, 2007; Green, 2007; Jelen, 1991; Layman, 2001; Legee and Kellstedt, 1993). For example, scholars have demonstrated the relationship of religious affiliations, beliefs, and commitments to attitudes about a range of cultural and social issues such as abortion (e.g., Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox, 1992), same-sex marriage (e.g., Olson, Cadge, and Harrison, 2006), and environmental policy (e.g., Guth et al., 1995). Yet, relatively few efforts have been made to analyze how religion shapes foreign policy attitudes—and almost all of the work in this area has been done in the wake of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent "war on terror" (Barker, Hurwitz, and Nelson, 2008; Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris, 2008; den Dulk, 2007; Froese and Mencken, 2009; Guth, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Guth et al., 1996, 2005; Jelen, 1994; Mayer, 2004; Rock, 2011; Smidt, 2005). More importantly, little is known about how religious variables relate to foreign policy attitudes outside of support for Israel (e.g., Mayer, 2004) and the recent war in Iraq (e.g., Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris, 2008). Furthermore, although a good deal is known about Americans' attitudes about President George W. Bush's foreign policy, we do not yet have a clear picture of public opinion regarding his successor Obama's approach to this policy area.

This study contributes to our understanding of the relationship between religious variables and foreign policy attitudes among Americans by (1) using new data that allow us to draw conclusions about American perceptions of Obama's handling of foreign policy and (2) analyzing a broader range of

policy questions than previous studies have examined. We engage Page and Shapiro's contention that "different groups of Americans . . . usually move in parallel" (1992:178) with regard to their attitudes about foreign policy. If our analysis, which utilizes public opinion data from 2009, confirms the findings of previous studies, we would solidify the contention that religious orientations do shape American public opinion about foreign policy issues in the Middle East—regardless of the president (or the party) in power. Therefore, our study will allow scholars to take a comparative look at the determinants of American public opinion about foreign policy issues in the Middle East, not only during two very different administrations (those of Bush and Obama) but also during two different periods during Obama's presidency: before and after the killing of al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden. Because the data we employ here were collected before the 2011 death of bin Laden, our analysis will provide a baseline against which later studies of attitudes about Obama's foreign policy may be compared. Furthermore, our study offers a better empirical test of the question of religion's relevance to foreign policy attitudes than previous analyses because our approach is more substantively comprehensive and our model is more fully specified. In addition to examining religion's effect on American attitudes about foreign policy and terrorism in general terms, we also analyze the factors that shape attitudes about foreign policy toward specific countries/territories in the Greater Middle East.¹ Specifically, we include understudied cases such as Afghanistan, the Guantanamo Bay detention camp, and Islamist extremist groups.

Our attention to the Greater Middle East grows out of the common-sense relevance of religion to U.S. foreign policy in this region. The Greater Middle East is, after all, home to the most significant historic sites of all three of the world's great monotheistic faiths—and the geopolitical center of the ongoing tension between the West and the Muslim world (Cimino, 2005). Since 2003, the United States has been engaged in military action in two countries in this region: Iraq and Afghanistan. Religion also plays an obvious role in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Studying American attitudes about foreign policy in a variety of Middle Eastern contexts allows us to examine the effect of religion on foreign policy attitudes in a broadly comparative fashion. Contrary to Page and Shapiro's (1992) "parallel publics" contention, we expect to show that religious variables have considerable influence on American attitudes about international affairs in general and about U.S. foreign policy toward the Greater Middle East in particular.

¹"Greater Middle East" is a relatively new term that refers collectively to the Middle East and Central and South Asia. The area "stretches from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean and the Arab Middle East through the Persian Gulf area to embrace Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and, now, at its furthest extreme, India" (Fradkin, 2009:2). The Greater Middle East arguably has been a geopolitically coherent region since 1979, when the Iranian Revolution occurred and the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan.

Specifically, we assume that one religious group, evangelical Protestants,² stands apart from members of other American religious traditions in embracing a hawkish conservatism about foreign policy. Elements of evangelical theology are consistent with support for assertive American unilateralism. In general terms, evangelical theology is uncompromisingly black and white; the Bible is to be taken at its word, and there are clear standards of right and wrong. Unlike most mainline Protestants (who are distinguished from evangelicals by their greater theological liberalism), Catholics, and Jews, evangelicals view God as a transcendent—and judging—moral authority. Most evangelical Protestants are unyieldingly supportive of Israel on scriptural grounds, believing that fulfillment of the biblical prophecy that Christ will return to earth one day requires the Jewish people to be present in their ancient homeland (Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris, 2008; Mayer, 2004; Rock, 2011). Some evangelicals also strongly criticize Islam and advocate hardline policies toward Muslim countries (Cimino, 2005). We expect mainline Protestants, Catholics, and members of other nonevangelical religious traditions to express greater moderation in their foreign policy attitudes. We also use evangelicals as a starting point because of their high degree of conservative, Republican political uniformity (e.g., Campbell, 2007; Wilcox and Robinson, 2010). This loyalty has allowed the Republican Party to design many of its electoral efforts around mobilizing evangelical voters and (more recently) conservative adherents of other faith traditions, such as some of America's most observant Catholics (Smidt et al., 2010). Thus evangelicals, and perhaps to a lesser degree, Catholics, should be expected to oppose Obama's foreign policy endeavors for partisan reasons as well.

Religion and American Foreign Policy Attitudes

Scholars have established that a variety of factors shape American foreign policy attitudes, including national interests, partisanship, ideology, gender, education, and race (Holsti, 2004; Page, 2006). Religion's relevance to foreign policy is less well understood, even though few deny the influence of religious groups in American politics today either in general terms (e.g., Green, 2007; Smidt et al., 2010) or with regard to specific international matters (e.g., Hertzke, 2004; Rock, 2011). Indeed, religious voices have exercised significant influence (either directly or indirectly) in American foreign policy for at least a century (Hertzke, 1988; Inboden, 2008; Rock, 2011; and controversially, Mearsheimer and Walt, 2008).

Nevertheless, little attention has been paid to religion's impact on public opinion about international issues. The lack of attention to the topic

²Evangelical Protestantism entails an active sharing of the word of God with others (evangelism), the "born-again" experience (in which the believer accepts Christ as personal savior), pietism, and strict scriptural interpretation (high view of scripture). See, for example, Smith (1998).

after World War II was primarily the result of conventional wisdom, which presumed that the public was ill informed about and uninterested in foreign affairs (Holsti, 1992). This view, termed the “Almond-Lippmann consensus,” assumed public opinion about foreign policy was inconsistent, volatile, and incoherent—so not especially influential on actual policy decisions (Almond, 1950; Lippmann, 1955). Thus scholars had little reason to expect Americans’ religious characteristics to be related to their foreign policy attitudes (Smidt, 2005).

Since the Vietnam War, however, scholarly interest in public opinion about U.S. foreign policy has blossomed and the Almond-Lippmann consensus has been challenged by revisionist literature (Holsti, 1992, 2004). Many analysts have claimed that the mass public is better informed about international politics issues than previously thought (e.g., Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida, 1989) and that citizens have relatively well-defined attitude structures that make public opinion about foreign policy fairly stable over time (Holsti, 2004; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1987; Maggiotto and Wittkopf, 1981; Wittkopf, 1981; Zaller, 1992). Some even argue that public opinion does have a measurable impact on foreign policy itself (Holsti, 1992; Page and Shapiro, 1983, 1992; Peffley and Hurwitz, 1992; Wittkopf, 1990). According to this newer literature, the foreign policy attitudes of the American public lack neither predictability nor structure—even in instances when citizens lack in-depth knowledge about the specifics of foreign policy issues. This is true mainly because people rely on cognitive shortcuts to simplify the processing of complex issues, including when those issues deal with foreign policy questions (e.g., Hurwitz, Peffley, and Seligson, 1993).

Several theoretical arguments support our contention that religion plays a role in shaping foreign policy attitudes. First, religious orientations have undergirded Americans’ foreign policy orientations in the past. For example, during the Cold War era, concerns about the “godless atheism” of Marxism fueled hawkish, anticommunist positions emphasizing military readiness and the use of force against “unrighteous” nations (Gunn, 2009; Jelen, 1994; Rock, 2011; Smidt, 2005; Wittkopf, 1990). This perspective was developed in part by the leading American Protestant theologian of the 20th century, Reinhold Niebuhr. Rejecting Christian pacifism, Niebuhr (1953) developed a systematic normative approach to foreign policy known as Christian Realism based on the premise that human sinfulness cannot be overcome on earth, which renders pacifism ill advised. Niebuhr’s connection of Christian faith to what amounts to standard realism in international relations had its greatest effect on mainline Protestantism, which was the dominant American religious tradition through most of the 20th century (Marty, 1970) and with which most Cold-War-era political elites identified.

Second, religion has been ever more relevant to discussions of American foreign policy since September 11, 2001. Muslim extremists have replaced communists as the objects of Americans’ deepest derision; thus the U.S. chief “enemy” is defined in religious rather than ideological terms (den Dulk, 2007;

Smidt, 2005). In fact, since the introduction of the Bush Doctrine³ in 2002, American foreign policy sometimes has been framed in outwardly religious terms; Bush himself invoked religious sentiments in appealing for Americans' support for his foreign policy objectives (Froese and Mencken, 2009; Judis, 2005; Rock, 2011). Although analysts disagree about the extent to which the Bush Doctrine drew directly upon evangelical Protestant theology (e.g., Guth, 2009b; Guth et al., 2005; Judis, 2005), previous quantitative analyses indicate strong support among evangelicals for Bush's foreign policy priorities and strategies (Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris, 2008; den Dulk, 2007; Froese and Mencken, 2009; Guth, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Guth et al., 2005). How might religious affiliation relate to attitudes about Obama's international priorities and strategies?

Third, religious organizations and leaders play important roles in shaping Americans' political attitudes. Clergy's political positions and statements have a great deal of influence on the way people interpret a range of issues, including foreign policy matters, because religious organizations and their leaders often are seen as highly credible sources of information by their congregations (Jelen, 1994). In recent years, American religious leaders have been vocal about foreign policy issues. For example, prominent evangelical leaders (such as the late Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Franklin Graham) have been outspoken critics of Islam and supporters of aggressive U.S. foreign policy, while the (mainline Protestant) United Methodist Church ran a series of 2003 television advertisements opposing U.S. military action in Iraq (e.g., Mayer, 2004). Meanwhile, Catholic leaders weigh the merits of any potential military intervention using the "just war" principles. It is plausible to assume that as levels of cue giving by clergy and other religious leaders increase, polarization in public opinion about foreign policy might naturally result (Mayer, 2004; see also Zaller, 1992) along religious affiliation lines. Thus, if the leaders of different American religious traditions provide divergent cues about foreign policy issues (evangelical leaders are largely hawkish while many mainline Protestant and Catholic leaders are far more skeptical about the deployment of U.S. troops), we might expect to observe a relationship between mass-level religious affiliation and foreign policy attitudes. And members of a particular religious tradition do not need to attend worship services on a weekly basis to have an idea of where clergy and other religious leaders stand on issues of the day.

Fourth, there is a distinctive element of evangelical Protestant theology—premillennial dispensationalism—that makes evangelicals stand apart from other American faith traditions with regard to foreign policy questions. By no means should evangelical affiliation be expected to correlate perfectly with

³The Bush Doctrine refers to the unilateral foreign policy orientation of the Bush administration, particularly with regard to the deployment of U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, rooted in a normative desire to advance freedom and democracy worldwide. See McCormick (2004).

foreign policy attitudes (den Dulk, 2007), but many evangelicals are premillennial dispensationalists, meaning they believe certain events must take place before the reappearance of Christ and the onset of Armageddon. A substantial majority of evangelicals (roughly two in three) are deeply concerned with protecting Israel because their premillennial interpretation of scripture teaches that the presence of the Jewish people in Israel presages the end times, or Christ's imminent return to earth (Mayer, 2004; Rock, 2011). Thus, they support U.S. foreign policy that prioritizes the security and unity of Israel and are critical of countries and other international actors that might endanger Israel's security. As a result, many evangelicals tend to view potential opponents of Israel (such as its Arab neighbors and Iran) in an especially negative light. They endorse hardline policies against such countries and disagree that Israel should make concessions to the Palestinians. We suspect that the effect of premillennial dispensationalism on foreign policy attitudes is not limited to the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but instead reflects a broader relationship between religion and public opinion about U.S. foreign policy, especially with regard to attitudes toward Israel's potential enemies. In short, we should expect evangelicals to be substantively different—and more unified—in their foreign policy attitudes than adherents of other faith traditions because of the distinctiveness of evangelical theology as well as the keen ability of evangelical clergy to communicate political cues (Guth et al., 1997).

Fifth, religion also might have an indirect impact on foreign policy attitudes through its relationship to partisanship and ideology (Guth et al., 1996). Even though Americans tend to be relatively united when the United States faces threats from or attack by a foreign entity (e.g., Baker and O'Neal, 2001), foreign policy attitudes usually are related to partisan politics and ideological self-classification (Brewer et al., 2004; Holsti, 2004). It therefore makes sense to introduce religion into the analysis as well because of its own powerful correlation with party identification and ideology (Green, 2007; Layman, 2001; Smidt, 2005; Smidt et al., 2010).

For the reasons outlined above, we hypothesize that religious affiliation shapes American attitudes about foreign policy issues pertaining to the Greater Middle East. Because of the dual impact of premillennial dispensationalism and strong Republican partisanship, we expect evangelical Protestants to be uniformly critical of Obama's handling of terrorism and his approach to a full range of countries in the Greater Middle East. We also expect evangelicals to hold favorable opinions of Israel and support unilateral, hawkish American foreign policy (including the use of force) in the Greater Middle East. By comparison, we hypothesize that members of religious traditions *other than* evangelical Protestantism are significantly more liberal—and likely to support Obama's approach to foreign policy. This should be the case for three reasons. First, nonevangelical Judeo-Christian theology is not heavily invested in premillennialism (Guth, 2009b). Second, nominally religious and secular Americans tend to view politics and policy from a perspective that is broadly oppositional toward evangelical Protestants' public positions

(Layman, 2001). Third, the large nonevangelical Christian traditions in the United States (namely, mainline Protestantism and Catholicism) officially take less hawkish approaches to foreign policy matters (Rock, 2011).

Data and Method

We rely on survey data gathered by the Pew Research Center in February, June, and November 2009. These surveys reached 1,303, 1,502, and 2,000 adults aged 18 years or older, respectively.⁴ Landline and cellular random-digit dialing methods of sample selection were used. We use the weighted sample recommended by the Pew Research Center to ensure national population parameters for sex, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region (U.S. Census definitions), population density, and telephone usage.⁵

These surveys are well suited to our research questions for several reasons. The Pew surveys are among the few recent data sources that include an appropriate battery of questions about religious affiliation and behaviors alongside a wide-ranging set of questions about the Obama administration's foreign policy. Some of the survey items Pew includes simply have no counterparts on other surveys, such as the Transatlantic Trends Survey. The Pew surveys differ from these other available data sources because they include nuanced measures of religious affiliation, a question on frequency of worship attendance, and items assessing American foreign policy regarding a wide variety of countries and territories in the Greater Middle East. In addition, the Pew surveys provide all necessary demographic and socioeconomic controls, including age, gender, party affiliation, education, and income.

For each of our 10 dependent variables, we estimate a multivariate model with the predictor variables described below entered as independent regressors. Since eight of the dependent variables have two response categories, logistic regression with robust standard errors is the method of estimation in Models 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. We use generalized ordered logit models with robust standard errors since the dependent variables are ordinal in Models 2 and 10.⁶

⁴To increase variation, we pooled the three Pew data sets. As indicated in Tables 1 and 2, there are differences in the number of observations in different models. These differences exist because not all of the questions we use as dependent variables were included in all three surveys. Indeed, some questions, such as an item asking respondents whether they would approve the use of U.S. troops if Iran were to develop nuclear weapons, were asked in the November survey only. Thus, while we test Model 1 using the pooled February, June, and November data sets, we test Models 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 10 using the November data only. We test Model 3 using the pooled February and November data sets, and Models 6 and 7 with the pooled June and November data sets.

⁵The response rate for the surveys ranged from 11 percent to 20 percent. An examination of the demographic characteristics of the sample led us to conclude that the sample is representative (data not reported).

⁶We also ran the models using ordered logistic regression techniques. However, the Brant test suggests that three variables—African American, Democrat, and Republican—are violating

Dependent Variables: Public Opinion About U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East

We analyze the effect of religious affiliation on 10 dependent variables that measure various foreign policy attitudes among Americans. The first two dependent variables measure how respondents view Obama's foreign policy in general. These variables are operationalized using survey questions that ask respondents whether they approve or disapprove Obama's foreign policy and toughness of Obama's approach to foreign policy issues.⁷

The next three dependent variables measure respondents' attitudes about terrorism and Obama's handling of the threat of terrorism.⁸ First, we use a February survey item that asked respondents whether they approve of the way Obama is handling terrorism. The same survey asked respondents whether they think Islamic extremist groups like al-Qaeda are a threat to the United States. We also use a measure of respondents' attitudes about Obama's proposal to close the U.S. detention camp at Guantanamo Bay.⁹

The remaining five dependent variables measure individuals' attitudes regarding specific countries/territories in the Greater Middle East: Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Israel, and Palestine. We include dependent variables measuring respondents' attitudes about whether: (1) Obama favors Palestine; (2) they themselves sympathize more with Palestine or Israel; (3) the initial use of force by the United States in Afghanistan was the right decision; (4) they would approve of the use of U.S. forces if it were certain that Iran had produced a nuclear weapon; and (5) Obama was removing troops from Iraq too quickly.¹⁰ Thus, our study tests whether religion matters broadly in the formation of foreign policy attitudes.

the parallel lines assumption (Brant, 1990). Thus, we employ generalized ordered logit models using STATA's `gologit2` command with `autofit` option.

⁷We code respondents who approve of Obama's foreign policy as 1 and those who disapprove as 0. The same coding technique is applied to "the way he handles terrorism." We code those who said Obama was "too tough" as 3, "about right" as 2, and "not tough enough" as 1. For all variables used in this study, "don't know" responses are coded as missing and excluded from the sample.

⁸It is important to note again that these data were collected before Obama announced the death of Osama bin Laden on May 1, 2011.

⁹We code respondents who approve of (a) Obama's handling of terrorism and (b) Obama's plan to close Guantanamo Bay as 1 and those who disapprove as 0. We code respondents who view groups such as al-Qaeda as a major threat as 1 and those who viewed such groups as a minor or not a threat at all as 0.

¹⁰We code the following respondents as 1: those who agree that Obama favors Palestine; those who say they favor Israel over Palestine; those who thought it was the right decision for the United States to go into Afghanistan; and those would approve the use of U.S. force in Iran. The Iraq variable is coded as follows: "not too quickly" = 1; "about right" = 2; and "too quickly" = 3.

Independent Variable: Religious Affiliation

Our principal independent variable is a measure of religious affiliation. We use a series of dummy variables to classify respondents into broad theological categories on the basis of their self-specified affiliation with a religious tradition or denomination (we adapt the classification scheme developed by Steensland et al., 2000): evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, Roman Catholic, other Christian (a category primarily comprised of Eastern Orthodox Christians and Mormons), Jewish, other non-Christian (including Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and others), and secular/religiously unaffiliated individuals.¹¹ We use evangelical Protestants as the reference category because we wish to distinguish public opinion among other religious groups that receive less scholarly attention. Other studies speak to the foreign policy conservatism of evangelical Protestants (Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris, 2008; Guth, 2009a, 2009b, 2010). Instead, we focus on how various groups of nonevangelicals compare with them. Mainline Protestants and Catholics are of special interest in this regard, as both groups are vitally important swing constituencies in U.S. elections (Green, 2007; Smidt et al., 2010). Evangelicals comprise around a quarter of the survey sample (24.7 percent), which squares roughly with the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life's (2008) highly regarded estimate of the evangelical population in the United States: 26.3 percent. Likewise, the data set we use is 20.0 percent mainline Protestant, 22.6 percent Catholic, 1.9 percent Jewish, and 14.5 percent secular. The comparable figures from the Pew Forum (2008) are 18.1 percent mainline, 23.9 percent Catholic, 1.7 percent Jewish, and 16.1 percent secular. Thus, the data we use appear to have face validity with regard to religious affiliation.

Control Variables

In addition to religious affiliation, we control for religiosity. Religion and politics scholars have established that the extent of one's commitment to and engagement with religious life is an important determinant of a range of political attitudes and opinions regardless of religious affiliation (Leege and Kellstedt, 1993). The more deeply enmeshed one is in a religious context—regardless of religious affiliation—the more politically conservative one tends to be (Green, 2007; Layman, 2001; Smidt et al., 2010). Thus, religiosity belongs in our models even though our central concern is with religious affiliation. To measure religiosity, we employ a dummy variable that divides respondents into two categories on the basis of how often they attend religious services: those who attended once a week or more are coded 1; all others are coded as 0. Although worship attendance by itself scarcely can capture

¹¹We do not include a separate category for African-American Protestants because we separately control for race in our models.

every dimension of individual religiosity, it is a fair proxy for the extent of one's religious engagement (Green, 2007). In our sample, 41.7 percent of respondents report attending worship services once a week or more often; the comparable figure from the Pew Forum (2008) is 39 percent, which again suggests face validity.

Meanwhile, we control for attitudinal and demographic characteristics identified in previous studies as significant predictors of public opinion about world affairs. First, party identification is an essential control in models of foreign policy attitudes (Holsti, 2004; Page, 2006), particularly when the analysis is tied to impressions of a particular U.S. president. Party identification allows individuals to process complex information and form policy opinions without in-depth knowledge (Brady and Sniderman, 1985). To control for partisanship's effect on foreign policy attitudes, we include Republican and Democratic dummy variables; the baseline category consists of Independents, affiliates of minor parties, and those with no party preference. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents identify as Republicans while nearly 34 percent are Democrats. These proportions square with most other studies of American party identification (e.g., Stonecash, 2010).¹² Demographic controls include gender, education, race, income, and age.¹³

Results and Discussion

The results of our multivariate analysis of the relationship between religion and foreign policy attitudes are presented across three tables. The dependent variables in Table 1 (Models 1 and 2) are of a general nature (support for Obama's foreign policy and the "toughness" of Obama's approach to foreign policy issues). The results shown in Table 2 (Models 3–5) reveal the impact of religion on citizens' attitudes about terrorism, Obama's handling of terrorist threats, and the closing of the Guantanamo Bay detention camp. Table 3 (Models 6–10) presents the results of our analyses of foreign policy attitudes regarding specific countries/territories in the Greater Middle East, including Palestine, Israel, Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq. All 10 models include religious affiliation as the independent variables of interest, as well as all of the control variables discussed above.

¹²We also tried adding an ideology variable to our models. However, coefficient estimates of other variables largely retained their significance and direction.

¹³Race is captured in our model via a dummy variable (African American = 1), as is gender (male = 1). We control for educational attainment with a measure ranging from 1 (grade 8 or less) to 7 (postgraduate or professional training). The income measure (total family income in 2008) ranges from 1 (less than \$10,000) to 7 (\$150,000 or more), and age (in years) ranges from 18 to 97. The average age of the survey respondents is 51.9 years. We initially included marital status and an interaction variable between religious beliefs and religiosity, but dropped both because they were not significant. We also included dummy variables in Models 1, 3, 6, and 7 that control for the survey month, since our models were based on pooled data. For simplicity's sake, however, the month dummies (February and June) are not reported in the tables.

TABLE 1
Attitudes About Obama's Handling of Foreign Policy

	Model 1 Approve of Obama's handling of foreign policy Coefficient (Robust standard error)	Model 2 Agree that Obama is tough in his approach to foreign policy	
		Not tough enough	About right
		Odds ratio (Robust standard error)	
Secular	0.581** (0.247)	2.41** (0.777)	2.41** (0.777)
Mainline Protestant	0.666*** (0.204)	2.46*** (0.718)	2.46*** (0.718)
Catholic	0.301 (0.109)	1.56 (0.445)	1.56 (0.445)
Other Christian	0.301 (0.235)	1.51 (0.516)	1.07*** (4.01)
Other non-Christian	0.142 (0.563)	5.20*** (2.57)	5.20*** (2.57)
Jewish	0.439 (0.508)	3.05 (2.13)	3.05 (2.13)
Worship attendance	-0.154 (0.150)	0.774 (0.163)	0.774 (0.163)
African American	0.693** (0.316)	1.66 (0.638)	1.66 (0.638)
Democrat	1.22*** (0.176)	2.05** (0.487)	0.466 (0.273)
Republican	-0.982*** (0.158)	0.386*** (0.090)	0.386*** (0.090)
Male	-0.224* (0.134)	1.04 (0.204)	1.04 (0.204)
Age	-0.010** (0.004)	0.991* (0.006)	0.991* (0.006)
Education	0.149*** (0.047)	1.18** (0.081)	0.905 (0.120)
Income	-0.079** (0.034)	0.870** (0.043)	0.870** (0.043)
Pseudo R^2	0.181		0.132
Log likelihood	-1,033.003	-536.832	
N	2,032	762	

NOTE: Constants and dummies representing the month of the surveys are included but not reported.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$ (two-tailed test).

Table entries in Models 2 and 10 are generalized ordered logit estimates with odds ratio and robust standard errors. Coefficients in other models are logit estimates. Since logit coefficients are not readily interpretable, we also calculated the predicted probability of each of the dependent variables for

TABLE 2

Attitudes About Terrorism and Obama's Handling of Terrorism

	Model 3 Approve of Obama's handling of terrorism	Model 4 Agree that Islamic extremist groups are a threat to United States	Model 5 Approve of proposal to close Guantanamo Bay
	Coefficient (Robust standard error)		
Secular	0.594* (0.309)	-0.383 (0.386)	1.19*** (0.361)
Mainline Protestant	0.168 (0.248)	0.220 (0.332)	0.552* (0.311)
Catholic	0.303 (0.236)	0.296 (0.347)	0.290 (0.331)
Other Christian	0.187 (0.313)	-0.015 (0.429)	-0.241 (0.405)
Other non-Christian	0.954* (0.497)	0.296 (0.654)	0.322 (0.661)
Jewish	-0.028 (0.484)	-0.316 (0.761)	1.33** (0.668)
Worship attendance	-0.422** (0.182)	0.152 (0.272)	-0.471** (0.239)
African American	1.05** (0.415)	-0.276 (0.359)	1.45*** (0.404)
Democrat	1.27*** (0.245)	-0.221 (0.263)	1.24*** (0.404)
Republican	-1.02*** (0.192)	0.396 (0.304)	-0.837** (0.288)
Male	-0.275* (0.171)	-0.115 (0.233)	-0.276 (0.214)
Age	-0.008 (0.006)	0.025*** (0.007)	-0.005 (0.006)
Education	0.128** (0.056)	-0.064 (0.0810)	0.254*** (0.072)
Income	-0.085** (0.041)	0.048 (0.059)	-0.107** (0.050)
Log likelihood	-743.257	-377.959	-391.496
Pseudo R^2	0.189	0.057	0.211
N	1,463	780	723

NOTE: Constants and dummies representing the month of the surveys are included but not reported.

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$ (two-tailed test).

an incremental change in the statistically significant independent variables in Tables 1 and 2 (holding all control variables constant). When the independent variable is dichotomous, we calculate predicted probabilities by varying it from 0 to 1. When the independent variable is continuous, we recode it to one-half standard deviation above to one-half standard deviation below the mean

TABLE 3
Foreign Policy Attitudes About Specific Middle Eastern Countries

	Model 6 (Palestine) Agree Obama is favoring Palestine	Model 7 (Israel) Sympathize with Israel	Model 8 (Afghanistan) Approve of using force in Afghanistan	Model 9 (Iran) Approve of use of U.S. forces in Iran	Model 10 (Iraq) Agree Obama was removing troops too quickly from Iraq
	Coefficient (Robust standard error)				Not quickly enough Odds ratio (Robust standard error)
Secular	-0.543* (0.306)	-0.865*** (0.232)	-0.636** (0.241)	-0.567 (0.366)	0.579** (0.174)
Mainline Protestant	-0.465** (0.224)	-0.548*** (0.196)	-0.283 (0.220)	-0.013 (0.328)	0.800 (0.228)
Catholic	-0.548** (0.231)	-0.414** (0.176)	-0.387* (0.207)	-0.295 (0.325)	0.819 (0.225)
Other Christian	-0.162 (0.255)	0.149 (0.217)	-0.365 (0.261)	-0.375 (0.376)	1.02 (0.323)
Other non-Christian	-1.22* (0.691)	-1.31*** (0.386)	-0.926** (0.395)	-0.759 (0.533)	0.568 (0.388)
Jewish	0.104 (0.552)	0.827*** (0.274)	-0.328 (0.499)	0.636 (0.628)	0.350* (0.227)
Worship attendance	0.521** (0.197)	-0.140 (0.131)	-0.159 (0.158)	-0.423* (0.231)	1.07 (0.221)
African American	-0.604 (0.498)	-0.302 (0.197)	0.105 (0.158)	-0.375 (0.322)	1.17 (0.411)
Democrat	-1.37*** (0.274)	-0.103 (0.158)	-0.261* (0.162)	-0.088 (0.235)	0.787 (0.197)

TABLE 3—continued

	Model 6 (Palestine) Agree Obama is favoring Palestine	Model 7 (Israel) Sympathize with Israel	Model 8 (Afghanistan) Approve of using force in Afghanistan	Model 9 (Iran) Approve of use of U.S. forces in Iran	Model 10 (Iraq) Agree Obama was removing troops too quickly from Iraq	
	Coefficient (Robust standard error)				Not quickly enough Odds ratio (Robust standard error)	Handling it about right Odds ratio (Robust standard error)
Republican	0.437** (0.165)	0.446*** (0.151)	0.771*** (0.185)	0.999*** (0.277)	1.13 (0.303)	2.18*** (0.564)
Male	0.259* (0.162)	0.376*** (0.125)	0.487*** (0.140)	-0.207 (0.205)	1.20 (0.215)	1.20 (0.215)
Age	0.019*** (0.005)	0.0002 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.006 (0.006)	1.01* (0.005)	1.01* (0.005)
Education	0.095* (0.054)	-0.010 (0.044)	0.053 (0.051)	-0.039 (0.074)	1.11* (0.070)	1.11* (0.070)
Income	0.073* (0.043)	0.053* (0.031)	0.124*** (0.035)	-0.024 (0.530)	1.10** (0.044)	1.10** (0.044)
Pseudo R ²	0.119	0.352	0.068	0.052		0.086
Log likelihood	-738.043	-940.235	-909.692	-443.550	682.349	
N	2,910	2,910	1,473	764	747	

NOTE: Constants and dummies representing the month of the surveys are included but not reported.
*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$ (two-tailed test).

(Long and Freese, 2001). These results are reported in Table 4. All models yield statistically significant chi-square values ($p < 0.001$). Finally, multicollinearity does not present a challenge to any of these models, as all mean variance inflation factor (VIF) scores are below the conventional standard of 2.

The most noteworthy results in Table 1 indicate that seculars, mainline Protestants, and (to a lesser extent) members of minority Christian and non-Christian religious traditions espouse significantly more approving attitudes regarding Obama's foreign policy—even in the face of significant partisan, demographic, and socioeconomic controls. Table 4, which reports the predicted probabilities for our binary logit models, shows that seculars are 14 percent and mainline Protestants almost 17 percent more likely than evangelicals to support Obama's foreign policy. On the other hand, religiosity performs poorly; it is insignificant in both models and is in the expected direction in only Model 1. Thus there is little difference in these general attitudes between regular worship attendees and less-observant people, which typically is not the case with regard to domestic policy attitudes (e.g., Olson, Cadge, and Harrison, 2006). Evidently being present to hear clergy cues is not as important as religious affiliation in shaping broad perceptions of Obama's handling of foreign policy.

Table 2 reports our analysis of attitudes regarding terrorism. Model 3 shows that seculars and non-Christians (apart from Jews) are significantly more likely than evangelicals to approve of Obama's handling of the "war on terror." Seculars are 14 percent and non-Christians 22 percent more likely than evangelicals to approve of Obama's handling of terror. Religiosity also is significant in Model 3, with frequent worship attendees expressing greater dissatisfaction with Obama's handling of terrorism. One unit of increase in religiosity leads to a 5 percent decrease in approval of Obama's handling of terrorism. Thus, in this case it would appear that non-Christian *identity* (whether in the form of secularism or Muslim, Hindu, or other religious affiliation) increases support for Obama's handling of terrorism, while opposition to his approach to the threat is structured by worship *attendance* (i.e., exposure to religious cues and social networks) rather than specific religious identity. However, Model 4 reveals that when it comes to evaluating the threat posed by Islamic terrorist groups, religious and nonreligious groups across the board share similar views. All of the religious affiliation dummies and worship attendance variables are insignificant in Model 4. The absence of significant findings here simply suggests broad consensus that Islamic extremist groups do pose a threat to the United States. It is noteworthy that we cannot conclude from Model 4 that evangelicals are any more anti-Muslim than are members of any other religious group. Model 5 shows that seculars, mainline Protestants, and Jews are all significantly more likely than evangelicals to favor Obama's proposal to close the Guantanamo Bay detention camp. Seculars are nearly 29 percent, mainline Protestants 13 percent, and Jews 32 percent more likely than evangelicals to approve Obama's proposal to close Guantanamo Bay. This finding likely reflects the relative political liberalism and prevailing concern for civil rights and

TABLE 4
Predicted Probabilities for Logit Models

	Model 1	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Secular	0.144	0.143	-	0.287	-0.044	-0.209	-0.156	-
Mainline Protestant	0.165	-	-	0.127	-0.039	-0.136	-	-
Catholic	-	-	-	-	-0.045	-0.103	-0.094	-
Other Christian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other non-Christian	-	0.220	-	-	-0.077	-0.301	-0.227	-
Jewish	-	-	-	0.318	-	0.188	-	-
Worship attendance	-	-0.052	-	-0.049	0.026	-	-	-0.042
African American	0.171	0.238	-	0.346	-	-	-	-
Democrat	0.289	0.278	-	0.296	-0.082	-	-0.062	-
Republican	-0.207	-0.237	-	-0.145	0.052	0.107	0.156	0.153
Male	-0.053	-0.069	-	-	0.029	0.091	0.104	-
Age	-0.040	-	0.064	-	0.032	-	-	-
Education	0.059	0.052	-	0.089	0.016	-	-	-
Income	-0.045	-0.051	-	-0.055	0.017	0.031	0.069	-

civil liberties among members of these three religious groups (Green, 2007). In contrast, worship attendance decreases respondents' approval of the proposal to close the camp. A one-unit increase in attendance decreases individuals' attendance by almost 5 percent. This finding suggests that frequent exposure to religious cues and social networks gives rise to a conservative, law-and-order orientation to the question of dealing with terrorism.

Model 6, presented in Table 3, reveal that seculars, mainline Protestants, Catholics, and non-Christians who are not Jewish are all less likely than evangelicals to assert that the Obama administration favors Palestine, by almost 5 percent, 4 percent, 5 percent, and 7 percent, respectively. Separately, worship attendance contributes significantly to the perception that Obama does favor Palestine; a one-unit increase in worship attendance increases the likelihood of agreeing that Obama favors Palestine by almost 3 percent. Meanwhile, Model 7 shows that being secular, mainline Protestant, Catholic, or someone who is neither Christian nor Jewish also decreases sympathy for Israel in comparison with evangelical Protestants by 21 percent, 14 percent, 10 percent, and 30 percent, respectively. This finding may be interpreted as reflecting the dimension of evangelical theology that requires the Jewish people to be in their ancient homeland as a precondition of Christ's return to earth. Among the religious groups analyzed here, only Jews (understandably) are more likely to sympathize with Israel than evangelicals: a Jewish respondent is almost 19 percent more likely to sympathize with Israel than an evangelical. In short, seculars, mainline Protestants, Catholics, and members of small minority non-Christian religious traditions all appear more supportive of Obama and less uniformly sympathetic toward Israel. The finding that evangelicals and Jews stand united for Israel is no surprise, but the significant attitudinal pushback provided by such a wide range of adherents of other religious traditions is noteworthy.

Model 8 shows that seculars, Catholics, and other non-Christians are significantly less likely than evangelicals to agree with the U.S. decision to use force in Afghanistan. Here mainline Protestants are no longer aligned with the other moderate-to-liberal religious groups; perhaps this is a vestige of the sway once held by Niebuhr's Christian Realism within mainline Protestantism. According to Model 9, all religious groups would be equally likely to approve deployment of U.S. forces to Iran if that country were to develop nuclear weapons. We attribute this nonfinding to the hypothetical nature of the survey item and to the relative volatility in the U.S. relationship with Iran over time. After all, Iran was an ally of the United States before the 1979 Islamic revolution, and relatively little is said in the American press about Iran's nuclear program. By comparison, the Israel-Palestine conflict has been a mainstay of U.S. (and world) news for decades, and the issues inherent in the conflict rarely change. Finally, Model 10 reveals that seculars and Jews are more likely than evangelicals to say Obama removed troops from Iraq too slowly or at about the right pace.

In comparison with our religious variables, what role does partisanship play in shaping Americans' attitudes about foreign policy toward the Greater Middle East? Not surprisingly, partisanship stands out among the control variables. The Republican variable is significant and in the expected direction in most of our models. Republicans do not approve of Obama's handling of foreign policy and terrorism, and they tend to believe the Obama administration is not tough enough in its approach to foreign policy and national security issues. Republicans criticize Obama for siding with Palestine and aiming to close Guantanamo Bay; they also favor Israel and approve of using force in Afghanistan and (hypothetically) Iran. The results for the Democratic variable are less consistent across our analyses. On balance, Democrats are sympathetic toward the Obama administration's foreign policy. With regard to Obama's handling of foreign policy and terrorism, being a fellow partisan of Obama's results in a significant increase of almost 29 percent and 28 percent, respectively, compared to nonaligned individuals. These findings not only bolster the literature emphasizing the important role of party identification in the formation of foreign policy attitudes, they also reflect the increasingly partisan tone of American politics.

On the whole, our analysis shows that the impact of the "faith factor" transcends partisanship. Religious variables perform significantly better than most demographic measures do in models of foreign policy attitudes. This finding has great substantive significance, in part because it supports the claim made by Converse in the 1960s: "there is fair reason to believe that [religious differences] are fully as important, if not more important, in shaping mass political behavior than are class differences" (1964:248). Our results indicate that both seculars and mainline Protestants, and to a lesser extent Catholics, are markedly more liberal than evangelicals regarding foreign policy and their support for Obama's handling of international affairs. This finding has important electoral consequences in the United States in that mainline Protestants and Catholics both constitute swing constituencies in the aggregate (Smidt et al., 2010). A majority of seculars are Democrats and most evangelicals are Republicans (Green, 2007), but evangelicals have a numerical advantage over seculars because they comprise at least 10 percent more of the American population (Pew Forum, 2008). Roughly four in 10 Americans, however, are either mainline Protestant or Catholic—and they tend to decide electoral outcomes. If it is the case, as our results would seem to indicate, that members of both groups are comparatively liberal and cautious about hawkish, unilateral foreign policy, then moderation in foreign policy rhetoric might be a winning campaign strategy for candidates of either major party, including President Obama.

Another noteworthy finding in this study is that evangelicals appear not to be all that different than members of other religious groups when it comes to their attitudes toward Islam. Conventional wisdom might lead to an expectation that many evangelicals' general conservatism might mean they espouse especially negative orientations toward Islam and Muslim people, but our

results imply that this is not necessarily the case. Along similar lines, our analysis of general foreign policy and terrorism questions (Models 1–3) reveal that evangelicals are quite similar to Catholics and Jews (if not the more broadly liberal adherents of secularism and mainline Protestantism) in their attitudes about Obama's handling of foreign policy and terrorism in general. It is only when it comes to foreign policy toward *specific countries* in the Greater Middle East that evangelicals emerge as much more critical of Obama, more sympathetic toward Israel, and more supportive of the use of force than members of a rather full range of other religious traditions. These findings have important implications for not only foreign policy, but also for the public opinion literature. Perhaps it is time to question some of our broad assumptions about knee-jerk evangelical conservatism, especially as this religious constituency continues to grow and diversify (Wilcox and Robinson, 2010). To wit, consider the following question: Why do we observe a difference between evangelicals and members of other religious groups when it comes to the use of force in Afghanistan, but not (hypothetically) in Iran? If evangelicals are generally more supportive of use of force than religionists, what explains the lack of difference when it comes to Iran? While there are many plausible explanations, the underlying point is the difficulty involved in making generalizations about evangelicals when it comes to their foreign policy attitudes, even when the issues at stake are relatively similar.

Conclusion

Slowly, scholars have been rediscovering the “faith factor” in American politics (Leege and Kellstedt, 1993; Wald and Wilcox, 2006), but most of their work has been geared toward understanding religion's effects on partisanship, ideology, electoral behavior, and attitudes about domestic policy issues. Few studies have undertaken a systematic analysis of religion's relationship to the foreign policy attitudes of the American public—despite the increasingly clear relevance of religious themes, symbols, and doctrines in the shaping and marketing of U.S. foreign policy since 9/11. To enhance our understanding of American foreign policy attitudes, particularly in the context of the Obama administration, we have investigated the extent to which religious variables affect public opinion about both general and specific foreign policy questions using survey data collected in 2009.

Our findings confirm and enhance the findings of earlier studies of the relationship between religion and public opinion about foreign policy among Americans. Previous work provides evidence that religion was an important determinant of public opinion about President Bush's handling of foreign policy (e.g., Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris, 2008). Our findings show that the same is true with regard to public opinion about President Obama's handling of foreign policy. Irrespective of the president in power, religious affiliation has a considerable effect on foreign policy orientations when the issues at hand center on the Greater Middle East. At the same time, this

analysis shows us that evangelical Protestants (most of whom voted against Obama) are relatively disapproving of his approach to foreign policy—even though his actions in this arena hardly have diverged from the Bush administration's foreign policy. The analysis also confirms our expectation that secular Americans, mainline Protestants, and (to a lesser extent) Catholics tend to support Obama and agree with many of his foreign policy objectives. Finally, our finding that worship attendance is significant in only some of our models speaks to the complexity of measuring and assessing the relationship between the various dimensions of "religion" and public opinion about any policy area.

Contrary to Page and Shapiro's (1992) notion of "parallel publics," we show that the impact of religious beliefs on foreign policy attitudes is *not* uniform across subgroups of Americans, defined in this context as adherents of different religious traditions. The attitudes of several politically important religious subgroups stand out as distinctive. In our analysis, seculars and mainline Protestants emerge as the strongest supporters of Obama's handling of foreign policy and terrorism. Evangelicals and Jews are ardent supporters of Israel who *sometimes* endorse hawkish foreign policy tools, up to and including the use of force, in the Greater Middle East.

We strongly suspect that the emergence of the Bush Doctrine after 9/11 played a role in creating new religion-based cleavages in foreign policy attitudes. In discussing foreign policy issues, Bush himself alluded to religious themes that resonated especially well with evangelicals (Froese and Mencken, 2009; Rock, 2011); Obama does not do so. Generally speaking, there is little uniformity of opinion at all within mainline Protestantism and Catholicism, but our results show that members of both religious traditions stand significantly to the left of evangelicals regarding some foreign policy matters. This is so despite the fact that mainline Protestant, Catholic, and other religious elites today face a more difficult challenge than do evangelical clergy in attempting to align their laity's foreign policy attitudes (Guth et al., 1997). At the same time, worship attendance is not significant in a majority of our models, suggesting that exposure to religious cues and social networks may not be the most important religious factor shaping foreign policy attitudes. Instead, religious identity, particularly whether one is an evangelical Protestant or not, affects foreign policy attitudes most significantly. Ironically, our results indicate that evangelicals are less distinctive across the board in their foreign policy attitudes than one might expect of such a conservative constituency—even though seculars, mainline Protestants, and Catholics sometimes emerge as significantly more liberal than their evangelical counterparts. Perhaps non-evangelicals engage in a bit of attitude attribution (Brady and Sniderman, 1985) in shaping their foreign policy views, positioning themselves against what they believe evangelicals are for—even if all evangelicals are not as uniformly conservative as outsiders might assume.

The results of this study also indicate that the impact of religious affiliation on public opinion (at least in the context of foreign policy) is distinct from the impact of party affiliation. We acknowledge that religion's

influence on foreign policy attitudes might be mediated by partisan orientations, including (in this case) the especially low regard in which many Republicans hold Obama. However, the frequency with which religious affiliation variables are significant in our models despite stringent controls (particularly party identification) is compelling evidence that religious identity on its own has a substantively meaningful impact on U.S. foreign policy attitudes. We recommend that future studies of American public opinion about foreign policy explore the indirect impact of religious faith in addition to its direct influence. For example, in what ways do partisanship, ideology, and presidential approval ratings mediate religious affiliation's influence on foreign policy attitudes?

The Middle East is unique among regions because Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all claim parts of the territory as sacred. Perhaps public opinion about this region is especially susceptible to religious influences because of its unique relevance to religion. Our study cannot answer questions about the relevance of religious variables to foreign policy attitudes regarding other countries that carry less obvious religious significance, such as North Korea. Additional research also might examine whether public opinion is more static on U.S. foreign policy in contexts that have not changed much over time as compared with more volatile situations. For example, our study shows that members of different religious groups have better defined (and differentiable) attitudes about Israel and Palestine than they do about Afghanistan and Iraq. We hypothesize that this difference is due at least in part to the fact that generations of Americans by now have received standard, unchanging messages about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in comparison with the U.S. relationship with Afghanistan and Iraq. What role would religious affiliation play, for example, in models of public opinion about American foreign policy toward Saudi Arabia? Future studies also should examine whether the impact of religious variables on foreign policy attitudes remains relatively stable across administrations—and whether evangelical Protestants might express more favorable opinions about Barack Obama in the wake of the death of Osama bin Laden.

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