**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 BALLOTERS...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. How long have you participated in the Great Decisions program (i.e., attended one or more discussion sessions)?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is the first year I have participated.</td>
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<td>I participated in one previous year.</td>
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<th>B. How did you learn about the Great Decisions program?</th>
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<td>Word of mouth</td>
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<td>Local library</td>
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<td>Foreign Policy Association website</td>
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<td>Promotional brochure</td>
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<td>Other organization</td>
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<th>C. Where does your Great Decisions group meet?</th>
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<td>Private home</td>
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<td>Library</td>
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<td>Community center</td>
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<td>Learning in retirement</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<th>D. How many hours, on average, do you spend reading one Great Decisions chapter?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 1 hour</td>
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<td>1–2 hours</td>
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<th>E. 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?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Have</td>
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<th>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 own community and neighborhood.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Agree strongly</td>
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<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>Disagree somewhat</td>
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<th>G. Generally speaking, how interested are you in politics?</th>
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<td>Very much interested</td>
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<td>Not too interested</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not interested at all</td>
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<th>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?</th>
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<td>Takes an active role in world affairs</td>
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<tr>
<th>I. How often are you asked for your opinion on foreign policy?</th>
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<td>Often</td>
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<td>Sometimes</td>
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<th>J. Have you been abroad during the last two years?</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<th>K. Do you know, or are you learning, a foreign language?</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<th>L. Do you have any close friends or family that live in other countries?</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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M. Do you donate to any charities that help the poor in other countries?

Yes 65.4%
No 34.6%

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

Republican 11.9%
Democrat 54.8%
Independent 28.3%
Other 5%

O. What is your gender?

Male 54.1%
Female 45.9%

P. What race do you consider yourself?

White/Caucasian 93.9%
Black/African-American 0.7%
Hispanic/Latino 0.2%
Asian-American 2.1%
Native American 0.2%
Other 2.9%

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

United States 91.7%
Another country 8.3%

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

United States 98.2%
Another country 1.8%

S. How important is religion in your life?

Very important 25.6%
Somewhat important 21.8%
Not too important 22.9%
Not at all important 29.7%

T. What is your age?

18 and under 1.4%
19–29 1.3%
30–39 0.4%
40–49 1.1%
50–59 4.8%
60–69 25.5%
70–79 49.5%
80–89 14.3%
90 and above 1.8%

U. Are you currently employed?

Full-time employee 5.4%
Part-time employee 4.3%
Self-employed 5.7%
Unemployed 0.9%
Retired 81.3%
Student 1.3%
Homemaker 1.3%

V. Can you give us an estimate of your household income in 2016 before taxes?

Below $30,000 3.8%
$30,000–$50,000 8.4%
$50,000–$75,000 11.1%
$75,000–$100,000 15.2%
$100,000–$150,000 21.1%
Over $150,000 19.6%
Not sure 0.9%
Prefer not to say 20%

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

Did not graduate from high school 0%
High school graduate 2.5%
Some college, but no degree (yet) 2.9%
2-year college degree 1.6%
4-year college degree 17.4%
Some postgraduate work, but no degree (yet) 13%
Post-graduate degree (MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, etc.) 62.6%

The National Opinion Ballot Report was prepared by the Foreign Policy Association: Karen M. Rohan, editor in chief; Lillian Marx, 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.
The ballots cast by Great Decisions participants indicate:

Support for:
- Free trade agreements between the U.S. and other countries, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and globalization in general.
- Increased U.S. military resources committed to Asia.
- U.S. development of alternative sources of energy, such as wind, solar and hydrogen technology.
- U.S. drone strikes to target extremists in countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran nuclear deal.

Opposition to:
- Increasing the amount of weapons and military equipment the U.S. trades with Saudi Arabia.
- The Supreme Court action which effectively blocked President Obama’s executive order known as Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA).
- The acquisition of nuclear weapons by South Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Germany or Canada.

Some questions from the previous opinion ballots, asked again in 2017
(Previous years’ answers are in parentheses)

A. From 2001’s “European Integration: Past, Present and the Future”: In the foreseeable future, is integration in the European Union more likely to flourish, or to stagnate?
   - Flourish: 30.1% (70%)  
   - Stagnate: 69.9% (21%)

B. From 2014’s “Turkey’s Challenges”: Generally speaking, do you think that Turkey’s membership in the European Union would be…?
   - A good thing: 51.7% (66.8%)  
   - A bad thing: 23.1% (9.6%)  
   - Neither good nor bad: 25.3% (23.6%)

C. From 2014’s “China’s Foreign Policy”: In general, do you think Chinese trade policy toward the U.S. is fair or unfair?
   - Fair: 41.3% (31.3%)  
   - Unfair: 58.7% (68.7%)

D. From 2008’s “U.S.-China Economic Relations”: Does the fact that a product is made in China affect your decision on whether or not to buy it?
   - I buy products made in China: 43.9% (50%)  
   - I don’t buy products made in China: 7.3% (16%)  
   - I don’t care where the products I buy are made: 48.8% (34%)

E. From 2014’s “China’s Foreign Policy”: How worried are you, if at all, that China could become a military threat to the U.S. in the future? Please say whether you are very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not worried at all.
   - Very worried: 4.4% (7.8%)  
   - Somewhat worried: 44.5% (42.6%)  
   - Not too worried: 43% (42.3%)  
   - Not worried at all: 8.1% (7.2%)

Yes 59.9% (79%)
No, the U.S.’s current status as a non-ratifying signatory is sufficient 12.2% (8%)
No, and the U.S. should not be a signatory to the treaty 1.5% (3%)
Not sure 26.4% (10%)

G. From 2012’s “Middle East Realignment”: The U.S. should reassess its relationships with semidemocratic allies such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

Strongly agree 20% (20%)
Agree 65.6% (63%)
Disagree 12.9% (14%)
Strongly disagree 1.5% (1%)

H. From 2014’s “Energy Independence”: Thinking about long-range foreign policy goals, how much priority do you think the U.S. government should give to reducing U.S. dependence on imported energy sources?

Top priority 33.5% (62%)
Some priority 62.5% (36.8%)
No priority at all 4% (1.8%)

I. From 2012’s “Promoting Democracy”: The United States should actively promote democracy around the globe.

Strongly agree 6.4% (13%)
Agree 54.4% (59%)
Disagree 34.1% (25%)
Strongly disagree 5.1% (4%)

J. From 2016’s “The Rise of ISIS”: Which of the following statements about Islamic extremist groups like ISIS do you agree with more:

We should use military strength to destroy Islamic extremist groups once and for all 25.8% (29.4%)
We should accept that we cannot destroy Islamic extremist groups by using military force 74.2% (70.6)

K. From 2008’s “Latin America”: Do you think that Latin America should be a priority for the next U.S. administration?

Yes 71.7% (92%)
No 28.3% (8%)

L. From 2012’s “Afghanistan and Iraq”: In your opinion, what is the most compelling reason for a continued U.S. presence in Afghanistan?

It is critical to thwart the Taliban and terrorist groups seeking sanctuary in Afghanistan 23.1% (24%)
Considering the strained nature of U.S.-Pakistani relations, Afghanistan is essential to curbing Pakistani extremists 19.2% (27%)
The U.S. has an obligation to assist the Afghan government in stabilizing the country 42.1% (31%)
Other 15.5% (19%)

M. From 2011’s “Sanctions and Nonproliferation”: To what degree do you feel that U.S./EU/UN economic sanctions against nuclear proliferators represent an effective policy tool for dealing with “rogue states” that pursue nuclear weapons?

They represent the best option available 29.3% (12%)
They are not necessarily the best choice, but one of the only tools we have 66.3% (68%)
They have proven ineffective time and again and are a waste of time and political and diplomatic resources 4.4% (20%)

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

“I’m pessimistic about the future of Europe. I see rising nationalism and populism as threats to future peace.”

★★★

“Free trade agreements generally are a good thing when they work for the mutual benefit of all parties. China is a prime example where the benefits have not been quite even.”
The European Union has helped secure peace in Europe for the past 70 years. Now it faces an uncertain future.

Since 2008, the European Union (EU) has wrestled with a set of severe and overlapping crises. It is confronted simultaneously with an unprecedented influx of refugees, a lingering financial recession, the constant specter of terrorism, and now Britain’s vote to leave the bloc (“Brexit”). Many pessimists openly assert that one or more of these crises may prove fatal for Europe, in that it could trigger a dissolution or collapse of the EU.

NATIONAL OPINION BALLOT participants reflected this uncertainty. Nearly 70% expected European integration to stagnate rather than to flourish in the foreseeable future—an almost exact reversal from 2002, when participants were asked the same question. Close to half of respondents pointed to immigration from non-EU countries as the greatest challenge to the EU, when compared with Brexit, acts of terror perpetrated by ISIS, and Russian actions in Ukraine.

Responding to the United Kingdom’s (UK) vote to leave the EU, balloters did not think that Brexit would alter British relations with the United States for better or for worse. However, a strong majority of participants felt that Brexit would hurt the economies of the United States, the UK and the EU. In comments, many readers expressed concern at rising populist and nationalist sentiment in Europe.

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to “The future of Europe” topic?
- Read the article on Europe in the 2017 Great Decisions briefing book 79.9%
- Discussed the article on Europe with a Great Decisions discussion group 76.1%
- Discussed the article on Europe with friends and family 45%
- Followed news related to Europe 76%
- Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to Europe 12.3%
- Have or had a job related to the European Union (EU) or United Kingdom (UK) 9.4%
- Traveled to the EU or UK 58.1%
- None of the above 0.2%

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to Europe?
- Very interested 73.9%
- Somewhat interested 25.1%
- Not too interested 1%
- Not at all interested 0.1%

C. In June 2016, the UK voted to leave the EU. What effect do you think “Brexit” will have on the special relationship between the U.S. and the UK? Will it improve relations between the U.S. and the UK, neither improve nor make relations worse, or make relations worse between the U.S. and the UK?
- Improve relations between the U.S. and the UK 10.8%
- Neither improve nor make relations worse 71.2%
- Make relations worse between the U.S. and the UK 18.1%

D. Which of the following do you think poses the greatest challenge to the EU?
- Managing Britain’s exit from the EU 27.8%
- Immigration from non-EU countries 48.9%
- Terrorist attacks inspired or directed by ISIS 9.5%
- Russian actions in Crimea and Ukraine 13.9%

E. Do you think the UK leaving the EU will help or hurt the U.S. economy?
- Help 32.8%
- Hurt 67.2%

F. Do you think the UK leaving the EU will help or hurt the economy of the UK?
- Help 12.4%
- Hurt 87.6%

G. Do you think the UK leaving the EU will help or hurt the economy of other European countries?
- Help 9.3%
- Hurt 90.8%

H. How much will the UK leaving the EU affect you personally?
- A great deal 1.1%
- Somewhat 17%
- Not too much 55.4%
- Not at all 26.6%

I. Was the vote by the UK to leave the EU an isolated referendum or part of a larger populist trend affecting other countries, including the U.S.?
- Isolated referendum 11.3%
- Part of a larger trend 88.7%
Before the onset of globalization, if a label said something was “Made in the USA” or “Made in China,” it usually was. These days, it almost never is.

Our economic metrics haven’t kept up. Misleading numbers promote a myopic view of ourselves in the world. Like looking through the wrong end of a telescope, these metrics show a shrunken image of America’s true economic size and competitiveness. We seem on the decline, while developing economies like China seem all the more menacing.

Nevertheless, ballot respondents mostly rejected this narrative of loss. More than nine out of ten readers believed that globalization and free trade agreements between the U.S. and other countries have been a good thing for the United States. When given a list of five countries, including Brazil, China, Canada, Mexico and the United Kingdom, balloters supported increased trade with four of them by a ratio of nine to one. The exception was China, with whom balloters still supported increased trade, but by a smaller margin.

Over 80% of readers supported both the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the North American Free Trade Agreement. At the same time, the majority felt the trade deficit should be a very important or somewhat important global priority for America.

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the “Trade, jobs and politics” topic?

- Read the article on trade, jobs and politics in the 2017 Great Decisions briefing book: 89.7%
- Discussed the article on trade, jobs and politics with a Great Decisions discussion group: 84.2%
- Discussed the article on trade, jobs and politics with friends and family: 58.5%
- Followed news related to trade, jobs and politics: 80.4%
- Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to trade, jobs and politics: 13.3%
- Have or had a job related to international trade: 13.1%
- Traveled to China: 28.1%
- None of the above: 0.6%

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to trade, jobs and politics?

- Very interested: 59.5%
- Somewhat interested: 37.9%
- Not too interested: 2.6%
- Not at all interested: 0.1%

C. In general, do you think that free trade agreements between the U.S. and other countries have been a good thing or a bad thing for the United States?

- Good thing: 93.4%
- Bad thing: 6.6%

D. The United States has negotiated a free trade agreement with 11 countries in Asia and Latin America called the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP. Do you think this trade agreement would be a good thing for our country or a bad thing?

- Good thing: 86.2%
- Bad thing: 13.8%

E. Do you think free trade agreements have definitely helped, probably helped, probably hurt, or definitely hurt the financial situation of you and your family?

- Definitely helped: 32.3%
- Probably helped: 61.6%
- Probably hurt: 5.4%
- Definitely hurt: 0.7%

F. How important were free trade agreements in your vote for president in 2016?

- Very important: 17.3%
- Somewhat important: 41.7%
- Not too important: 28.3%
- Not important at all: 12.8%

G. Do you think the United States should increase or decrease the amount of trade it conducts with the following countries?

1. Brazil
   - Increase: 93.7%
   - Decrease: 6.3%

2. China
   - Increase: 66%
   - Decrease: 34%

3. Canada
   - Increase: 97.7%
   - Decrease: 2.4%

4. Mexico
   - Increase: 94.2%
   - Decrease: 5.8%

5. United Kingdom
   - Increase: 95.7%
   - Decrease: 4.3%

H. Globalization is the increase of trade, communication, travel and other things among countries around the world. In general, has the United States gained more or lost more because of globalization?

- Gained more: 90.2%
- Lost more: 9.8%
I. Overall, would you say U.S. trade with other countries creates more jobs for the U.S., loses more jobs for the U.S., or does U.S. trade with other countries have no effect on U.S. jobs?

- Creates more jobs: 67.2%
- Loses more jobs: 17.9%
- Has no effect on jobs: 15%

J. How important is the trade deficit among all of American global priorities?

- Very important: 20.1%
- Somewhat important: 51%
- Not too important: 25.8%
- Not important at all: 3.1%

K. More than 20 years ago Congress passed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico and Canada. So far, would you say that NAFTA has had more of a positive impact on the nation’s economy, had more of a negative impact on the nation’s economy, or has not had much of an impact on the nation’s economy?

- Positive impact: 81%
- Negative impact: 11.3%
- Not had much of an impact: 7.7%

L. Have free trade agreements between the U.S. and other countries been a good thing or a bad thing for American workers?

- Good thing: 81.9%
- Bad thing: 18.1%

### TOPIC 3/CONFLICT IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

The South China Sea is a locus of competing territorial claims, and China its most vocal claimant.

Beijing’s interest in the South China Sea has intensified disputes with other regional players in recent years, especially since China has increased its naval presence there. Despite rising international pressure, including an unfavorable ruling by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), China staunchly defends its policies. But government officials in the U.S., China and the Philippines have all called for “turning a new page” following the ITLOS ruling, and for peacefully resolving disputes.

Balloters assessed the territorial dispute over the South China Sea as a very serious or somewhat serious problem for the U.S. Almost 100% believed that the U.S. should place a high or medium priority on protecting freedom of navigation in the sea lanes between the U.S. and East Asia. Nearly three quarters felt that committing more U.S. military resources to Asia was a good thing because it could help maintain peace in the region, as opposed to a bad thing because it could lead to conflict with China. Participants mostly maintained that the U.S. should not reduce its Navy fleet in response to the national deficit, although about a quarter somewhat favored this course of action.

### A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the “Conflict in the South China Sea” topic?

- Read the article on the South China Sea in the 2017 Great Decisions briefing book: 90.1%
- Discussed the article on the South China Sea with a Great Decisions discussion group: 84.8%
- Discussed the article on the South China Sea with friends and family: 53.7%
- Followed news related to the South China Sea: 76%
- Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to the South China Sea: 7.2%

### B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to the South China Sea?

- Very interested: 44.9%
- Somewhat interested: 46.3%
- Not too interested: 8.2%
- Not at all interested: 0.6%

### C. How big of a problem for the U.S. is the territorial dispute over the South China Sea? Do you think this is a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not a problem at all?

- Very serious: 33.3%
- Somewhat serious: 55.4%
- Not too serious: 11.3%
- Not a problem at all: 0%

“China must be put on clear notice that any military aggression will be countered with force, as necessary, as well as economic sanctions and trade stoppages.”
D. Some people say that China is an expansionist power that is building up its military to enforce its claims to sovereignty in the South China Sea. Other people say that China is primarily a peaceful country that is more interested in economic growth than in military adventures. Which view is closer to your own?

- China is an expansionist power: 72.3%
- China is primarily a peaceful country: 27.7%

E. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) recently ruled in favor of the Philippines in a dispute with China over territory in the South China Sea. Do you think the ruling will have significant impact, some impact, or no impact at all on future disputes in the South China Sea?

- It will have significant impact: 9.9%
- It will have some impact: 64.5%
- It will have no impact at all: 25.6%

F. In terms of America’s relations in East Asia, what priority should the U.S. place on protecting freedom of navigation on the sea lanes between the U.S. and East Asia?

- High priority: 65.2%
- Medium priority: 32.2%
- Low priority: 2.4%
- No priority at all: 0.1%

G. In terms of reducing the national deficit, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the U.S. should reduce its Navy fleet?

- Agree strongly: 6%
- Agree somewhat: 25.4%
- Disagree somewhat: 37.5%
- Disagree strongly: 31.2%

H. If one of our allies in Asia, such as Japan, South Korea or the Philippines, gets into a serious military conflict with China, do you think we should or should not use military force to defend them?

- Should use military force to defend them: 72.3%
- Should not use military force to defend them: 27.7%

I. The United States has announced plans to commit more military resources to Asia. Indicate which comes closer to your view: This is a good thing because it could help maintain peace in the region, or this is a bad thing because it could lead to conflict with China.

- This is a good thing because it could help maintain peace in the region: 73.9%
- This is a bad thing because it could lead to conflict with China: 26.1%
The U.S. and Saudi Arabia need each other, but they are at a crossroads in bilateral relations.

Outside powers, such as the United States, do not have solutions to the problems plaguing the Middle East. The U.S. has been worn down by never-ending conflicts in the region, and finds itself grappling with how to approach human rights as it forms policy toward countries like Saudi Arabia.

Ballot responses reflected that dilemma. Some 96.6% of participants thought that the Saudi government did not respect the personal freedoms of its people. About 34% of balloters were optimistic that Saudi Arabia would become more democratic over the next ten years, while approximately 58% anticipated that there would be no change in the level of democracy from today.

Readers displayed ambivalence toward the kingdom’s role in the war in Yemen and the role of the United States in providing military assistance in that war. A plurality of participants disapproved somewhat of these actions, while more approved somewhat than disapproved strongly. At the same time, respondents wanted the United States to decrease the amount of weapons and military equipment the U.S. trades with Saudi Arabia (45.8%), or to keep it the same (49.8%).

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the “Saudi Arabia in transition” topic?

- Read the article on Saudi Arabia in the 2017 Great Decisions briefing book: 92.9%
- Discussed the article on Saudi Arabia with a Great Decisions discussion group: 85.2%
- Discussed the article on Saudi Arabia with friends and family: 54.2%
- Followed news related to Saudi Arabia: 78.4%
- Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to Saudi Arabia: 10.2%
- Have or had a job related to Saudi Arabia: 5.4%
- Traveled to Saudi Arabia: 4.6%
- None of the above: 0.5%

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to Saudi Arabia?

- Very interested: 45.9%
- Somewhat interested: 49.5%
- Not too interested: 4.6%
- Not at all interested: 0%

C. Do you feel that Saudi Arabia is a close ally of the United States, is friendly but not a close ally, is not friendly but is not an enemy, or is unfriendly and is an enemy of the United States?

- Close ally of the United States: 25%
- Friendly but not a close ally: 54.6%
- Not friendly but is not an enemy: 19.3%
- Unfriendly and is an enemy of the United States: 1.1%

D. Generally speaking, how much do you think the United States can trust Saudi Arabia: a great deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all?

- A great deal: 2.7%
- A fair amount: 51.9%
- Not too much: 41.6%
- Not at all: 3.8%

E. Over the next ten years, do you think Saudi Arabia will become more democratic, less democratic, or will it be about the same as it is now?

- More democratic: 33.9%
- Less democratic: 8.3%
- About the same: 57.8%

F. Do you think the government of Saudi Arabia respects the personal freedoms of its people or does not respect their personal freedoms?

- Respects personal freedoms: 3.4%
- Does not respect personal freedoms: 96.6%

G. To what extent do you approve or disapprove of Saudi Arabia’s involvement in the war in Yemen?

- Approve strongly: 6.3%
- Approve somewhat: 28.5%
- Disapprove somewhat: 41.9%
- Disapprove strongly: 23.4%

H. To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the U.S. providing military assistance to Saudi Arabia in the war in Yemen?

- Approve strongly: 4.7%
- Approve somewhat: 28.4%
- Disapprove somewhat: 37.3%
- Disapprove strongly: 29.7%

I. How likely or unlikely do you think it is that we will see a war between Saudi Arabia and Iran in the Middle East?

- Very likely: 3.4%
- Somewhat likely: 30.2%
- Somewhat unlikely: 53.8%
- Very unlikely: 12.7%

J. Do you think the U.S. government should increase, decrease, or keep the same the amount of weapons and military equipment it trades with Saudi Arabia?

- Increase: 4.3%
- Decrease: 45.8%
- Keep the same: 49.8%
For 45 years, the United States has alternated between periods of energy security and insecurity, sometimes able to wield petroleum as a useful instrument of foreign policy, sometimes not.

The relationship between petroleum and foreign policy is difficult to analyze with precision. Especially today, after the so-called “energy revolution,” some look at the geopolitics of oil and ask if this revolution improved U.S. foreign policy. Many find the benefits hard to see. While U.S. energy security has clearly improved, its contribution to the success of U.S. foreign policy has been uncertain at best.

Most of our readers thought that America’s dependence on foreign oil was somewhat threatening to national security, though 35.4% said it was not too threatening. Only about 10% strongly favored the increased use of hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) or federal action to increase offshore oil and gas drilling. Approximately 30% strongly opposed both of those options, with the remainder of balloters split about equally between being somewhat in favor or somewhat opposed. Eight out of ten participants believed that developing alternative sources of energy should be a more important priority for the United States than expanding exploration and production of oil, coal and natural gas, or building more nuclear power plants.

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the “U.S. foreign policy and petroleum” topic?

- Read the article on U.S. foreign policy and petroleum in the 2017 Great Decisions briefing book: 94.1%
- Discussed the article on U.S. foreign policy and petroleum with a Great Decisions discussion group: 87.5%
- Discussed the article on U.S. foreign policy and petroleum with friends and family: 55.8%
- Followed news related to U.S. foreign policy and petroleum: 73.3%
- Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to U.S. foreign policy and petroleum: 8.7%
- Have or had a job related to U.S. foreign policy and petroleum: 7.2%
- None of the above: 1.2%

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to U.S. foreign policy and petroleum?

- Very interested: 55.9%
- Somewhat interested: 40.7%
- Not too interested: 3.2%
- Not at all interested: 0.2%

C. Right now, which one of the following do you think should be the more important priority for addressing the U.S. energy supply: developing alternative sources, such as wind, solar and hydrogen technology; expanding exploration and production of oil, coal and natural gas; or building more nuclear power plants?

- Developing alternative sources, such as wind, solar and hydrogen technology: 82%
- Expanding exploration and production of oil, coal and natural gas: 7.1%
- Building more nuclear power plants: 10.9%

D. To what extent do you favor or oppose the increased use of fracking to extract oil and natural gas from underground rock formations?

- Favor strongly: 10.5%
- Favor somewhat: 27.9%
- Oppose somewhat: 28.7%
- Oppose strongly: 32.9%

E. How threatening to U.S. national security do you think America’s dependence on foreign oil is?

- Very threatening: 14.6%
- Somewhat threatening: 46.7%
- Not too threatening: 35.4%
- Not threatening at all: 3.4%

F. To address the country’s energy needs, would you support or oppose action by the federal government to increase offshore oil and gas drilling?

- Support strongly: 9.7%
- Support somewhat: 29.9%
- Oppose somewhat: 29.5%
- Oppose strongly: 30.9%

G. To what extent do you support or oppose the federal government permitting gas prices to rise in order to decrease our reliance on oil for energy?

- Support strongly: 29.8%
- Support somewhat: 51.9%
- Oppose somewhat: 12%
- Oppose strongly: 6.3%

H. Many issues were discussed during the presidential campaign. Please indicate how much influence the candidates’ positions on dependence on foreign oil had on your decision of who to vote for in 2016.

- A great deal of influence: 11.1%
- Some influence: 25.9%
- Not too much influence: 30.5%
- No influence at all: 32.5%
The pendulum of Latin American politics is swinging rightward once again.

In the early 2000s, many Latin American countries witnessed the emergence of leaders and parties of the political left, in its many variants. Much of the media dubbed this the “pink tide” of Latin America. Yet as the “pink tide” now recedes, the forces of change have more to do with socio-economics than ideology. Dramatic economic and political crises have coincided in countries like Brazil and Venezuela.

Still, the final result for Latin America may be the emergence of centrist, pragmatic modes of governance, and with them, opportunities for the U.S. to improve relations. Indeed, readers believed that Latin America should be a priority for the current administration. Nevertheless, this number was down about 20% from 2008, when balloters were asked the same question.

Readers also felt that the United States should negotiate free trade agreements with just the Latin American countries that would have been party to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, had that agreement gone into effect. Most balloters strongly disapproved of the Supreme Court action that blocked President Obama’s executive order, known as Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA). Some 20% strongly approved of the action.

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the “Latin America’s political pendulum” topic?

- Read the article on Latin America in the 2017 Great Decisions briefing book: 90.5%
- Discussed the article on Latin America with a Great Decisions discussion group: 83%
- Discussed the article on Latin America with friends and family: 49.3%
- Followed news related to Latin America: 70.5%
- Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to Latin America: 11.9%
- Have or had a job related to Latin America: 10.9%
- Traveled to Latin America: 46.1%
- None of the above: 0.7%

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to Latin America?

- Very interested: 43.3%
- Somewhat interested: 47.3%
- Not too interested: 9.2%
- Not at all interested: 0.2%

C. The United States has negotiated a free trade agreement with 11 countries in Asia and Latin America called the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP. If TPP is not approved, to what extent would you support or oppose the United States negotiating a free trade agreement with just the Latin American countries in the deal?

- Support strongly: 55.1%
- Support somewhat: 36.7%
- Oppose somewhat: 6.3%
- Oppose strongly: 2%

D. To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the Supreme Court action which effectively blocked President Obama’s executive order which would have provided work permits and prevented the deportation of nearly 4 million immigrants who have lived illegally in the U.S. since 2010 or earlier, have no criminal record, and are parents of children who are either U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents?

- Approve strongly: 19.9%
- Approve somewhat: 10.3%
- Disapprove somewhat: 14.7%
- Disapprove strongly: 55.1%

E. To what extent do you support or oppose the United States government ending its trade embargo against Cuba?

- Support strongly: 73.7%
- Support somewhat: 18.2%
- Oppose somewhat: 5%
- Oppose strongly: 3.1%

F. Which of these do you think is most likely to happen in Venezuela?

- Venezuela will become a stable democracy in the next year or two: 0.2%
- Venezuela will become a stable democracy, but it will take longer than a year or two: 63.7%
- Venezuela will probably never become a stable democracy: 36.1%

G. In your view, is the temperature of U.S.-Latin America relations likely to get better, get worse, or remain about the same over the next five years?

- It will get better: 13.8%
- It will get worse: 47.5%
- It will remain about the same: 38.7%
Major internal conflict has plagued Afghanistan for four decades. The United States, for its part, has conducted military operations in the country nearly continuously since 9/11.

The United States invaded Afghanistan seeking to destroy al-Qaeda, which at the time was being sheltered by the Taliban. Throughout the decade and a half since 2001, Pakistan has continued to quietly support the Taliban’s fight against the United States and the Afghan government, even while helping the U.S. combat al-Qaeda. The U.S. remains concerned about the Taliban and al-Qaeda, while trying to manage relationships with Afghanistan and Pakistan.

An overwhelming majority of balloters anticipated that the situation in Afghanistan would be worse in 2017 than it was in 2016. Most believed that history would judge the war there as more of a failure than a success. Some 36.4% thought it was somewhat unlikely that Afghanistan could maintain a stable, democratic government following a full withdrawal of U.S. troops, while 55.5% thought it very unlikely. Respondents favored the delay of a U.S. withdrawal, though about 40% were ambivalent. Almost 80% approved of U.S. drone strikes to target extremists in countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan.

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the “Prospects for Afghanistan and Pakistan” topic?

Read the article on Afghanistan and Pakistan in the 2017 Great Decisions briefing book 93.4%
Discussed the article on Afghanistan and Pakistan with a Great Decisions discussion group 86%
Discussed the article on Afghanistan and Pakistan with friends and family 52.5%
Followed news related to Afghanistan and Pakistan 80.1%
Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to Afghanistan and Pakistan 12.2%
Have or had a job related to Afghanistan and/or Pakistan 3.5%
Traveled to Afghanistan or Pakistan 3.5%
None of the above 0.9%

B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to Afghanistan and Pakistan?

Very interested 51.1%
Somewhat interested 41.7%
Not too interested 7.1%
Not at all interested 0%

C. To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the way President Barack Obama has handled the war in Afghanistan?

Approve strongly 14.2%
Approve somewhat 52.3%
Disapprove somewhat 25.5%
Disapprove strongly 8.1%

D. In 2017, do you think things will be better or worse than they were in 2016 when it comes to the war in Afghanistan?

Better 22%
Worse 78%

E. How likely is it that Afghanistan can maintain a stable, democratic government once the U.S. has withdrawn all its troops?

Very likely 0%
Somewhat likely 8.1%
Somewhat unlikely 36.4%
Very unlikely 55.5%

F. How do you think history will judge the war in Afghanistan: complete success, more of a success than failure, more of a failure than success, or complete failure?

Complete success 0%
More of a success than a failure 15.4%
More of a failure than a success 68.9%
Complete failure 15.6%

“Our primary focus in Afghanistan should be on defeating ISIS, neutralizing the Taliban and preventing other terrorist organizations from developing. To that end, diplomacy along with economic initiatives and sanctions should play a major role.”
G. President Barack Obama announced that the United States will delay withdrawing the remaining U.S. troops in Afghanistan, keeping about 9,800 troops in that country in 2016 and about 5,500 in 2017. Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose this plan?

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<th>Oppose</th>
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<td>44%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
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H. How important is eliminating the opium trade to making Afghanistan a country that is stable enough to withstand the threat posed by the Taliban or other extremist groups?

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<td>Not too important</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not important at all</td>
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I. Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of Pakistan?

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J. Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of Afghanistan?

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<tr>
<td>Very unfavorable</td>
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K. Do you approve or disapprove of the United States conducting missile strikes from pilotless aircraft, called “drones,” to target extremists in countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan?

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<td>Approve somewhat</td>
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<td>Disapprove somewhat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disapprove strongly</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
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“We’ve placed ourselves in an almost unwinnable, untenable situation in Afghanistan.”

A. Have you engaged in any of the following activities related to the “Nuclear security” topic?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read the article on nuclear security in the 2017 Great Decisions briefing book</td>
<td>93.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed the article on nuclear security with a Great Decisions discussion group</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed the article on nuclear security with friends and family</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Followed news related to nuclear security</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taken a class in which you learned about issues related to nuclear security</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have or had a job related to nuclear security</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
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B. How interested would you say you are in issues related to nuclear security?

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<td>Somewhat interested</td>
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<td>Not too interested</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
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<td>Not at all interested</td>
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TOPIC 8/NUCLEAR SECURITY

While the Iran nuclear deal continues to be a subject of intense debate, there is widespread agreement that nuclear proliferation poses a grave challenge to international security.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy called the spread of nuclear weapons “one of the greatest hazards which man faces.” Nuclear nonproliferation continues to rank as one of the top foreign policy challenges for the United States today. Questions persist about the nuclear deal with Iran, and North Korea continues to pursue a larger and more sophisticated nuclear arsenal. Moreover, the United States and the new administration face critical choices about the country’s own nuclear arsenal.

U.S. nuclear security was important to our readers when casting their votes for president in 2016. Three quarters of respondents believed that the world is less secure from nuclear threats today than it was eight years ago. A majority of balloters (56.6%) thought that North Korea’s nuclear program was a major threat to the well-being of the United States, although 40.8% found it to be a minor threat. Readers supported the Iran nuclear agreement, and more than 80% said the deal made the United States and the world safer as opposed to less safe.
C. Would you support or oppose the following countries acquiring nuclear weapons?

1. South Korea
   Support 11.3%
   Oppose 88.8%

2. Japan
   Support 15.1%
   Oppose 84.9%

3. Saudi Arabia
   Support 2%
   Oppose 98%

4. Germany
   Support 14.5%
   Oppose 85.5%

5. Canada
   Support 23.6%
   Oppose 76.4%

D. How important was U.S. nuclear security to your vote for president in 2016?

   Very important 35.5%
   Somewhat important 29.8%
   Not too important 20.7%
   Not important at all 14.1%

E. Do you think the world is more secure or less secure from nuclear threats than it was eight years ago, or has there been no change?

   The world is more secure from nuclear threats 8%
   The world is less secure from nuclear threats 75%
   The world is about as secure from nuclear threats as it was eight years ago 16.9%

F. How likely do you think it is that the U.S. will experience a nuclear terrorist attack in the near future?

   Very likely 3.5%
   Somewhat likely 32.4%
   Not too likely 53%
   Not likely at all 11.1%

G. To what extent do you think that North Korea’s nuclear program is a major threat, a minor threat or not a threat to the well-being of the United States?

   Major threat 56.2%
   Minor threat 40.8%
   Not a threat 3.1%

H. Last year the United States made an agreement with Iran that lifts sanctions for ten years in exchange for Iran curtailing its pursuit of a nuclear program over that time period. So far, do you think the Iran deal is making the United States safer or less safe?

   Safer 84.2%
   Less safe 15.8%

I. Last year the United States made an agreement with Iran that lifts sanctions for ten years in exchange for Iran curtailing its pursuit of a nuclear program over that time period. So far, do you think the Iran deal is making the world safer or less safe?

   Safer 82.6%
   Less safe 17.4%

J. To what extent do you support or oppose the Iran nuclear agreement?

   Support strongly 55.1%
   Support somewhat 29.6%
   Oppose somewhat 7.6%
   Oppose strongly 7.8%
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