Foreign Policy in the Age of Retrenchment

Results of the 2014 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy

By Dina Smeltz and Ivo Daalder
with Craig Kafura

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2014 Chicago Council Survey Team

Dina Smeltz, *Principal investigator*
Craig Kafura, *Study coordinator*

Salma Al-Shami
Joshua Busby
Gregory Holyk
Catherine Hug
Jonathan Monten
Benjamin Page

Foreign Policy Advisory Board

Ivo Daalder
Michael Desch
Daniel Drezner
Peter Feaver
Bruce Jentleson
Ellen Laipson
Tod Lindberg
James Lindsay
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Benjamin Page
James Steinberg

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The Chicago Council on Global Affairs is a leading, independent nonpartisan organization committed to influencing the discourse on global issues through contributions to opinion and policy formation, leadership dialogue, and public learning.

The Chicago Council provides members, specialized groups, and the general public with a forum for the consideration of significant international issues and their bearing on American foreign policy.

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Foreword

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Chicago Council Survey. First conducted in 1974, the 2014 Survey is the 14th poll of American public opinion and US foreign policy conducted by The Chicago Council. During these 40 years, Chicago Council Surveys have captured the sense of particular eras—post-Vietnam, post-Cold War, post-9/11—and highlighted critical shifts in American public thinking. Over the past four decades it has been a valuable resource for policymakers, academics, media, and the general public. The Survey has been, and continues to be, one of the signature products of The Chicago Council on Global Affairs. Going forward, we will conduct this survey on an annual basis.

This report, *Foreign Policy in the Age of Retrenchment,* is the first of several drawing on the 2014 Chicago Council Survey data. It focuses on the Survey's most important finding—that Americans remain committed to an active US role in world affairs. While weary of large-scale military interventions, they support the use of force when critical national interests are threatened and favor a broad array of nonmilitary forms of international engagement. Americans are not turning inward; as they have for 40 years, they remain committed to maintaining a powerful military and a strong leadership role in international affairs to address security challenges abroad and enhance economic prosperity at home.

In addition to surveying American public opinion, The Chicago Council this year also surveyed the foreign policy opinions of American leaders in government, business, religious organizations, and the academy. A report on these data will be released later this year. The Council will also issue shorter analyses drawn from the public and leadership data over the course of the year, all of which, like this report, will be available on our new website, www.thechicagocouncil.org. The full dataset from this year's study will also be made available on our website by January 2015.

This report would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of a team of people. Central to that effort has been Dina Smeltz, senior fellow for public opinion and foreign policy at The Chicago Council. Her leadership and decades of experience have been invaluable in quickly moving from questionnaire design to in-depth analysis. In this report, she has woven together a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of how Americans view international engagement that is sure to inform the ongoing debate on international engagement. Special recognition is also due to Craig Kafura, senior program officer at The Chicago Council, for his day-to-day management of all stages in the survey project and important contributions in research and analysis.

The Chicago Council greatly benefitted from a Foreign Policy and Public Opinion Advisory Board, which helped the survey team to frame the study and interpret the results. With decades of experience in think tanks, government, and academia, the advisory board helped develop key topics for the survey and assisted in contextualizing the results in a broader foreign policy framework. We would like to thank the members of the board for their assistance and insights. The board members are Michael Desch, chair and professor, Department of Political Science at Notre Dame; Daniel Drezner, professor of international politics at Tufts University; Peter Feaver, professor of political science and public policy at Duke University;

Bruce Jentleson, professor of public policy and political science at Duke University; Ellen Laipson, president and CEO of the Stimson Center; Tod Lindberg, research fellow, Hoover Institution at Stanford; James Lindsay, senior vice president and director of studies at the Council on Foreign Relations; Thomas Mann, W. Averrell Harriman Chair and senior fellow in governance studies at the Brookings Institution; Benjamin Page, Gordon S. Fulcher Professor of Decision Making and faculty associate, Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University; and James Steinberg, dean of the Maxwell School at Syracuse University.

In addition to the advisory board, a team of researchers contributed to the design and analysis of the 2014 Chicago Council Survey. Benjamin Page, who sat on both the advisory board and the survey team this year, has worked on this survey since its first publication in 1974 and has been a steady guide through each iteration. Over the last several years our team has been joined by Gregory Holyk, research analyst at Langer Research Associates, who has brought an increasing methodological sophistication to our analytical process. The newest additions to the Council survey team are Joshua Busby, associate professor of public affairs at the University of Texas-Austin, and Jon Monten, assistant professor in political science at University College London, who have brought fresh ideas and an experimental emphasis to the Council survey process. Along with Jordan Tama, assistant professor of international relations at American University, Josh and Jon have helped to revive the leadership survey poll in 2014. Thanks are also due to Rachel Bronson, senior fellow for global energy; Phil Levy, senior fellow on the global economy; and Steve Kull, director of the Center on Policy Attitudes (COPA) and the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), for their input and advice on question framing and interpretation. Finally, the team was ably aided in the writing and research by consultant Salma Al-Shami and interns Liz Deadrick and Mariam Hussain. We are grateful to all of them for their efforts and assistance.

None of this would have been possible without the generous support of The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, the Korea Foundation, the United States-Japan Foundation, and the personal support of Lester Crown.

Ivo H. Daalder
President

Executive Summary

Among much of the political elite today, a specter is haunting America—the specter of isolationism. Since the last Chicago Council Survey in 2012, many policymakers, politicians, and pundits have come to question the continued willingness of Americans to engage in world affairs. As global troubles brew in Gaza, Syria, Iraq, and Ukraine, some claim that the public is turning inward and resistant to any sort of US military intervention. And they have used public opinion polling to argue their points.

Public continues to support an active role for the United States in world affairs.

But a new survey by The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, conducted from May 6 to 29, 2014, demonstrates that isolationism is not the appropriate term to describe current public opinion. Public support for international engagement remains solid, with six in ten Americans in favor of an active role in world affairs. At the same time, four in ten Americans now say the US should stay out of world affairs—a proportion that has grown to its highest point since the first Chicago Council Survey in 1974.

The new survey data show that this growing desire among Americans to "stay out" of world affairs is linked to increased criticism of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a decreased sense of threat, a long-standing desire to focus on domestic problems, and an increased divide among Republicans on this question. But the data do not show a desire to disengage from the world. Instead, results of the 2014 Chicago Council Survey confirm continued, and in some cases even growing support for US international involvement, especially when it comes to nonmilitary forms of engagement.

Indeed, the most striking finding of the 2014 Chicago Council Survey is the essential stability of American attitudes toward international engagement, which have not changed all that much since the Council conducted its first public opinion survey 40 years ago. As they have for four decades, Americans support strong US international leadership, place primacy on protecting American jobs over other foreign policy goals, favor diplomacy with countries that are hostile toward the United States, support participation in many international treaties and agreements, and endorse trade despite economic setbacks. Americans remain selective about when they will support putting US troops in harm's way, but are most likely to do so in response to top threats or humanitarian crises.

Public aversion to the use of force is long-standing.

Much of the discussion around Americans' current foreign policy mood is centered upon war weariness and public opposition to military intervention in places like Syria and Ukraine. Indeed, with seven in ten Americans now viewing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as not worth the cost, public hesitancy about military intervention is real. But it is not new. In fact, since the first Chicago Council Survey in 1974, Americans have consistently expressed reluctance to use military force to solve international problems, especially when doing so involves putting "boots on the ground." That skepticism persists today, with little public support for

military intervention in Ukraine in the event of Russian invasion (30%), sending troops into Syria (17%), or leaving US forces in Afghanistan beyond 2014 to support counterterrorism and anti-insurgency operations (33%). And though arming the rebels in Syria may not pose a direct risk to Americans, only one in four support doing so (25%), consistent with past public opposition to arming rebel groups.

Americans will support force if they sense a direct threat.

At the same time, the 2014 Chicago Council Survey shows that Americans will support the use of force when they feel directly threatened, if they expect the response to be relatively low cost and low risk, or in case of a humanitarian disaster. Thus, a majority of Americans is prepared to use US troops to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon (69%). And as they have for more than a decade, majorities are willing to put US troops in harm's way in order to combat terrorism (56% support sending ground troops to attack terrorist training camps) and to ensure the oil supply (54%). Support for military action goes up when such actions pose little to no hazard to American soldiers, including air strikes to carry out bombing attacks against terrorist camps and facilities (71%), assassinations of individual terrorist leaders (70%), and drone strikes against suspected terrorists (63%).

Moreover, at least in principle, Americans support sending US troops to prevent a government-sponsored genocide (71%) and to help with humanitarian crises (71%). Importantly, support for using force in all these cases is not confined to those Americans who want the US to play an active role in world affairs. Even among those who say the United States should stay out of world affairs, majorities would support the use of force in most of these cases.

Majorities support alliances, treaties, and keeping a military edge.

The discussion on American views of the US role in the world has tended to emphasize public caution about the use of force. But this ignores the fact that Americans today generally support many other forms of global engagement, including strong alliances, trade agreements, international treaties, strategic uses of sanctions, and diplomacy. This is true even for those who prefer that the United States "stay out" of world affairs, though they are less supportive of providing economic and military assistance to other countries. Even while reluctant to use forces, Americans nevertheless consider maintaining US military superiority one of the most effective ways to achieve US foreign policy goals. They also continue to support maintaining a long-term US military presence overseas. And while Americans have grown even more critical of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2012, they are not calling for large-scale cutbacks in defense spending.

Globalization receives the highest endorsement ever; majorities support new trade agreements.

As much as they value US military superiority, Americans believe economic power is more important to a nation's power and influence in the world. As the US economy continues to recover from the largest global economic collapse since the 1930s, Americans continue to express broad support for globalization and free trade. Two out of three Americans say that globalization is mostly a good thing (65%), the highest recorded percentage to feel this way since the question was first asked in 1998. Six in ten also support the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with Europe (62%) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) being negotiated with a dozen Pacific Rim countries (63%).

Americans continue to support diplomacy and sanctions.

Americans prefer a diplomacy-first strategy before—if at all—resorting to force. For example, six in ten (62%) support the interim agreement between Iran and the United States, and nearly eight in ten (77%) support diplomatic efforts to stop Iranian enrichment. A large majority of Americans also supports continuing diplomatic efforts to get North Korea to suspend its nuclear weapons program (85%). In addition, in several surveys conducted since 2008, consistent majorities think that US leaders should be ready to meet and talk with leaders of Cuba (73% in 2014), Iran (67%), and North Korea (61%). Half continue to favor talking with the Taliban (49%), Hezbollah (50%), and Hamas (50%).

Americans also support sanctions as a means of achieving US foreign policy goals. Two in three Americans support the United States and its allies increasing economic and diplomatic sanctions on the Assad regime in Syria (67%). A large majority of Americans support the UN Security Council placing sanctions on Iran if Iran commits a major violation of the interim treaty (83%, slightly higher than the 77 percent who favor continuing diplomatic efforts).

Americans draw distinctions between spying on friends and foes.

Despite the international resentment created in the wake of revelations about US surveillance programs, only one in three (34%) supports placing greater restrictions on the National Security Agency (NSA). A plurality thinks the budget for general information-gathering activities of the CIA and NSA should remain the same as it is now (41%).

Americans tend to support spying on countries for which they have unfavorable views and oppose spying on those governments they view favorably. Seven in ten or more think the United States should be listening in on the governments of China, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and Russia. Compared to 20 years ago, even more Americans now favor spying on China, Mexico, North Korea, and Russia. Majorities—to varying degrees—oppose spying on Brazil, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.

More Republicans than Democrats now support "staying out" of world affairs.

For the first time in the 40-year history of the Chicago Council Survey, more self-described Democrats (64%) than Republicans (60%) support an active international role for the United States. Conversely, Republicans (40%) are now more likely than Democrats (35%) to say that the United States should "stay out" of world affairs. In fact, since 2006, the proportion of Republicans who say they want the United States to "stay out" of world affairs has nearly doubled (from 20% to 40% today). Independents have also grown substantially more likely to say they want the United States to "stay out" of world affairs, increasing from 30 percent in 2006 to 48 percent today.

Other results seem to confirm the traditional leanings of partisans, with Republicans expressing highest support for the use of force, Democrats most likely to support peacekeeping and multilateralism, and Independents lying somewhere in between. Yet the shift on the proper role of the United States in world affairs may hint at emerging differences among supporters of the Republican Party, perhaps reflecting the political debate among Republican political leaders on the future of American foreign policy.

Conclusion

A review of Chicago Council Surveys conducted over the past 40 years—covering Vietnam, the Cold War, the 9/11 attacks, the rise of China, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the 2008 financial collapse—shows that American attitudes on foreign engagement have been remarkably stable. Throughout, Americans have expressed a preference for a foreign policy that relies on multiple means of engagement, avoiding military entanglements overseas, while ensuring we remain strong militarily and economically. That was true 40 years ago. It is equally true today.

Chapter 1
US Role in the World

Since the last Chicago Council Survey of 2012, many policymakers, politicians, and pundits have come to believe there is a new isolationist surge among Americans today. They describe a public that is turning inward and resistant to any sort of US military intervention to address the conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, or Iraq. Many have pointed to public opinion polling to argue their points. Among Obama administration officials, Secretary of State John Kerry warned about "a hangover from the excessive interventionism of the last decade" leading to "an excess of isolationism in this decade."[1] And in May, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel cautioned a Chicago Council audience that "America must not succumb to the temptation to turn inward."[2]

Beyond the US administration, Senator John McCain has argued that the American public "has largely applauded" President Obama's "restraint" on Syria, but that "our policies should be determined by the realities of the moment, not by today's isolationism dictated by the past."[3] Roger Cohen has opined in *The New York Times* that "Obama has deferred to a growing isolationism." And Niall Ferguson has observed that "the public mood is strongly against international intervention." "If one looks at polls," he continued, "we haven't seen this lack of interest in the rest of the world since before World War II."[4]

This is not a new argument. Americans had been said to be disengaging from the world in the wake of Vietnam and at the end of the Cold War. Yet, in the span of 40 years of Chicago Council Surveys, solid majorities of Americans have always supported international engagement on multiple levels. That continues to be the case today, as the results of the 2014 Chicago Council Survey show.

Public continues to support an "active part" for the United States in world affairs.

In a time-honored barometer of American support for international engagement that asks respondents whether they prefer the United States to play an "active part" or "stay out" of world affairs, a solid majority of Americans (58%) continues to say that the United States should play an active part in world affairs (figure 1.1).

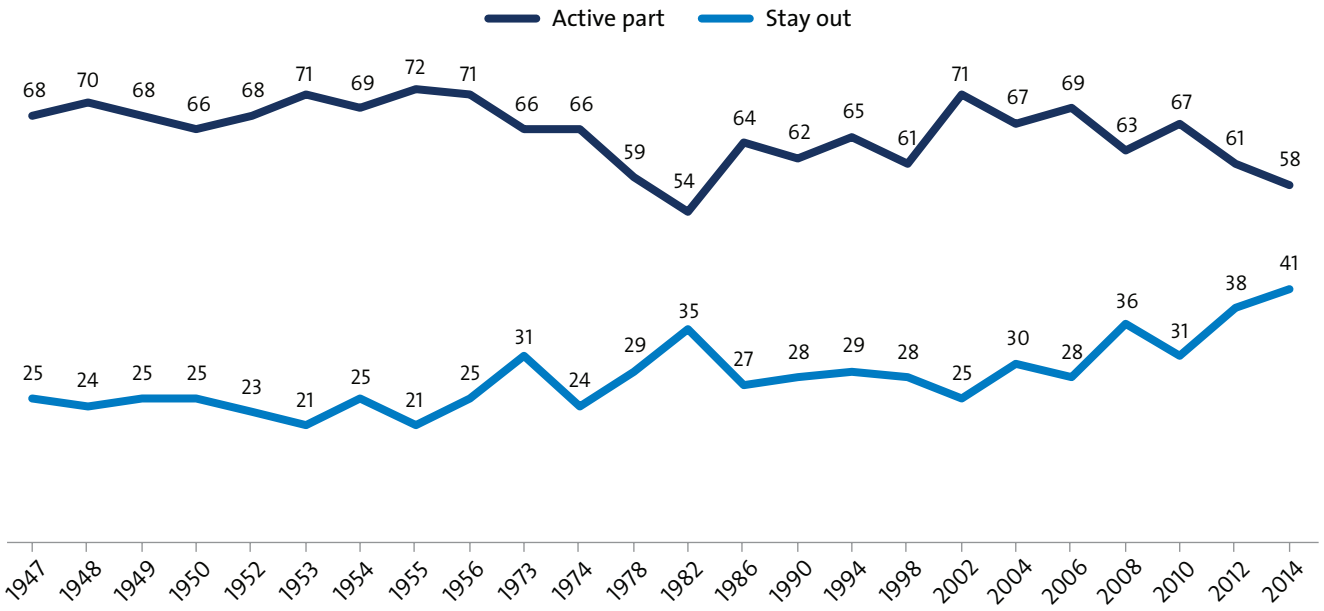
The highest percentage ever recorded of Americans saying the United States should take an active role was in 2002, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, when 71 percent of Americans expressed this view. But by 2004—after the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had begun—support for an active role fell back to previous levels. The lowest level recorded occurred in 1982,

1. John Kerry, Commencement Address at Yale University, New Haven, CT, May 18, 2014, http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2014/05/19/full-text-of-john-kerrys-speech-at-yale-commencement/.
2. Chuck Hagel, "US Secretary of Defense on Priorities for the 21st Century," Address to The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Chicago, May 6, 2014, http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/files/Event/FY14_Events/05_May/US_Secretary_of_Defense_on_Priorities_for_the_21st_Century_.aspx.
3. John McCain, "Remarks on Mass Atrocities in Syria as World Commemorates Anniversary of Rwandan Genocide," Address to the US Senate, Washington, DC, April 10, 2014, http://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2014/4/remarks-by-senator-john-mccain-on-mass-atrocities-in-syria-as-world-commemorates-anniversary-of-rwandan-genocide.html.
4. Niall Ferguson, "A new grand strategy for America," *Stanford Daily,* May 28, 2014, http://www.stanforddaily.com/2014/05/28/qa-2/

FIGURE 1.1

Taking an "Active Part" in World Affairs

Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs? (%)



Trend data from 1947 through 1973 come from the following national surveys conducted by NORC in Chicago: Study T-49, 151, 156, 169, 295, 332, 348, 355, 370, 399, and the 1973 General Social Survey. The 1974 survey was conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

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amidst a prolonged period of recession, the aftermath of the Iran hostage crisis, and the deployment of a contingent of US Marines to Beirut as part of a multinational force after the Israeli incursion into Lebanon. By October 1982, just 54 percent of the public supported an active US role in world affairs.

The number preferring that the United States "stay out" of world affairs has been increasing in the post-9/11 era.

The current survey shows that 41 percent of Americans say the United States should "stay out" of world affairs—the highest percentage reported since the first Chicago Council Survey of 1974. As figure 1.1 illustrates, the gap between those who prefer the United States to take an active role and those who think the United States should "stay out" is at its narrowest point. This increased preference for "staying out" of world affairs is linked to increased criticism of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a pronounced decrease in the public's sense of international threat, a long-standing desire to focus on domestic concerns, and an increasing partisan divide among Republicans on this question.

As in 2012, the increase in the percentage of Americans preferring to "stay out" of world affairs coincides with a heightened desire to focus on domestic concerns in the aftermath of the US economic downturn and a lessening sense of threat. What's new this year, however, is the growing desire among Republicans, who have traditionally expressed a more activist stance on world affairs than Democrats, to "stay out." Indeed, more Republicans than Democrats now support "staying out" of world affairs (see page 12).

"Staying out" of world affairs is not the same as isolationism.

The increase in the number of Americans who say they would prefer to "stay out" of world affairs since 2006 might lead some to conclude that the belief that Americans want to disengage from the world is correct. But the full Chicago Council results show that this is not an accurate characterization of opinion. Few respondents

SPOTLIGHT 1.1

What "staying out of world affairs" really means.

To shed more light on what Americans are signaling when they express a desire to "stay out" of world affairs, this Chicago Council Survey asked respondents to explain why they feel this way. The following themes emerged.

Give domestic problems greater priority.

Many respondents say they want the government to focus attention on domestic problems, a long-standing preference expressed in many public opinion surveys. Several respondents in the 2014 Chicago Council Survey elaborated along the lines that "our efforts and expenditures should be spent making America a stronger country;" "I'm tired of our government assisting other countries when our people here at home need help;" and "I think we need to get our country in order first." Several criticized overstretch in terms of being "the policemen of the world."

This focus on domestic problems has also been found in other survey questions. For example, in 2010 the Chicago Council Survey found that nine in ten Americans said it is more important for the United States to fix pressing problems at home than to address challenges to the United States from abroad (91%, up from 82% in 2008). Pew Research similarly found that slightly more in 2014 (80%) than in 2011 (76%) agreed with the statement "we should not think so much in international terms but concentrate more on our own national problems and building up our strength and prosperity here at home." This current level rivaled the previous high of 78 percent in 1994.

Our involvement in the past has not been effective or appreciated.

Some believe our involvement will not make a difference in conflicts abroad. As one respondent said, "I don't think we should keep trying to keep peace in some of these countries, as they have been fighting amongst each other for hundreds of years and will never change." Another remarked that "we also make certain conflicts worse by getting involved in them far too much." Others mentioned a lack of appreciation for our efforts in the past. Several put forth the idea that "other countries seem to resent Americans," and "many countries hate us for being involved in everything."

These views may reflect survey findings that reveal dissatisfaction with the US role in many interventions abroad, both recent and historical. Twice as many Americans see the US role in the 2003 war in Iraq as a dark moment in American history (42%) than as a proud moment (21%). A solid majority considers the US role in the Vietnam War a dark moment (58%, 12% proud moment).

Our involvement should be limited to direct threats.

Still others say that unless an issue "directly affects us" we should not get involved. For example, one respondent noted, "Well, my answer was stay out ... but if our security is at stake, then yes [take an active part], but if our domestic and abroad personnel are not in danger, then we should stay out." Another advises, "We should only be involved if what is taking place has the potential of putting us in jeopardy now or later."

Not a clear-cut question for several respondents.

Many who said that they would like the United States to take an active part or stay out of world affairs qualified their responses, saying that "it really depends on the situation." In the words of one participant who selected the stay out response: "It really depends on what we are talking about. There are certain areas where the United States has gotten involved and I don't see where it has much business.... In other areas, there could be problems with the United States just sitting back. North Korea is an example. It's also really important to protect Israel."

A few set limits on what is acceptable, like one individual who said the United States should take an active part "as far as education, health, and food relief, NOT in combat/war efforts." Another who chose staying out commented, "I would entertain an argument either way. However, I do think we should honor our agreements with other countries and talk with countries that share our interests, but we need to be selective and cautious about how we do it."

who say they want the United States to "stay out" of world affairs express a desire to disengage.

The survey data show that majorities of those who say they want to "stay out" support many forms of international engagement, including alliances, diplomacy, trade agreements, and treaties (reviewed in chapter 3). Where direct threats to the United States are clear, they are willing to act. They recognize the value of military superiority and support deploying US troops to prevent genocide, respond to humanitarian crises, and to counter critical threats such as international terrorism and Iran's nuclear program. They are comfortable with globalization and economic aid to African countries. In fact, the inclinations of those who want the United States to "stay out" of world affairs generally reflect the overall views of the American public at large. Those who want the United States to "stay out" of world affairs are, however, even more selective than average when it comes to economic assistance, military expenditures, and the use of force (chapters 2 and 3).

Eight in ten Americans continue to support strong US leadership in the world.

A key indication that Americans want to remain globally engaged is that most Americans still see strong US leadership in world affairs as a good thing. A large majority of the public (83%) continues to say that strong US leadership in the world is desirable, consistent with views going back to 2002 (figure 1.2). This includes 37 percent who say that strong US leadership is "very" desirable. Even among those who say the United States should "stay out" of world affairs, a majority says that strong US leadership is desirable, though most say it is "somewhat" (50%) rather than "very" (19%) desirable.

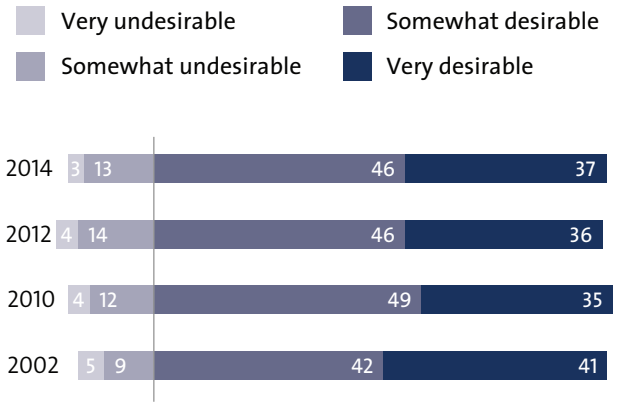
Those who believe strong US leadership is desirable say it is because "the US should be a model for other countries to follow" (31%) or "because it is in our national interest" (29%). Others say it is because other countries will only "step up and do their part" if the United States exerts strong leadership (24%) or that the United States has a "moral obligation to lead because of our wealth and power" (14%).

The small percentage (16%) who say that strong US leadership is very or somewhat *undesirable* tend to believe so because "the United States should focus on domestic problems in the country rather than the world's problems" (56%). Fewer believe strong US leadership is undesirable because "the United States should not interfere in other countries' affairs" (22%) or "other countries should or can help themselves without US leadership" (16%).

FIGURE 1.2

Desirability of Strong US Leadership in World Affairs

From your point of view, how desirable is it that the US exert strong leadership in world affairs? Very desirable, somewhat desirable, somewhat undesirable, or very undesirable? (%)



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The United States is still viewed as the most influential country in the world.

Along with endorsement for strong US leadership, Americans still rate the United States as the most influential country in the world, both today and 10 years from now. On a scale from 0 to 10, with 10 being the most influential, the public gives the United States a mean rating of 8.6, compared to 7.4 for China (figure 1.3). And in a decade, the public still expects the United States to have greater influence, even as China narrows the gap (8.2 for United States vs. 7.6 for China).

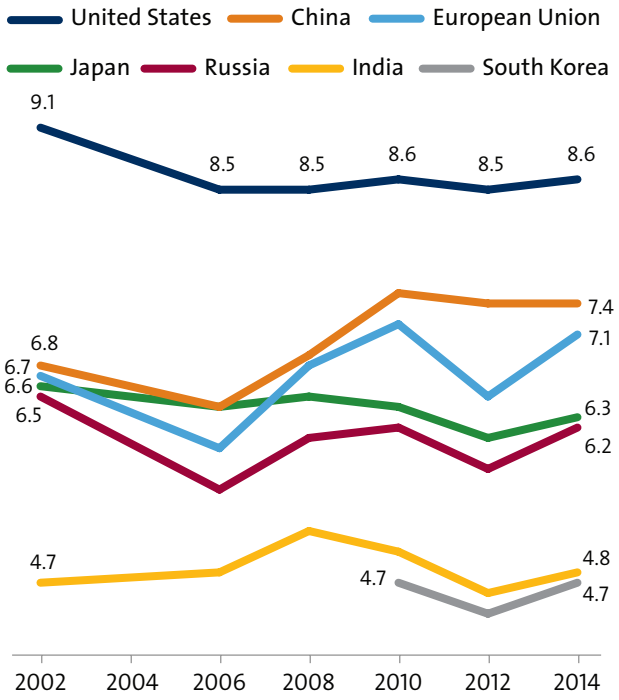
The European Union as a whole is rated just below China in terms of influence, with a 7.1 mean rating, recovering from a drop to 6.5 in 2012. Japan (6.3) and Russia (6.2) round out the second tier of countries perceived to be most influential. The next tier includes India (4.8), South Korea (4.7), and Iran (4.3).

Among those who say the United States should "stay out" of world affairs, perceptions of global influence are not much different. They give the United States an average influence rating of 8.4 and expect

FIGURE 1.3

Global Influence of Countries

I would like to know how much influence you think each of the following countries has in the world. Please answer on a 0 to 10 scale, with 0 meaning they are not at all influential and 10 meaning they are extremely influential.



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American influence to decline to 7.8 in the next 10 years. They rate China's influence at 7.1 and expect its influence to grow to a mean of 7.2, still behind the United States.

In addition to rating the United States as the most influential country, two in three Americans (65%, down somewhat from 70% in 2012) continue to think that the United States "has a unique character that makes it the greatest country in the world." About a third disagree, saying that "every country is unique, and the United States is no greater than other nations" (34%, up from 29% in 2012).

Is America playing a less important role?

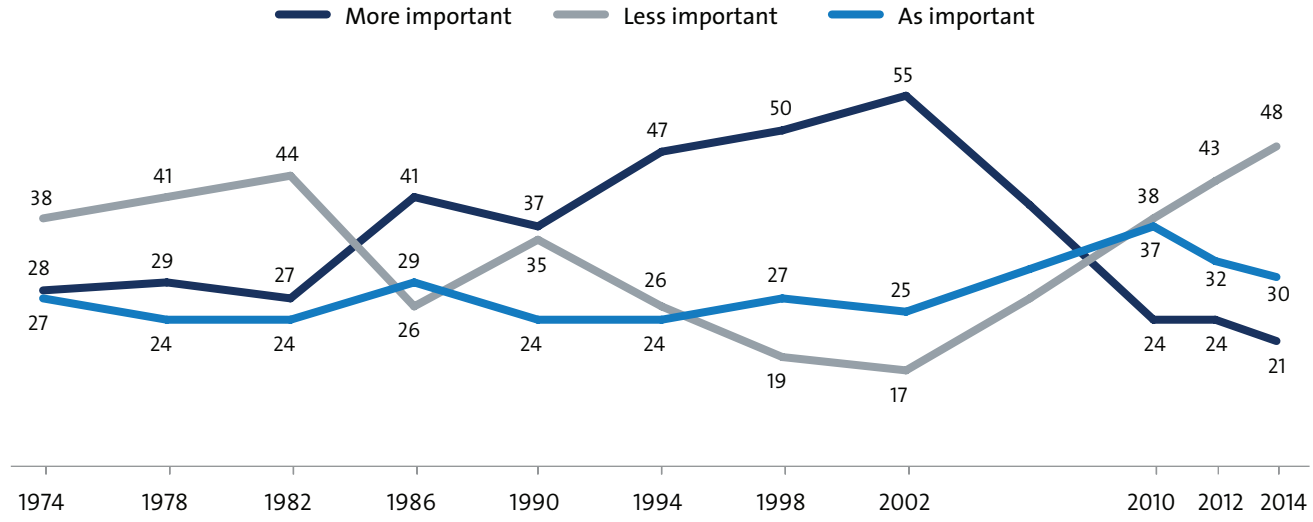
While Americans clearly view the United States as the world's most influential country, a growing portion of Americans say their nation plays a less important role as a world leader compared to 10 years ago. While a bare majority of 51 percent says the United States is as important (30%) or more important (21%) as a world leader than it was 10 years ago, 48 percent say it is less important as a world leader. This is the highest level since the question was first asked by The Chicago Council in 1974 (figure 1.4).

Current public attitudes on this question are most similar to opinion in 1978 and 1982, both periods in

FIGURE 1.4

US Role As a World Leader

Do you think the United States plays a more important and powerful role as a world leader today compared to 10 years ago, a less important role, or about as important a role as a world leader as it did 10 years ago?



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which economic conditions had deteriorated (high rates of inflation and declining value of the dollar in 1978; deep recession in 1982). This result corroborates a November 2013 Pew Research Center finding in which 53 percent of Americans said that the United States plays a less important and powerful role as a world leader than it did 10 years ago, a rise of 20 percentage points since 1993 (see also page 16). As documented in the 2012 Chicago Council Survey and again in 2014, the feeling that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were not worth the costs after a decade of involvement, combined with the slow economic recovery, appear to be contributing to these views.

Those who perceive that the United States is less important than it was 10 years ago seem to base their views on a sense of diminished American economic leverage. A substantial 45 percent of Americans mistakenly believe that China has already surpassed the United States in terms of economic power, with 27 percent thinking the United States is more powerful economically, and 26 percent thinking they are about equal. However, Americans are more likely to say that the United States is the stronger military power (54% United States, 14% China, and 32% about equal). Importantly, nearly eight in ten Americans say that economic strength (77%) is more important than military power (23%) in determining a country's overall power and influence in the world—more than have ever said so in the past (figure 1.5).

FIGURE 1.5

Importance of Economic vs. Military Strength

Which of the following do you think is more important in determining a country's overall power and influence in the world—a country's economic strength or its military strength?

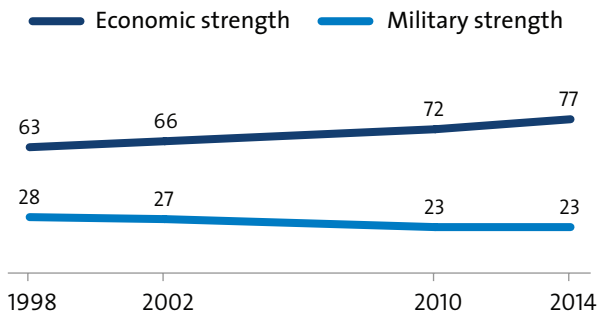

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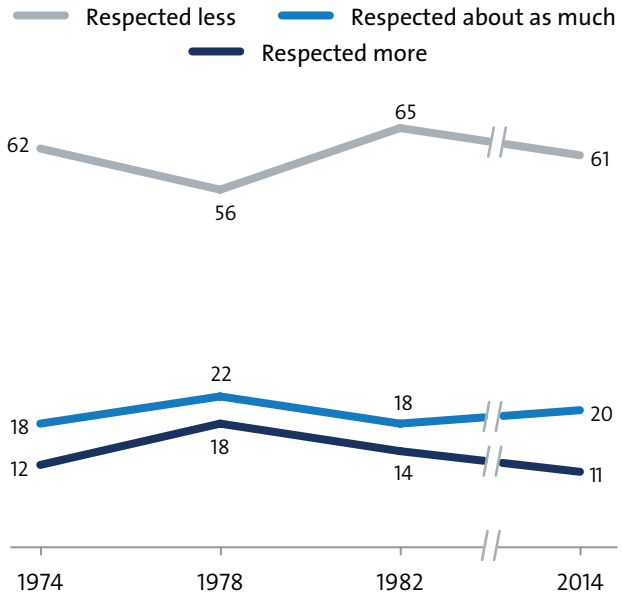
FIGURE 1.6

Respect in the World

Do you think that the United States is respected more in the world today than it was 10 years ago, is respected less, or is respected about as much now as it was 10 years ago?



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Loss of respect in the world is an age-old American viewpoint.

While the 2014 Chicago Council Survey shows that Americans think the United States is less respected today than it was 10 years ago (61%), historical results show this is nothing new. Similar majorities have said the United States was less respected in various Chicago Council and Pew Research Center surveys over the past four decades (figure 1.6).[5]

Public wants cooperative, not dominant, leadership from the United States

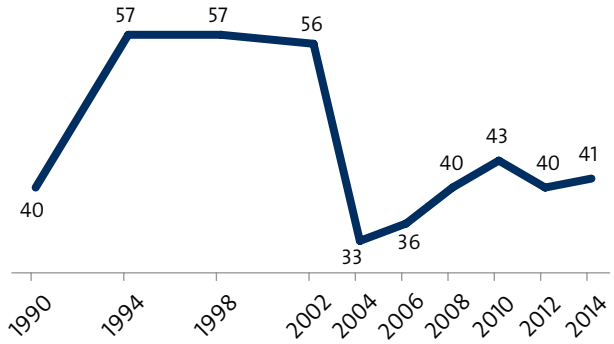
While they support a strong leadership role for the United States, Americans seem comfortable living in a world where power is diffusing among nations and institutions. For example, Americans clearly see China as a rising power—and as previously noted, a substantial percentage of Americans mistakenly say that China's economic power is greater than that of the United States. Still, only a minority sees the devel-

5. See Spotlight 1.2 and "America's Place in the World 2013," Pew Research Center, December 2013, http://www.people-press.org/2013/12/03/section-1-americas-global-role/.

FIGURE 1.7

The Development of China as a World Power

Please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all. (% critical threat)



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opment of China as a world power as a critical threat to US interests (41%), compared to majorities in the mid-1990s (figure 1.7). A majority also believes that the United States should undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China (67%) rather than actively work to limit China's growth (29%).

Americans also support more cooperative engagement, including through the United Nations. Six in ten agree that when dealing with international problems, the United States should be more willing to make decisions within the United Nations, even if this means that the United States will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice (59%, up 7 points since 2008). And when last asked in 2010, a majority of Americans said that the United States "should do its fair share to solve international problems together with other countries" (71%), rather than withdrawing from efforts to solve global problems (19%) or being "the preeminent world leader in solving problems" (8%). These results align with a November 2013 Pew Research Center survey result showing that a solid majority of Americans favor a *shared leadership* role for the United States (72%) rather than a role as a single world leader or no leadership role at all.[6]

6. Seven in ten have consistently held this view since 1997 in Pew Research Center surveys. In 2013, 72 percent supported a shared role for the United States (51% said the United States should be "as active as others" and 20 percent said it should be the "most active"). Just 12 percent supported the United States being the single world leader, and another 12 percent preferred no leadership role. See "America's Place in the World 2013," Pew Research Center, December 2013, http://www.people-press.org/2013/12/03/section-1-americas-global-role/.

More Republicans than Democrats now support staying out of world affairs.

As in past surveys, men, the better-educated, and individuals from higher income households are more likely than others to favor an active part in world affairs. But for the first time in the history of the Chicago Council Survey, more self-described Democrats (64%) than Republicans (60%) support an active international role for the United States. Conversely, Republicans (40%) are now more likely than Democrats (35%) to say that the United States should stay out of world affairs. In fact, since 2006 the proportion of Republicans who say they want the United States to "stay out" of world affairs has doubled (from 20% to 40% today). As in previous surveys, self-described Independents are least likely to support an active role (51%) and most likely to want the United States to "stay out" (48%). Similar to the pattern among Republicans, Independents have grown substantially more likely to say they want the United States to "stay out" of world affairs, increasing from 30 percent in 2006 to 48 percent today (figure 1.8).

FIGURE 1.8

"Staying Out" of World Affairs by Political Affiliation

Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs? (% stay out)

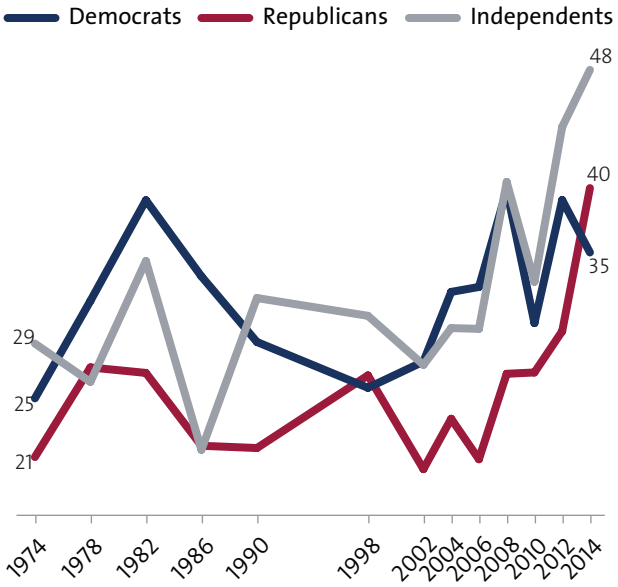

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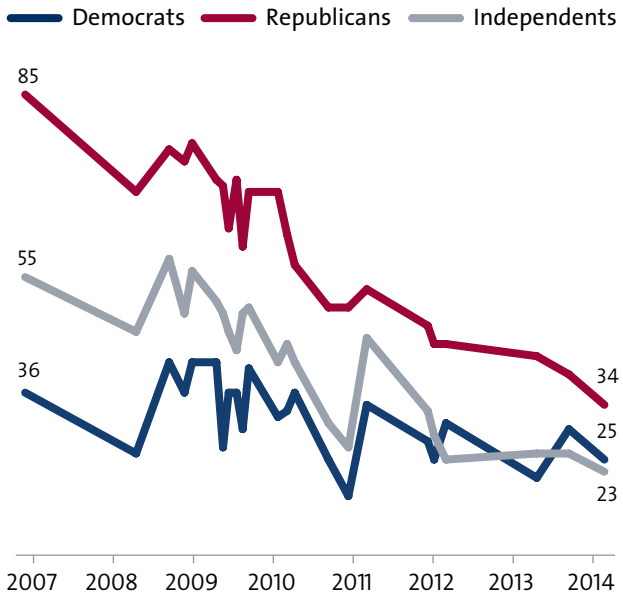
FIGURE 1.9

The Afghanistan War—Was It Worth It?

All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think the war in Afghanistan was worth fighting, or not?



Data for 2012 and 2014 from Chicago Council Surveys; all other results from ABC NEWS/Washington Post surveys.

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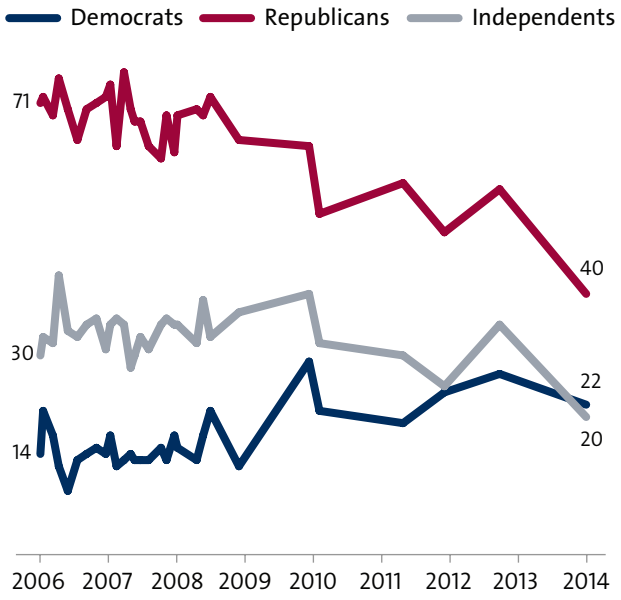
FIGURE 1.10

The Iraq War—Was It Worth It?

All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think the war in Iraq was worth fighting, or not?



Data for 2012 and 2014 from Chicago Council Surveys; all other results from ABC NEWS/Washington Post surveys.

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The 2014 data show that support for an active role among Republicans, like the public overall, is related to views that the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were worth the costs of US involvement. However, the percentage viewing these wars as worth the costs has dropped more among Republicans than it has for Democrats. Figure 1.9 shows that in comparable questions asked in ABC News/Washington Post and Chicago Council Surveys, the percentage of Republicans who think the Afghan war was worth the cost has steadily eroded from 85 percent in 2007 to just a third today (34%). Support among Independents, too, has fallen from 55 percent in 2007 to 23 percent in 2014. Democrats have been consistently critical of the war, but have also grown more disillusioned since 2007 (from 36% in 2007 to 25% today).

There has been a similar pattern on attitudes about the Iraq war, with the gap between Republicans and Democrats narrowing significantly since 2006 (figure 1.10). Today, only four in ten Republicans say the Iraq war was worth fighting (40%), compared to seven in ten (71%) in the ABC News/Washington Post 2006 poll. At the same time, the minority of Democrats who think the war was worth fighting has grown somewhat from 14 percent in 2006 to 22 percent in 2014, while the proportion of Independents sharing that view has decreased (20% in 2014 vs. 30% in 2006).

Support for an active role among Republicans is also related to views that combating international terrorism is a "very important" foreign policy goal. Traditionally, more Republicans have placed a priority on combating terrorism than Democrats, and this gap widened until very recently. The Republican percentage has now dropped, with similar majorities of both Republicans and Democrats in 2014 saying that combating international terrorism is a "very important" foreign policy goal (see figure 2.6 on page 23).

For Democrats, support for an active role is related to positive views of globalization, which have increased among Democrats in recent years (see figure 3.8 on page 37), and for support for foreign aid to other countries (which is also a key factor in support for an active role among Independents). For all partisans, support for an active role is linked to support for the

use of US troops in various humanitarian scenarios and to the belief that building new alliances is an effective approach to achieving US foreign policy goals.

Overall, Democrats and Republicans share similar foreign policy views.

Republicans and Democrats are generally on the same side when it comes to foreign policy, though to varying degrees or intensity. Majorities of supporters in both parties share similar concerns about top threats facing the country. They differ little in their preferred approaches toward China, Iran, and Syria (except that Democrats are more willing to accept Syrian refugees into the United States). The sharpest differences between Democrats and Republicans are on the issue of immigration and on US policy in the Middle East.[7] In most cases, Republicans are more supportive of the use of force, while Democrats are more likely to favor peacekeeping missions. Independents generally tend to fall somewhere in between the views of Democrats and Republicans.

Democrats have become substantially less likely to label immigration a critical threat, while Republicans have remained concerned. In 2014 only two in ten Democrats (21%) say that large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the United States represent a critical threat to US vital interests, while more than half of Republicans (55%) say the same. In 2002 six in ten Democrats (63%) and Republicans (58%) said that immigration was a critical threat.[8]

Conclusion

Historical results show that despite their long-standing focus on domestic concerns, Americans have consistently supported many forms of international engagement. That trend continues in the 2014 Chicago Council Survey. While the Council continues to document a substantial minority among the American public who want the United States to "stay out" of world affairs, a solid majority still supports an active role for the United States. This preference for "staying out" of world affairs is linked to increased criticism of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a pronounced decrease in the public's sense of international threat, a long-standing desire to focus on domestic concerns, and an increasing partisan divide among Republicans on this question. Furthermore, even those who say they want the United States to "stay out" of world affairs support many forms of international engagement, including the use of force in certain situations. While Americans think the United States is less respected today than it was 10 years ago, and a growing percentage says it is less important, they continue to believe that the United States is the most influential country in the world and support the United States playing a strong leadership role in the world.

7. Dina Smeltz and Craig Kafura, "Americans Prefer Neutrality in Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, August 7, 2014, http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/Surveys/Israel_Brief.pdf.

8. The Chicago Council will explore Americans' views on immigration in more detail in a forthcoming report.

SPOTLIGHT 1.2

Historical Chicago Council Survey results put current polls in context.

Many commentators have used recent poll results to make the case that Americans are turning inward. Below is a comparison of several frequently cited results from Pew Research Center and NBC/Wall Street Journal (WSJ) surveys with 2014 Chicago Council Survey results. While recent survey findings tend to reinforce each other, the additional comparisons to earlier periods help to put current results in perspective.

US engagement in the world

One oft-cited poll was an April 2014 NBC/WSJ survey showing a significant increase from 14 percent in 2001 to 47 percent today in the portion of Americans who say the United States should take "a less active role" in world affairs. This is indeed a sharp increase, but the 2001 survey was completed just after the 9/11 attacks, a time of unusual public support for an activist foreign policy role. Since 9/11, in light of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the American public's understanding of an "active role" has shifted considerably.

Rather than comparing results to 2001, a better comparison is with surveys conducted on behalf of the *Wall Street Journal* and Nikkei in May 1997 (32% less active) and March 1995 (34% less active). While the 2014 result for taking a less active role is still higher than it was during those years, it is more in line with these readings (table 1.1).

In a differently worded question, with two instead of three response options, Chicago Council Surveys also show a significant drop in the percentage of Americans who prefer an active role since 2002 (when 71% supported an active role compared to 58% today). But results from the intervening years show this has been more of a steady decline over the past decade and a return to more usual pre-2002 levels (table 1.2).

TABLE 1.1

NBC/WSJ surveys: "Now, in your view, should the United States become more active in world affairs, less active in world affairs, or continue its current level of activity in world affairs?" (%)

Year	More active	Less active	Current level
2014	19	47	30
2001*	37	14	44
1997	17	32	46
1995	17	34	47

* September 15-16, 2001

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TABLE 1.2

Chicago Council Surveys: "Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs?" (%)

Year	Active part	Stay out
2014	58	41
2012	61	38
2010	67	31
2008	63	36
2006	69	28
2004	67	30
2002	71	25
1998	61	28
1994	65	29
1990	62	28
1986	64	27
1982	54	35
1978	59	29
1974	66	24

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US status in the world—importance compared to 10 years ago

An October-November 2013 Pew Research Center survey found that 53 percent of Americans say that the United States is less important and powerful than it was 10 years ago, a rise of 20 percentage points since 1993 (table 1.3).

Chicago Council results also show a similar rise of 22 percentage points since 1994 (from 26% to 48%). As discussed in chapter 1, comparisons to 10 years ago undoubtedly prompt a sense of economic decline, especially after the Great Recession of 2008. Attitudes today are most similar to opinion in 1978 and 1982, both periods in which the United States was having economic difficulties (table 1.4).

Table 1.3

Pew Research Center: "Do you think the United States plays a more important and powerful role as a world leader today compared to 10 years ago, a less important role, or about as important a role as a world leader as it did 10 years ago?" (%)

Year	More important	Less important	As important
2013	17	53	27
2009	25	41	30
2004	45	20	31
2001	33	26	38
1997	35	23	40
1994	40	27	29
1993	37	30	31
1993	37	26	33

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Table 1.4

Chicago Council Surveys: "Do you think the United States plays a more important and powerful role as a world leader today compared to 10 years ago, a less important role, or about as important a role as a world leader as it did 10 years ago?" (%)

Year	More important	Less important	As important
2014	21	48	30
2012	24	43	32
2010	24	38	37
2002	55	17	25
1998	50	19	27
1994	47	26	24
1990	37	35	24
1986	41	26	29
1982	27	44	24
1978	29	41	24
1974	28	38	27

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

US status in the world—loss of respect

Several articles have pointed to the 2013 Pew Research Center finding that 70 percent of Americans said the United States is less respected "compared to the past." But trends show that every year this question was asked, majorities have felt the United States had lost respect (table 1.5). The 2013 level was more negative than those reported after the election of President Obama in 2012 and 2009 (56% each), but in line with results from 2008 (71%), 2006 (65%), 2005 (66%), and 2004 (67%).

Chicago Council results in 2014 also find a majority saying the United States is less respected today than it was 10 years ago, similar to readings in 1982 (65%), 1978 (56%), and 1974 (62%). It seems that whenever this question is posed, the American public has some sense of a more golden age when the United States commanded worldwide respect (table 1.6).

Table 1.5

Pew Research Center: "Compared with the past, would you say the US is more respected by other countries these days, less respected by other countries, or as respected as it has been in the past?" (%)

Year	Respected more	Respected less	As respected
2013	7	70	19
2012	12	56	27
2009	21	56	20
2008	7	71	18
2006	7	65	23
2005	9	66	21
2004	10	67	20
1987*	19	55	23
1984*	27	36	29

*In May 1987 the question asked, "Compared to five years ago, would you say the US is more respected by other countries, less respected by other countries, or as respected as it was five years ago by other countries?" In January 1984 the question asked, "Compared to four years ago..."

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Table 1.6

Chicago Council Surveys: "Do you think that the United States is respected more in the world today than it was 10 years ago, is respected less, or is respected about as much now as it was 10 years ago?" (%)

Year	Respected more	Respected less	Respected about as much
2014	11	61	20
1982	14	65	18
1978	18	56	22
1974	12	62	18

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Long-standing desire to focus on problems at home

Pew Research Center found that slightly more in 2013 (80%) than in 2011 (76%) agreed with the statement: "We should not think so much in international terms but concentrate more on our own national problems and building up our strength and prosperity here at home." This current level rivaled the previous high of 78 percent in 1995, but it is not far from 2011 and 2009 levels either (table 1.7), and underscores a long-running preference to focus on domestic concerns.

The Chicago Council did not ask a variant of this question in 2014, but in open-ended, qualitative comments on why respondents say they want to "stay out" of world affairs, respondents make it clear that they want to focus government attention on domestic problems (see page 8). Chicago Council Surveys over the past 40 years show that Americans have long placed a higher priority on domestic problems compared to international problems. In 2010 the Chicago Council Survey found that nine in ten Americans said it is more important to "fix pressing problems at home" than to "address challenges abroad" (91%, up from 82% in 2008) (table 1.8).

In addition, protecting the jobs of American workers has been among the top foreign policy goals considered "very important" in all 14 surveys since 1974, placing first in no less than eight polls—higher than preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and combating international terrorism. Similarly, Americans have consistently supported the expansion of domestic federal government programs such as education, Social Security, and health care over defense spending or other international programs.

Chicago Council Surveys from 1978 to 2002 asked the public to cite the biggest problems facing the country. The percentage of responses related to foreign policy was tracked against domestic problems. Foreign policy problems only reached 26 percent of total problems cited in the six surveys before 2002. In the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks, the percentage bounced up to 41 percent, comparatively high, yet still less than domestic concerns.

This domestic focus, however, has not been accompanied by a desire to disengage internationally . In fact, Americans have a long-standing and clear commitment to international engagement, documented in Chicago Council Surveys since 1974 and in other surveys prior to that by NORC at the University of Chicago.

Table 1.7

Pew Research Center: "We should not think so much in international terms, but concentrate more on our own national problems and building up our own strength and prosperity here at home." (%)

Year	Agree	Disagree
2013	80	16
2011	76	21
2009	76	19
2006	69	26
2005	71	23
2004	69	25
2002	65	31
2001	68	25
1999	68	27
1997	72	24
1995	78	18
1993	79	18

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Table 1.8

Chicago Council Surveys: "At this time, what do you think is more important to the future of the United States?" (%)

Year	Fixing problems at home	Addressing challenges abroad	Both equally important
2010	91	9	0
2008	82	17	0

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Minding its own business

Pew's 2013 survey also reported the highest percentage yet (52%) of Americans who agreed that the United States should "mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best that they can." Reports have highlighted the steep rise from 1964 Gallup results, when only 20 percent agreed with this same statement. While indeed higher than past results, the 2013 percentage is not that much of a jump from 2011 and 2009 levels (table 1.9).

Respondents may focus on the latter half of this question, in terms of letting other countries take care of themselves. Chicago Council Survey results have long validated this sentiment. In the 2014 survey, few Americans consider "defending US allies' security" (38%), "promoting human rights abroad" (32%), "protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression" (25%), or "helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations" (17%) "very important" goals. In surveys since 1974, these items have ranked at the bottom of US foreign policy priorities.

Table 1.9

Pew Research Center: "The US should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can on their own." (%)

Year	Agree	Disagree
2013	52	38
2011	46	50
2009	49	44
2006	42	53
2005	42	51
2004	34	59
2002	30	65
2001	37	55
1999	35	57
1997	39	54
1995	41	51
1993	37	58

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

Chapter 2
Use of Force Abroad

Much of the discussion about Americans' current foreign policy mood is centered upon public opposition to military intervention in Syria (to quell its violent civil war), Ukraine (to protect it from Russian intervention), and Iraq (to blunt the advance of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) into the country). In fact, Americans have been cautious in supporting military force to solve international problems—especially when it comes to putting "boots on the ground"—since the Chicago Council began polling in 1974.

Then, as now, Americans generally express support for the use of force when they feel directly threatened, for a major humanitarian crisis, or if they expect the response to be relatively low cost and risk. As they have for over a decade, majorities are willing to support the use of US troops to combat terrorism and to defend the supply of oil. They are also prepared to use force if necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. And majorities have consistently favored the use of US troops—at least in principle—to prevent government-sponsored genocide or in a humanitarian crisis.

American public's top threats include terrorism, energy, and nuclear proliferation.

As has been the case since 1994, when Americans were first asked about possible threats to the vital interests of the United States in Chicago Council Surveys, Americans continue to be most concerned about direct threats to the country. Cyberattacks on US computer networks leads other threats, with 69 percent considering this critical (up from 53% in 2010) (figure 2.1). This dramatic increase could be due to recent disclosures about organized attacks on sensitive US government networks by foreign countries, in particular by China and Russia. Solid majorities also believe that international terrorism (63%), the possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers (60%), and Iran's nuclear program (58%) are critical threats (figure 2.3 on page 21). In previous Chicago Council Surveys, US dependence on foreign oil also figured high on this list (62% when last asked in 2010).

Perceptions of various threats have decreased significantly from previous surveys, particularly when compared to the public's hyper-vigilant attitudes immediately after the terrorist attacks in 2001. For example, in 2002 nine in ten Americans said that international terrorism was a critical threat (91%) and that combating international terrorism was a very important goal (91%). Now that majority has declined to six in ten on both items (63% critical threat, 61% very important goal). In fact, American views of the

Figure 2.1

Cyberattacks on US Computer Networks

Please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all. (%)

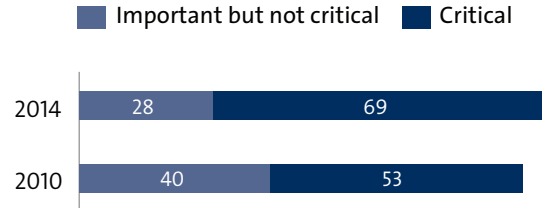

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FIGURE 2.2

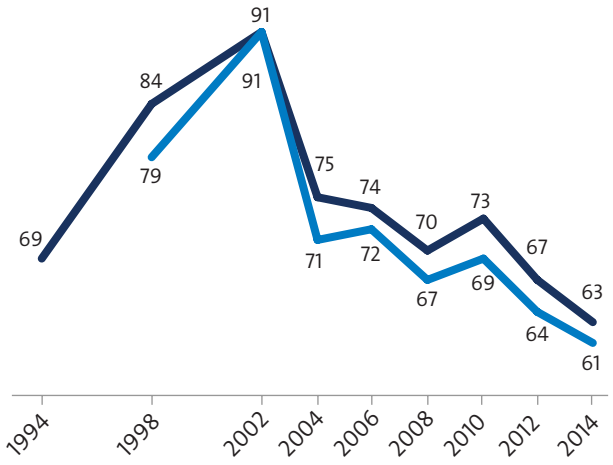
Threat of Terrorism

Please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all.

International terrorism (% critical threat)

Please select whether you think that it should be a very important foreign policy goal of the United States, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all.

Combating international terrorism (% very important)



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threat posed by international terrorists are at the lowest levels of concern ever reported, even lower than in surveys fielded before the 9/11 attacks (figure 2.2). There has been a similar decline in fears about nuclear proliferation (from 85% in 2002 to 60% now; with the current threat level even less than the 72% reported in 1994) and about Iran's nuclear program (68% when first asked in 2010 to 58% now)(figure 2.7 on page 24).

No more than four in ten consider the development of China as a world power (41%), political instability in the Middle East (40%), Russia's territorial ambitions (38%), the lack of a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians (26%), the continuing conflict in Syria (24%), or China's territorial ambitions (19%) to be critical threats.[9]

The largest decline over the past two decades has been in the threat of large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the United States. In 1994, seven in ten Americans (72%) labeled this issue a critical threat to US vital interests—the same level of concern as expressed for nuclear proliferation. Two decades later, concern about immigrants and refugees coming into the United States has plunged more than 30 points, to 39 percent in 2014. However, the survey was fielded before the July 2014 spike in media reports regarding the number of undocumented families and unaccompanied minors attempting to cross the US-Mexico border, which could have an impact on attitudes.

The public's foreign policy priorities align with top threats.

Chicago Council Surveys have long shown that Americans weight their priorities for foreign policy goals in terms of direct threats and self-interest. As has been the case since at least 1994, the top goals for US foreign policy are protecting American jobs (76% "very important"), reducing US dependence on foreign oil (74%), preventing the spread of nuclear weapons (73%), securing adequate supplies of energy (66%), and combating international terrorism (61%). A smaller majority considers maintaining superior American military power worldwide a "very important" goal (52%). Fewer members of the public consider the goals of controlling and reducing illegal immigration (47%, down sharply from 72% in 1994) and protecting the interests of American business abroad (44%) "very important," (figure 2.4).

The public places less emphasis on goals they view as unrelated to a direct threat or US self-interest. Minorities rate combating world hunger (42%), strengthening the UN (37%), and defending US allies' security (38%) as "very important" goals. Even fewer believe that the goals of promoting and defending human rights in other countries (32%), protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression (25%), and helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations (17%) are "very important" for the United States. Americans have always placed less emphasis on these latter goals in Chicago Council Surveys. In fact, in surveys since 1974, the last two goals have ranked at the bottom of the list of US foreign policy priorities (figure 2.4, and table 2.1 on page 30). Even so, large majorities do think that each of these items should be at least a "somewhat" important US foreign policy goal.

9. This survey was conducted before the recent outbreak of fighting in Gaza and before the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or ISIS) made significant gains in Iraq and advanced to the border of Lebanon.

FIGURE 2.3

Threats to US Vital Interests

Below is a list of possible threats to the vital interest of the United States in the next 10 years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all. (%)

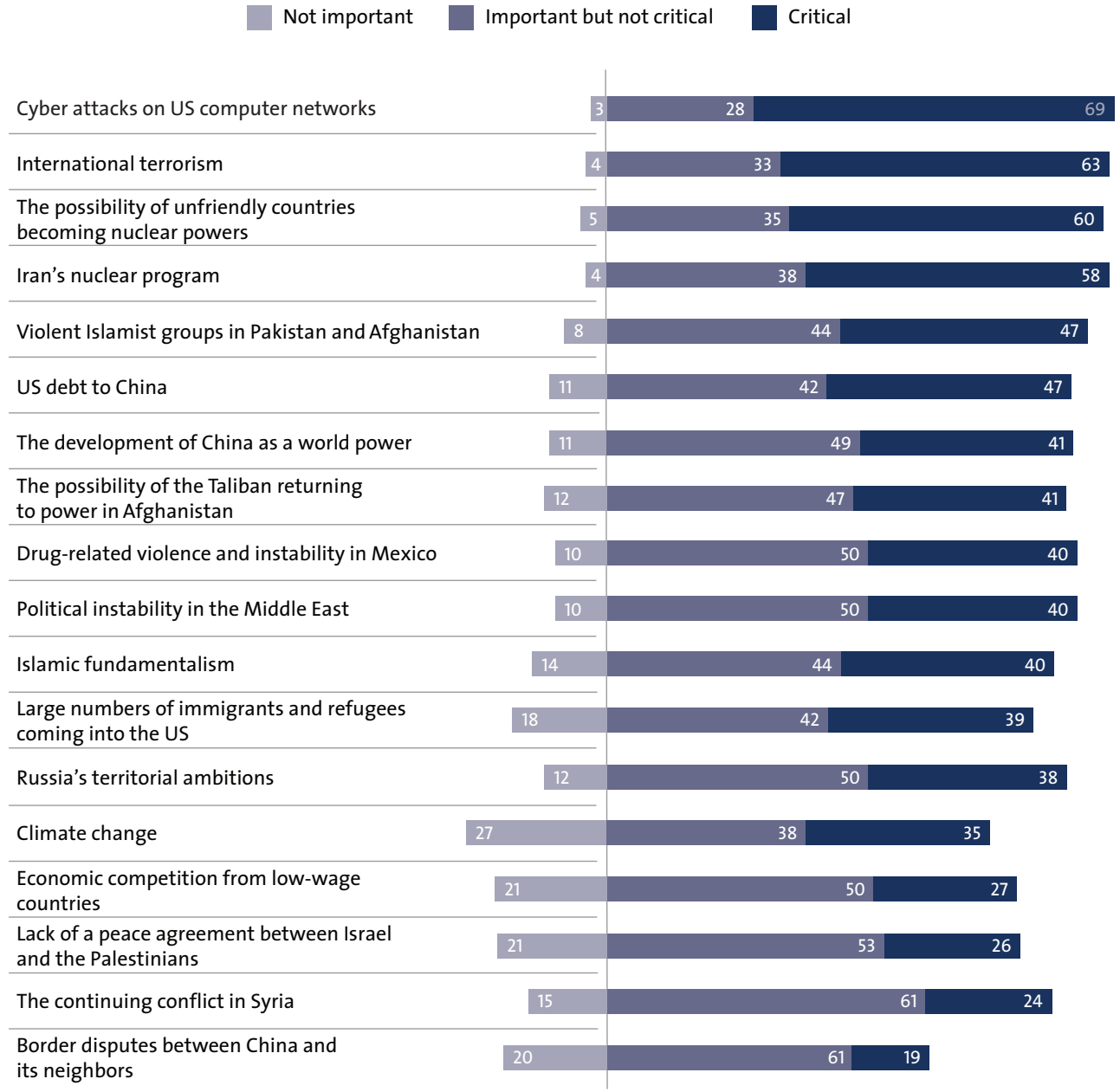

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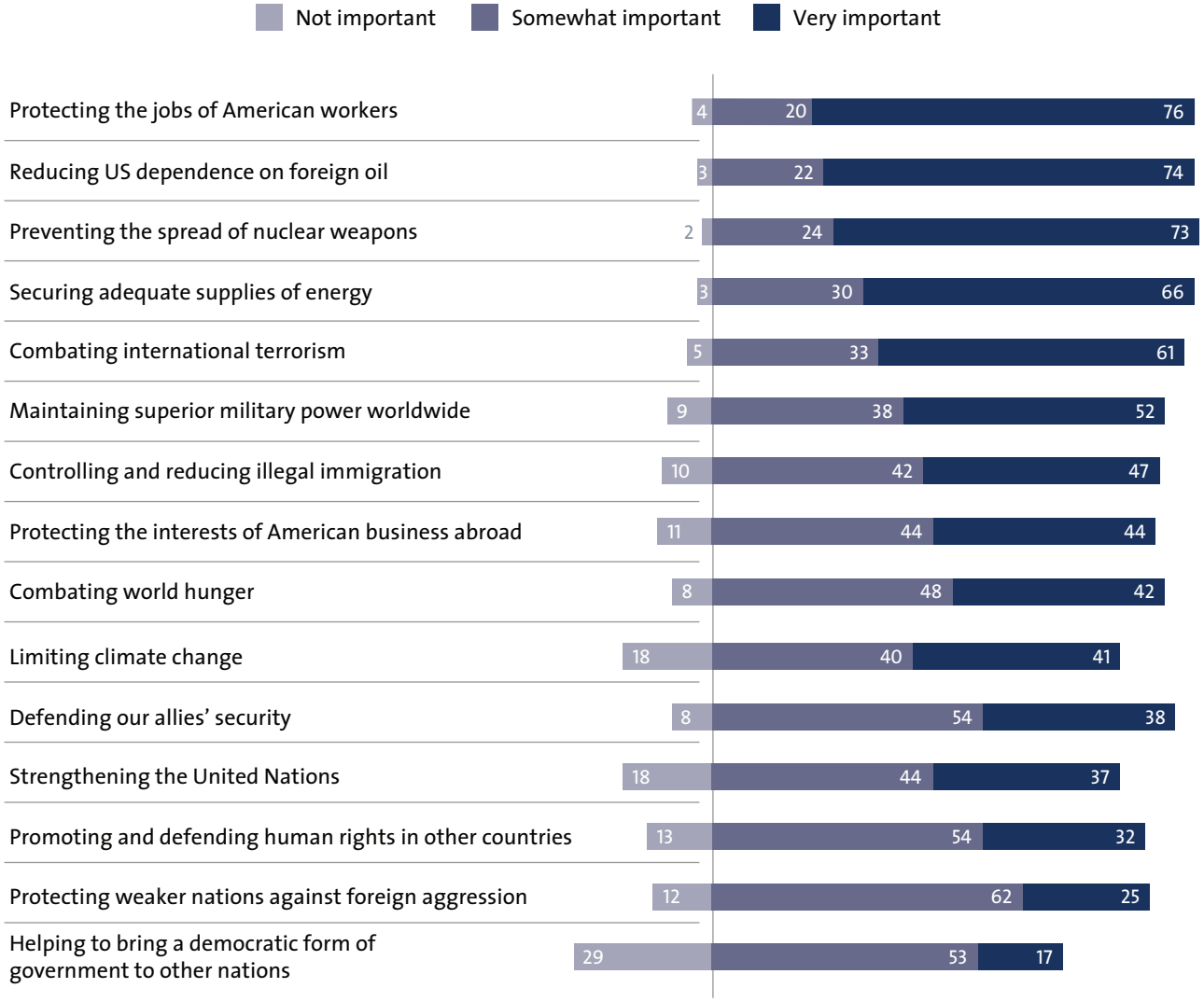
FIGURE 2.4

Foreign Policy Goals

Below is a list of possible foreign policy goals that the United States might have. For each one please select whether you think that it should be a very important foreign policy goal of the United States, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all. (%)



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Americans support the use of force to combat top threats and achieve top goals.

In line with the list of top threats, Americans are willing to commit US troops to combat terrorism, to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, and to protect the oil supply.

Terrorism

Despite a subsiding sense of fear from the heights reported in 2002, only 24 percent of Americans believe that the United States is safer today than it was before the terrorist attacks in 2001. A plurality of Americans says the country is as safe (48%), and another quarter says the country is less safe (27%).

Reflecting this concern, seven in ten Americans support US air strikes against terrorist training camps and other facilities (71%) and assassinations of individual terrorist leaders (70%). Six in ten support using drone strikes to carry out bombing attacks against suspected terrorists (62%).[10] Nearly six in ten (56%) support attacks by US ground troops against terrorist

10. Drone strikes are a new addition to the 2014 questionnaire; therefore there are no trends on this item.

training camps. American support for using ground troops has dropped sharply since 2010 (when 73% supported doing so), highlighting a preference for the lower-risk approaches of air strikes, assassinations, and drone strikes. Over time, support for air strikes and ground troops has returned to levels before the 2001 attacks, while support for targeted assassinations has grown (figure 2.5).

Majorities also support nonmilitary approaches to combat terrorism, including helping poor countries develop their economies (66%) and working through the United Nations to strengthen international laws against terrorism and to make sure UN members enforce them (78%).

There have been some interesting partisan shifts over time on the importance of combating international terrorism. Figure 2.6 shows that from 1998 to 2002 all partisans agreed on the importance of the goal, but by 2004 this consensus had fragmented. Traditionally, a higher percentage of Republicans than Democrats or Independents had considered combating terrorism a very important goal for US foreign policy. But in the last two years, fewer Republicans view this goal as "very important," down from 73 percent in 2012 to 62 percent in 2014. Over the same two-year period, there has been little shift in the views among Democrats (from 64% in 2012 to 65% in 2014) and Independents (from 57% in 2012 to 56% in 2014).

FIGURE 2.5

Measures to Fight Terrorism

In order to combat international terrorism, please say whether you favor or oppose each of the following measures. (% support)

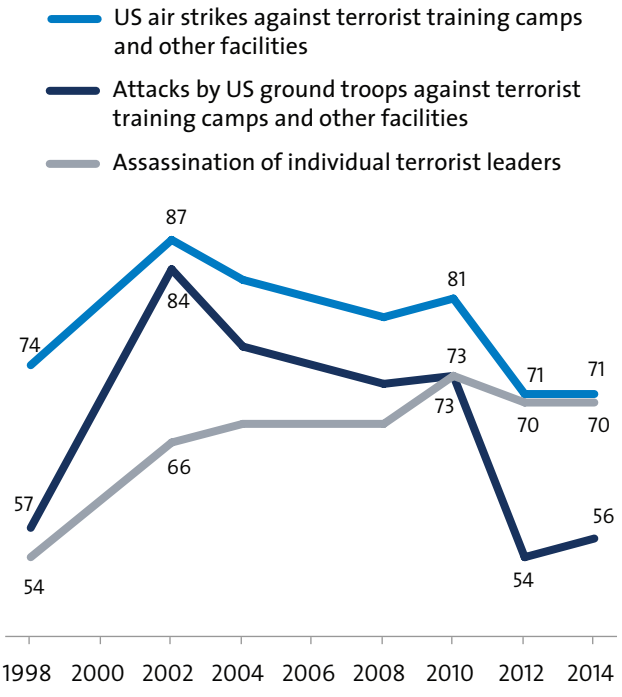

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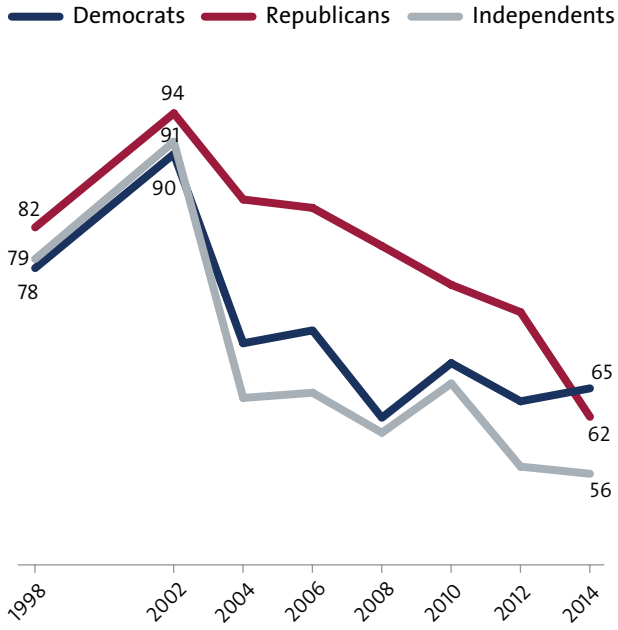
FIGURE 2.6

Combating International Terrorism by Political Affiliation

Please select whether you think that combating international terrorism should be a very important foreign policy goal of the United States, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all. (% very important)



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Iran

Americans' feelings about Iran continue to be quite negative overall (they rate it 27 out a possible 100 on a scale of favorability, where 50 is neutral). This is in line with ratings going back to 1982, the first Chicago Council Survey after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Americans were far more positive about Iran before the revolution, rating it a 50 out of 100 in the 1978 Chicago Council Survey.

Americans prefer a diplomacy-first approach in delicate international situations, but if diplomacy is not effective, sometimes they are willing to use force. Iran is a good example. A majority of Americans sup-

FIGURE 2.7

Nuclear Proliferation

Please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all. (% critical threat)

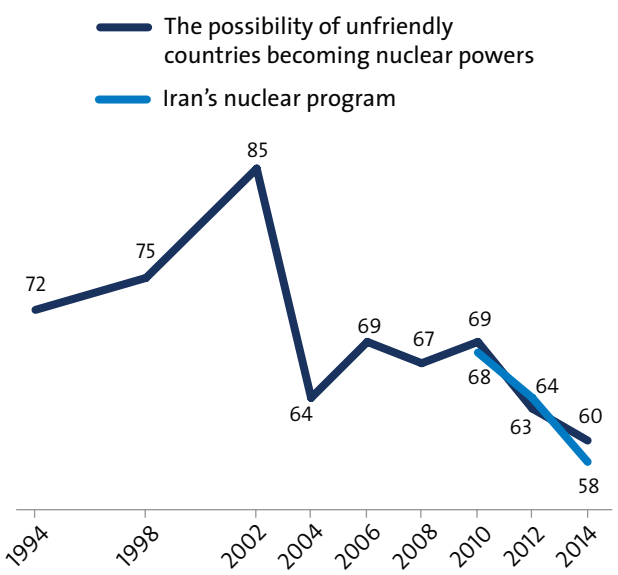

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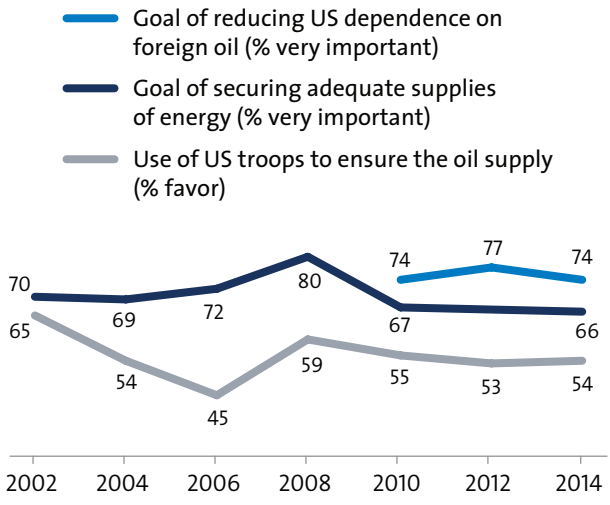
FIGURE 2.8

Importance of Energy Security



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port the current interim agreement with Iran, but also support the use of force if the agreement is broken. Six in ten (62%) support the current agreement in which the United States "eases some of the international economic sanctions against Iran" in exchange for Iran restricting its nuclear program in part, but not completely, and "submits to greater international inspection of its nuclear facilities." But should Iran commit "a major violation" of the agreement, a majority of Americans (60%) support the United Nations Security Council authorizing a military strike against Iran's nuclear energy facilities. In a separate question not referencing UN authorization, an even larger majority would support using US troops to stop Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, with seven in ten (69%) in favor.

Energy supply

Americans are willing to support the use of force not just in self-defense, but also in self-interest. Securing sources of energy are a major priority for Americans: reducing US dependence on foreign oil (74% "very important" in 2014, 77% in 2012, and 74% in 2010) and securing adequate supplies of energy (66% in 2014 and 75% in 1974) rank as top goals (figure 2.8).

Perhaps the clearest signal of the importance that Americans attach to energy issues is the consistent public willingness to commit US troops to ensure the oil supply since 2002 when the question was first asked. In 2014, 56 percent of Americans supported using troops for this purpose. The exception was in 2006, when more opposed than supported this, most likely in reaction to heightened hostilities in the war in Iraq. Those Americans who prefer that the United States "stay out" of world affairs are less likely than others to favor the use of US forces to ensure the oil supply (46% vs. 59% who support an active role). Self-described Independents (49%) and Democrats (53%) are also less likely than Republicans (62%) to approve of the use of US troops to ensure the oil supply.

Humanitarian interventions

Americans have consistently supported the use of force, in principle, for humanitarian actions. Seven in ten Americans support using US troops to "deal with humanitarian crises" and "to stop a government from committing genocide and killing large numbers of its own people" (71% each). This level of support has been fairly consistent over the past decade, with at least seven in ten Americans backing the use of US troops in these cases (figure 2.9).

Public support for using US troops in actual situations that could qualify in these categories, however, is generally much lower. In the 2014 survey, for example, only 17 percent support the United States

sending troops into Syria, which certainly constitutes a major humanitarian crisis. And for a more historical example, only 36 percent of Americans supported the use of US troops "if Serbian forces killed large numbers of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo" in 1998 Chicago Council Survey.

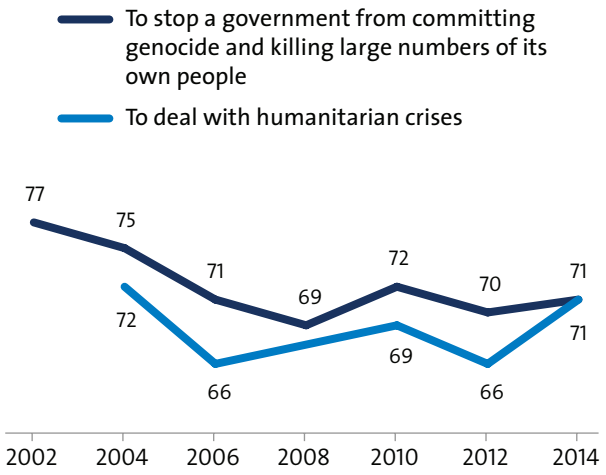
Polls have shown that support may be higher if US troops are positioned as part of a peacekeeping mission. For example, just 17 percent of Americans support the United States sending troops into Syria, compared to 44 percent who would support the use of US troops as part of a peacekeeping force to enforce a peace agreement in Syria (see Syria section on page 26). Earlier Chicago Council Surveys showed majorities in favor of sending US troops to be part of an "international peacekeeping force to stop the killing in Darfur" in 2010 (56%), 2008 (62%), and in 2006 (65%).

Other research has shown that public support for a specific military action is often higher if the president has indicated support for that action. For example, following President Obama's endorsement of air strikes on Islamic State targets in Iraq, an August 13-17, 2014, ABC News/Washington Post poll found that public support for such strikes rose from 45 percent in June 2014 to 54 percent.[11]

FIGURE 2.9

Use of US Troops for Humanitarian Intervention

There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using US troops in other parts of the world. Please give your opinion about some situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of US troops... (% favor)



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Disillusionment with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is affecting the desire to intervene.

As mentioned in chapter 1, disillusionment with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan appears to be affecting views on American engagement abroad. Seven in ten believe that neither war was worth their costs (71% each). Republicans, in particular, have increasingly come to feel that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were not worth the cost (see page 13).

Perhaps reflecting these apprehensions about the two recent wars, Americans tend to oppose sending US troops to intervene in many conflicts within countries in the Middle East, between countries in East Asia, and between Russia and Ukraine.

Israel-Palestinian Conflict

While Americans express more favorable feelings toward Israel (rating it an average of 59 on a scale 0 to 100 scale, where 50 is neutral) than they do toward the Palestinian Authority (rating an average 33 out of 100), a solid majority (64%) says they prefer not to take sides in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Thirty percent prefer taking Israel's side, and 3 percent prefer taking the Palestinians' side (figure 2.10). If a hypothetical peace agreement were reached between the two sides, Americans are divided on whether to send troops to help keep the peace. Half say they would support sending US troops as part of an international peacekeeping mission to enforce a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians (50%), while 49 percent are opposed. This is consistent with support over the last decade of Chicago Council Surveys (figure 2.11).

Defending Israel

A slight majority (53%) says they would oppose committing US troops to defend Israel in the event it is attacked by its neighbors, with 45 percent in favor (figure 2.11). And while Americans support using force against Iran to prevent it from acquiring nuclear weapons, they prefer to avoid getting involved in an Israel-Iran conflict if Israel bombs Iran's nuclear facilities, and

11. ABC News/Washington Post, "Support for US Air Strikes in Iraq Jumps," 20 August 2014.

FIGURE 2.10

Taking Sides in the Middle East Conflict

In the Middle East conflict, do you think the United States should:

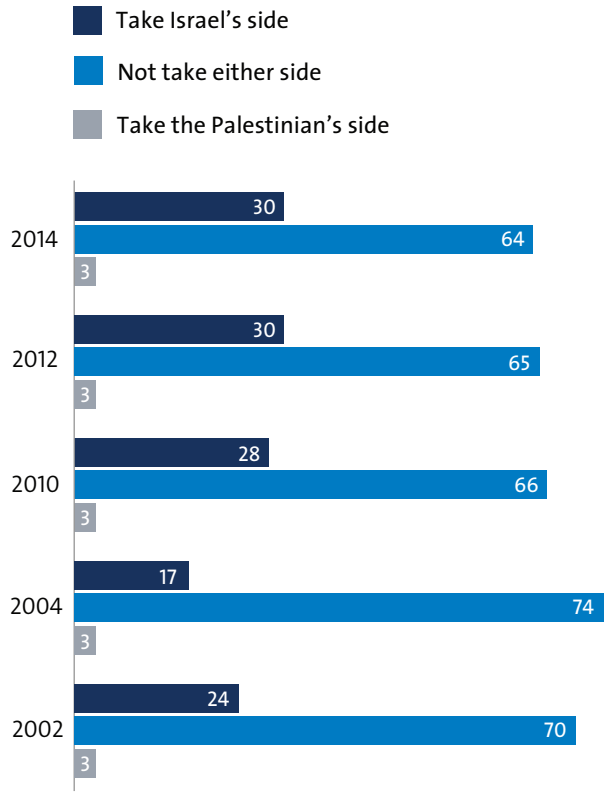

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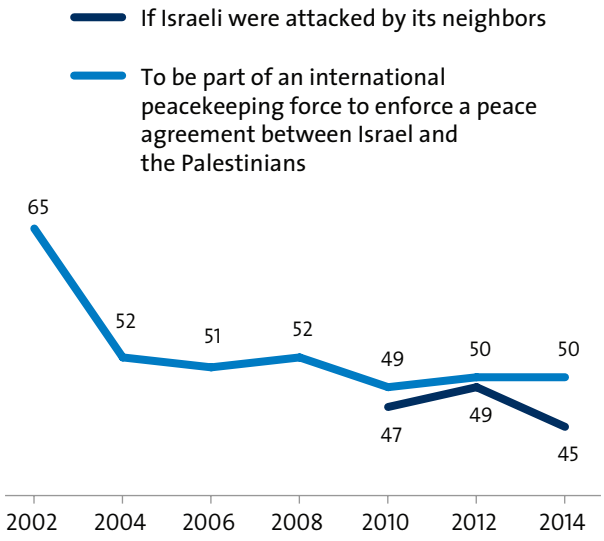
FIGURE 2.11

Use of US Troops for Arab-Israeli Conflict

There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using US troops in other parts of the world. Please give your opinion about some situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of US troops... (% favor)



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Iran were to retaliate against Israel (55% oppose sending US troops for this purpose, while 43% favor it).

Syria

Eight in ten Americans oppose the United States sending troops into Syria (78%), with only 17 percent in favor. In the event of a peace agreement, a majority opposes sending troops to be part of a peacekeeping mission (55%), but a sizable 44 percent would support the use of troops in this case.

The public continues to oppose the United States providing arms and supplies to antigovernment groups in Syria (70%, 25% in favor). It is likely that this opposition is based on a desire to stay out of civil wars and internal political change. These results also echo Chicago Council Survey results from 1986 that found a majority of Americans opposed to arming "rebel fighters in Nicaragua, Angola, and Afghanistan."[12]

But Americans are not completely disengaged from this crisis. Half would support the United States enforcing a no-fly zone over Syria, including the bombing of Syrian air defenses (48% in favor, with 47% opposed).

China and Taiwan

In line with readings from 2008, 2010, and 2012, just four in ten Americans view the development of China as a world power as a critical threat. These attitudes contrast sharply with views between 1994 and 2002, when nearly six in ten considered China's rise a critical threat (see figure 1.7 on page 12).[13]

Even fewer consider China's border disputes with its neighbors a critical threat (19%). In fact, of all the potential threats asked about in the 2014 Chicago Council Survey, China's border disputes with its neighbors ranks as the least critical.

Americans have more favorable feelings toward Taiwan (average rating of 52 out of 100) than China

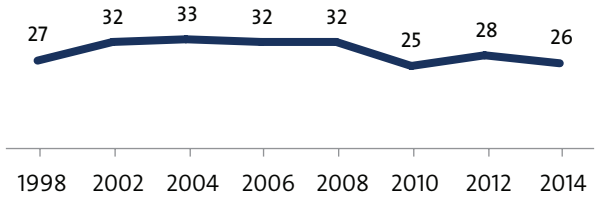
12. Survey conducted in 1986; fieldwork by Gallup. See "American Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy 1987," ed. John E. Rielly, The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, March 1987, http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/POS_Topline%20Reports/Archived%20POS%20Surveys/survey%201987.pdf.

13. In fact, US debt to China is deemed a more critical threat at 47 percent.

FIGURE 2.12

Use of US Troops if China Invades Taiwan

There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using US troops in other parts of the world. Please give your opinion about some situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of US troops if China invaded Taiwan? (% support)



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(44 out of 100). Yet surveys since 1982 have shown that no more than a third of Americans has ever supported sending US troops to defend Taiwan from a Chinese invasion. Only one in four (26%) support defending Taiwan today, similar to recent surveys (figure 2.12).

North Korea

Of all countries rated in the 2014 survey, Americans feel least favorable toward North Korea, giving it an average rating of 23 out of 100 (matching its lowest rating in 2006).

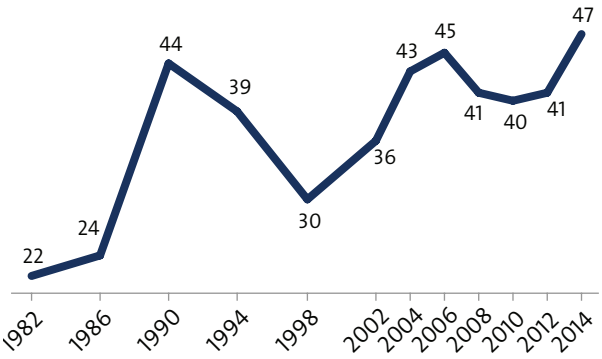
However, Americans do not see a threat from North Korea urgent enough to warrant military action. Broadly consistent with 2012 results, a majority (55%) opposes air strikes against military targets and suspected nuclear sites in North Korea to pressure North Korea to stop building its nuclear weapons program (41% favor air strikes). An even larger proportion oppose sending in US ground troops to take control of the country (78% opposed, with 18% in favor). Americans want to keep their eyes on Pyongyang, however. Two in three support the United States stopping and searching North Korean ships for nuclear materials or arms (66%, a 6 point increase from 2012).

The stakes appear to be higher, however, if North Korea were to invade US ally South Korea. Nearly half support the use of US troops in a hypothetical situation where North Korea invades South Korea (47% in favor, with 51% opposed). Though still a minority view, it is the highest level of support for sending US troops to defend South Korea ever recorded in Chicago Council Surveys (figure 2.13). Indeed, support has grown substantially since the question was first asked in 1982, when just 22 percent favored sending US troops to defend Seoul.

FIGURE 2.13

Use of US Troops to Defend South Korea

There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using US troops in other parts of the world. Please give your opinion about some situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of US troops if North Korea invaded South Korea? (% support)



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Russia's territorial ambitions

The Russian annexation of Crimea occurred just before the fielding of this survey. As a result, American feelings toward Russia have fallen to their lowest levels since the Cold War. On the favorability scale of 0 to 100, Americans rate Russia a 36 on average. This is just above the average rating Americans gave to the Soviet Union during the Chicago Council's Cold War-era surveys of 1978 to 1986 and is the lowest rating ever given to Russia since the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Yet, only a minority (38%) sees Russia's territorial ambitions as a critical threat to the vital interests of the United States. Perhaps as a result, only three in ten support using US troops to come to Ukraine's defense if Russia invades the rest of that country (30%). When asked a similar question in 1994, only two in ten Americans (20%) supported using US troops to defend Ukraine if Russia invaded. If Russia were to invade "NATO allies such as Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia," 44 percent would support using US troops to defend these NATO allies.

Republicans are generally more willing than other partisans to use force. Democrats are most willing to favor US participation in peacekeeping missions.

The data show some clear partisan differences on the willingness to use US troops around the world. As figure 2.14 shows, self-described Republicans are more likely to support the use of US troops to come to the aid of allies if they are attacked. A slight majority of Republicans (53%) support using US troops to defend South Korea in the event of North Korean invasion, compared to fewer than half of Democrats (44%) or Independents (46%). Republicans are also more likely to support sending US troops to defend a NATO ally like Latvia, Lithuania, or Estonia in the event of Russian invasion (50% vs. 41% of Democrats and 43% of Independents).

If Israel is attacked by its neighbors, Republicans are more likely than other partisans to favor sending US troops to defend Israel (52% vs. 41% of Democrats and 44% of Independents). And a majority (54%) of Republicans support coming to Israel's aid if it bombs Iranian nuclear facilities and Iran retaliates (40% of Democrats, 36% of Independents).

But as has been the case in past surveys, when it comes to peacekeeping missions, Democrats are more inclined to send troops than Republicans. A majority of Democrats support the use of US troops as part of an international peacekeeping force to enforce a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians (59%, compared to 51% of Independents and 46% of Republicans). Democrats are also more likely to support sending US troops for peacekeeping purposes if a peace agreement is reached in Syria (54% compared to 38% of Republicans and Independents).

Conclusion

Since the Chicago Council's first survey in 1974, Americans have consistently expressed reluctance to use military force to solve international problems. Americans continue to support the use of force only when they feel directly threatened or in cases that appeal to their moral conscience.

Americans remain willing to support the use of US troops to combat terrorism, defend the oil supply, prevent genocide, and help with humanitarian crises. A majority is also prepared to use force if necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Even those who say the United States should stay out of world affairs would support sending US troops to combat terrorism and Iran's nuclear program. However, many of the conflicts in the press today—for example, in Syria and Ukraine—are not seen by the public as vital threats to the United States.

FIGURE 2.14

Support for Use of US Troops around the World

There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using US troops in other parts of the world. Please give your opinion about some situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of US troops... (% support)

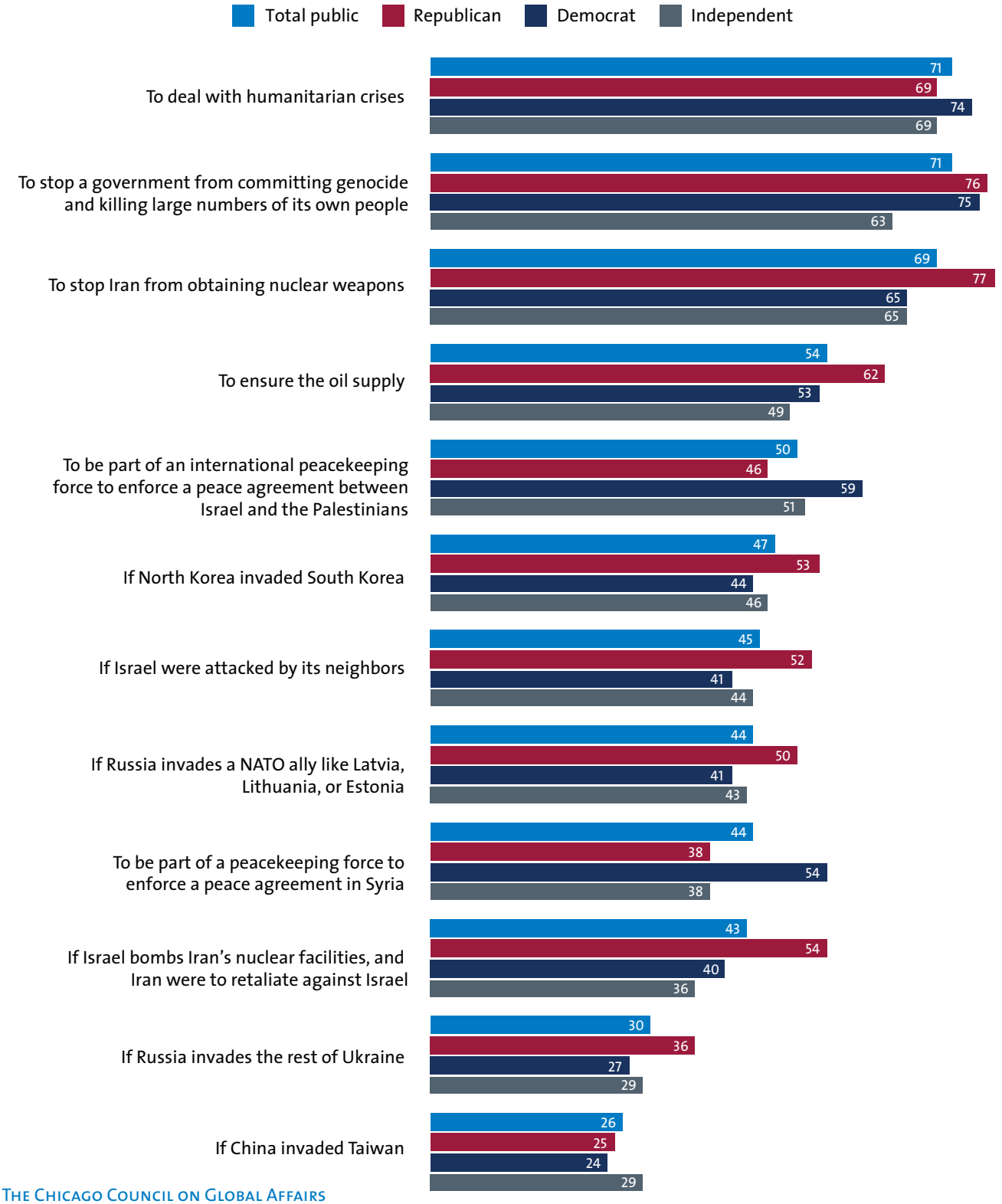

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TABLE 2.1

Historical Results for Foreign Policy Goals

Below is a list of possible foreign policy goals that the United States might have. For each one please select whether you think that it should be a very important foreign policy goal of the United States, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all. (% very important)

	1974	1978	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Protecting the jobs of American workers	74	78	77	77	84	83	80	85	78	76	80	79	83	76
Reducing US dependence on foreign oil	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	74	77	74
Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons	–	–	–	–	84	82	82	90	73	74	73	73	72	73
Securing adequate supplies of energy	75	78	70	69	61	62	64	75	69	72	80	67	–	66
Combating international terrorism	–	–	–	–	–	–	79	91	71	72	67	69	64	61
Maintaining superior military power worldwide	–	–	–	–	–	50	59	68	50	55	57	56	53	52
Controlling and reducing illegal immigration	–	–	–	–	–	72	55	70	59	58	61	59	53	47
Combating world hunger	61	59	58	63	56	62	61	61	43	48	46	42	42	42
Defending our allies' security	33	50	50	56	43	41	44	57	–	–	–	–	–	38
Strengthening the United Nations	46	47	48	46	52	51	45	57	38	40	39	37	35	37
Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression	28	34	34	32	32	24	32	41	18	22	24	24	–	25
Helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations	28	26	29	30	28	25	29	34	14	17	17	19	15	17

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SPOTLIGHT 2.1

There are no discernible differences in public support for using US troops when multilateralism is not specified vs. in specific multilateral configurations.

It is commonly assumed that Americans prefer multilateral to unilateral military actions, and past Chicago Council Surveys have shown some evidence to support this theory. To test this assumption, the 2014 Chicago Council Survey ran an experiment. The sample was split into three groups, with each third of the sample receiving a different variation of the Council's long-running question about the use of US troops abroad.

The results may run counter to the popular theory of multilateral preference. On a wide range of possible situations where military force might be used—including in Syria, defending South Korea, ensuring the oil supply, Russia invading the rest of Ukraine, and others—there are no discernible differences in views among Americans toward the use of US troops when multilateral action is not specified, as part of a coalition of like-minded allies, or as part of a UN Security Council authorized military mission (table 2.2 below). The Council will continue to explore this issue in future surveys.

TABLE 2.2

Public Support for the Use of US Troops Abroad (% favor)

Question 30: There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using US troops in other parts of the world. Please give your opinion about some situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of US troops...

Question 30B: There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using US troops in other parts of the world as part of a United Nations Security Council authorized military mission. Please give your opinion about some situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of US troops...

Question 30C: There has been some discussion about the circumstances that might justify using US troops in other parts of the world as part of a coalition of like-minded allies. Please give your opinion about some situations. Would you favor or oppose the use of US troops...

	Q30 (US Troops)	Q30B (UNSC)	Q30C (Coalition)
To stop a government from committing genocide and killing large numbers of its own people	71	70	71
To deal with humanitarian crises	71	69	70
To stop Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons	69	71	69
To ensure the oil supply	54	52	52
To be part of an international peacekeeping force to enforce a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians	50	50	48
If North Korea invaded South Korea	47	48	44
If Israel were attacked by its neighbors	45	45	47
To be part of a peacekeeping force to enforce a peace agreement in Syria	44	46	44
If Russia invades a NATO ally like Latvia, Lithuania, or Estonia	44	42	42
If Israel bombs Iran's nuclear facilities, and Iran were to retaliate against Israel	43	44	41
If Russia invades the rest of Ukraine	30	32	27
If China invaded Taiwan	26	28	28

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Chapter 3
The Power of Deterrence, Trade, and Diplomacy

As they have for decades, Americans today broadly support multiple forms of engagement. These forms of engagement include alliances, trade agreements, economic and military aid, international treaties, strategic uses of sanctions, and diplomacy. Even those who say they would like the United States to "stay out" of world affairs support these forms of global engagement, with solid majorities considering alliances, diplomacy, trade agreements, sanctions, and treaties effective ways to realize US foreign policy goals (figure 3.1).

The 2014 Chicago Council Survey demonstrates that while Americans are generally reluctant to use US military forces for overseas intervention, they nevertheless consider US military superiority one of the most effective ways to achieve US foreign policy goals. They also continue to support maintaining a long-term US military presence overseas, presumably for its effect as a deterrent against potential aggression or as a muscular tool to back diplomatic efforts. In addition, for the past 40 years, majorities have backed the US commitment to NATO.

Americans support maintaining US military superiority.

Even though Americans consider economic strength more important than military might to a nation's power and influence, a majority of Americans consider maintaining US superior military power a "very important" foreign policy goal (52%). Maintaining US military superiority reached a high point as a "very important" goal in 2002 (68%), but the current level is on par with 2004 and 1994 (50%).

In addition, nine in ten Americans view military superiority as an effective way to achieve US foreign policy goals (47% "very" effective, 37% "somewhat" effective) (figure 3.1). Seven in ten also support a US military presence overseas, with 71 percent in favor of maintaining (59%) or increasing (12%) the number of long-term US bases abroad. But more often than not, as demonstrated in chapter 2, Americans are reluctant to deploy these forces in specific scenarios.

Despite disillusionment with recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Americans are not calling for drastic cuts in defense spending as they did in the aftermath of the Vietnam War and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In fact, more Americans continue to favor either maintaining (39%) or increasing (25%) defense spending than cutting it back (28%) (figure 3.2).

Americans continue to be committed to alliances, including the NATO alliance and relationships with Pacific allies.

Besides superior military power, large majorities also see maintaining existing alliances (87%) and building alliances with new countries (80%) as effective ways to achieve US foreign policy goals, though they are more likely to consider them "somewhat" rather than "very" effective, up 4 points from 2012 (figure 3.1).

In line with this assessment, majorities since 1974 have consistently said that our commitment to NATO should remain the same as it is now or should be increased. The current results show that 66 percent think the commitment to NATO should remain as it as it is now, with 12 percent desiring an increase. Only 7 percent want to withdraw entirely from NATO.

FIGURE 3.1

Approaches to Achieving US Foreign Policy Goals

How effective do you think each of the following approaches has been to achieving the foreign policy goals of the United States—very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective or not effective at all? (% effective among the public overall and among those who prefer to take an "active part" in world affairs or "stay out" of world affairs)

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This reading is on the high end of endorsement for NATO, perhaps in reaction to recent events in Ukraine (figure 3.3).

Reversing a previous trend, a majority of Americans now say that Europe is more important to the United States than Asia (55% Europe, 44% Asia). But Americans do not discount their allies in the Pacific. In fact, a larger majority now than two years ago supports US government's plans "to pivot our diplomatic and military resources away from the Middle East and Europe and more towards Asia" (60%, an increase of 6 percentage points since 2012).

In addition to their European alliances, Americans feel very favorable towards their key allies in Asia, especially South Korea and Japan. Large majorities of Americans view Japan as a partner rather than a rival to the United States (80% partner to 16% mostly rivals). The same is true for US-Korea relations (70% partner to 27% mostly rivals). And a solid majority (59%, up 6 points from 2012) continues to think the United States should put a higher priority on its partnership with traditional allies like South Korea and Japan, "even if this might diminish our relations with China." Only one in three (33%, down from 40% in 2012) holds the opposing view, saying that the United States should place a higher priority on building a new partnership with China "even if this might diminish US relations with our traditional allies" (figure 3.4).

Support for alliances is reflected in the "feelings" that Americans have toward many countries. Asked

FIGURE 3.2

Defense Spending

Please select whether you feel it should be expanded, cut back, or kept about the same.

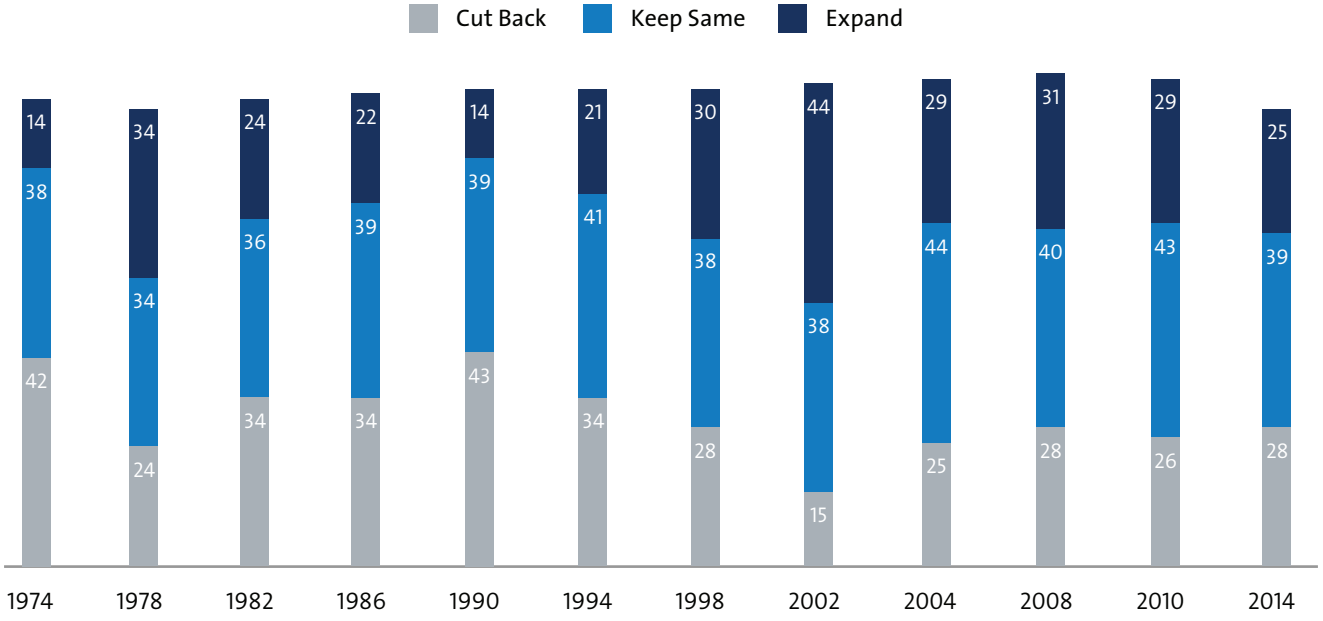

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FIGURE 3.3

US Commitment to NATO

Do you feel we should increase our commitment to NATO, keep our commitment what it is now, decrease our commitment to NATO, or withdraw from NATO entirely?

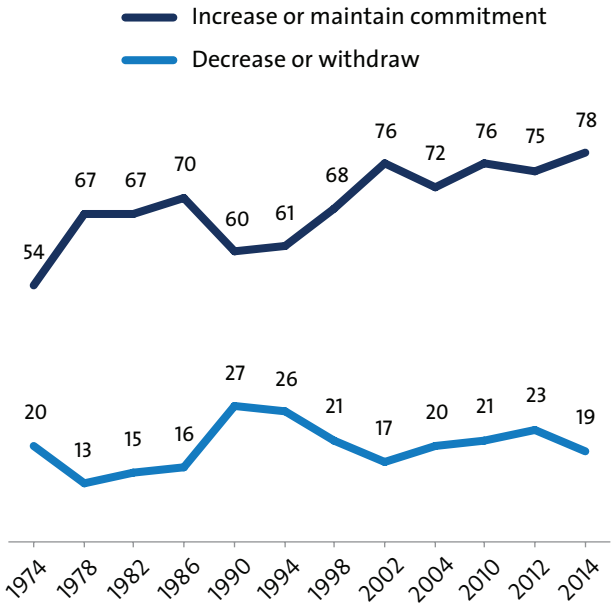

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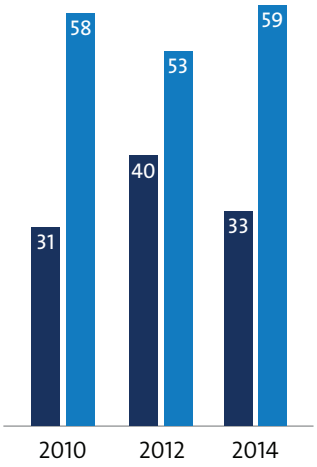
FIGURE 3.4

US Relations with Traditional Allies in Asia

Now thinking about US foreign policy in Asia, do you think the US should put a higher priority on:

- Building a new partnership with China, even if this might diminish our relations with our traditional allies (%)
- Building up our strong relations with traditional allies like South Korea and Japan, even if this might diminish our relations with China (%)



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their general views about friends and allies, Americans feel more positive now than they have in Chicago Council Surveys going back to 1990. For example, Americans give ratings of at least 55 on a scale from 0 to 100 (with 100 being the most favorable feelings) to Canada (79), Great Britain (74), Germany (65), Japan (62), France (61), Israel (59), Brazil (58), and South Korea (55). In many cases these are the highest ratings that have ever been recorded in Chicago Council Surveys (figure 3.5).

While Americans support alliances in general, chapter 2 shows that narrow majorities do not support using US forces to protect particular allies asked about, including Israel, South Korea, Taiwan, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, if they come under hypothetical attack.

Support for maintaining military presence overseas remains stable.

In line with the desire to maintain superior military power worldwide, a majority of Americans have consistently supported a military posture overseas. Today, six in ten (59%) want to maintain as many long-term overseas bases as there are now, up from 52 percent in 2012 and the highest level ever recorded (figure 3.6). Of the rest, 12 percent would increase long-term overseas bases (up from 9% in 2012), and 29 percent would like to decrease the number (down from 38% in 2012).

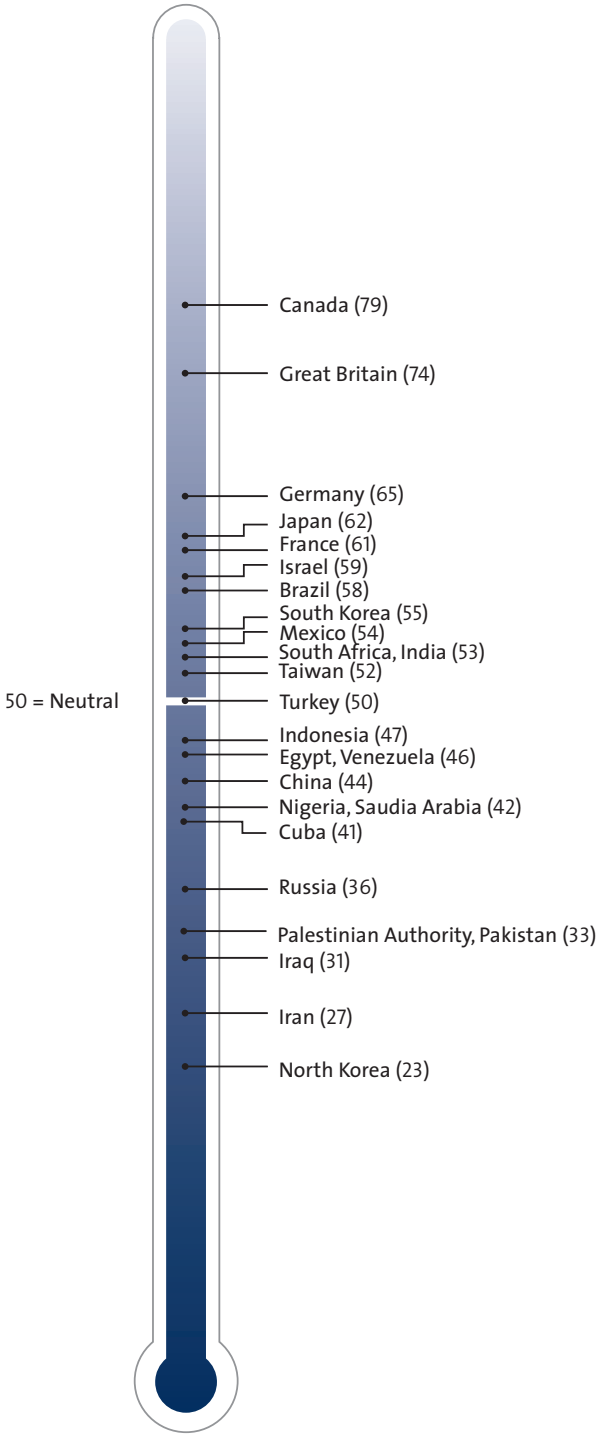
Americans believe that the US military presence abroad helps increase regional stability in the Middle East (56%) and East Asia (62%). Yet, they are less supportive of maintaining military bases in specific countries in the Middle East and South Asia. The public is divided over having US military bases in Kuwait (47% support, 49% oppose), while majorities oppose bases in Turkey (54%, down from 57% in 2012), Iraq (56%, up from 53% in 2012), and Pakistan (59%, similar to 58% in 2012). A majority also opposes bases in Afghanistan (54% oppose, same as in 2012). In a separate question, only 33 percent say that the United States should leave some US troops in Afghanistan beyond 2014 for training, anti-insurgency, and counterterrorism activities. The rest say that either the United States should bring all combat troops home as scheduled by the end of 2014 (41%) or withdraw them before the end of 2014 (26%).[14]

14. Four in ten (41%) Americans consider the possibility of the Taliban returning to power in Afghanistan a critical threat. See figure 2.3 in chapter 2.

FIGURE 3.5

Feelings toward Other Countries

Please rate your feelings toward some countries and peoples, with 100 meaning a very warm, favorable feeling, 0 meaning a very cold, unfavorable feeling, and 50 meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from 0 to 100, the higher the number the more favorable your feelings are toward that country or those people.



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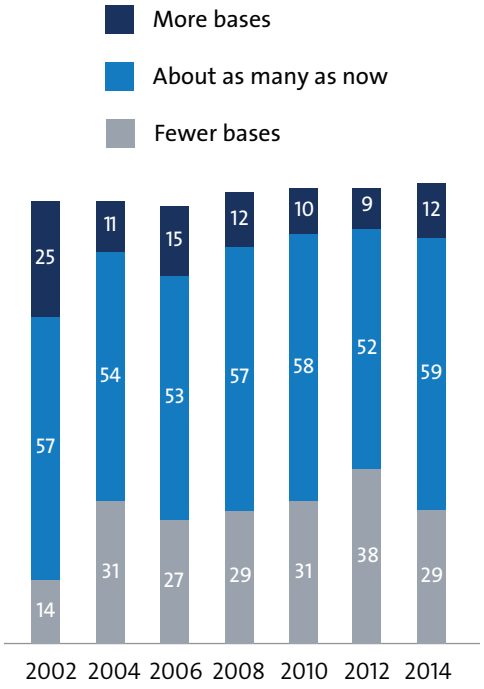
The lack of support for bases in the Middle East and South Asia may be linked to dissatisfaction with the wars of the past decade. For example, those who say the Iraq war was not worth the costs are, on average, 22 percentage points less likely to support bases in the Middle East and South Asia. Nevertheless, majorities of Americans also oppose having US bases in Poland (60%) and Australia (55%, down from 58% in 2012).

On the other hand, majorities of Americans support long-term US military bases in areas where they already have—or have had—them, including South Korea (64%, up from 60% in 2012), Germany (57%, up from 51% in 2012), Japan (55%, up from 51% in 2012), the Philippines (51%, down from 66% in 2002), and Guantanamo Bay (51%, down from 60% in 2008). Since 2002, when Chicago Council Surveys began asking the question, majorities of Americans have consistently supported bases in Germany, South Korea, Japan, and Guantanamo Bay. In fact, the percentage supporting bases in South Korea is at its highest point yet.

FIGURE 3.6

Attitude toward Long-Term Military Bases

Thinking about long-term military bases the US has overseas, do you think the US should have more bases overseas, fewer bases overseas, or about as many as we have now?



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Americans show strong support for globalization and trade.

Despite the continuing effects of the Great Recession, Americans remain broadly supportive of globalization and free trade. In fact, far from a rise in protectionist sentiments, public views on globalization have returned to 2004 levels. Two out of three Americans say that globalization is mostly a good thing (65% vs. 34% bad thing), the highest recorded percentage to feel this way since the question was first asked in 1998 (figure 3.7).

Self-described Democrats have consistently expressed positive views of globalization, increasingly so since 1998 and especially so after 2008. Opinions of globalization among Republicans and Independents became less positive after the 2008 recession, but since then have more or less recovered to prerecession levels (figure 3.8).

Asked about trade agreements specifically, half the public (50%) favors agreements to lower trade barriers provided the government has programs to help workers who lose their jobs. Another 14 percent favor trade agreements but oppose the governments' programs to help workers who lose their jobs. One in three (31%) opposes agreements to lower trade barriers regardless of programs to help the unemployed, the lowest proportion yet. Since this question was first asked in 2004, opinion has been quite stable, with a plurality of Americans (between 43% and 50%) supporting trade agreements with a provision for the unemployed (figure 3.9).

This general support for trade agreements is reflected in more specific situations. Majorities of Americans support both of the two far-reaching trade agreements that the United States is currently pursuing. Six in ten Americans support the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with Europe (62%, 29% oppose). A similar proportion support the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) being negotiated among a dozen Pacific Rim countries (63%, 31% oppose). Public support for these agreements is impressive given that the text of these agreements has been neither completed nor publicized. This suggests that public backing of these agreements is based on broad support for the idea of trade agreements rather than knowledge of the specifics. Indeed, seven in ten (72%, up 5 points since 2012) say that signing free

FIGURE 3.7

Views of Globalization

Turning to something else, do you believe that globalization, especially the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is mostly good or mostly bad for the United States? (%)

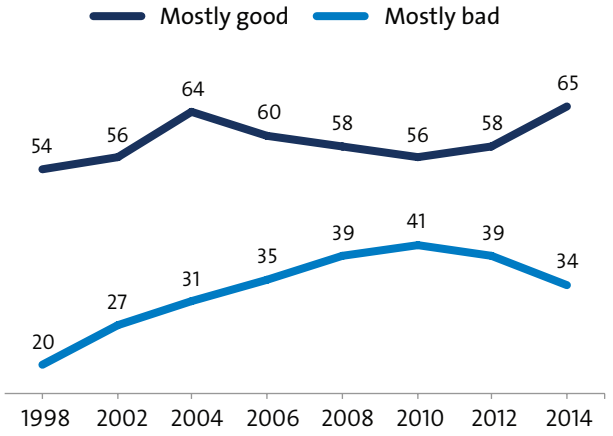

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FIGURE 3.8

Views of Globalization by Political Affiliation

Turning to something else, do you believe that globalization, especially the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is mostly good or mostly bad for the United States? (%)

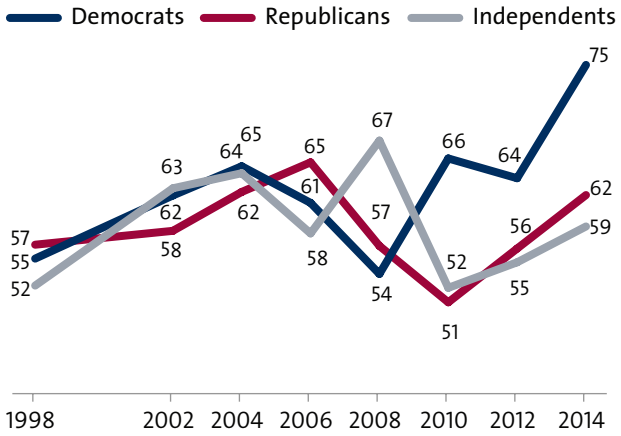

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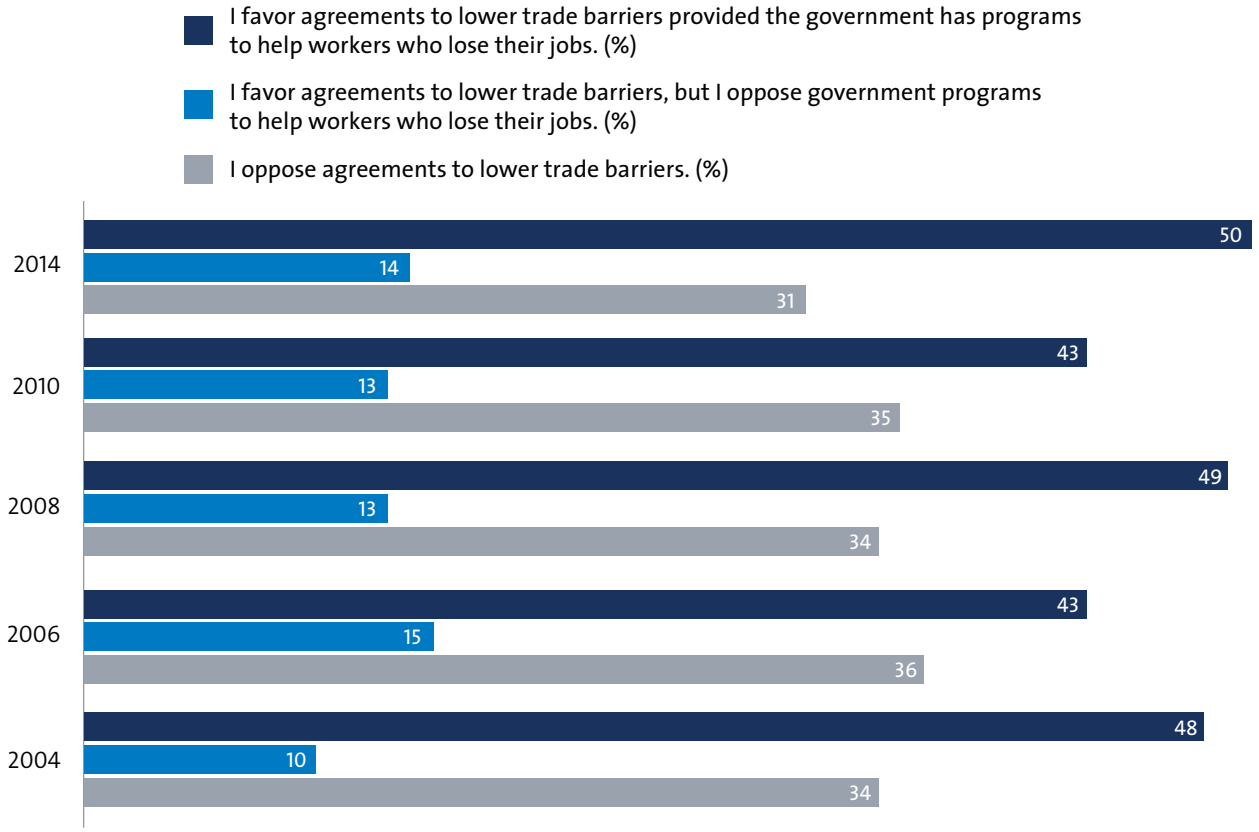
FIGURE 3.9

Position on Lowering Trade Barriers

Which of the following three positions comes closest to your point of view about lowering trade barriers such as tariffs?



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trade agreements is an effective means to achieve foreign policy objectives.

While public support for trade is broad, not all Americans are aware of some of their top trading partners. Japan and South Korea are among the United States' top 10 trading partners, with Japan holding the fourth spot, and South Korea just above the United Kingdom in sixth, according to June 2014 US Census Bureau figures. While a majority of Americans correctly place Japan among America's top 10 trading partners (62%), only a minority knows that South Korea also belongs in this group (24%). A plurality of Americans instead believe that South Korea ranks among America's top 20 but not top 10 trading partners (44%); fewer say so of Japan (28%). Similar results from a Chicago Council Survey in late 2013 revealed that only one in five Americans (20%) knew that Mexico ranks among the top five trading partners of the United States. (June 2014 Census figures place Mexico third.) Nearly half (49%) believe instead that Mexico is among the top 10 but outside the top five, while 27 percent think it is not among the top 10 US trade partners.

Targeted sanctions are more palatable than military actions in conflict situations.

While trade agreements are seen as an effective economic tool for achieving foreign policy goals, so too are economic sanctions. Two in three Americans (65%, up 3 percentage points since 2012) consider sanctions at least somewhat effective in achieving US foreign policy goals. Fully eight in ten Americans support the UN Security Council placing sanctions on Iran if it commits a major violation of the interim treaty (83%, slightly higher than the 77 percent who favor continuing diplomatic efforts). A majority also supports the United States increasing economic and diplomatic sanctions on Syria (67%); the next most popular option was enforcing a no-fly zone (48%). And in the case of Ukraine, according to an April 2014 Pew Research Center/USA Today poll, 53 percent of Americans support sanctioning Putin's government in response to the Ukraine crisis, while 36 percent oppose such a move (one in ten are unsure).[15]

Americans strongly support diplomacy, even with hostile nations or actors.

As in the past, Americans continue to support active diplomatic efforts to resolve international conflicts, including with hostile parties. Since 2008 Americans have said that US leaders should be ready to meet and talk with leaders from nations or organizations that are unfriendly or hostile to the United States, including Cuba (73%) and Iran (67%). Six in ten (61%) say the same about North Korea. Half favor talking with the Taliban, Hezbollah, and Hamas (though this survey was fielded prior to the August 2014 clashes between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza) (table 3.1).

In addition, six in ten (62%) support the interim agreement between Iran and the United States, and nearly eight in ten (77%) support diplomatic efforts to stop Iranian enrichment. A large majority of Americans (85%) also support continuing diplomatic efforts to get North Korea to suspend its nuclear weap-

15. "Bipartisan Support for Increased US Sanctions against Russia," Pew Research Center, April 2014.

TABLE 3.1

Talking with Hostile Countries

As you many know, there is currently a debate about whether US government leaders should be ready to meet and talk with leaders of countries and groups with whom the United States has hostile or unfriendly relations. Do you think US leaders should be ready to meet and talk with leaders of... (% saying "should be" ready to meet and talk)

	Cuba	Iran	North Korea	Hamas	Hezbollah	The Taliban
2008	70	70	68	53	51	51
2010	70	70	62	48	47	47
2012	73	73	69	52	N/A	N/A
2014	73	73	61	50	50	50

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ons program. And two in three (67%) support the United States and its allies increasing economic and diplomatic sanctions on the Assad regime in Syria.

Support is solid for the treaty on climate change and Law of the Sea.

Over the past decade, majorities of Americans have consistently supported international treaties and agreements, ranging from the ban on land mines and the nuclear test ban treaty to the International Criminal Court and Kyoto agreements. This year is no different. Seven in ten Americans (71%, up from 67% in 2012) favor US participation in an international treaty that addresses climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Majorities also favor US participation in international treaties to regulate trade in small arms (68%), establish rights for people with disabilities (76%), and a Law of the Sea treaty regulating the international use of the world's oceans and marine natural resources (83%). While majorities across party lines support these treaties, self-described Democrats are at least 18 percentage points higher in their support for these treaties except for the Law of the Sea, where there are no partisan differences.

Strengthening the UN is seen as effective, but is not a high foreign policy priority.

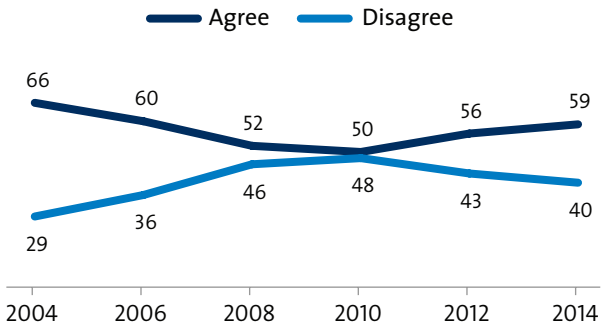
Two in three Americans (64%) say that strengthening the United Nations is an effective approach to achieving US foreign policy goals, and nearly as many (59%) believe the United States should be more willing to make decisions within the UN even if this means that the United States will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice (figure 3.10). A majority also supports working through the United Nations to strengthen international laws against terrorism and to make sure UN members enforce them (78%).

Yet strengthening the United Nations does not rank as a top goal for Americans. From 1974 to 2002, about half said that strengthening the United Nations was a "very important" goal. Since 2004, however, no more than four in ten have said that strengthening the United Nations is a very important goal (figure 3.11). This may reflect a partisan divide that emerged in the wake of the Iraq war, which was hotly debated in the

Figure 3.10

US-UN Joint Decision Making

Please select whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: When dealing with international problems, the US should be more willing to make decisions within the United Nations even if this means that the United States will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice.



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UN Security Council before its start in 2003. Since 2004, fewer Republicans and Independents consider strengthening the United Nations a "very important" goal, while the percentage of Democrats who favor doing so has remained more or less constant over the past decade.

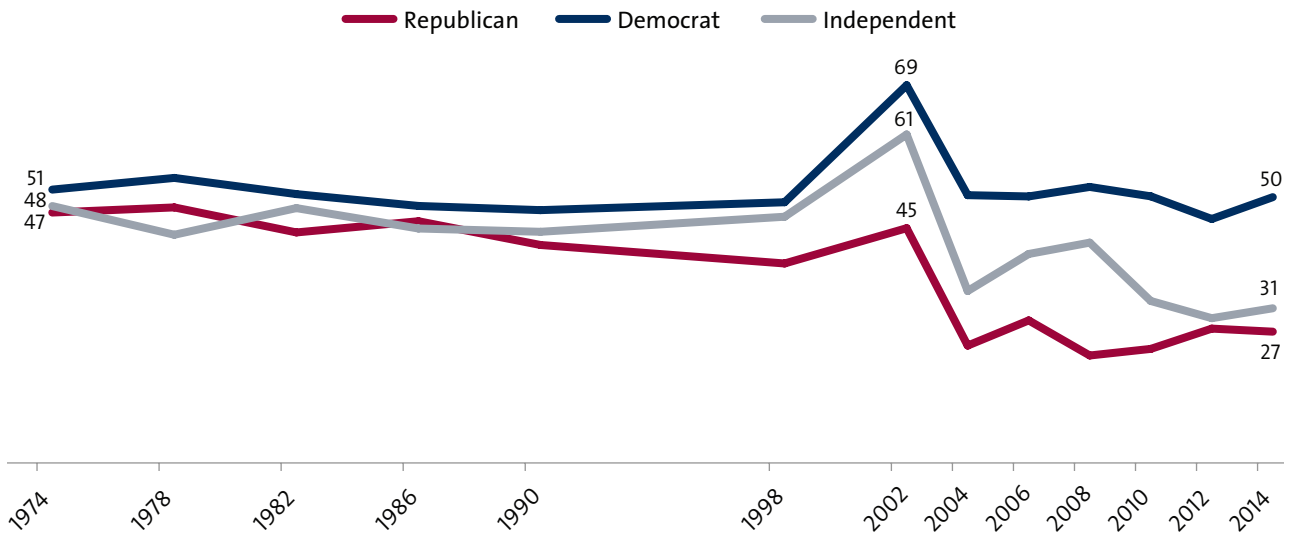
On another question, a much smaller majority now than in 1974 says that the US role in the founding of the United Nations was "a proud moment" in US history (59% vs. 81% in 1974). More now than in 1974 say that the US role in the founding of the United Nations is neither a proud nor a dark moment (20%, up from 9% in 1974, with more saying they are unsure (12% now, 5% in 1974). The 40-year time difference likely accounts for this change. But when asked the same question about the US role in World War II, an identical percentage today as in 1974 says the US role in WWII is a proud moment in American history (68% in both 1974 and 2014).

The United Nation's peacekeeping, cultural, and humanitarian efforts are seen as more effective than its approaches toward more hard-hitting threats. About six in ten (61%) think the United Nations is doing a good job at sending peacekeeping troops to conflict zones, protecting the cultural heritage of the world (61%), leading international efforts to combat hunger (57%), and protecting and supporting refugees around the world (57%). But the public is more divided on

FIGURE 3.11

Strengthening the United Nations by Political Affiliation

Please select whether you think that strengthening the United Nations should be a very important foreign policy goal of the United States, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all. (% very important)



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whether the United Nation is doing a good or bad job at authorizing the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security (51% good, 45% bad), preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons (50% good, 47% bad), imposing sanctions to punish countries that violate international law (50% good, 46% bad), and resolving international conflicts through negotiations (50% good, 46% bad).

Majorities oppose spying on friends, but support spying on countries they view unfavorably.

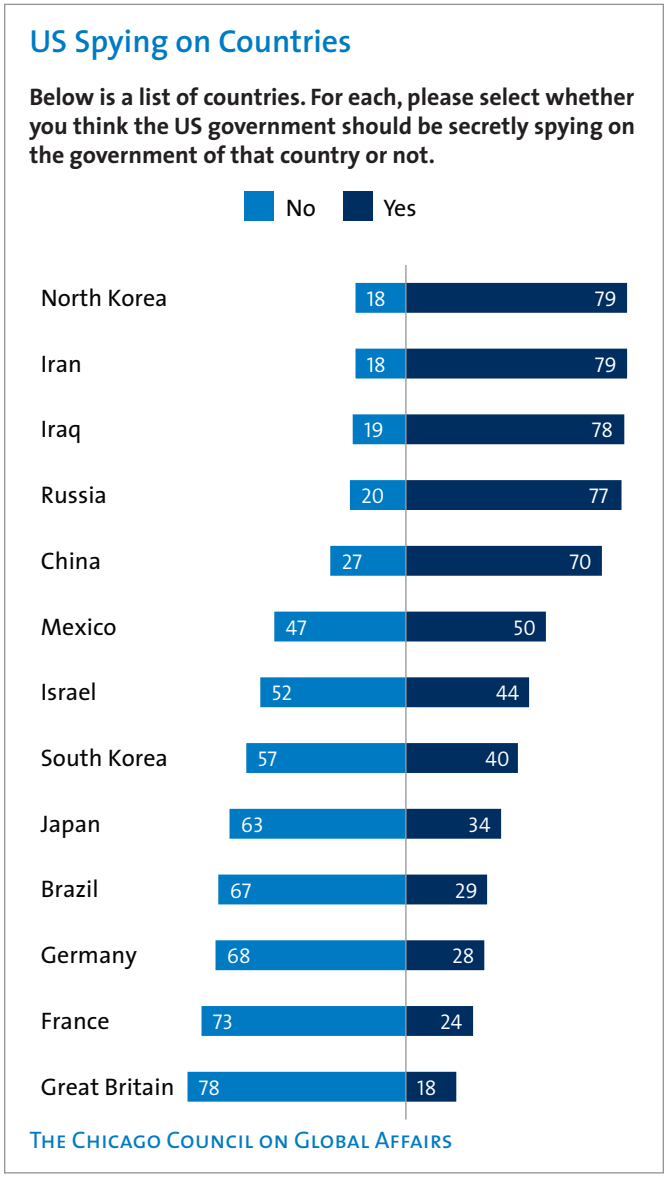
Several American allies have been vocal about their resentment of US surveillance programs in the wake of Edward Snowden's revelations. Majorities of Americans *oppose* spying on their allies—to varying degrees—including Brazil, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom. But they do see some utility in keeping an ear on countries for which they have unfavorable views. Seven in ten or more think the US government should be listening in on the governments of China, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and Russia. They are divided on Mexico (50% yes, 47% no) (figure 3.12).

Some of these countries were included in the 1994 Chicago Council Survey with the identical question on spying. Compared to 1994, even more Americans now favor spying on China (67% in 1994), Mexico (34% in 1994), North Korea (66% in 1994), and Russia (63% in 1994).

Americans appear to be fairly comfortable with current methods of obtaining communications data. About one in three (35%) thinks that restrictions on the National Security Agency should remain the same, with 12 percent wanting fewer restrictions. Another third (34%) think restrictions should be increased. And a plurality (41%) says the budget for general information-gathering activities of the CIA and NSA should remain the same as it is now.

In the tradeoff between security and privacy on this matter, Americans choose security. Seven in ten say that it is more important right now "for the federal government to investigate possible terrorist threats, even if that intrudes on personal privacy" (68%). In contrast, three in ten think it is more important for the federal government not to intrude on personal privacy, even if that limits its ability to investigate possible terrorist attacks (31%).

FIGURE 3.12



Public would give more to foreign aid than actual levels in federal budget.

Consistent with every Chicago Council Survey since 1974, Americans favor cutting federal spending on military aid (59%) and economic aid (60%) to other countries. But other polls have shown that Americans also tend to overstate the actual amounts appropriated for these categories.[16] In fact, in a new budget exercise included in the 2014 survey, Americans say that out of $100, they would give $4.34 to economic assistance and $4.13 to military assistance for other countries. Translated into percentages of a real budget, this would constitute spending 8.48 percent on international assistance, vastly higher than the actual level, which was 1.4 percent in 2012.

16. "American Public Vastly Overestimates Amount of US Foreign Aid," WorldPublicOpinion.org, November 29, 2010.

Support is stronger for foreign aid to Africa than countries in Mideast, South Asia

The public gives very different responses when questioned about aid to specific countries. Americans tend to support maintaining or increasing *economic* aid to African countries, Israel, and Ukraine. On the other hand, they tend to favor decreasing or ceasing economic aid to countries in South Asia and the Middle East, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Egypt (figure 3.13).

Americans tend to support maintaining or increasing *military aid* to Israel, Taiwan, and Mexico. In a pattern similar to preferences for economic aid, the public tends to favor decreasing or stopping military aid to Egypt, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq, though this question was asked before the August violence between Israel and the Palestinians and the advance of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Iraq (figure 3.14).

Conclusion

Much discussion of American views on foreign policy focus solely on their opinion towards the large-scale deployment of US troops abroad. While this is certainly a critical area of US foreign policy, it is far from the only means by which America engages the world. Nor is it a frequent one. Americans continue to support a wide variety of engagement, ranging from an international military presence and espionage to dialogue with hostile actors and international trade. They see benefits to multilateral cooperation enshrined in alliances, trade agreements, treaties, and working through the United Nations. While they do not shy away from using force if necessary, they prefer diplomatic approaches and economic sanctions to address many critical threats. Taken together, the results in this report underscore the public's consistent and stable support for American engagement abroad.

FIGURE 3.13

Economic Aid to Other Nations

Do you think economic aid to the following people or nations should be increased, decreased, kept about the same, or stopped altogether?

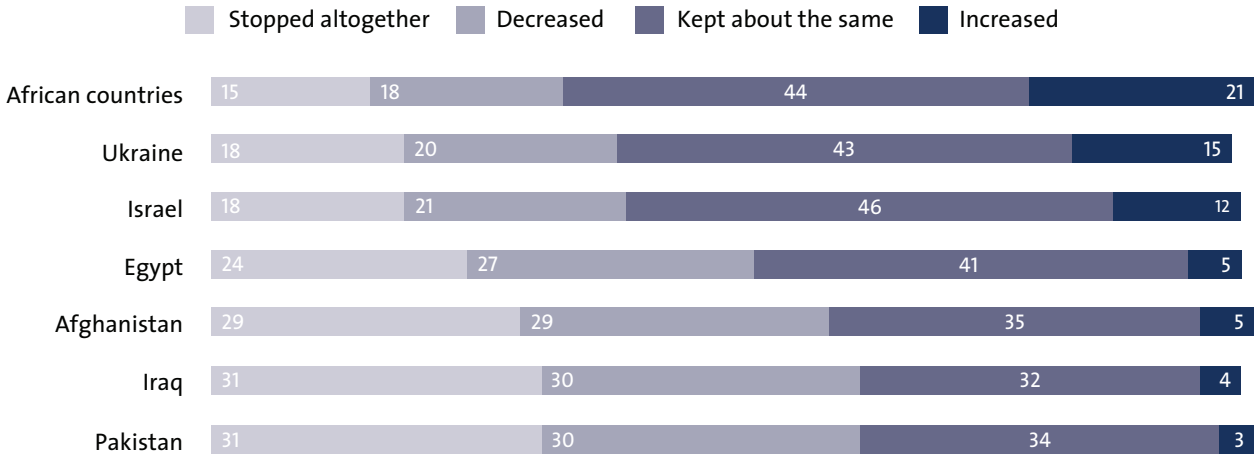


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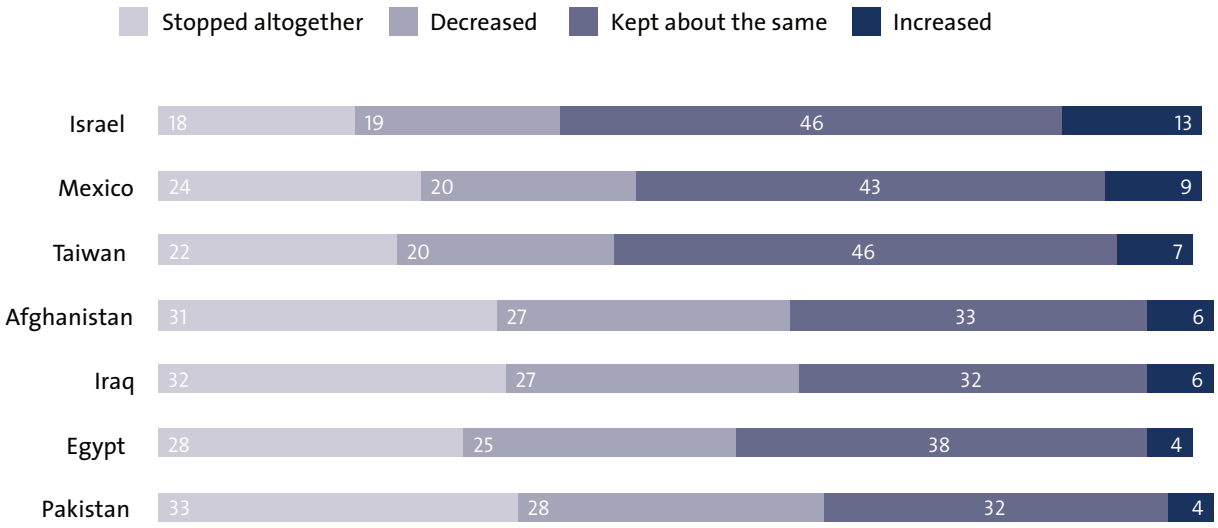
FIGURE 3.14

Military Aid to Other Nations

Do you think military aid to the following countries should be increased, decreased, kept the same, or stopped altogether?



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Methodology

This report is based on the results of a survey commissioned by The Chicago Council on Global Affairs. The 2014 edition of the survey is the latest effort in a series of wide-ranging biennial surveys on American attitudes towards US foreign policy.

The survey was conducted from May 6 to 29, 2014, among a representative national sample of 2,108 adults, including an oversample of 311 Hispanic respondents. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is +/- 2.5, including a design effect of 1.46.

The survey was conducted by GfK Custom Research, a polling, social science, and market research firm in Palo Alto, California. The survey was fielded to a total of 3,905 panel members, including 759 in the Hispanic oversample, yielding a total of 2,243 completed surveys. Of the total completes, 1,914 were from the main sample (a completion rate of 61%) and 339 were from the Hispanic oversample (a completion rate of 45%). The median survey length was 37 minutes.

Of the 2,243 total completed surveys, 142 cases were excluded for quality control reasons, leaving a final sample size of 2,108 respondents:

Respondents were excluded if they failed at least one of three key checks:

1. Respondents who completed the survey in 10 minutes or less.
2. Respondents who refused to answer half of the items in the survey or more.
3. Respondents who failed three or four of the following:
   a. Completed the survey in 10 minutes or less.
   b. Did not accurately input "4," refused or skipped the question that was specifically designed to make sure respondents were paying attention. ("In order to make sure that your browser is working correctly, please select number 4 from the list below.")
   c. Refused one or more full lists that included five items or more (of which there were 22 such lists).
   d. Respondents who gave exactly the same answer ("straight-lined") to every item on one of the four longest lists in the survey (Q5, Q7, Q50 or Q55).

The survey was fielded using a randomly selected sample of GfK's large-scale nationwide research panel, KnowledgePanel®. Prior to April 2009, the panel was recruited using stratified random digit dialing (RDD) telephone sampling, and now uses address-based sampling (ABS) to cover the growing number of cellphone-only households (approximately 97% of households are covered this way). Currently, 40 percent of panel members were recruited through RDD, 60 percent with ABS.

For both RDD and ABS recruitment, households that agree to participate in the panel are provided with free Internet hardware and access (if necessary), which uses a telephone line to connect to the Internet and the television as a monitor. Thus, the sample is not limited to those in the population who already have Internet access.

The distribution of the sample in the Web-enabled panel closely tracks the distribution of United States Census counts for the US population 18 years of age or

older on age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, geographical region, employment status, income, and education. To reduce the effects of any nonresponse and noncoverage bias in panel estimates, a poststratification raking adjustment is applied using demographic distributions from the most recent data from the Current Population Survey (CPS).

The poststratification weighting variables include age, gender, race, Hispanic ethnicity, and education. This weighting adjustment is applied prior to the selection of any sample from the KnowledgePanel and represents the starting weights for any sample. The following benchmark distributions were utilized for the poststratification weighting adjustment:

- Gender (male, female)
- Age (18-29, 30-44, 45-59 and 60-plus)
- Race (white non-Hispanic, black non-Hispanic, other non-Hispanic, 2+ races non-Hispanic, Hispanic)
- Education (less than high school, high school, some college, college degree or more)
- Household income (less than $10K, $10-25K, $25-50K, $50-75K, $75-100K, $100K-plus)
- Home ownership status (own, rent/other)
- Census region (Northeast, Midwest, South, West)
- Metropolitan area (yes, no)
- Internet access (yes, no)
- Primary language by Census region (non-Hispanic, Hispanic English proficient, Hispanic bilingual, Hispanic Spanish proficient)

Comparable distributions are calculated using all valid completed cases from the field data. Since study sample sizes are typically too small to accommodate a complete cross-tabulation of all the survey variables with the benchmark variables, an iterative proportional fitting is used for the poststratification weighting adjustment. This procedure adjusts the sample back to the selected benchmark proportions. Through an iterative convergence process, the weighted sample data are optimally fitted to the marginal distributions. After this final poststratification adjustment, the distribution of calculated weights is examined to identify and, if necessary, trim outliers at the extreme upper and lower tails of the weight distribution. The poststratified trimmed weights are then scaled to the sum of the total sample size of all eligible respondents.

In 2004 the Chicago Council Survey shifted from a mix of Internet and telephone polling to fully online polling, a shift that produces some mode differences. One difference appears to be that telephone respondents, who are talking to an interviewer, tend to give more "socially desirable" responses; they may be less likely, for example, to express approval of assassinations or torture. Another difference is that, for some questions with multiple alternatives, telephone respondents may tend to give more quick, "first choice" responses. Again, many or most Chicago Council Survey questions are unaffected by these tendencies. Still, inferences about opinion change in surveys from 2002 and prior require some caution.

For more information about the sample and survey methodology, please visit the GfK website at http://www.gfk.com/us/Solutions/consumer-panels/Pages/GfK-KnowledgePanel.aspx.

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, founded in 1922

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332 South Michigan Avenue
Suite 1100
Chicago, Illinois 60604
thechicagocouncil.org