

NATIONAL OPINION BALLOT REPORT

Results of the Foreign Policy Association's 2018 National Opinion Survey

GREAT DECISIONS 2018



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	27.9%
I participated in one previous year	18.5%
I participated in more than one previous year	52.3%

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

Word of mouth	45.5%
Local library	12.7%
Foreign Policy Association website	1.8%
Promotional brochure	2.2%
Other organization	36.6%

C. Where does your Great Decisions group meet?

Private home	5%
Library	22.6%
Community center	26.9%
Learning in retirement	14.4%
Other	30%

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

Less than 1 hour	10.2%
1-2 hours	61.8%
3-4 hours	23.7%
More than 4 hours	3%

E. Would you say you have or have not change your opinion in a fairly significant way as a result of taking part in the Great Decisions Program?

Have	46%
Have not	28.5%
Not Sure	24.2%

F. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Although the media often reports about national and international events and developments, this news is seldom as interesting as the things that happen directly in our community and neighborhood.

Agree strongly	1.3%
Agree somewhat	8.2%
Neither agree or disagree	15.3%
Disagree somewhat	34.2%
Disagree strongly	39.8%

G. Generally speaking, how interested are you in politics?

Very much interested	67.7%
Somewhat interested	28.7%
Not too interested	2.4%
Not interested at all	0%

H. Do you think it is best for the future of the United States if the U.S. takes an active role in world affairs or stays out of world affairs?

Takes an active role in world affairs	96.8%
Stays out of world affairs	2%

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

Often	11.3%
Sometimes	70%
Never	17.6%

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

Yes	58.1%
No	40.8%

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

Yes	48%
No	50.8%

L. Do you have any close friends or family that live in other countries?

Yes	60.3%
No	38.5%

For more information about *Great Decisions*, visit us online

www.GreatDecisions.org

M. Do you donate to any charities that help the poor in other countries?

Yes	67.8%
No	31%

N. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

Republican	12.4%
Democrat	54.4%
Independent	27.5%
Other	4.4%

O. With which gender do you most identify?

Male	50.7%
Female	46.8%
Transgender Male	0%
Transgender Female	0.1%
Gender variant/non-conforming	0.1%
Other	0%
Prefer not to answer	1%

P. What race do you consider yourself?

White/Caucasian	93.6%
Black/African-American	0.3%
Hispanic/Latino	0.1%
Asian-American	0.9%
Native American	0%
Other	1.7%
Prefer not to answer	2.1%

Q. Were you born in the United States or another country?

United States	92.2%
Another country	6.6%

R. Are you a citizen of the United States, another country, or both?

United States	95%
Another country	1.2%
U.S. and another country	2.7%

S. How important is religion in your life?

Very important	27.1%
Somewhat important	22.8%
Not too important	23%
Not at all important	25.8%

T. What is your age?

18 and Under	0.7%
19-29	2%
30-39	0.5%
40-49	4%
50-59	3.2%
60-69	28.4%
70-79	47.7%
80-89	11.5%
90 or older	0.14%

U. Are you currently employed?

Full-time employee	3%
Part time employee	5.2%
Self-employed	5.6%
Unemployed	0.8%
Retired	81.6%
Student	1.7%
Homemaker	0.8%

V. Can you give us an estimate of your household income in 2017 before taxes?

Below \$30,000	3.5%
\$30,000-\$50,000	7.1%
\$50,000-\$75,000	12.7%
\$75,000-\$100,000	17.3%
\$100,000-\$150,000	20%
Over \$150,000	20.5%
Not Sure	0.9%
Prefer not to say	16.9%

W. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Did not graduate from high school	0.3%
High school graduate	1.5%
Some college, but no degree (yet)	4.2%
2-year college degree	1.9%
4-year college degree	18.5%
Some postgraduate work, but no degree (yet)	12.1%
Postgraduate degree (MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, etc.)	60.5%

The NATIONAL OPINION BALLOT REPORT was prepared by the Foreign Policy Association: Karen M. Rohan, editor in chief; Matthew Barabari, assistant editor.

Ballot questions were composed, collected and tabulated by Lauren Prather, assistant professor of political science at the School of Global Policy and Strategy at University of California, San Diego, in affiliation with UCSD.

(Totals may not equal 100% after rounding.)

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, 6,649 opinion 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 majority of ballot participants were middle or upper-middle class and held an advanced degree. They did not shy away from partisan politics either—most were Democrats, although Republicans and Independent were well represented.

The ballots cast by Great Decisions participants include:

Support For:

- ✓ A shared role for the U.S. and its allies, where the U.S. is not the dominant force
- ✓ News media holding public officials accountable
- ✓ Maintaining current U.S. troop levels around the world
- ✓ U.S. government investment in health research
- ✓ NATO as essential to U.S. security interests
- ✓ Free trade agreements

Opposition to:

- ✓ China and Russia stepping into a global leadership role in the absence of the U.S.
- ✓ Military intervention unless used to defend an ally
- ✓ Turkey’s handling of the crisis in Syria and its refugee population

Other Views:

- ✓ Tension between the Trump administration and the media have hindered Americans’ ability to access important info from the news
- ✓ Agreements, trade or otherwise, are more effective than military aid or intervention
- ✓ South Africa remains a democracy, although not without its issues.

Some questions from the previous opinion ballots, asked again in 2018

(Previous years’ answers are in parentheses)

A. From 2016’s “Nuclear security”: How likely do you think it is that the U.S. will experience a nuclear terrorist attack in the near future?

Very likely	2.4%	(3.5%)
Somewhat likely	11%	(32.4%)
Not too likely	24.6%	(53%)
Not likely at all	60.7%	(11.1%)

B. From 2015’s “The future of Kurdistan”: To what extent do you support or oppose the Turkish government’s bombing of Kurdish regions in Turkey against militants fighting for independence?

Strongly support	0.3%	(1.6%)
Somewhat support	1.4%	(33.2%)
Neither support or oppose	26.4%	(19.8%)

Somewhat oppose	10.1%	(13.9%)
Strongly oppose	60.5%	(9.1%)

C. From 2013’s “Turkey’s challenges”: How likely or not do you think it is that Turkey will join the European Union?

Very Likely	0.9%	(3.7%)
Somewhat likely	16.9%	(40.6%)
Not too likely	63.6%	(48.2%)
Not likely at all	17.3%	(7.5%)

(Totals from older ballot reports may not equal 100% because some participants did not mark particular ballots or volunteered other responses not tabulated here.)

D. From 2011’s “Promoting democracy”: In your opinion, which method of promoting democracy is the most appropriate unilateral U.S. strategy?

Diplomacy	57.6%	(41%)
Sanctions (includes conditional aid)	3.6%	(8%)
Democracy assistance in the form of funding, training, organizing, etc.	37%	(51%)
Military force	0.4%	(1%)

E. From 2011’s “Cybersecurity”: Which of the following is the most compelling argument for cyberspace governance?

The proliferation of internationalized cybercrime	36.8%	(40%)
The incidence of “political” cyber-attacks (e.g. pro-nationalist hackers)	20.8%	(8%)
The impact of cyber activity on foreign and military policy	17%	(23%)
The possibility of cyber “arms race” in the near future	17.2%	(22%)
Other	7%	(7%)

F. From 2010’s “Caucasus”: Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: U.S. relations with the regional powers, Russia and Turkey, are more important and should have priority over relations with other states in the region.

Strongly agree	4.4%	(19%)
Somewhat agree	40.2%	(59%)
Somewhat disagree	43.8%	(20%)
Strongly disagree	10.4%	(2%)

G. From 2013’s “Trade”: People debate whether the U.S. government should increase restrictions on imports, keep restrictions on imports at current levels, or decrease restrictions on imports. What do you think the U.S. government should do?

Increase the restrictions on imports	8.8%	(13.6%)
Keep restrictions on imports the same	55.4%	(52.1%)
Decrease restrictions on imports	34.5%	(34.3%)

H. From 2002’s “Alone or together: the U.S. and the world”: Overall, have organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization done more good than harm for poor nations?

More good	64.8%	(50%)
More harm	5.2%	(13%)
Both, equally	28.7%	(37%)

I. From 2014’s “Defense technology”: Do you think the U.S. government should increase, maintain or decrease

the amount of money it spends on programs to develop new defense technologies?

Increase the amount	23.8%	(40.1%)
Maintain the current amount	44%	(38.8%)
Decrease the amount	30.8%	(21.1%)

J. From 2009’s “The Global financial crisis and its effects”: Which of the following statements best describes the future U.S. role in the world?

The U.S. will remain the dominant power for the next 10 years	34.9%	(40%)
The U.S. will remain the dominant power for the foreseeable future	30.7%	(45%)
The U.S. is no longer the dominant global power	33.1%	(15%)

K. From 2007’s “U.S.-China economic relations”: In terms of the U.S., do you see China’s surging economy as:

A threat, taking jobs from the U.S.	6%	(16%)
A boon, providing cheap goods to the U.S.	7.7%	(11%)
Both	85%	(74%)

L. From 2007’s “Russia and ‘Putinism’”: Considering the following, do you believe that, as a matter of policy, the U.S. should:

Actively seek a closer and more stable relationship with Russia?

Yes	72.2%	(97%)
No	26.5%	(3%)

Attempt to have friendly relations with former Russian republics but avoid meddling in Moscow’s ‘sphere of influence’?

Yes	72.3%	(87%)
No	26.4%	(13%)

Make strong efforts to establish close ties to those former Russian republics that could be of most use to the U.S. for security reasons or to promote stable access to fossil fuels for the U.S. and its European allies?

Yes	79.1%	(70%)
No	19.6%	(30%)

M. From 2014’s “Syria’s Refugee Crisis”: In general, do you support or oppose Western countries sending arms and military supplies to anti-government groups in Syria?

Support strongly	10.3%	(11.6%)
Somewhat support	38%	(43.7%)
Somewhat oppose	22.1%	(22%)
Strongly oppose	12.1%	(10.9%)
Not sure	16.2%	(11.8%)

TOPIC I / THE WANING OF PAX AMERICANA?

Since 1945, Pax Americana has promised peaceful international relations and an open economy, buttressed by U.S. military power.

The election of President Donald Trump was boosted by his assurances that he would put “America First” and renegotiate any bilateral or multilateral agreements that he believes do not adequately benefit the United States. Many experts claim that the U.S. is ceding its role on the global stage in order to fulfill the doctrine of America First.

NATIONAL OPINION BALLOT participants expressed their reservations to President Trump’s policy of America First, preferring to be active on the international stage. Nearly 94% of respondents believe that participating in international organizations, signing free trade agreements, and being part of international agreements are effective approaches to achieving foreign policy goals.

Respondents also felt generally pessimistic about America’s role on the international stage, with an overwhelming majority feeling that the U.S. has lost ground over the past decade. This topic was of particular importance to readers, having had a far greater response than the other topics.

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to “Waning of Pax Americana?”

Read the article on the “Waning of Pax Americana” in the 2018 Great Decisions briefing book	93%
Discussed the article on the “Waning of Pax Americana?” with a Great Decisions discussion group	88.5%
Discussed the article on the “Waning of Pax Americana?” with friends or family	57.3%
Followed news related to the “Waning of Pax Americana?” topic	61%
Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to the “Waning of Pax Americana?” topic	7.9%
Have or had a job related to the “Waning of Pax Americana?” topic	5.3%
None of the above	0.2%

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to the “Waning of Pax Americana?” topic?

Very Interested	68.3%
Somewhat interested	27%
Not too interested	3.1%
Not at all interested	0.6%

C. What kind of leadership role should the United States play in the world? Should it be the dominant world leader, play a shared leadership role or not play any leadership role?

Dominant world leader	16.9%
Shared leadership role	81.9%
Should not play any leadership role	0.2%

D. Do you believe that globalization, especially the increasing connections of the U.S. economy with others around the world, is mostly good or mostly bad for the U.S.?

Mostly good	95.6%
Mostly bad	3.5%

E. Which of the following comes closest to your view on international agreements between the U.S and other countries?

They most benefit the United States	8.8%
They mostly benefit other countries	7.3%
They benefit both the United States and other countries	82.3%
They benefit neither	0.7%

F. How effective do you think each of the following approaches is to achieving the foreign policy goals of the U.S.?

International agreements

Very effective	38.8%
Somewhat effective	55.3%
Not too effective	4.6%
Not effective at all	0.4%

Participating in international organizations

Very effective	49.6%
Somewhat effective	44.9%
Not too effective	4%
Not effective at all	0.6%

Signing free trade agreements with other countries

Very effective	46%
Somewhat effective	47.1%
Not too effective	5.5%
Not effective at all	0.4%

Economic aid to other countries

Very effective	25.4%
Somewhat effective	58.1%
Not too effective	14%
Not effective at all	1.6%

G. Compared to 10 years ago, do you think the United States is more powerful as a world leader today, less powerful as a world leader today or about as powerful a world leader as it was 10 years ago?

More powerful	3.9%
Less powerful	82%
About as powerful	13.2%

H. Thinking about the future of the U.S., please indicate whether you feel generally optimistic or generally pessimistic about America’s role as a global leader in the world?

Generally optimistic	38.7%
Generally pessimistic	60.4%

TOPIC 2/RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

How should the United States respond to Putin's foreign policy ambitions?

Russia and its leader Vladimir Putin have been a constant in U.S. news, especially since the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Russia's reported interference in the election, as well as its aggressive foreign policy in the Ukraine and Syria, has led to many of our balloters to see Russia as a major enemy of the United States. Over 90% of respondents say they see Russia as benefiting from the U.S. reducing its role on the world stage.

Balloters generally have a negative opinion of Putin's regime, with an overwhelming number of respondents saying that Russia "does not respect the personal freedoms of its people." Despite the widespread coverage of the threat posed by Putin's government, our balloters see Russia only as the second biggest immediate threat to the U.S., with almost half of respondents putting North Korea in first place.

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the "Russia's foreign policy" topic?

Read the article on "Russia's foreign policy" in the 2018 Great Decisions briefing book	93.9%
Discussed the article on "Russia's foreign policy" with a Great Decisions group	89.5%
Discussed the article on "Russia's foreign policy" with friends and family	60.3%
Followed news related to Russia's foreign policy	79.4%
Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to Russia's foreign policy	3.5%
Traveled to Russia	25%
None of the above	0.1%

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to the "Russia's Foreign Policy" topic?

Very interested	72.5%
Somewhat interested	25%
Not too interested	1.3%
Not at all interested	0%

"Recent events including the poisonings/killings in other countries by Russian agents and the results of their recent election will embolden Putin to escalate threats on other countries and hostility to the West."

(Comments from balloters are in purple boxes throughout the report.)

C. In general, do you think that Russia's power and influence is a major threat, a minor threat or not a threat to the United States?

Major threat	59.7%
Minor threat	36.8%
Not a threat	2.3%

D. Do you think the Russian hacking into the 2016 U.S. elections poses a major threat, a minor threat, or no threat at all to future elections in the United States? If you don't think Russia was involved with hacking the 2016 U.S. election, please say so.

Major threat	69.1%
Minor threat	25.4%
No threat	2.3%
I do not believe Russia was involved with hacking the 2016 U.S. election	2%

E. If the United States reduces its role on the world stage, how likely do you think it is that Russia will benefit compared to other countries?

Very likely	51.9%
Somewhat likely	38.4%
Not too likely	8%
Not likely at all	0.5%

F. Do you think the government of Russia respects the personal freedoms of its people or do you think the government of Russia does not respect the personal freedoms of its people?

Respects the personal freedoms of its people	2.1%
Does not respect the personal freedoms of its people	96.7%

G. Do you consider Russia to be a friend or an enemy of the United States?

Friend	7.5%
Enemy	91.2%

H. If Russia got into a serious military conflict with one of its neighboring countries that is a NATO ally of the United States, do you think the United States should or should not use military force to defend that country?

Should use military force	80.3%
Should not use military force	18.5%

I. Which of the following poses the greatest immediate threat to the United States: North Korea, Iran, Russia, China or ISIS?

North Korea	49.1%
Iran	4.3%
Russia	18.1%
China	13.1%
ISIS	14.3%

TOPIC 3/CHINA AND AMERICA

What are Beijing's geopolitical objectives? What leadership and political conditions in each society underlie growing Sino-American tensions?

Beijing's influence on the global stage is growing, as many see the United States abdicating its leadership role. Some 97% of NATIONAL OPINION BALLOT participants see China as the likely beneficiary of the smaller U.S. role. Respondents see China's growing economic power, China's negative impact on the global environment, and territorial disputes involving China in the South China Sea, as the biggest challenges in the relationship between Beijing and Washington.

President Xi has consolidated his power within the Chinese Communist party. This, combined with abolishing of term limits means he can see many of his projects, including the "Belt and Road Initiative," expanding influence in the South China Sea and creating more economic inroads in Latin America and Africa, to fruition. To counter China's growing influence, President Trump has agreed to raise tariffs on many Chinese imports, leading many to declare that the U.S. and China are now engaged in a trade war.

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the "China and America: The New Geopolitical Equation" topic?

Read the article on the "China and America: The New Geopolitical Equation" topic in the 2018 Great Decisions briefing book	93.3%
Discussed the article on the "China and America: The New Geopolitical Equation" topic with a Great Decisions discussion group	88.7%
Discussed the article on the "China and America: The New Geopolitical Equation" topic with friends or family	58.6%
Followed news related to the "China and America: The New Geopolitical Equation" topic	77.9%
Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to the "China and America: The New Geopolitical Equation" topic	0.9%
Have or had a job related to the "China and America: The New Geopolitical Equation" topic	0.5%
Traveled to China	28.4%
None of the above	0.01%

"Any vacuum in economic or foreign relations in the Far East will open a door for China to fill it."

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to the "China and America: The New Geopolitical Equation" topic?

Very interested	77.1%
Somewhat interested	20.8%
Not too interested	0.7%
Not at all interested	0.1%

C. Do you think that China's power and influence is a major threat, a minor threat or not a threat to the U.S.?

Major threat	54.2%
Minor threat	36.9%
Not a threat	7.6%

D. Do you think the government of China respects the personal freedoms of its people or do you think the government of China does not respect the personal freedoms of its people?

Respects the personal freedoms of its people	4.1%
Does not respect the personal freedoms of its people	94.6%

E. If the United States reduces its role on the world stage, how likely do you think it is that China will benefit compared to other countries?

Very likely	85.2%
Somewhat likely	11.9%
Not too likely	1.5%
Not likely at all	0.1%

F. To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the way President Donald Trump is handling U.S. policy toward China?

Strongly approve	6%
Somewhat approve	12.1%
Somewhat disapprove	27.6%
Strongly disapprove	53.1%

G. Which concerns you more about China: its economic strength or its military strength?

Its economic strength	78.7%
Its military strength	20.1%

H. Below is a list of things that may be problems for the U.S. For each one, please indicate if you think it is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, not too serious a problem or not a problem at all.

The loss of U.S. jobs to China

Very serious problem	11.7%
Somewhat serious problem	45.4%
Not too serious a problem	38.8%
Not a problem at all	2.9%

The U.S. trade deficit with China

Very serious problem	25.2%
Somewhat serious problem	47.9%
Not too serious a problem	22.4%
Not a problem at all	3.2%

China's policies on human rights

Very serious problem	37.4%
Somewhat serious problem	44.3%
Not too serious a problem	15%
Not a problem at all	2.1%

Tensions between China and Taiwan

Very serious problem	19.4%
Somewhat serious problem	53.1%
Not too serious a problem	24.2%
Not a problem at all	2.1%

China's impact on the global environment

Very serious problem	47.8%
Somewhat serious problem	42.2%
Not too serious a problem	7.9%
Not a problem at all	0.8%

The large amount of American debt that is held by China

Very serious problem	43.7%
Somewhat serious problem	37.6%
Not too serious a problem	16%
Not a problem at all	1.4%

Territorial disputes between China and neighboring countries

Very serious problem	37.2%
Somewhat serious problem	51.3%
Not too serious a problem	9.5%
Not a problem at all	0.7%

TOPIC 4/MEDIA AND FOREIGN POLICY

State and non-state actors today must maneuver a complex and rapidly evolving media landscape.

The media's relationship with the U.S. government, in particular the Executive branch, has gone through a massive shift since the election of Donald Trump. Rhetoric from both sides has driven a wedge between the two, with claims of "fake news" being thrown back and forth. The way the news is delivered has switched from print to digital, leading to a change in how the American people receive and perceive the news. Sources like Twitter and Facebook have led to "echo chambers" or online communities that share pieces of news that have been altered to fit a particular opinion.

Ballot responders find that the relationship has been damaged by both sides, with the national news media having a "mixed effect" on current U.S. policy. Some 90% of ballot responders say that it is "very important" that the news media hold public officials accountable, and that the government is not doing enough to protect the American people from cyberattacks and the spread of fake news.

"Online access and cell phones have changed the world in ways we don't know."

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the "Media and Foreign Policy" topic?

Read the article on the "Media and Foreign Policy" topic in the 2018 Great Decisions briefing book	79%
Discussed the article on the "Media and Foreign Policy" topic with a Great Decisions discussion group	75.5%
Discussed the article on the "Media and Foreign Policy" topic with friends or family	53.7%
Followed news related to the "Media and Foreign Policy" topic	65.7%
Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to the "Media and Foreign Policy" topic	0.8%
Have or had a job related to the "Media and Foreign Policy" topic	0.04%
None of the above	0.02%

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to the "Media and Foreign Policy" topic?

Very interested	72.5%
Somewhat interested	24.4%
Not too interested	1.7%
Not at all interested	0%

C. Overall, do you think the U.S. government is doing enough or not doing enough to protect the government's computer systems from a future cyber-attack?

Doing enough	4.5%
Not doing enough	94.2%

D. How important is it to you that the news media hold public officials accountable?

Very important	91.9%
Somewhat important	5.8%
Not too important	0.6%
Not important at all	0.3%

E. What type of effect are the national news media having on the way things are going in the U.S. these days? A positive effect, a negative effect, a mixed effect, or neither a positive nor a negative effect?

Positive	16.2%
Negative	20.3%
Mixed	61.6%
Neither	0.5%

F. Would you say that the tensions between the Trump administration and the U.S. news media are getting in

the way or not getting in the way of Americans' access to important national political news and information?

Getting in the way	81.5%
Not getting in the way	17.1%

G. How often do you get news from social media, such as Facebook or Twitter?

Often	10.8%
Sometimes	15.6%
Hardly ever	26.6%
Never	45.7%

H. How much do you trust information you see on social media, such as Facebook or Twitter?

A lot	.1%
Somewhat	15.4%
Not too much	42.5%
Not at all	41.4%



TOPIC 5/TURKEY: A PARTNER IN CRISIS

In this age of a worsening “clash of civilizations” between Islam and the West, even more important than its place on the map is what Turkey symbolically represents as the most institutionally Westernized Muslim country in the world.

The failed coup in 2016 and subsequent consolidation of power by Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan has left the relationship between the U.S. and Turkey on shaky ground. Erdogan’s victory in the July 2018 election led to his enacting changes to Turkey’s constitution that granted more powers to the president. Erdogan has used these new powers to continue his campaign against the Kurdish forces in northeast Syria, which are backed by the United States, as well as to remove powers from parliament.

Balloters have shown that they consider Turkey to be a key ally for the United States, despite the controversies surrounding Erdogan. Around 70% of responders say they see Turkey as a friend to the U.S., as well as an ally. However, they are not against criticizing Erdogan who they feel is not handling the Syrian crisis effectively and does not respect the personal freedoms of his people.

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the “Turkey: A Partner in Crisis” topic?

Read the article on the “Turkey: A Partner in Crisis” topic in the 2018 Great Decisions briefing book	92.9%
Discussed the article on the “Turkey: A Partner in Crisis” topic with a Great Decisions discussion group	87.9%
Discussed the article on the “Turkey: A Partner in Crisis” topic with friends or family	57.8%
Followed news related to the “Turkey: A Partner in Crisis” topic	70.4%
Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to the “Turkey: A Partner in Crisis” topic	0.9%
Have or had a job related to the “Turkey: A Partner in Crisis” topic	0.03%
Traveled to Turkey	28.2%
None of the above	0.01%

“It has long outlived its usefulness as a NATO member. The bases there are a residual effect of the post WWII cold war era meant to contain the USSR and have little value. Erdogan heads a regressive bordering on a totalitarian regime and sees himself as a modern version of the pre-WWI Sultan.”

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to the “Turkey: A Partner in Crisis” topic?

Very interested	48.8%
Somewhat interested	43.1%
Not too interested	6.1%
Not at all interested	0.5%

C. Do you consider Turkey to be a friend or an enemy of the United States?

Friend	69.1%
Enemy	29.3%

D. Please indicate how you view Turkey’s relationship with the United States: Do you consider it a strong ally, somewhat of an ally, somewhat of an enemy or a bitter enemy?

Strong ally	2.4%
Somewhat of an ally	70.2%
Somewhat of an enemy	25.8%
A bitter enemy	0.2%

E. Do you think President Donald Trump considers Turkey to be a friend or an enemy of the United States?

Friend	64.4%
Enemy	34%

F. Do you think the United States should or should not have long-term military bases in Turkey?

Should have long-term military bases in Turkey	71.3%
Should not have long-term military bases in Turkey	27.2%

G. To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the way Turkey is handling the Syrian crisis?

Strongly approve	1.9%
Somewhat approve	21.9%
Somewhat disapprove	49.8%
Strongly disapprove	24.8%

H. Do you think the government of Turkey respects the personal freedoms of its people or do you think the government of Turkey does not respect the personal freedoms of its people?

Respects the personal freedoms of its people	7.3%
Does not respect the personal freedoms of its people	91.2%

I. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: Turkey contributes to peace and stability in the Arab world.

Strongly agree	3.6%
Somewhat agree	45.1%
Somewhat disagree	38.5%
Strongly disagree	11.4%

TOPIC 6/U.S. GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT & THE MILITARY

The global power balance is rapidly evolving, leaving the United States at a turning point with respect to its level of engagement and the role of its military.

The role of the U.S. military in foreign affairs has been heavily discussed since the formation of this country. The Trump administration has played an interesting role in this regard, looking to expand the size and budget of the U.S. military while using rhetoric against longstanding U.S. military alliances like NATO. While the administration calls for an increase of the military's size, Trump has also said he wants to reduce troop levels in many areas of the world, like Europe and South Korea.

Balloters see military aid and alliance building as a more effective tactic of foreign policy than military intervention. Balloters also showed support for NATO, with nearly 90% saying NATO is still essential to U.S. security, and 84% in favor of the U.S. using military force to defend a NATO ally. A majority of participants are also in favor of maintaining current troop levels around the world, except for the Middle East, where there is a split in vote between maintain and decrease.

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the "Global engagement and the Military" topic?

Read the article on the "Global engagement and the Military" topic in the 2018 Great Decisions briefing book	91.7%
Discussed the article on the "Global engagement and the Military" topic with a Great Decisions discussion group	86.8%
Discussed the article on the "Global engagement and the Military" topic with friends or family	55.3%
Followed news related to the "Global engagement and the Military" topic	70.6%
Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to the "Global engagement and the Military" topic	0.1%
Have or had a job related to the "Global engagement and the Military" topic	1.1%
None of the above	0.1%

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to the "Global engagement and the Military" topic?

Very interested	71.1%
Somewhat interested	25.5%
Not too interested	1.8%
Not at all interested	0%

C. How effective do you think each of the following approaches is to achieving the foreign policy goals of the United States?

1. Maintaining existing alliances

Very effective	62.4%
Somewhat effective	29.3%
Not too effective	5.8%
Not effective at all	0.9%

2. Building new alliances with other countries

Very effective	54.3%
Somewhat effective	32.5%
Not too effective	9.1%
Not effective at all	2.5%

3. Military intervention

Very effective	4.2%
Somewhat effective	29.3%
Not too effective	52.6%
Not effective at all	12.3%

4. Military aid to other countries

Very effective	4.9%
Somewhat effective	55.3%
Not too effective	33.6%
Not effective at all	4.6%

5. Which of the following comes closest to your view on U.S. security alliances in East Asia?

Mostly benefit the U.S.	7.3%
Mostly benefit our allies	12.6%
Benefit both the U.S. and our allies	74.2%
Benefit neither	4.2%

6. What about security alliances with countries in Europe?

Mostly benefit the U.S.	6.2%
Mostly benefit our allies	16.2%
Benefit both the U.S. and our allies	75.2%
Benefit neither	0.7%

7. Finally, what about our security alliances with countries in the Middle East?

Mostly benefit the U.S.	8.8%
Mostly benefit our allies	24%
Benefit both the U.S. and our allies	47.5%
Benefit neither	18.1%

D. Some people say that NATO is still essential to U.S. security. Others say it is no longer essential. Which of these views is closest to your own?

NATO is still essential to U.S. security	90%
NATO is no longer essential to U.S. security	8.3%

E. There has been some discussion about circumstances that might justify using U.S. troops in other parts of the world. To what extent would you favor or oppose the use of U.S. troops in the following situations?

1. To stop or prevent a government from using chemical or biological weapons against its own people

Strongly favor	38.5%
Somewhat favor	42%
Somewhat oppose	12.5%
Strongly oppose	5.4%

2. To deal with humanitarian crises

Strongly favor	37%
Somewhat favor	45.5%
Somewhat oppose	13%
Strongly oppose	3.3%

3. To fight against violent Islamic extremist groups in Iraq and Syria

Strongly favor	22.4%
Somewhat favor	46%
Somewhat oppose	24.5%
Strongly oppose	7.2%

4. If North Korea invaded South Korea

Strongly favor	60.4%
Somewhat favor	24.9%
Somewhat oppose	9.8%
Strongly oppose	3.3%

5. If Russia invaded a NATO ally like Latvia, Lithuania or Estonia

Strongly favor	52.2%
Somewhat favor	32.3%
Somewhat oppose	10.9%
Strongly oppose	3.1%

6. If China initiated a military conflict with Japan over disputed islands

Strongly favor	40.2%
Somewhat favor	35.2%
Somewhat oppose	17.9%
Strongly oppose	5.1%

7. If Russia invaded the rest of Ukraine

Strongly favor	29.7%
Somewhat favor	43.9%
Somewhat oppose	20.7%
Strongly oppose	5.7%

F. Do you think that the U.S. military presence in the following regions should be increased, maintained at its present level or decreased?

1. Europe

Increased	4.9%
Decreased	31.2%
Maintained at present level	62.3%

2. Asia-Pacific

Increased	18.5%
Decreased	18.7%
Maintained at present level	61.2%

3. Middle East

Increased	4.2%
Decreased	46.7%
Maintained at present level	47.5%

4. Africa

Increased	13.5%
Decreased	24.6%
Maintained at present level	60.2%

5. Latin America

Increased	7.3%
Decreased	30.2%
Maintained at present level	60.9%

“The group still favors the Multilateral Leadership role America followed after the close of WWII, with the caveat of deterring regional aggression using advisers but not boots on the ground. We do not defeat regional aggression; the countries and peoples involved are in charge.”

TOPIC 7/SOUTH AFRICA'S FRAGILE DEMOCRACY

The African National Congress (ANC) party has governed South Africa since the end of apartheid in 1994. But the party today suffers from popular frustration over official corruption and economic stagnation.

Things have changed drastically for South Africa over the past decade, as it has gone from being one of the burgeoning world economies, to a country dealing with massive corruption scandals and economic recession. The corruption charges levied against former African National Congress party chair Jacob Zuma have left many South Africans feeling gloomy about their once bright future. New leader, Cyril Ramaphosa, hopes to restore South African's faith in their government, and restore order to the chaotic ANC.

NATIONAL OPINION BALLOT participants express their concern over the future of South Africa. An overwhelming majority of participants see South Africa as a democracy, but not without some major issues. Balloters also believe that South Africa is a friend of the U.S. despite also believing that U.S. foreign policy rarely takes the interests of South Africa into account, or having much of an impact on the nation.

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the "South Africa's Fragile Democracy" topic?

Read the article on "South Africa's Fragile Democracy" topic in the 2018 Great Decisions briefing book	92.2%
Discussed the article on the "South Africa's Fragile Democracy" topic with a Great Decisions discussion group	85.9%
Discussed the article on the "South Africa's Fragile Democracy" topic with friends or family	54.9%
Followed news related to the "South Africa's Fragile Democracy"	65.7%
Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to the "South Africa's Fragile Democracy" topic	0.1%
Have or had a job related to the "South Africa's Fragile Democracy" topic	0.03%
Traveled to South Africa	1.6%
None of the above	0.01%

"South Africa is a young imperfect democracy. The U.S. should set a much better example of how democracy benefits a country as well as the rest of the world."

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to South Africa?

Very interested	31.8%
Somewhat interested	49.6%
Not too interested	15.3%
Not at all interested	1.4%

C. Overall, how much of a democracy do you think South Africa is today?

A full democracy	1.4%
A democracy, but with minor problems	23.5%
A democracy, but with major problems	73.3%

D. Do you think South Africa is having a mainly positive or mainly negative influence in the world?

Mainly positive	70.3%
Mainly negative	27.8%

E. Do you feel that South Africa is a close ally of the U.S., is friendly but not a close ally, is not friendly but not an enemy, or is unfriendly and is an enemy of the U.S.?

Close ally of the U.S.	7%
Friendly but not a close ally	73.5%
Not friendly but not an enemy	17.5%
Unfriendly and is an enemy of the U.S.	0.2%

F. To what extent would you favor or oppose adding South Africa as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council?

Strongly favor	9.2%
Somewhat favor	36.7%
Somewhat oppose	36.7%
Strongly oppose	17.4%

G. Generally, do you think American foreign policy has a positive effect on South Africa or a negative effect, or does American foreign policy have no effect on South Africa?

Positive effect	27.6%
Negative effect	14.4%
No effect	56%

H. In making international policy decisions, to what extent do you think the United States considers the interests of South Africa: a great deal, a fair amount, not too much or not at all?

A great deal	0.4%
A fair amount	11%
Not too much	70%
Not at all	16.8%

TOPIC 8/GLOBAL HEALTH

The world now faces a mix of old and new health challenges, including the preventable deaths of mothers and children, continuing epidemics of infectious diseases, and rising rates of chronic disease.

During the 2016 U.S. presidential election, then candidate Trump promised to limit U.S. spending on foreign aid, including on global health initiatives. Many balloters believe that this would be a mistake, and that the U.S. has a “moral obligation” to spend some foreign aid on global health research. Balloters also believe that combating global outbreaks of diseases should be “one of our top priorities” as well as giving money to international organizations such as the United Nations.

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the “Global Health: Progress and Challenges” topic?

Read the article on the “Global Health: Progress and Challenges” topic in the 2018 Great Decisions briefing book	92.3%
Discussed the article on the “Global Health: Progress and Challenges” topic with a Great Decisions discussion group	85.8%
Discussed the article on the “Global Health: Progress and Challenges” topic with friends or family	59.6%
Followed news related to the “Global Health: Progress and Challenges” topic	69.8%
Take a class in which you learned about issues related to the “Global Health: Progress and Challenges” topic	0.1%
Have or had a job related to the “Global Health: Progress and Challenges” topic	0.1%
None of the above	0.01%

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to the “Global Health: Progress and Challenges” topic?

Very interested	64%
Somewhat interested	30.4%
Not too interested	3.5%
Not at all interested	0.2%

C. When it comes to efforts to improve health in developing countries, do you think the U.S. should or should not give money to each of the following?

1. To international organizations like the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Should give money	95%
Should not give money	3.1%

2. To international organizations like the United Nations and the World Health Organization

Should give money	86.5%
Should not give money	11.7%

3. Directly to U.S.- based non-profits operating programs in developing countries

Should give money	88.1%
Should not give money	11.9%

4. Directly to local non-profits based in developing countries and not in the U.S.

Should give money	62.8%
Should not give money	35.3%

5. Directly to religious or faith-based organizations

Should give money	27.7%
Should not give money	70.4%

6. Directly to governments in developing countries

Should give money	40.1%
Should not give money	59.9%

D. In terms of what the U.S. government could spend on foreign aid, do you think combating global outbreaks of diseases like Ebola or Zika should be one of the top priorities, important but not a top priority, or not that important?

One of the top priorities	67.1%
Important but not a top priority	30.2%
Not that important	0.8%

E. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Americans will be better off if the U.S. government invests in global health research?

Strongly agree	81.3%
Somewhat agree	15.6%
Somewhat disagree	0.6%
Strongly disagree	0.6%

F. To what extent do you agree or disagree that it is a moral obligation for the U.S. government to spend money supporting global health research?

Strongly agree	70.3%
Somewhat agree	22%
Somewhat disagree	3.3%
Strongly disagree	2.5%

G. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The U.S. government should not spend money on global health because the problems of global health are just too big to be solved.

Strongly agree	1%
Somewhat agree	2.3%
Somewhat disagree	13.5%
Strongly disagree	81.3%



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