

NATIONAL OPINION BALLOT REPORT

Results of the Foreign Policy Association's 2013 National Opinion Survey

GREAT DECISIONS 2013



FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION
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OPINION BALLOTS have been included with the Foreign Policy Association's *Great Decisions* since 1955 to enable participants to make their views known. Each year FPA sends the National Opinion Ballot Report to the White House, the departments of State and Defense, members of Congress, the media and concerned citizens.

ABOUT GREAT DECISIONS BALLOTTERS...

A. How long have you participated in the Great Decisions program (i.e., attended one or more discussion sessions)?

This is the first year I have participated.	24%
I participated in one previous year.	15%
I participated in more than one previous year.	61%

B. How did you learn about the Great Decisions program?

Word of mouth	44%
Local library	7%
FPA Web site	4%
Promotional brochure	4%
Other organization	41%

C. Where does your Great Decisions group meet?

Private home	16%
Library	15%
Community center	22%
Learning in retirement	15%
Other	32%

D. What is your sex?

Female	61%
Male	39%

E. Have you been abroad during the last two years?

Yes	50%
No	50%

F. Do you know, or are you learning, a foreign language?

Yes	48%
No	52%

G. What the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

Some high school	0.1%
High school degree	2.2%
Some college	11%
College degree	36%
Advanced degree	51%

H. How often are you asked for your opinion on foreign policy?

Often	15%
Sometimes	50%
Never	35%

I. How many hours, on average, do you spend reading one Great Decisions chapter?

Less than 1 hour	18%
1–2 hours	61%
3–4 hours	18%
More than 4 hours	4%

J. Would you say you have or have not changed your opinion in a fairly significant way as a result of taking part in the Great Decisions program?

Have	52%
Have not	26%
Uncertain	22%

*The NATIONAL OPINION BALLOT REPORT
was prepared by the Foreign Policy Association:
Karen M. Rohan, Editor in Chief;
Hannah Gais, Assistant Editor*

*Ballots received by June 30 were tabulated by
Peter Abrams Research Services, NYC.*

(Totals may not equal 100% because of rounding off.)

Ballot Report Highlights

Opinion ballots are included in each edition of Great Decisions, a briefing book prepared annually by the nonpartisan, not-for-profit Foreign Policy Association. This year, 18,380 ballots were returned by Great Decisions participants from across the country. Their responses reflect opinions crafted after the study and discussion of each of this year's eight Great Decisions topics. The five states whose residents returned the largest number of ballots are, in decreasing order, Florida, California, New York, Colorado and Arizona. The largest number of ballots were returned for the "Euro" and "Egypt" topics.

The ballots cast by *Great Decisions* participants demonstrate:

Support for:

- ✓ *Scrutinizing European banks that operate in the U.S.*
- ✓ *Continuing aid to Egypt to stabilize the country in the face of tremendous instability and to continue U.S. influence in the country and region.*
- ✓ *Prioritizing human rights in Myanmar over free and fair elections and economic investment.*
- ✓ *Choosing diplomatic dialogue over military action and sanctions when dealing with the Iranian nuclear problem.*
- ✓ *NATO focusing on keeping Afghanistan from becoming a sanctuary for terrorists.*

Opposition to:

- ✓ *Instituting banking regulations to discourage U.S. financial institutions from investing in Europe.*
- ✓ *Cutting aid to Egypt due to economic hardship and/or because Egypt was slow to criticize those who carried out the attack on the U.S. embassy in Cairo.*
- ✓ *Justifying a U.S.-led intervention in Syria under the doctrine of responsibility to protect (R2P).*
- ✓ *U.S. military cooperating with Israel were Israel to carry out a military strike on Iran.*
- ✓ *The belief that sanctions have prevented Iran from building a nuclear weapon.*

TOPIC 1/FUTURE OF THE EURO

How did the 2008 global recession contribute to the development of the euro crisis? The health of the euro affects and is affected by the state of the global economy. How can European Union leaders prevent the collapse of the common currency?

Issue A. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following two statements?

1. U.S. banking regulators should scrutinize European banks that operate in the U.S. more closely.

Strongly agree	53%
Somewhat agree	36%
Somewhat disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	3%
Not sure	3%

2. U.S. banking regulators should discourage American financial institutions from investing in Europe.

Strongly agree	4%
Somewhat agree	11%
Somewhat disagree	34%
Strongly disagree	46%
Not sure	6%

Regulations are only as good as (1) the competence and efficiency of the regulators; and (2) the willingness of governmental authorities to enforce regulations by appropriately imposing criminal and civil punishments for violations.

—comment from balloter
in Lakewood, WA

Any U.S. government measures should carefully consider the potential impact on our vital transatlantic trading and investment relationship.

—comment from balloter
in Columbus, GA

Issue B. To what extent do you support or oppose the creation of Eurobonds by the European Union?

Strongly support	28%
Somewhat support	40%
Somewhat opposed	6%
Strongly oppose	4%
Not sure	22%

Issue C. Suppose European countries need a bailout to avoid defaulting on their debt. To what extent do you support or oppose the U.S. providing funding to help bailout European countries?

Strongly support	4%
Somewhat support	27%
Somewhat opposed	29%
Strongly oppose	33%
Not sure	7%

TOPIC 2/EGYPT

The popular revolution that ousted President Hosni Mubarak in 2011 ushered in the promise of radical change. Two years later, what is the state of Egyptian democracy? How will the military and the civilian government balance power?

Issue A. Which of the following should be the highest priority for the U.S. in Egypt? (Rank in order from 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest.)

Building relationships with Islamist politicians

1	2	3	4	5
17%	33%	27%	18%	5%

Building relationships with the Egyptian military

1	2	3	4	5
6%	19%	33%	33%	10%

Providing economic aid

1	2	3	4	5
14%	27%	23%	30%	6%

Preserving regional stability and security

1	2	3	4	5
65%	15%	11%	8%	1%

Other

1	2	3	4	5
9%	8%	5%	8%	71%

Issue B. To what extent do you support or oppose the U.S. establishing a free trade agreement with Egypt?

Strongly support	20%
Somewhat support	50%
Somewhat opposed	13%
Strongly oppose	5%
Not sure	13%

Issue C. How much pressure should the U.S. government put on Egypt's new regime to uphold the Camp David accords and maintain good relations with Israel?

A great deal of pressure	48%
Some pressure	38%
Not too much pressure	9%
No pressure at all	3%
Not sure	2%

Issue D. How convincing do you find each of the four arguments below about how the U.S. should reassess its economic aid to Egypt?

The U.S. should continue to provide aid to Egypt because it helps Egypt's emerging democracy as it goes through a transition.

Very	56%
Not very	44%

The U.S. should continue to provide aid because it helps provide stability and is a continuing way for the U.S. to influence events.

Very	69%
Not very	31%

The U.S. should stop giving aid to the Egyptian government because it has been slow to criticize, and has failed to effectively confront, those who have perpetrated attacks against Americans and the U.S. Embassy in Cairo.

Very	20%
Not very	80%

Given the difficult economic times the U.S. is going through, it is unwise for the U.S. to give large amounts of aid to Egypt.

Very	44%
Not very	56%

So now, do you think U.S. foreign aid to Egypt should be:

Increased	5%
Kept the same	46%
Decreased	36%
Not sure	14%

The U.S. needs to help build Egypt's economy from a social not military perspective. We should help without unduly influencing the process.

—comment from ballotster in Jacksonville, FL

TOPIC 3/NATO

How has NATO's agenda evolved since its inception during the cold war? With its military commitment in Afghanistan winding down and a recent successful campaign in Libya, what are the Alliance's present-day security challenges?

Issue A. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? NATO faces a crisis in purpose and direction.

Strongly agree	26%
Somewhat agree	47%
Somewhat disagree	19%
Strongly disagree	6%
Not sure	2%

Issue B. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The U.S. government should shift its priorities away from NATO and Europe toward other regions and security concerns.

Strongly agree	12%
Somewhat agree	46%
Somewhat disagree	25%
Strongly disagree	13%
Not sure	4%

Events over the last decade have resulted in a large U.S. military build up. As we constrict the military needs to get leaner and smarter in the use of force.

—comment from balloter in Dryfork, WV

Issue C. What should be the primary goal shaping the U.S. and NATO's continuing involvement in Afghanistan? (Rank in order from 1 to 6, with 1 the most important)

Preventing the country from becoming a sanctuary for terrorists

1	2	3	4	5	6
57%	15%	13%	10%	4%	1%

Building a viable democratic state

1	2	3	4	5	6
12%	16%	19%	23%	26%	4%

Eradicating the Taliban

1	2	3	4	5	6
6%	20%	11%	21%	36%	6%

Increasing economic development

1	2	3	4	5	6
12%	24%	28%	23%	12%	1%

The protection of human and women's rights

1	2	3	4	5	6
15%	25%	27%	16%	15%	2%

Other

1	2	3	4	5	6
7%	3%	2%	4%	6%	80%

Issue D. Do you support or oppose a reduction in U.S. government defense spending, even if doing so significantly reduces NATO's military capacity?

Strongly support	36%
Somewhat support	39%
Somewhat opposed	14%
Strongly oppose	9%
Not sure	3%

TOPIC 4/MYANMAR

The West has welcomed unprecedented democratic reforms made by Myanmar's government. What challenges must Myanmar overcome before it can fully join the international community? What role can it play in Southeast Asia?

Issue A. Regarding international economic sanctions in Myanmar, to what extent do you agree with the following two statements?

1. The U.S. should not roll back sanctions further until Myanmar has made more reforms for democratization.

Strongly agree	11%
Somewhat agree	33%
Somewhat disagree	34%
Strongly disagree	18%
Not sure	4%

2. The democratic reforms undertaken by Myanmar's leadership demonstrate that international sanctions were a successful strategy.

Strongly agree	8%
Somewhat agree	50%
Somewhat disagree	21%
Strongly disagree	9%
Not sure	12%

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Issue B. Which of the following issues should be the top priority in U.S. relations with Myanmar? (Rank in order from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important)

Fair and free elections

1	2	3	4	5
25%	36%	23%	14%	1%

Human rights issues, including ethnic minority rights

1	2	3	4	5
40%	27%	20%	11%	1%

Economic investment

1	2	3	4	5
20%	21%	35%	21%	3%

The "pivot to Asia" in national security strategy

1	2	3	4	5
19%	12%	18%	47%	5%

Other

1	2	3	4	5
5%	3%	3%	5%	85%

Issue C. To what extent do you support or oppose the U.S. government encouraging private-sector investment and engagement of American firms in Myanmar?

Strongly support	31%
Somewhat support	52%
Somewhat opposed	9%
Strongly oppose	3%
Not sure	5%

TOPIC 5/INTERVENTION

The “responsibility to protect” doctrine has become central to modern humanitarian intervention. When should the international community intervene? Why did the West rush to intervene in Libya but not Syria?

Issue A. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the responsibility to protect doctrine? A U.S. military intervention in Syria is justified under the R2P doctrine.

Strongly agree	9%
Somewhat agree	30%
Somewhat disagree	22%
Strongly disagree	32%
Not sure	8%

Issue B. The international intervention in Libya in 2011 was an example of the R2P doctrine well-applied.

Strongly agree	30%
Somewhat agree	48%
Somewhat disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	6%
Not sure	6%

Issue C. In addition to being a moral responsibility, R2P is in the national security interests of the U.S.

Strongly agree	23%
Somewhat agree	49%
Somewhat disagree	15%
Strongly disagree	7%
Not sure	7%

Issue D. The U.S. should channel its R2P efforts through the newly created Atrocities Prevention Board.

Strongly agree	21%
Somewhat agree	40%
Somewhat disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	10%
Not sure	19%

Intervention...should have taken place soon after Assad came into power and we could see that he was not living up to his promises and meeting the needs of his people. Now it's too late. We should learn and promote more diplomatic and personal contact in all countries and not only when a crisis boils over.

—comment from balloter in Coatesville, PA

TOPIC 6/IRAN

Suspicion and a troubled history have blighted U.S.-Iranian relations for three decades. How can the United States and Iran move forward? Is the existence of Iran's nuclear program an insurmountable obstacle?

Issue A. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement regarding U.S. sanctions against Iran? The economic sanctions against Iran to keep it from building nuclear weapons are working.

Strongly agree	6%
Somewhat agree	29%
Somewhat disagree	29%
Strongly disagree	30%
Not sure	16%

I fear that a military strike, while possibly ultimately necessary, will destroy any hopes of a free and democratic Iran in my life time. Any airstrike by Israel or a western power will strengthen the position of the hardliners in Iran and make any chance of a liberal and democratic Iran impossible. The U.S. and Israel should continue to use cyber attacks to delay, disable or destroy Iran's nuclear program and use diplomatic channels to strengthen the position of the reform movement in Iran.

—comment from balloter in Maspeth, NY

Issue B. When should the U.S. begin to roll back sanctions on Iran?

Right now	17%
After it reopens nuclear talks	36%
After it stops its nuclear program	31%
After it holds fair and free elections	9%
Other	7%

Issue C. To what extent do you support or oppose U.S. military cooperation with Israel if Israel launches a preemptive strike against Iran's nuclear program?

Strongly support	15%
Somewhat support	20%
Somewhat opposed	21%
Strongly oppose	39%
Not sure	5%

Issue D. Which of the following represents the best U.S. policy regarding Iran? (Rank in order from 1 to 4, with 1 being the best policy.)

Military action

1	2	3	4
2%	6%	8%	84%

Diplomatic dialogue

1	2	3	4
73%	15%	9%	4%

Covert actions, e.g., cyberattacks

1	2	3	4
10%	26%	59%	5%

Sanctions

1	2	3	4
19%	53%	22%	6%

TOPIC 7/CHINA IN AFRICA

What interests govern China's engagement in Africa? Should China's growing emphasis on political ties and natural resource extraction inform U.S. relations with African nations?

Issue A. What is the most important concern facing the U.S. regarding China in Africa? (Rank from 1 to 6, with 1 most important.)

China as a supplier of small arms and light weapons to African countries

1	2	3	4	5	6
23%	22%	22%	20%	12%	1%

China's military operations in Africa

1	2	3	4	5	6
9%	18%	23%	22%	24%	4%

China's Communist economic system serving as a possible economic model for Africa

1	2	3	4	5	6
17%	20%	19%	22%	18%	4%

China's increasing economic cooperation with Africa

1	2	3	4	5	6
30%	14%	13%	15%	25%	4%

China's support for undemocratic forms of government

1	2	3	4	5	6
25%	25%	19%	14%	15%	2%

Other

1	2	3	4	5	6
7%	3%	3%	4%	4%	79%

Issue B. What should be the top U.S. priority in Africa? (Rank from 1 to 8, with 1 most important.)

Peacekeeping

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11%	10%	16%	17%	15%	16%	14%	2%

Democracy building

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8%	7%	11%	15%	16%	18%	24%	2%

Humanitarian assistance

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
28%	20%	15%	16%	11%	7%	3%	0.2%

Human rights

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14%	19%	16%	18%	15%	11%	8%	1%

Economic investment

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1%	10%	16%	17%	15%	16%	14%	2%

Natural resources

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7%	13%	14%	12%	13%	22%	19%	1%

Trade

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11%	14%	16%	10%	13%	17%	19%	1%

Other

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4%	1%	1%	0.3%	0.3%	1%	3%	90%

The U.S. should increase priority of support to Africa, focusing on regional economic organizations, especially those which have regional action plans (RAP) that match U.S. national security interests, e.g., ECOWAS and its RAP focused on organized crime and drugs (which includes effects of drug abuse on citizens) and EAC and its RAP on food security.

—comment from balloter in Waynesville, NC

TOPIC 8/THREAT ASSESSMENT

How can the United States address the challenges of a weak economy, homegrown terrorism and nuclear proliferation? What threats and opportunities are presented by the ascendancy of China and by regime change in the Middle East?

Issue A. Which of the following represents the greatest threat to the U.S. today? (Rank from 1 to 6, with 1 being the greatest threat.)

China

1	2	3	4	5	6
5%	9%	14%	23%	38%	11%

Global health crisis

1	2	3	4	5	6
9%	18%	15%	28%	27%	5%

Economic crisis

1	2	3	4	5	6
46%	20%	19%	10%	4%	1%

Radical Islamist government

1	2	3	4	5	6
15%	26%	25%	20%	12%	2%

Rogue nuclear states

1	2	3	4	5	6
19%	25%	23%	17%	14%	3%

Other

1	2	3	4	5	6
16%	4%	4%	3%	4%	69%

Issue B. Which of the following do you think will represent the greatest threat to the U.S. two decades from now? (Rank from 1 to 6, with 1 being the greatest threat.)

China

1	2	3	4	5	6
17%	15%	15%	15%	29%	10%

Global health crisis

1	2	3	4	5	6
16%	19%	19%	20%	22%	4%

Economic crisis

1	2	3	4	5	6
23%	21%	22%	25%	15%	4%

Radical Islamist governments

1	2	3	4	5	6
13%	21%	22%	25%	16%	4%

Rogue nuclear states

1	2	3	4	5	6
21%	23%	19%	18%	16%	4%

Other

1	2	3	4	5	6
22%	5%	3%	3%	3%	64%

Issue C. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The U.S. Senate should pass legislation to regulate national infrastructure in private hands?

Strongly agree	23%
Somewhat agree	32%
Somewhat disagree	16%
Strongly disagree	18%
Not sure	11%

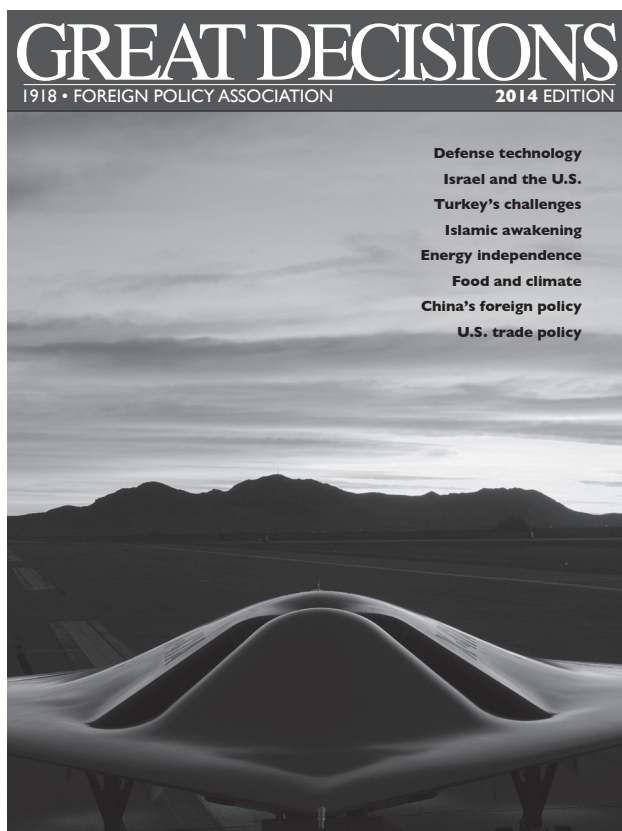
Issue D. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding U.S. policy toward North Korea?

1. The U.S. should continue using economic sanctions to address the threat of a nuclear North Korea.

Strongly agree	52%
Somewhat agree	29%
Somewhat disagree	10%
Strongly disagree	4%
Not sure	5%

2. The U.S. should continue using multilateral talks to address the threat of a nuclear North Korea.

Strongly agree	78%
Somewhat agree	16%
Somewhat disagree	3%
Strongly disagree	1%
Not sure	2%



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