



Constrained Internationalism: Adapting to New Realities

Results of a 2010 National Survey of American Public Opinion



**THE CHICAGO COUNCIL
ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS**

Global Views 2010 Team

Marshall M. Bouton, *Study chair*

Rachel Bronson, *Team member*

Gregory Holyk, *Team member*

Catherine Hug, *Team member and study editor*

Steven Kull, *Team member*

Benjamin I. Page, *Team member*

Silvia Veltcheva, *Study coordinator*

Thomas Wright, *Study director*

GLOBAL VIEWS 2010

Constrained Internationalism: Adapting to New Realities

Results of a 2010 National Survey of American Public Opinion



**THE CHICAGO COUNCIL
ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS**

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.

THE CHICAGO COUNCIL TAKES NO INSTITUTIONAL POSITION ON POLICY ISSUES AND HAS NO AFFILIATION WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. ALL STATEMENTS OF FACT AND EXPRESSIONS OF OPINION CONTAINED IN ALL ITS PUBLICATIONS ARE THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AUTHOR OR AUTHORS.

Copyright © 2010 by The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

This report may not be reproduced in whole or in part, in any form (beyond that copying permitted by sections 107 and 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law and excerpts by reviewers for the public press), without written permission from the publisher. For further information about The Chicago Council or this study, please write to The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 332 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 1100, Chicago IL, 60604, or visit The Chicago Council's Web site at www.thechicagocouncil.org.

Table of Contents

Foreword	1
Executive Summary	3
Chapter 1: Reevaluating Priorities across a Changing Global Landscape	11
Chapter 2: International Economic Policy and Domestic Priorities	25
Chapter 3: International Security and Selective Engagement.....	40
Chapter 4: Americans in an Emerging Multipolar World	58
Appendix A	77
Appendix B	82

Foreword

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs has sought to record and track American attitudes toward U.S. foreign policy since the mid-1970s through its biennial survey of American public opinion. Sometimes, the survey captures views at a unique moment in history—in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union or following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The 2010 survey features one of these historic moments, coming as it does less than two years after the greatest financial crisis since World War II, in the midst of the most severe economic downturn since the 1930s, and in the ninth year of major U.S. military engagement overseas. Economic constraints at home, accompanied by uncertainty and power transitions abroad, have deepened Americans' sense of vulnerability and pessimism about the future.

The Council's 2010 survey shows that Americans remain committed to an active part in world affairs—its problems, opportunities, and key actors. However, Americans are becoming more selective in what they support. They recognize constraints on their resources and on their power and influence abroad. They support playing an active role in solving international problems together with other countries, but they worry whether these efforts will prove to be effective. Consequently, they wish to focus on clear threats to the homeland such as international terrorism and nuclear weapons falling into the hands of unfriendly regimes, and are reluctant to become entangled in costly conflicts between other countries.

The 2010 Chicago Council survey is the latest edition in a long-running study, conducted every four years from 1974 to 2002 and biennially since 2002. While recent editions have devoted considerable attention to international views of U.S. foreign policy in addition to U.S. public opinion, this version, conducted in June 2010, concentrates exclusively on U.S. public opinion. The goal is to better understand the impact of the financial crisis, recession, ongoing war, and the emergence of new powers in the international system on American thinking about the U.S. role and involvement in the world. As a result, it is our most encyclopedic survey of American public opinion since 2002.

The Chicago Council survey would not be possible without the support and dedicated effort of a great number of people and institutions. The Council extends its greatest appreciation to The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the McCormick Foundation, which have been core funders of Chicago Council studies for many years. We are also thankful for generous support from the Korea Foundation for a special section of the survey on American attitudes towards the U.S.–ROK alliance.

The Chicago Council is fortunate to have a distinguished project team that made invaluable contributions to every phase of the study's development. We are particularly grateful for the continuing and invaluable leadership of Benjamin I. Page, Gordon Scott Fulcher Professor of Decision Making at Northwestern University's Department

of Political Science, and Steven Kull, director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA). Gregory Holyk, visiting assistant professor of politics at Washington and Lee University, provided expertise in the analysis of survey data and made important contributions throughout the process.

The Chicago Council would like to express sincere appreciation for the excellent work of Catherine Hug, a principal with Chicago Creative Group, who was the principal drafter of the report and an essential member of the team. The Chicago Council is also grateful to Sahar Khan, our copy-editor, Stefan Subias at Knowledge Networks, and Evan Lewis of PIPA.

Our team included a number of my colleagues from The Chicago Council. Rachel Bronson, vice president of programs and studies, and Thomas Wright, executive director of studies, had overall responsibility for developing, directing, and implementing the survey. Special recognition is due to Silvia Veltcheva, program officer at the Council, who managed day-to-day operations during all stages of the project and provided key input in the

survey development and final report. Interns who worked hard on the project and made this report possible include Anna Sims and Sarah Smith.

The Chicago Council would like to thank Victor Cha, senior adviser and Korea chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and Katrin Katz for writing a separately produced report based on a portion of the survey focusing on American perceptions of Korea and the U.S.–ROK alliance.

The data from this survey will be placed on deposit with the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and the Roper Center for Public Opinion in Storrs, Connecticut. The data will be available to scholars and other interested professionals. The report will also be available on the Internet at www.thechicagocouncil.org.

Marshall M. Bouton
President
The Chicago Council on Global Affairs
September 2010

Executive Summary

The world in 2010 looks quite different to Americans than it did just a decade ago. U.S. influence is seen as lessening, as China's is on the rise. Other countries are also viewed as increasing in influence, suggesting a trend toward a more multipolar world. The threats of terrorism and nuclear proliferation are perceived as continuing unabated. Difficult wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have dragged on for most of a decade. There is a growing feeling that conflict between Muslim and Western civilizations is inevitable. The financial crisis and deep lingering recession since 2008 at home have helped sustain an already negative view of America's economic future. In view of these challenges, Americans overwhelmingly prefer to focus on fixing problems at home.

Americans are not, however, backing away from their long-held commitment to take an active part in world affairs. They support a strong global military posture and are committed to alliances, international treaties and agreements, humanitarian interventions, and multilateral approaches to many problems. Americans also support many direct U.S. actions to address critical threats to U.S. vital interests.

Yet constraints on U.S. economic resources and influence abroad have led Americans to reassess priorities, scale back certain ambitions, and become more selective in what they will support in terms of engagement in major conflicts between other countries and long-term military commit-

ments. They appear to accept the idea of playing a less dominant role in the world, as other countries pursue more independent foreign policies. Even so, they are keeping a watchful eye on China, while supporting friendly cooperation and engagement with this rapidly rising power.

Lessening of U.S. Influence

- U.S. influence in the world today is seen as significantly greater than any other country asked about, including China. Yet the perception of U.S. current influence has declined since 2008, and in ten years U.S. influence is projected to decline even further. Meanwhile, China's influence is projected to increase in ten years to be nearly on par with the United States.
- Only one-quarter of Americans think the United States plays a more important and powerful role as a world leader today compared to ten years ago, down from a solid majority in 2002 when the question was last asked.
- Looking forward fifty years, only one-third of Americans think the United States will continue to be the world's leading power.
- Just over half of Americans think the ability of the United States to achieve its foreign policy goals has decreased.

- Three-quarters of Americans think the ability of terrorists to launch another major attack on the United States is either the same or greater than it was at the time of the 9/11 attacks.
- A bare majority of 51 percent believe that because most Muslims are like people everywhere, we can find common ground and violent conflict between the civilizations is not inevitable. The percentage who say instead that because Muslim religious, social, and political traditions are incompatible with Western ways, violent conflict between the two civilizations is inevitable, has increased sharply since 2002 from 27 percent to 45 percent today.

Tough Economic Times at Home

- A large majority of Americans think that the way things are going, the next generation of Americans who are children today will be economically worse off than the generation of adults working today.
- Americans are showing dampened enthusiasm for expanding many federal government programs. Top priorities continue to be the domestic programs of aid to education, health care, and Social Security, all still with majorities wanting to expand them. However, these majorities have been steadily declining and are the lowest in a decade.
- Two-thirds of Americans think reducing federal budget deficits is “very important” to the United States remaining competitive with other countries in the global economy, putting this at the top of the list of items asked about.
- While globalization is seen as “mostly good” for the United States by a majority of Americans, it is seen as bad for many aspects of American life, including the job security of American workers and creating jobs in the United States. Half of Americans now think it should be a goal of the United States to either try to slow globalization down or reverse it.

- Nine out of ten Americans today think it is more important for the future of the United States to fix pressing problems at home than to address challenges to the United States from abroad.

Sustained Support for International Engagement

- Two-thirds of Americans continue to think it is best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs.
- More than eight out of ten Americans think it is at least “somewhat desirable,” if not “very desirable,” for the United States to exert strong leadership in world affairs.
- Two-thirds favor keeping America’s commitment to NATO what it is now.
- A majority of Americans think maintaining superior power worldwide is a “very important” foreign policy goal.
- A majority also thinks the United States should have about as many long-term military bases as it does now, though support for long-term bases in many specific countries has dropped.
- Americans maintain their strong support of international treaties and agreements to deal with important problems such as nuclear proliferation and war criminals, favoring participation in the biological weapons treaty, the nuclear test ban treaty, the International Criminal Court, and an international treaty on climate change.
- Majorities support *new* international institutions to monitor financial markets, energy markets, and climate change treaty obligations as well as to provide information and assistance with migration problems.

Acceptance of Less Dominance

- A large majority thinks the United States is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be, a long-held view.
- Less than 10 percent think that as the sole remaining superpower, the United States should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems. Instead, a strong majority thinks the United States should do its share in efforts to solve international problems together with other countries.
- More than two-thirds of Americans think that as rising countries like Turkey and Brazil become more independent from the United States in the conduct of their foreign policy, it is mostly good because then they do not rely on the United States so much (rather than thinking it is mostly bad because then they are more likely to do things the United States does not support).
- There has been a striking overall drop in the percentages of Americans who say that various countries are “very important” to the United States, with thirteen of the fourteen countries asked about in both 2008 and 2010 showing declines. The only country that did not decline in perceived importance is China.
- More than two-thirds think that the United States should undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China rather than actively work to limit the growth of China’s power.

Preference for More Selective Engagement

- Given the constraints brought on by the financial crisis at home, the limits of U.S. power and influence abroad, and the strong desire to address domestic ills, Americans are choosing carefully where to focus their efforts.
- The principles of selective engagement that emerge from this study are:

- Support for actions against top threats
- Support for low-risk, low-cost humanitarian actions
- Support for multilateral actions through the United Nations
- Preference for lightening the U.S. military footprint
- Preference for staying on the sideline of conflicts that are not seen as directly threatening to the United States

Support for Actions against Top Threats

- Americans show strong support for both military and nonmilitary actions against international terrorism and nuclear proliferation as well as for actions to secure the energy supply and reduce dependence on foreign oil, all issues at the top of the list of “critical” threats and “very important” foreign policy goals.
- Majorities support actions that include working through the United Nations to strengthen international laws against terrorism, participating in the treaty that would prohibit nuclear weapon test explosions worldwide, having a UN agency control access to all nuclear fuel, creating a new international institution to monitor the worldwide energy market and predict potential shortages, U.S. air strikes on terrorist facilities, assassination of terrorist leaders, pursuit of mainly nonmilitary measures aimed at stopping Iran from enriching uranium, and the use of U.S. troops to ensure the oil supply.

Afghanistan/Pakistan

- A majority thinks that eliminating the threat from terrorists operating from Afghanistan is a worthwhile goal for American troops to fight and die for.

- Three-quarters of Americans support either withdrawing forces within two years or an even longer commitment—“as long as it takes to build a stable and secure state.” Less than one-quarter believe the United States should withdraw its forces from Afghanistan right away.
- Americans also support taking military action to capture or kill terrorists if the United States locates high-ranking members of terrorist groups operating in Pakistan that threaten the United States, even if the government of Pakistan does not give the United States permission to do so.

Iran

- On the issue of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons, Americans are at present reluctant to resort to a military strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities, preferring economic sanctions and diplomacy.
- Very strong majorities do not think it is likely that a military strike would cause Iran to give up trying to have a nuclear program. They also think a strike would likely result in retaliatory attacks against U.S. targets in neighboring states as well as in the United States itself.
- If all efforts fail to stop Iran, Americans are about evenly divided on whether to conduct a military strike.
- If Iran were to allow UN inspectors permanent and full access throughout Iran to make sure it is not developing nuclear weapons, a slight majority of Americans believe that Iran should be allowed to produce nuclear fuel for producing electricity.

Energy Dependence

- Strong majorities favor several measures to reduce dependence on foreign energy sources, including creating tax incentives to encourage the development and use of alternative energy sources such as solar or wind power; requiring automakers to increase fuel efficiency even if this means the price of cars would go up; and build-

ing nuclear power plants to reduce reliance on oil and coal.

Support for Low-Risk, Low-Cost Humanitarian Actions

- Strong majorities of Americans support robust U.S. responses to humanitarian crises. These include using U.S. troops in other parts of the world to stop a government from committing genocide and killing large numbers of its own people, creating an international marshals service through the United Nations that could arrest leaders responsible for genocide, and providing food and medical assistance to people in needy countries.

Support for Multilateral Actions through the United Nations

- Americans also continue to support multilateral action in certain major conflicts where they would not support U.S. action alone, namely in the case of an invasion by North Korea of South Korea.
- They are also generally supportive of peacekeeping operations, including having a standing UN peacekeeping force selected, trained, and commanded by the United Nations.

Preference for Lightening the U.S. Military Footprint

- Overall, a majority of Americans think the United States should have about as many long-term military bases as it has now.
- Majorities still favor long-term U.S. military bases in South Korea, Afghanistan, and Germany. However, only half of American now support long-term bases in Japan and Iraq, a shift from 2008 when majorities were in favor. And, majorities now oppose long-term bases in Pakistan and Turkey.

Preference for Staying on the Sideline of Conflicts That Are Not Seen As Directly Threatening to the United States

- A majority of Americans think that if Israel were to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities, Iran were to retaliate against Israel, and the two were to go to war, the United States should not bring its military forces into the war on the side of Israel and against Iran.
- Fewer than half of Americans show a readiness to defend Israel against an attack by its neighbors.
- Four out of ten Americans think the United States has been doing more than it should to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Americans are now evenly split on whether U.S. government leaders should be ready to talk with leaders of Hamas, down from a majority in favor of this. There is no majority support for using U.S. troops to be part of an international peacekeeping force to enforce a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.
- Two-thirds of Americans think that in response to North Korea's torpedoing of a South Korean naval ship in which forty-six South Korean sailors were killed, the United States should strongly criticize North Korea for its attack, but should view it as one in a series of incidents in the North Korea-South Korea conflict over disputed waters. Only a little more than one-quarter think the incident was an act of unprovoked aggression and the United States should join South Korea in punishing North Korea.

Diminished Ambitions for Upgrading International Institutions

- Responses show a sharp drop in support for strengthening international institutions. In the case of the United Nations and the World Health Organization, majorities still favor strengthening them, but the size of the majorities has dropped quite dramatically since 2002 when the question was last posed.

- International economic institutions (the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund) have now lost majority or plurality support for strengthening.
- There is also no longer a majority that thinks strengthening the United Nations should be a "very important" U.S. foreign policy goal, although a large majority still sees this as at least a "somewhat important" goal.
- Americans still support many important new roles for the United Nations, with strong majorities in favor of giving the United Nations the authority to go into countries to investigate human rights violations, having a UN agency to control access to all nuclear fuel in the world to ensure that none is used for weapons production, having a standing UN peacekeeping force selected, trained, and commanded by the United Nations, giving the UN the power to regulate the international trade of arms, and giving the UN the power to override a veto by a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Watchful Acceptance of China's Rise

- While Americans do not see the rise of China as highly threatening at this point, they are keeping a watchful eye on it, showing some concern about economic relations and hedging against a potential future military threat.
- Three-quarters of Americans believe it is likely that someday China's economy will grow to be as large as the U.S. economy, and two-thirds think that "another nation" will either become as powerful or surpass the United States in fifty years.
- Half of Americans think that if China's economy were to grow as large as the U.S. economy, this would be equally positive and negative. The rest lean heavily toward the negative, thinking this would be "mostly negative" rather than "mostly positive."

- Nearly two-thirds of Americans believe China practices unfair trade. Two-thirds now understand that China loans more money to the United States than the United States loans to China, up dramatically over the past two surveys. Roughly half consider debt to China a critical threat to vital U.S. interests in the next ten years. A majority is opposed to having a free trade agreement with China.
- Only a minority (but a substantial one) views the development of China as a world power as a “critical” threat. Very few Americans are “very worried” that China could become a military threat to the United States in the future, while nearly half are “somewhat worried.”
- As mentioned, a strong majority of Americans prefer to undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China rather than actively work to limit the growth of China’s power. Yet a majority prefers to hedge against a possible future threat from China by building up strong relations with traditional allies like South Korea and Japan even if this might diminish relations with China (as opposed to building a partnership with China at the expense of allies). When asked specifically if the United States and South Korea should work together to limit China’s rise in the years ahead, a majority is in favor.

Steadiness on Support for International Trade

- Americans are steady in their support for international trade. A majority believes foreign trade is “more of an opportunity for economic growth through increased U.S. exports” than “a threat to the economy from foreign imports.”
- Only about one-third of Americans are flatly opposed to agreements to lower trade barriers such as tariffs, with a plurality favoring such agreements provided that the government has programs to help workers who lose their jobs.

- Nearly three-quarters think the United States should generally comply with a decision by the World Trade Organization even if it rules against the United States.
- Americans favor the status quo on free trade agreements, opposing new agreements with China, Colombia, India, and South Korea. Only Japan receives majority support, though slim, for a free trade agreement with the United States.

Immigration

- Responses on immigration questions have generally not grown more negative since 2008, even as overall negative sentiment persists.
- Majorities think that “large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the United States” constitutes a “critical” threat to the vital interest of the United States and that “controlling and reducing illegal immigration” should be a “very important” goal of U.S. foreign policy.
- Immigration is seen as having a negative impact on many aspects of U.S. life, including the job security of American workers, the U.S. economy, and American companies.
- An overwhelming majority of Americans support a package of immigration reforms that includes stronger enforcement measures (greater efforts to secure the border, identify illegal immigrants, and penalize employers who hire them) as well as a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants (a program that would require them to pay back taxes and to learn English).

Climate Change and the Environment

- A majority of Americans say that protection of the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of curbing economic growth, rejecting the idea that economic growth should be given priority even if the environment suffers to some extent.

- Overall, climate change is seen less as a “critical” threat, than as an “important” threat to U.S. vital interests.
- On a question with three views of climate change, the plurality view is that the problem of climate change should be addressed, but its effects will be gradual so we can deal with the problem gradually by taking steps that are low in cost. Relatively equal proportions take the other two positions: that climate change is a serious and pressing problem and we should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs, or that until we are sure that climate change is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs.
- Nearly half of Americans think their government is not doing enough about climate change—far more than say it is doing too much—while just under one-third say the government is doing about the right amount.
- To address climate change, strong majorities favor creating tax incentives to encourage the development and use of alternative energy sources such as solar or wind power; requiring automakers to increase fuel efficiency even if this means the price of cars would go up; and building nuclear power plants to reduce reliance on oil and coal (the same measures as they support to address dependence on foreign sources of energy).

Chapter 1

Reevaluating Priorities across a Changing Global Landscape

Ten years into the new millennium, Americans face a uniquely challenging situation. Economically they are experiencing the deepest recession since the Great Depression. Federal budget deficits are larger than they have ever been with no end in sight. Since the September 11, 2001, attacks, the battle against al Qaeda has dragged on with many doubting that the United States is gaining ground.

In addition, the United States has been fighting two major wars for most of a decade. While the United States has withdrawn combat troops from Iraq, American involvement in the Afghan war—now possibly the longest in American history—shows little sign of ending as NATO allies increasingly pull their troops out.

Many have speculated that the American public may feel overstretched and that a backlash against the level of American involvement in the world is under way, leading to a renewal of isolationism. Some isolated poll results have contributed to this perception.

The new Chicago Council on Global Affairs study, however, paints a different picture. Americans are clearly still internationalists. Large majorities support continuing U.S. engagement with the world. Yet, there are signs that this internationalism is changing as it faces increasing constraints at home and abroad.

At home, these constraints are partially driven by the ongoing economic downturn. With a painfully slow recovery, persistently high unemploy-

ment, and diminished tax revenues, the United States has fewer resources to direct toward international efforts.

Abroad, Americans see a shifting international environment in which the United States is less dominant, China's power is growing, and the world is gradually moving toward a more multipolar order. Yet while such a change does engender some anxiety, this international realignment is not something that Americans are inclined to resist. In fact, they have favored the United States playing a less hegemonic role in the world for some time now, and thus they appear ready to adapt to it.

Overall, Americans are standing by their internationalist views and major commitments, even as they scale back their ambitions and become more selective in what they will support in terms of blood and treasure.

The Lessening of U.S. Influence

American attitudes about U.S. foreign policy appear to be conditioned by a perception that the international order is in flux. The dominance of U.S. power is gradually receding, China's power is rising, and the world is becoming more multipolar and less U.S.-centric.

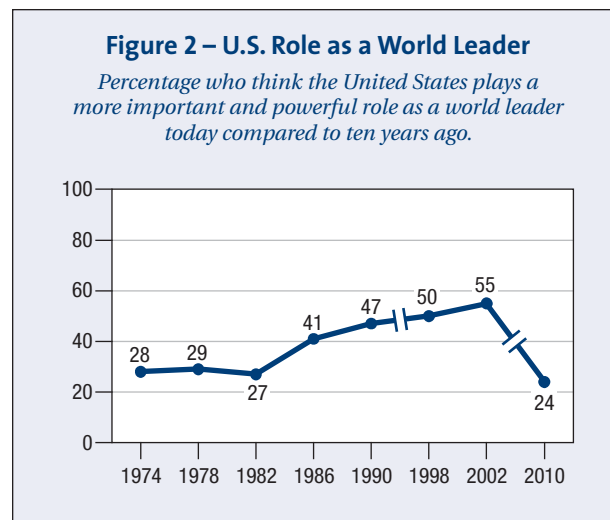
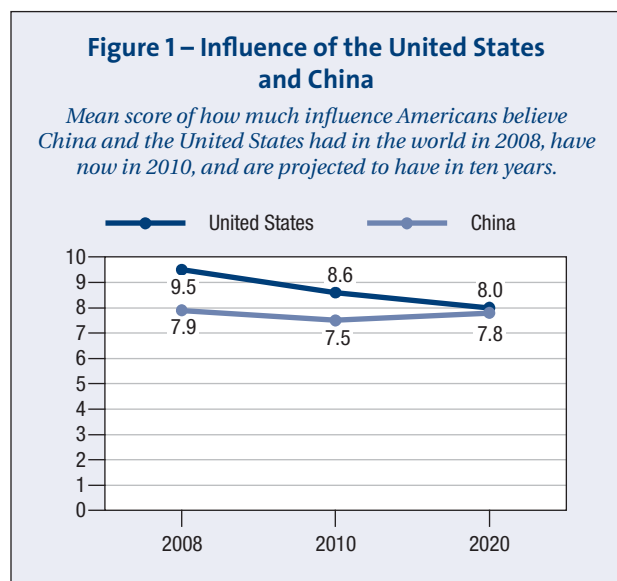
When asked to rate the influence of major countries in the world on a scale from 0 (not at all influential) to 10 (extremely influential) now and in ten years, Americans put the United States today at

an average of 8.6. While still the highest of all countries asked about, this number has dropped almost a full point from the 2008 average of 9.5 (before the onset of the U.S. financial crisis in the fall of 2008). Looking forward to ten years from now, U.S. influence is anticipated to erode further to 8.0 (see Figure 1).

China, on the other hand, is seen as growing in influence. Even though perceived Chinese influence has slipped a bit from 7.9 in 2008 to 7.5 in 2010, this is much less than for the United States, narrowing the gap between China and the United States to just 1.1 from 1.6 in 2008. Looking to the future, China's influence is seen as rising to 7.8, narrowing the gap with the United States even further to a mere 0.2 points.

The perceived influence of other nations also declined between 2008 and 2010.¹ But looking toward the future, in all cases the gap between the United States and other countries is seen as diminishing in ten years from what it is today: with the EU from 1.4 to 1.1, with Japan from 2.2 to 1.5, with Russia from 2.4 to 1.8, and with India from 3.6 to 2.4. In other words, it appears that Americans perceive that the world order is moving away from one

1. The decline in numbers between 2008 and 2010 appears in all cases on this question. The number of "don't know" responses also increased in all cases by 4 to 6 percentage points and may account for some of the decline. The relative trends and relationships among these countries, however, still hold.



of American dominance to one of increasing multipolarity (see Figure 54).

All this is a sharp turn from the 1990s and early 2000s. As the Cold War came to an end, Americans showed increasing optimism that the United States was playing a “more important and powerful role as a world leader today compared to ten years ago.” By 2002, 55 percent thought that the United States was on an upward arc. Now this optimism has dropped to the lowest level the Council has ever recorded (24%, see Figure 2). Those believing the United States is playing a less important and powerful role as a world leader has risen from 17 percent in 2002 to 37 percent.

Perhaps most striking, looking forward 50 years, only 33 percent of Americans think the United States will continue to be the world's leading power, down steadily from 40 percent in 2006 and 35 percent in 2008. Those saying that another nation will surpass the United States in power increased from 16 percent to 22 percent and then to 25 percent over the same period. The rest, currently 39 percent, think that another nation will become as powerful as the United States.

Constraints on U.S. Power Abroad

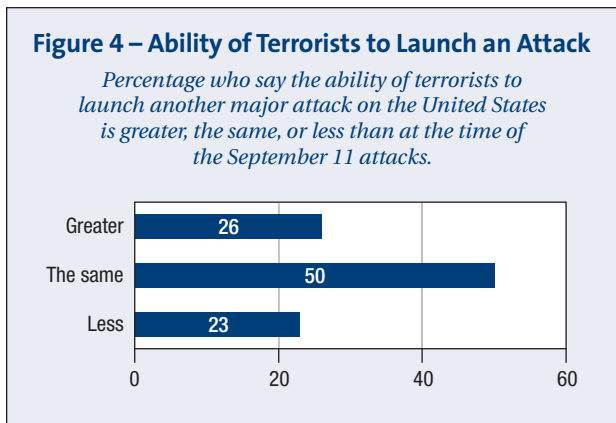
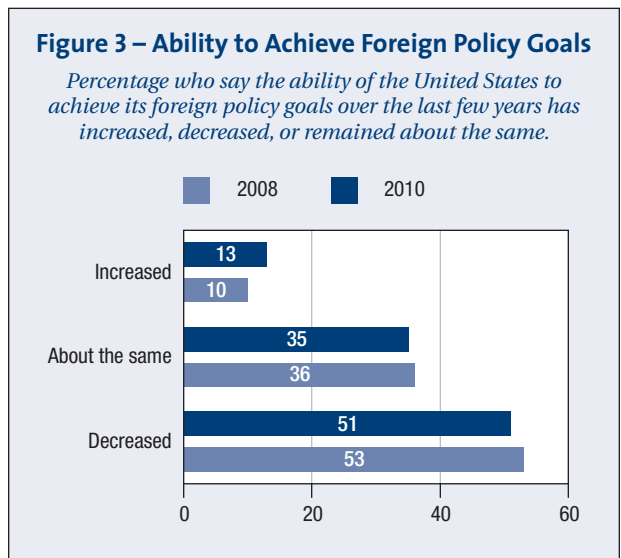
In the context of these changing power dynamics, Americans perceive the United States as more constrained in the pursuit of its foreign policy goals. Asked whether the ability of the United States

to achieve its foreign policy goals has increased, decreased, or remained about the same over the past few years, 51 percent of Americans think U.S. ability to achieve its goals has decreased. Only 13 percent think it has increased, while 35 percent think it has remained about the same (see Figure 3).

This perception may be at least in part attributable to the sense that critical international challenges do not appear to be abating despite massive efforts by the United States to combat them. In this study, “international terrorism” and “the possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers”—which for more than a decade have been among the top threats considered “critical” to the vital interests of the United States in the next ten years—still stand at the top of the list of perceived threats, with undiminished majorities considering them critical (73% and 69%, respectively).

Americans clearly do not see much headway in the war on terrorism. Three-quarters of Americans think the ability of terrorists to launch another major attack on the United States is either the same (50%) or greater (26%) than it was at the time of the 9/11 attacks (see Figure 4). A majority (53%) says the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan—which has been going on for nine years—is going either not too well (43%) or not well at all (10%).

Further, there is a growing overall pessimism in regard to relations with the Muslim world. In a striking change from 2002 when the question was



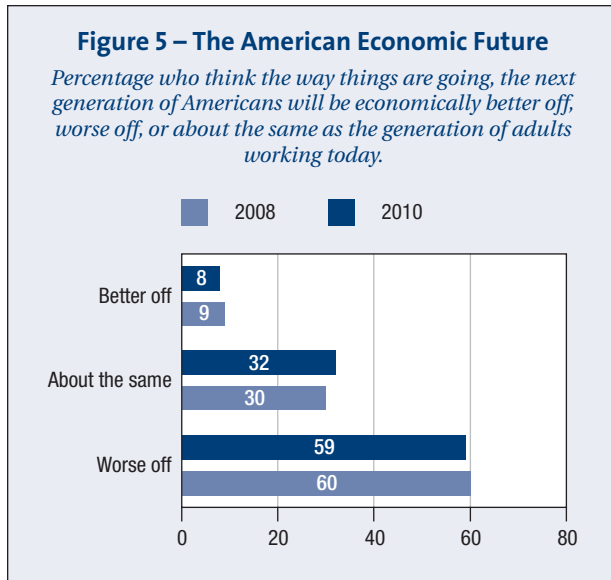
last posed, now only a bare majority (51%) believes that “because most Muslims are like people everywhere, we can find common ground and violent conflict between the civilizations is not inevitable.” This is down 15 points from 66 percent in 2002. A substantial 45 percent (up 18 points from only 27 percent in 2002) say instead that “because Muslim religious, social, and political traditions are incompatible with western ways, violent conflict between the two civilizations is inevitable.”

Regarding the possibility of an unfriendly country becoming a nuclear power, especially Iran, Americans are not at all confident about combating the threat. Seventy-six percent (76%) believe that it is either not very likely or not at all likely that Iran would give up trying to have a nuclear program if the United States were to conduct a military strike against it.

Tough Economic Times at Home

Americans are also recognizing the constraints imposed by the country’s severe economic downturn. Seventy-two percent (72%) of Americans think that economic strength is more important in determining a country’s overall power and influence in the world than military strength, up six points since 2002 when the question was last asked. Yet in a variety of ways, Americans are not feeling particularly strong economically.

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of Americans think that the way things are going, the next generation of Americans who are children today will be economically worse off than the generation of adults



working today (see Figure 5). Even more (62%) think the distribution of income and wealth in the United States has recently become less fair.

Signs of economic distress are also reflected in the American public’s dampened enthusiasm for expanding many federal government programs. While their favorite programs (aid to education, health care, and Social Security) continue to be top priorities, all still with majorities enjoying support for expanding them, these majorities have been steadily declining and are the lowest in a decade (see Chapter 2).

Indeed, Americans are showing substantial concern about the federal budget deficit. Asked to evaluate how important various factors are to the United States remaining competitive with other countries in the global economy, 66 percent think reducing federal budget deficits is “very important.” More significant, it has jumped to the top of the list of “very important” factors, ahead of investing in renewable energy and improving public education.

As Americans’ confidence in the country’s economic health has eroded, so has confidence in globalization. The belief that globalization, especially the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is “mostly good” for the United States—though still at a majority of 56 percent—continues to slowly erode and is down 8 points from a high of 64 percent in 2004. Those saying it is “mostly bad” for the United States has risen

from 31 percent in 2004 to 41 percent today. With regard to further globalization, 39 percent think it should be a goal of the United States to allow globalization to continue, yet far more (50%) think the goal should be to try to either slow it down (33%) or reverse it (17%) than to actively promote it (8%). This is a large shift from 2002, when 35 percent said it should be allowed to continue, 39 percent preferred to put on the brakes (with 24% wanting to slow it down and 15% wanting to reverse it), and 14 percent wanted to actively promote it.

The biggest concern about globalization is its effect on jobs. Sixty-five percent (65%) of Americans think globalization is bad for the job security of American workers, and 60 percent think it is bad for creating jobs in the United States. Protecting the jobs of American workers has not budged from its usual spot at or near the top of the list of preferred foreign policy goals, with 79 percent of Americans considering this “very important” in 2010.

While Americans have always given a higher priority to domestic problems over international concerns in these surveys, with a sluggish recovery, high unemployment, and huge deficits, it is not surprising that Americans have an especially strong opinion that problems at home are a higher priority than problems abroad. A whopping 91 percent of Americans today think it is more important for the future of the United States to fix pressing problems at home than to address challenges to the United States from abroad. This is up 9 percentage points since 2008 (see Figure 6).

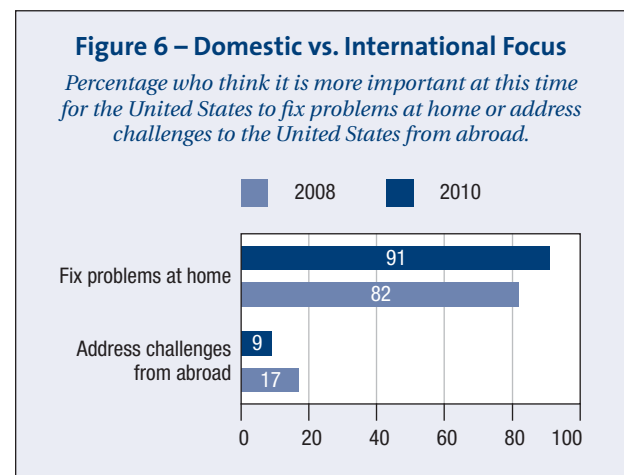
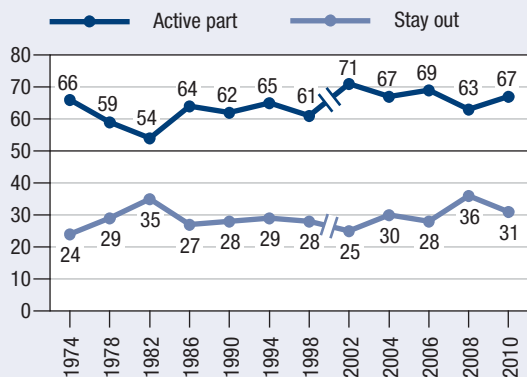


Figure 7 – Support for Active Part in World Affairs

Percentage who 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.



Sustained Support for International Engagement Overall

Given these sobering realities at home and abroad, one might expect a dramatic shift in commitment to engagement around the world. This study, however, finds no real signs of overt isolationism. Indeed, there are many indications of persisting support for an internationalist foreign policy at levels unchanged from the past. In some cases, however, there are signs that enthusiasm is a bit more muted.

On a long-time question that serves as a barometer of U.S. commitment to internationalism, Americans have held steady. Asked whether the United States should play an active part in world affairs or stay out of world affairs, only 31 percent take the isolationist position that United States should stay out of world affairs. This is actually down 5 points from 2008. Rather, a robust 67 percent say that the United States should play an active part in world affairs, up 4 points from 2008 and a typical response going back to 1947 (see Figure 7).²

Even though they see America’s influence as declining relative to other nations, Americans still support the United States playing a leadership role

2. Trend data from 1947 through 1973 come from national surveys conducted by NORC in Chicago. The Chicago Council began polling this question in 1974.

in the world. An overwhelming 84 percent say it is at least somewhat (49%) if not very (35%) desirable that the United States exert strong leadership in world affairs.

At the same time, there are signs that Americans are not quite as enthusiastic as they were in the past. The percentage saying it is “very desirable” for the United States to exert strong leadership is down 6 points from 41 percent when the question was last asked in 2002 to 35 percent today.

When presented three choices on the U.S. role in solving international problems (continuing to be the preeminent world leader in solving problems, solving problems together with other countries, or withdrawing from most efforts to solve international problems), only 19 percent choose the isolationist position of withdrawing (see Figure 8). This position did, however, rise 7 points from 2008.

Americans also continue to show support for involvement in NATO, one of America’s most enduring military alliances. Only 13 percent favor decreasing the U.S. commitment—essentially unchanged from 2004. Sixty-six percent (66%) favor keeping the current U.S. commitment to NATO “what it is now,” while 10 percent would like to increase it (down 4 points from 2004).

In broad terms Americans continue to support a robust military presence. Asked about the goal of “maintaining superior military power worldwide,” 56 percent say it is “very important” and 36 per-

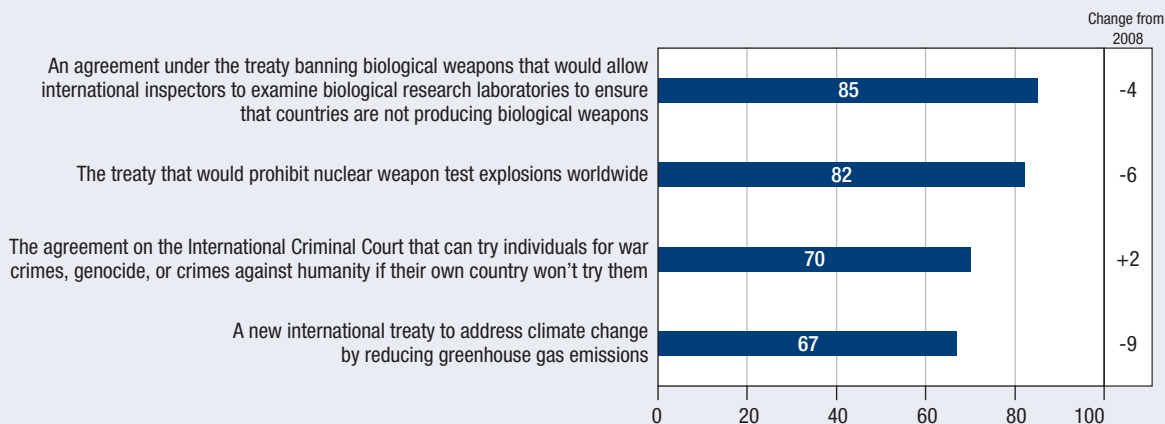
Figure 8 – U.S. Role in Solving International Problems

Percentage who say each of the following comes closest to their view.



Figure 9 – Participation in International Treaties and Agreements

Percentage who think the United States should participate in the following treaties and agreements.



cent say it is “somewhat important.” Asked generally about U.S. military bases overseas, 58 percent say the United States should have about as many as it does now. This number has been quite stable over the last decade. Yet there are also many more Americans who say the United States should have fewer bases (31%) than more bases (10%), and support for long-term bases in many specific countries has dropped, indicating a greater selectivity in support for the global U.S. presence (see Chapter 3 for further discussion).

Likely in response to their concern about critical threats such as terrorism and nuclear proliferation, Americans in this study are generally protective of defense spending. When asked whether defense spending should be expanded, kept about the same, or cut back, 43 percent of Americans prefer to keep spending about the same as it is now, a steady position since 2004, with 30 percent saying expand and 27 percent saying cut back. At the same time, Americans do recognize the need for moderation if federal budget cuts are necessary to reduce the deficit. When asked whether the defense budget should be cut along with other programs in an effort to address the federal budget deficit, a majority (58%) favors at least some cuts—less than other programs (29%), about the same as other programs (20%), and greater than other programs (9%). A substantial number (41%), however, say defense should not be cut at all. Along with the 29% who

say it should be cut less than other programs, there is a considerable majority that clearly sees defense spending as a high priority.

On the economic side, American views on international trade have remained solid. Fifty-five percent (55%) of Americans agree that foreign trade is more of an opportunity for economic growth than a threat to the economy. Only about one-third are opposed to trade agreements to lower trade barriers. And, 72 percent of Americans are generally willing to comply with a decision by the World Trade Organization (WTO) against the United States. The positive news on globalization is that in addition to the majority that still believes globalization is mostly good (56%), majorities also recognize its benefits in terms of being good for consumers (59% good) and for their own standard of living (51% good).

Americans maintain their strong support of international treaties and agreements to deal with important problems such as nuclear proliferation and war criminals (see Figure 9). Considerable majorities think the United States should participate in the biological weapons treaty (85%), the nuclear test ban treaty (82%), the International Criminal Court (70%), and an international treaty on climate change (67%). While the latter treaty showed a 9-point drop between 2008 and 2010, from 76 percent to 67 percent, the majority remains decisive (see Chapter 2 for discussion of climate change).

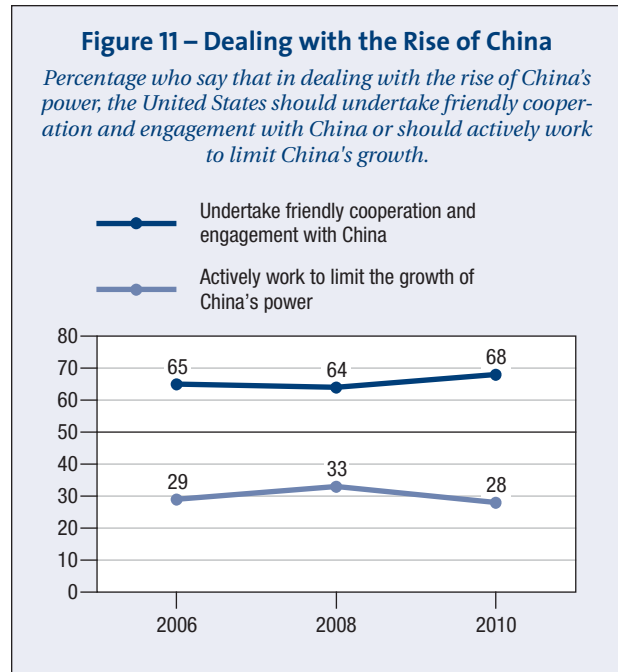
Finally, although levels of support have dropped somewhat since 2008, there remains strong majority support for new international institutions to monitor financial markets (66%), monitor energy markets (64%), monitor climate change treaty obligations (62%), and provide information and assistance with migration problems (53%).

Acceptance of Less Dominance

While Americans are holding fast to an internationalist stance, the preference for focusing on problems at home is very clear. Even as the global balance of power and influence around the world appears to be shifting, Americans seem—perhaps surprisingly—fairly accepting of the prospect of the United States playing a less dominant role.

This has been foreshadowed for some years now in the Chicago Council surveys, which have shown Americans uncomfortable with America’s hegemonic role. In the current survey a large majority (79%) agree that the United States is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be. This finding is unchanged from 2008, and large majorities have taken this position since the question was first asked in 2002.

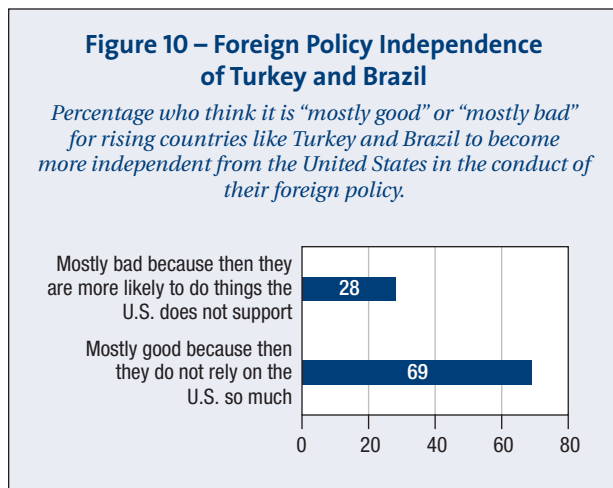
On the question mentioned earlier about the U.S. role in solving international problems, asked repeatedly since 2002, only small minorities (8% in 2010), have thought that “as the sole remaining superpower, the United States should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving interna-



tional problems.” By far the most popular response (in all cases seven in ten or more) has been for the United States to “do its share in efforts to solve international problems together with other countries.”

It appears that many Americans find the role of global hegemon more of a burden than a benefit. This may help explain a surprising response to a question in the current survey that asked about rising countries like Brazil and Turkey becoming more independent from the United States in the conduct of their foreign policy. Presented with two positions on this development, just 28 percent say that this is “mostly bad because then they are more likely to do things the United States does not support.” Rather, 69 percent say that this is “mostly good because then they do not rely on the United States so much” (see Figure 10).

Perhaps most striking is Americans’ limited response to the prospect of China becoming more powerful. A strong majority (68%) says the United States should undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China, while only 28 percent (down 5 points from 2008) think the United States should actively work to limit the growth of China’s power (see Figure 11). As will be discussed in Chapter 3, there is some hedging against a threat that is still “somewhat” concerning to Americans.



Decline in the Perceived Importance of Other Countries

In line with Americans' feeling that it is more important to focus on fixing problems at home than to address challenges to the United States from abroad, there has been a detectable shift in American thinking about getting involved in the affairs of other countries. This is most striking on a long-standing poll question, used by numerous organizations for some decades, that asks respondents whether they agree that the United States should "mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can on their own." Historically, a majority has always rejected this proposition. For the first time in November 2009, a poll by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press found nearly half of Americans (49%) agreeing with the statement. The current Council survey confirms this result, with 49 percent agreeing and the same number disagreeing.

The idea of "minding one's own business," however, appears to be quite different from the idea of not playing an active role in the world. While certainly there is some correlation between those who think the United States should "mind its own business" and those who want the United States to "stay out" of world affairs, nearly half (48%) of those who think the United States should "mind its own business" still say the United States should take an "active part" in world affairs. In addition, 75 percent of those who say the United States should "mind its own business" still say that it is at least somewhat desirable for the United States to exert strong leadership in world affairs. They also support many international actions, including maintaining superior military power worldwide (53% say this is a "very important" foreign policy goal); keeping the U.S. commitment to NATO the same (59%); combating terrorism with attacks by ground troops against terrorist training camps and other facilities (63%); complying with WTO decisions (73%); having a standing UN peacekeeping force selected, trained, and commanded by the United Nations (64% in favor); and providing food and medical assistance to people in needy countries

Figure 12 – Importance of Other Countries

Percentage who think the following countries are "very important" to the United States.

	Very important (%)	Change from 2008
China	54	+2
Great Britain	52	-8
Canada	50	-3
Japan	40	-5
Israel	33	-7
Mexico	31	-6
Saudi Arabia	30	-14
Germany	27	-2
Iraq	26	—
Russia	26	-8
Iran	25	-7
Afghanistan	21	-4
South Korea	21	—
Pakistan	19	-11
India	18	-7
Brazil	10	-4
Turkey	10	—

(67%), among others. Indeed, many Americans may consider such international actions—including efforts to counter top-ranked threats—as being very much the United State's own business.

But there is further evidence of the feeling that countries should get along on their own—presumably so Americans can focus on problems at home—in the question of how important Americans feel other countries are to the United States. For thirteen of the fourteen countries for which there are data from previous surveys, the percentage saying that the country is "very important" has declined (see Figure 12). In some cases these declines are quite substantial. For Saudi Arabia the decline is 14 points; for Pakistan 11 points; for Great Britain and Russia 8 points; and for India, Iran, and Israel 7 points (see Chapter 4).

There is also a decline in the amount of influence Americans think other countries should have on U.S. foreign policy. On a scale from 0 (not at all influential) to 10 (extremely influential), Americans think that "the opinion of the majority of govern-

ments around the world” should have a mean 4.9 level of influence on U.S. foreign policy. This is down from 6.1 in 2002 when the question was last asked. Still, this preferred level of influence is also notably below the amount of influence that Americans believe foreign governments have on U.S. foreign policy now—a mean level of 6.0.

Preference for More Selective Engagement

As Americans face seemingly intractable enemies, a fractious international system, and the rise of other powers, they are also necessarily bumping up against very real constraints brought on by the financial crisis at home, the limits of U.S. power and influence abroad, and the strong desire to address domestic ills. In light of these constraints, Americans are reassessing their priorities and choosing where to focus their efforts carefully.

As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, responses to many questions about international action in this survey show some fundamental principles of engagement emerging. Not surprisingly, Americans tend to show the most support for actions against the most critical perceived threats to U.S. vital interests. Yet, they also show strong support for morally compelling but low-risk humanitarian interventions and for other actions if undertaken multilaterally through the United Nations. Otherwise, they prefer to stay out of potentially dangerous, costly, and long-term foreign entanglements that are not seen as directly threatening to the United States and to reduce commitments where they perceive the United States is not needed or wanted.

Priorities for Engagement

Action against Top Threats

Americans show strong support for actions against international terrorism and nuclear proliferation as well as for actions to secure the energy supply and reduce dependence on foreign oil, all issues at the top of the list of “critical” threats and “very

important” foreign policy goals. These actions include everything from multilateral approaches—such as working through the United Nations to strengthen international laws against terrorism (82% in favor), participating in the treaty that would prohibit nuclear weapon test explosions worldwide (82% in favor), having a UN agency control access to all nuclear fuel (64% in favor), and creating a new international institution to monitor the worldwide energy market and predict potential shortages (64%)—to other actions such as U.S. air strikes on terrorist facilities (81% in favor), assassination of terrorist leaders (73%), pursuit of mainly nonmilitary measures aimed at stopping Iran from enriching uranium (71% favoring either economic sanctions or continued diplomatic efforts, 77% opposing trade, 62% favoring U.S. leaders meeting and talking with Iran’s leaders), and the use of U.S. troops to ensure the oil supply (55%).

Support for Low-Risk, Low-Cost Humanitarian Actions

In terms of humanitarian crises, Americans support many measures, including using U.S. troops in other parts of the world to stop a government from committing genocide and killing large numbers of its own people (72%), creating an international marshals service through the United Nations that could arrest leaders responsible for genocide (73%), and providing food and medical assistance to people in needy countries (74%).

Support for Multilateral Actions through the United Nations

Americans also continue to support multilateral action in certain major conflicts where they would not support U.S. action alone, namely in the case of an invasion by North Korea of South Korea. Sixty-one percent (61%) favor the United States contributing military forces together with other countries to a UN-sponsored effort to reverse the aggression. They are also generally supportive of peacekeeping operations, including having a standing UN peacekeeping force selected, trained, and commanded by the United Nations (64% in favor).

Opportunities for Reducing Commitments

Selectively Lightening the U.S. Military Footprint

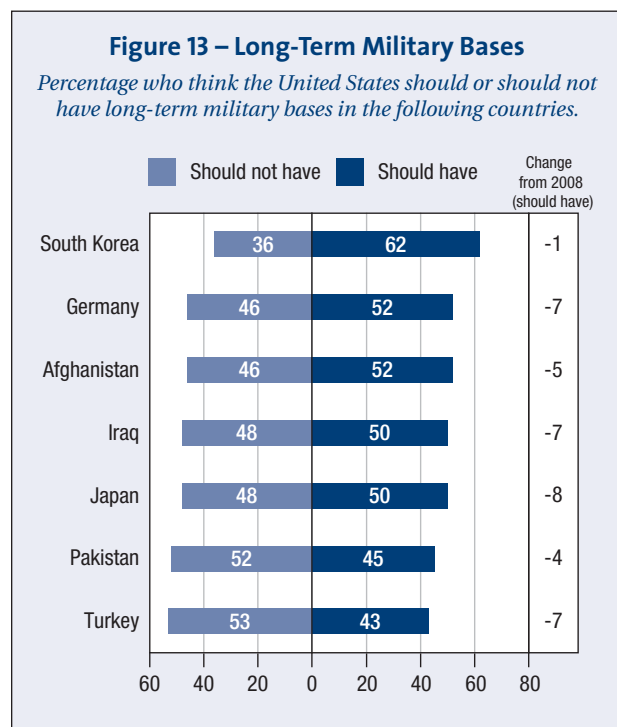
While support is steady for action to address top threats, humanitarian crises, and certain types of aggression when in a multilateral context, there is also evidence of a desire to selectively scale back ambitions internationally. One area in which Americans show this desire is on long-term military bases. Even though most Americans support having about the same number of bases as at present, there are clear movements toward wanting to lighten the U.S. military footprint in a number of specific countries. Overall, there are significant drops in support for long-term bases in six out of the seven countries asked about, and no country except South Korea gets more than a bare majority supporting bases there (see Figure 13).

In areas where the United States is or has been involved in major conflicts, there is a substantial decline in support for long-term military bases. Support for having long-term bases in Afghanistan has dropped 5 points to only a slight majority of 52 percent. Only half of Americans (50%) now support long-term bases in Iraq, down 7 points from

2008. For Pakistan, views were divided in 2008, but today there is a majority *against* long-term bases (52% opposed).

Enthusiasm for long-term military bases in Germany and Japan, critical strategic locations during the Cold War and longtime close allies, has also dropped. While a majority still supports bases in Germany, this is down 7 points from 59 percent in 2008 to 52 percent. In the case of Japan, the solid majority of 58 percent that supported long-term bases in 2008 has now turned into support from only half of Americans (50%). This is possibly influenced by the controversy in Japan over troops in Okinawa that led to the resignation of its prime minister (see Chapter 3). In the case of Turkey, a strategic location between Europe and the Middle East, the desire to have long-term bases has dropped from half in favor (50%) in 2008 to 43 percent, with a majority opposed (53%).

The only country (out of seven asked about) where there has not been a significant drop in support for U.S. military bases is South Korea. This is related both to concern about the nuclear threat from North Korea as well as to a desire to hedge against a possible future threat from China (see further discussion in Chapter 3).



Staying on the Sideline of Conflicts That Are Not Seen As Directly Threatening to the United States

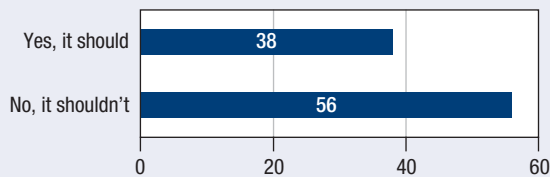
There are numerous situations where the American public expresses a desire for the United States to refrain from taking an active role in conflicts. These include situations where the United States has historically been quite active.

Perhaps most striking is a possible military conflict between Iran and Israel, prompted by an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities. A majority (56%) says the United States should not bring its military forces into such a conflict, with 38 percent saying it should (see Figure 14).

Contrary to the long-standing, official U.S. position, fewer than half of Americans show a readiness to defend Israel even against an unprovoked attack by a neighbor. Asked whether they would favor using U.S. troops in the event that Israel were

Figure 14 – U.S. Involvement in Possible Israel–Iran War

Percentage who think that if Israel were to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities, Iran were to retaliate against Israel, and the two were to go to war, the United States should or should not bring its military forces into the war on the side of Israel.



attacked by a neighbor, only 47 percent say they would favor doing so, while 50 percent say they would oppose it.

Americans also show an inclination to take a hands-off approach to confrontations between North and South Korea. Asked how the United States should respond to the recent North Korea's torpedoing of a South Korean naval ship in which forty-six South Korean sailors were killed, only 27 percent endorse the view that this was an act of unprovoked aggression and the United States should join South Korea in punishing North Korea. Rather, two-thirds endorse the position that the United States should strongly criticize North Korea for its attack, but should view it as one in a series of incidents in the North Korea–South Korea conflict over disputed waters. Americans are also reluctant to unilaterally defend South Korea against an attack from the north. Fifty-six percent (56%) would oppose the use of U.S. troops if North Korea invaded South Korea, though as mentioned previously, a majority would contribute military forces “together with other countries” to a UN-sponsored effort to reverse the aggression.

A recurring question for American policymakers has been whether the United States should actively discourage democratic elections if there is a good chance that it will lead to the election of a potentially hostile Islamist party such as the Muslim Brotherhood. In a question that has not been asked previously, the American public comes down quite firmly on the side of not being involved. Respondents were asked to suppose there is a

Muslim country that is not democratic, and if it were democratic, the people would probably elect an Islamic fundamentalist leader. In these circumstances just 5 percent favor the United States discouraging democracy, with 25 percent in favor of encouraging it and 68 percent in favor of not taking a position either way.

Diminished Ambitions for Upgrading International Institutions

In past years Americans have expressed substantial enthusiasm for strengthening international institutions and giving them new powers. This time, however, they are much more restrained in their enthusiasm.

Respondents were asked to say if various institutions should be strengthened or not after being presented pro and con arguments: “Some say because of the increasing interaction between countries, we need to strengthen international institutions to deal with shared problems, while others say that this would only create bigger, unwieldy bureaucracies.”

Responses show a sharp drop in support for strengthening international organizations (see Figure 15). In the case of the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO), majorities still favor strengthening them, but the size of the majorities has dropped quite dramatically since 2002 when the question was last posed. The number wanting to strengthen the United Nations has gone from 77 to 54 percent, a 23-point drop, and the WHO from 80 to 58 percent, a 22-point drop. International economic institutions have now lost majority or plurality support for strengthening. In the case of the WTO, attitudes have shifted from a majority of 63 percent to 44 percent saying it should be strengthened, with a plurality of 48 percent against strengthening. Attitudes on the World Bank have shifted from a plurality of 49 percent saying it needs to be strengthened to a majority saying it does not (53%). Similarly, for the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a plurality of 42 percent that said it did need to be strengthened in 2002 is now a majority saying it does not

Figure 15 – Strengthening International Institutions

Percentage who think the following international institutions need to be strengthened or not based on the idea that because of the increasing interaction between countries, we need to strengthen international institutions to deal with shared problems OR that this would only create bigger, unwieldy bureaucracies.

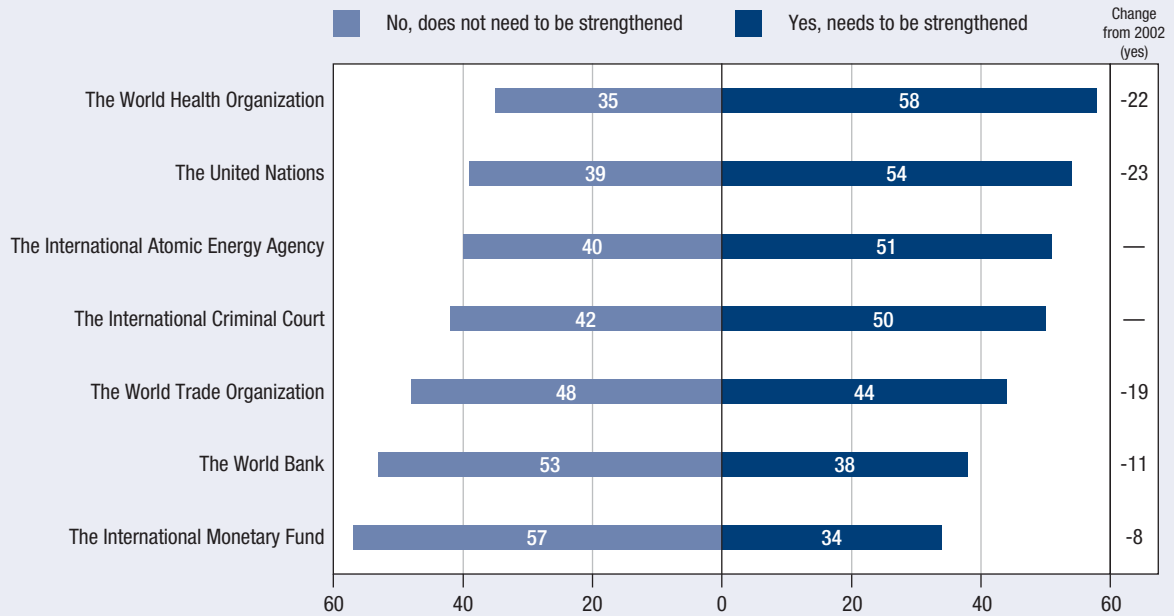
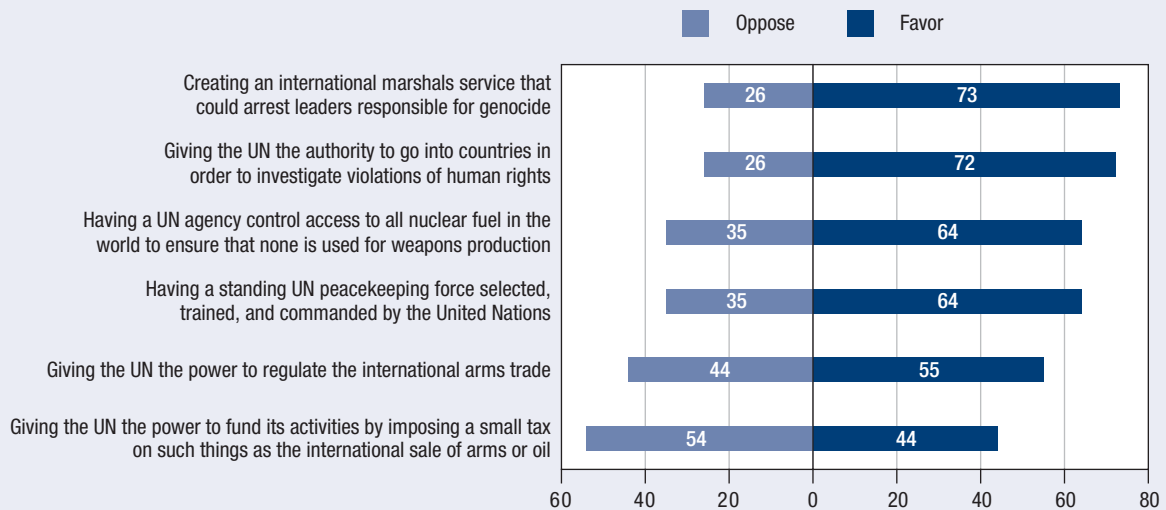


Figure 16 – Steps to Strengthen the United Nations

Percentage who favor or oppose the following steps to strengthen the United Nations.



(57%). Support for strengthening the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), two new items asked about in 2010, stands at roughly half for both (50% and 51%, respectively).

Regarding the United Nations, other findings show that strengthening this institution in general is a relatively low priority. Just 37 percent consider strengthening the United Nations to be a “very important” foreign policy goal. In addition, there is now an essentially even split between those who 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 (50%) and those who disagree with this (48%). The percentage in favor of being more willing to make such decisions through the United Nations has gone down steadily from 66 percent in 2004 when this question was first asked.

The drops in support for strengthening international institutions overall do not necessarily mean that Americans do not support these organizations or prefer for the United States not to work through them. This is supported by still other findings on

the United Nations. As we have seen, Americans are not abandoning the United Nations and still support many specific steps for strengthening it, especially those related to U.S. top priorities for engagement, including action against top threats and humanitarian crises (see Figure 16).

As in the past, strong majorities favor giving the United Nations the authority to go into countries to investigate human rights violations (72%) and creating an international marshals service to arrest leaders responsible for genocide (73%). This is not surprising given that 66 percent of Americans think the United Nations has a responsibility to protect people from severe human rights violations such as genocide even against the will of their own government. Majorities also support a UN agency to control nuclear fuel (64%), a standing UN peacekeeping force (64%), and giving the United Nations the power to regulate the international sale of arms (55%). Along the same lines, 59 percent of the public favors giving the United Nations the power to override a veto by a permanent member of the UN Security Council. The only reform Americans oppose is funding the United Nations with a tax on international oil and arms sales (54% oppose).

Trust in Government and Who Influences Foreign Policy

From a policymaker's perspective, the apparent acceptance of a less dominant role for the United States in the world and a scaling back of ambitions is not necessarily a bad thing for the United States or the world. It provides an opportunity to reevaluate, reprioritize, and streamline international commitments. Yet, what is potentially problematic is the perception that foreign policy is disconnected from the interests of the American public. When asked how much influence various people and groups have on U.S. foreign policy on a scale of 0 (not at all influential) to 10 (extremely influential), the American public perceives its own influence to be near the bottom of the list at an average of 5.1. Importantly, the public thinks it should have the *most* influence of any groups asked about, an average of 8.1 (see Figure 17).

As will be discussed in Chapter 2, there is also a rather large discrepancy between the influence on foreign policy that large corporations are viewed to have now and the influence the American public thinks they should have. Americans believe large corporations have virtually as much influence as the president (7.2 compared to the president's 7.3). They think that corporations should have the least influence of all groups asked about (4.1).

Consistent with these massive discrepancies is the relatively low level of trust that Americans say they have in the government in Washington, D.C., to do what is right. A strong majority of Americans (59%) say they can trust Washington "only some of the time," with another 15 percent saying "never." Only 23 percent trust the government "most of the time," with a mere 2 percent saying "just about always."

Those who have little or no trust in the government to do what is right also believe that the American public has very little influence on foreign policy (4.7 on the 10-point scale). This compares to a 6.1 level of influence given to the American public among those who trust the government all or most of the time. Even though both groups rank the American public's influence next to last in comparison to other groups (just above world public opinion), the differential in the level of perceived influence of Americans on foreign policy is significant.

Interestingly, those who trust the government most of the time or just about always think the president currently has the most influence on U.S. foreign policy and should have the most influence, followed by the American people and Congress. Those who trust the government only some of the time or never think large corporations have the most influence on foreign policy

Figure 17 – Influence of Groups

Mean rating on a scale of 0 (not at all influential) to 10 (extremely influential) of how much influence some people and groups have on U.S. foreign policy now and how much they should have.

Influence groups have now		Influence groups should have	
The President	7.3	The American public	8.1
Large corporations	7.2	The President	7.2
Congress	7.1	Congress	6.6
U.S. interest groups	6.4	The opinion of the majority of all people around the world	5.2
The opinion of the majority of governments around the world	6.0	The opinion of the majority of governments around the world	4.9
The American public	5.1	U.S. interest groups	4.5
The opinion of the majority of all people around the world	4.7	Large corporations	4.1

(more than the president, who comes in second) and think the American people *should* have the most influence, followed by the president and Congress. Both groups think large corporations should have the least influence.

When analyzing the data even further, it is clear that those who show more trust in the government are much less pessimistic about the economic future, more willing to take an active part in world affairs, much less threatened by globalization and immigration, and much more likely to support a range of international commitments, including working through international institutions to help solve international problems. They also see the United States as having much more influence in the world in ten years than those who do not trust the government. Among those who trust the government "most of the time" or "just about always," the United States is projected to have an 8.7 mean level of influence in the next ten years on a 10-point scale. Among those who trust the government "only some of the time" or "never," the mean level of influence for the United States in ten years is 7.7, just below the sample overall (7.8).

The challenge for policymakers is to help rebuild trust by either responding more fully to the foreign policy concerns of Americans and/or making a greater effort to educate and persuade the public to agree more fully with official policies.

Chapter 2

International Economic Policy and Domestic Priorities

The financial crisis of 2008–2009 and the deep, lingering recession that has followed have presented serious challenges for Americans. Depleted tax revenues have severely strained budgets at all levels of government. While the country is reeling from high unemployment—which continues to hover just below 10 percent—depressed housing prices, high rates of foreclosure, and sluggish consumer demand, debate is raging about the perceived “massive” federal budget deficit. Even though many analysts believe that large deficit spending is the quickest route to economic recovery and that deficits can be dealt with when healthy economic growth returns, there are loud calls to bring spending under control and cut taxes.

These extraordinary economic circumstances have led Americans to overwhelmingly prefer to focus on fixing problems at home over addressing challenges to the United States from abroad. Many of the top U.S. foreign policy goals considered “very important” to Americans are focused on domestic economic priorities. These include protecting the jobs of American workers, securing adequate supplies of energy, and controlling and reducing illegal immigration (see Figure 18).

By far the highest priority for Americans is job security. This overriding concern colors American views on many international economic issues, including globalization, immigration, and trade. While this is not new in these studies, heightened economic pressures at home have added weight to

already growing worries about the impact of global economic influences on the lives of Americans.

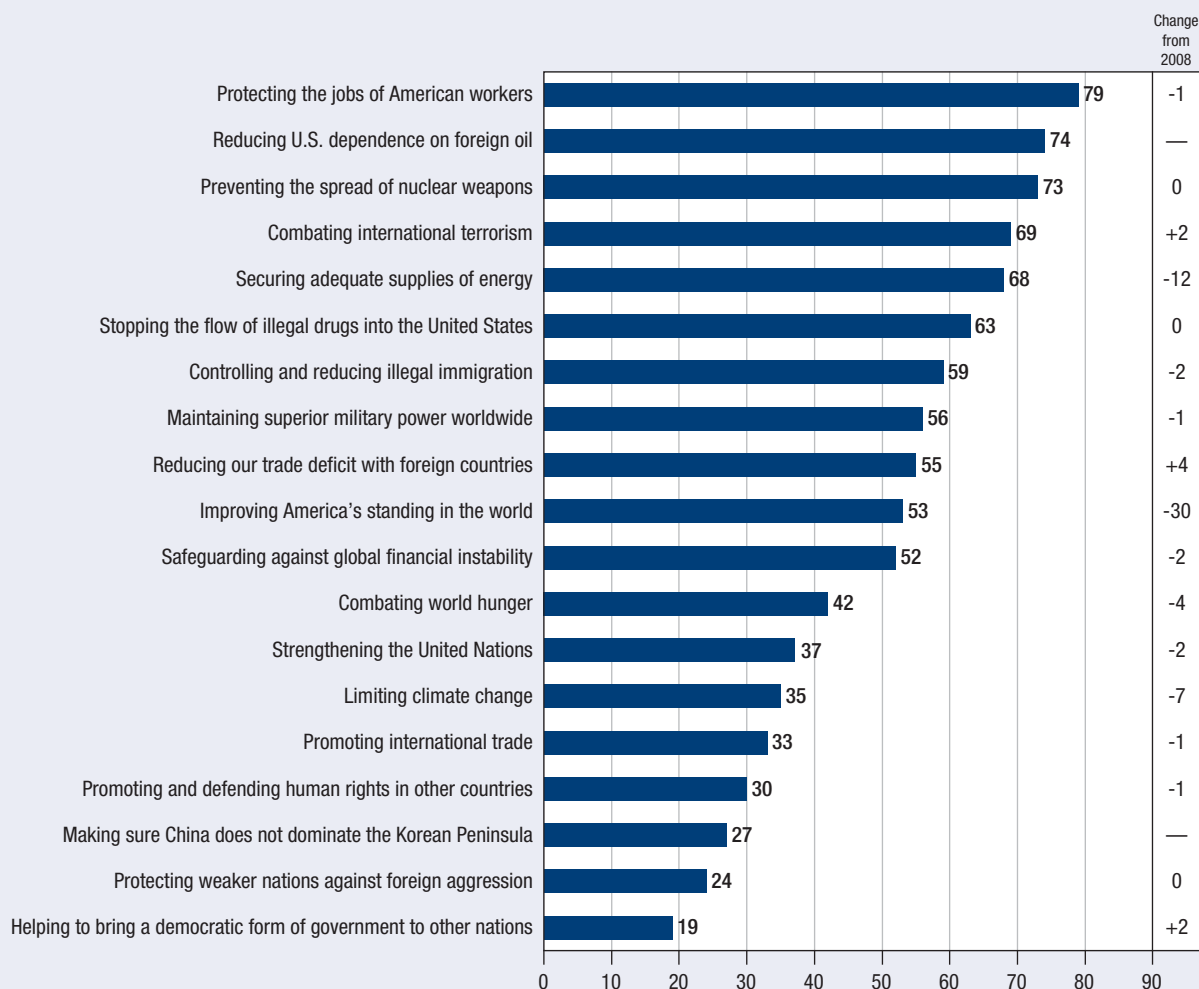
At the same time, perhaps remarkably, economic troubles at home have not had as dramatic an impact on Americans’ international economic views as might be expected. Americans are keenly aware of the rising economic power of China and global problems such as climate change. Yet even as they are wary of unfair traders and concerned about economic imbalances and other problems, they do not appear to be highly concerned about direct economic threats from other countries. They see free trade as more of an opportunity than a threat, support current international trade structures, and overall still consider globalization to be mostly a good thing, especially for consumers. And even though economic travails and job worries are clearly imposing constraints on the expansion of international economic pursuits—majorities no longer want to strengthen international economic organizations and generally do not favor new trade agreements—Americans are still willing to support domestic and international measures to address many problems, including climate change and energy security.

Prioritizing Demands at Home

Americans—who were already exhibiting economic anxieties in the Council’s previous study in 2008, two months *prior* to the September financial crisis

Figure 18 – Foreign Policy Goals

Percentage who think each of the following should be a “very important” foreign policy goal of the United States.



that brought the U.S. economy to the brink—have since been hit with a severe economic downturn that is stubbornly hovering like a dark cloud over their future. As mentioned in Chapter 1, 59 percent of Americans think that the way things are going, the next generation of Americans will be economically worse off, and 62 percent think the distribution of income and wealth in the United States has recently become less fair. These numbers are nearly identical to those in 2008.

Even though pessimism has not deepened since 2008, Americans are more resolute in their desire to put their own house in order. Ninety-one percent (91%) of Americans want to focus on fixing problems at home rather than addressing interna-

tional challenges, up 9 points from 82 percent in 2008. The biggest problem they want to address is job security. Seventy-nine percent (79%) say protecting the jobs of American workers should be a very important goal of foreign policy. This places it at the top of the foreign policy goals list, a position it has held in three of the Council's last four surveys (see Figure 18). This signals that the issue is perhaps one of the greatest influencing factors on attitudes toward international economic matters.

Besides jobs, other domestic priorities are clear on the question about what to do with various federal government programs. As in previous years, many more Americans favor expanding popular domestic programs than want to expand defense or

foreign programs. Indeed, majorities favor expanding each domestic program asked about. Yet there has been a gradual diminishing of enthusiasm for expanding even domestic programs, as economic troubles impose constraints. Not one program, domestic or foreign, shows any increase at all since 2008 in the proportion of Americans wanting to expand it. Perhaps surprisingly, though, there is *not* a dramatic shift from past surveys in favor of cutting programs back. Rather, the declines in those supporting expansion of programs tend to be moving toward the middle of keeping programs about the same.

When asked whether various federal government programs should be expanded, cut back, or kept about the same, the top three programs on the list are purely domestic (aid to education, health care, and Social Security), with majorities supporting expansion (see Figure 19). This has long been the case in these surveys. What is new, however, is the continued decline in the percentages supporting expansion over the past decade. Aid to education, though still at solid majority of 59 percent, is down 2 points from 2008 and 10 points from

2004. Support for expanding Social Security, which stands at 55 percent, is down 5 points from 2008 and 10 points from 2004. The biggest drop, not surprisingly, given the passage of a major health care reform bill prior to polling for this survey, is support for expanding health care (58%). This is down 12 points from 2008 and 21 points from 2004. Interestingly, this is still a clear majority in favor of expanding health care programs despite passage of reform.

When it comes to national security, however, there is no significant change in preferences in 2010, with most people wanting to keep programs about the same or expand them, even as they place clearly behind other domestic priorities. A bare majority (51%) still wants to expand homeland security programs, steady since 2004, with few wanting to cut (11%). A plurality of Americans (43%) prefer to stick to the status quo of keeping defense spending about the same, with the rest evenly split between wanting to expand (30%) and cut back (27%). Again, these numbers are relatively consistent over the past six years. On gathering intelligence information about other countries,

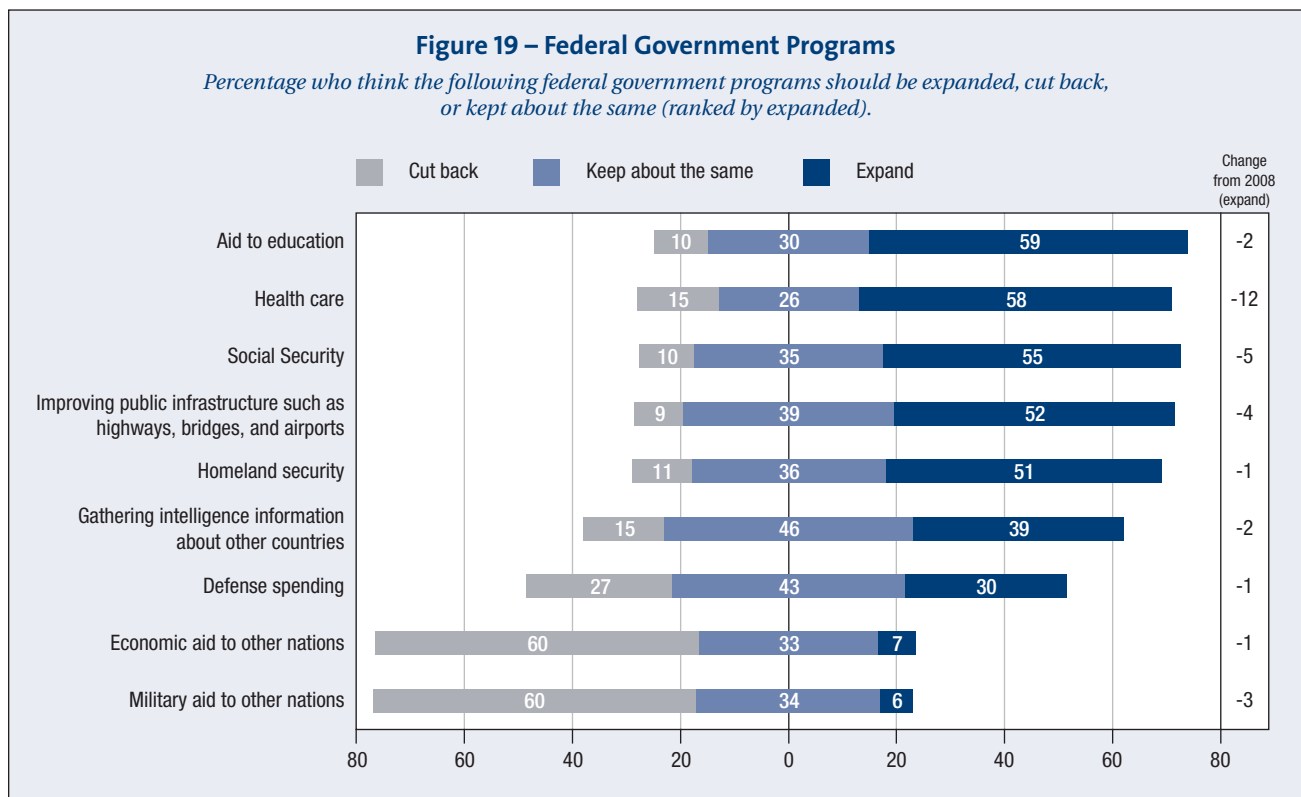
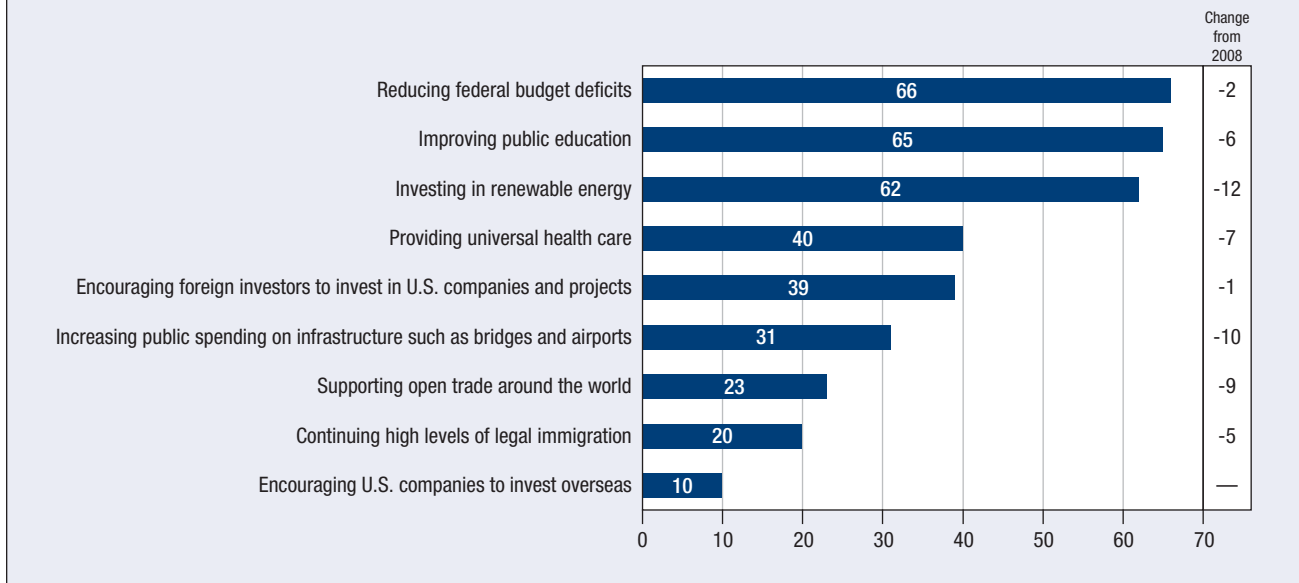


Figure 20 – Important Factors in U.S. Global Competitiveness

Percentage saying the following factors are “very important” to the United States remaining competitive with other countries in the global economy.



preferences have been relatively steady since 2004 around keeping this program about the same (46%), with more wanting to expand (39%) than cut back (15%).

The other two programs asked about—military aid to other nations and economic aid to other nations—have always had majorities favoring cut-backs in the context of this question asking about many government programs. Both stand at 60 percent wanting to cut back, not statistically different from 2008 for military aid, but up 5 points for economic aid.

Concern about Deficits

A trend of declining majorities, which may further reflect concern about spending, can also be seen in responses to a question about how important various factors are to the United States remaining competitive with other countries in the global economy. Tellingly, reducing federal budget deficits tops the list, with 66 percent considering this “very important,” virtually the same as in 2008 (see Figure 20). Yet, on other items, most of which would clearly entail more spending, there are significant drops since 2008 in the numbers considering them

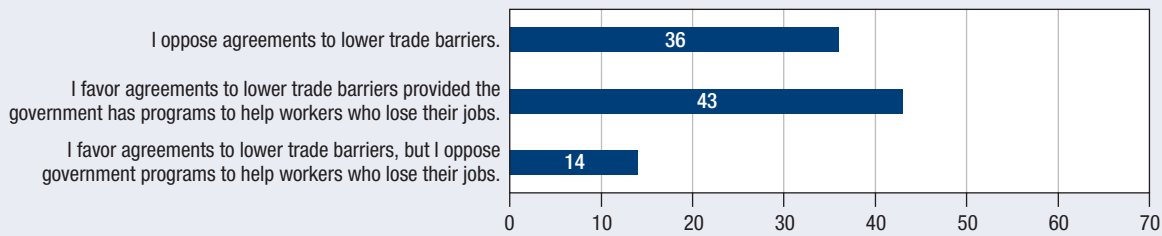
“very important.” These include improving public education, investing in renewable energy, providing universal health care, and increasing public spending on infrastructure such as bridges and airports. Improving public education and investing in renewable energy, which were the top two items in 2008, fall just behind reducing deficits as top items considered “very important” in remaining competitive and are the only other two factors receiving majorities as “very important.”

Steadiness on Support for International Trade

When thinking about international trade, Americans do not appear to be blaming other countries for their economic ills or to be particularly threatened by current U.S. trading relationships with other countries. When asked whether foreign trade is “more of an opportunity for economic growth through increased U.S. exports” or “a threat to the economy from foreign imports,” a new question in 2010, a majority (55%) says it is an opportunity. Economic competition from low-wage countries is considered a “critical” threat by only 32 percent of Americans, down 6 points from

Figure 21 – Agreements to Lower Trade Barriers

Percentage who think each of the following comes closest to their view about lowering trade barriers such as tariffs.



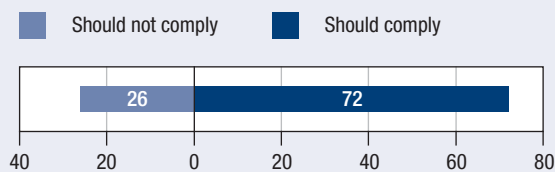
2008 and appearing next to last on a list of seventeen possible threats to the vital interests of the United States.

On a question with three choices about lowering trade barriers, only about one-third of Americans (36%) choose flat opposition to agreements to lower trade barriers such as tariffs, relatively consistent with responses since 2004 when this was first asked. In a clear indicator that concern about jobs is playing a role in views of trade, a plurality (43%) favors such agreements provided that the government has programs to help workers who lose their jobs. Only a few (14%) favor free trade agreements without government programs to help workers who lose their jobs (see Figure 21).

Americans are also willing to abide by international trade rules. When asked what the United States should do if another country files a complaint with the WTO and it rules against the United States, 72 percent of Americans think the United States should generally comply with that decision rather than not comply (see Figure 22).

Figure 22 – Compliance with WTO Decisions

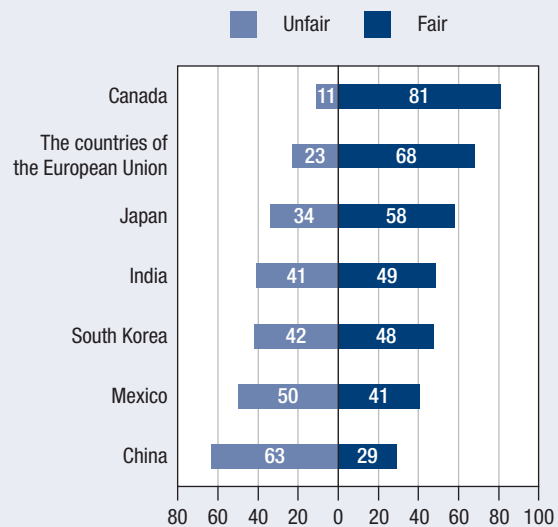
Percentage who say that if another country files a complaint with the World Trade Organization and it rules against the United States, as a general rule, the United States should or should not comply with that decision.



Most Americans see our biggest traditional trade partners as practicing fair trade rather than unfair trade. Large majorities say this about Canada (81%), the countries of the EU (68%), and Japan (58%), while pluralities call both India and South Korea fair traders (see Figure 23). These numbers are mostly steady since 2008, but are up for the EU (4 points) and India (3 points) and are on the up side of longer-term trends. The exceptions on trade are Mexico (50% unfair to 41% fair), to which the hot button issues of illegal immigration and jobs are linked, and China (63% unfair and 29% fair), which will be discussed in the next section.

Figure 23 – U.S. Trade with Other Countries

Percentage who think the following countries practice fair trade or unfair trade with the United States.



Watchfulness of China

When it comes to the rise of China, economic and trade relations appear to elicit some concern among Americans. Yet, Americans do not appear to be panicked or to view China's economic rise as a highly threatening development.

Americans clearly see China catching up to the United States economically. Three-quarters of Americans (75%, up from 60% in 2006) now think it is more likely that someday China's economy will grow to be as large the U.S. economy than think that the U.S. economy will always stay larger than China's.

When asked what the effect of China's economy catching up with the U.S. economy would be, the most Americans (50%) say this would be equally positive and negative rather than mostly negative (38%) or mostly positive (8%). These responses are not significantly different than those in 2008 or 2006 and suggest that most Americans are not highly troubled by the prospect of China's economy matching that of the United States in size. At the same time, the notable percentage that thinks China's catching up is mostly negative signals some disquiet (see Figure 24).

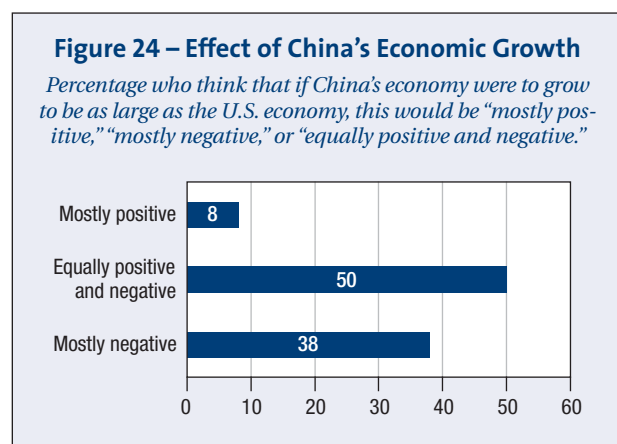
As mentioned, trade with China is clearly a sticking point with Americans, perhaps partly because of China's stubborn currency policy, which is believed to have contributed to a persistent trade gap with the United States. Sixty-three percent (63%) of Americans think China practices unfair trade. Concern about unfair trade with China also

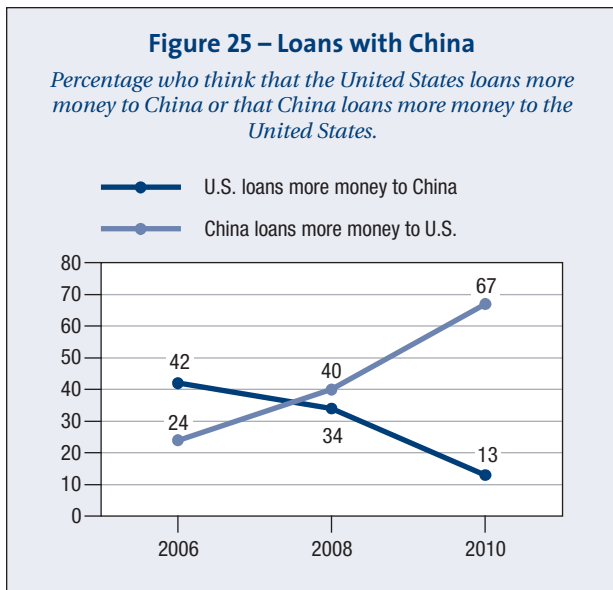
correlates with greater concern about the U.S. trade deficit. Of those who think China practices unfair trade, 61 percent consider reducing our trade deficit with foreign countries a "very important" foreign policy goal of the United States. This compares to 55 percent overall and 48 percent among those who think China practices fair trade.

When asked how concerned they are about China's keeping its currency cheap to make its exports more competitive, 71 percent of Americans say they are at least "somewhat" concerned, but only 23 percent say they are "very" concerned. Not surprisingly, 56 percent of Americans do not think the United States should have a free trade agreement with China. This correlates strongly with the perception of China as practicing unfair trade (see next section).

Americans are also concerned about U.S. debt to China. In the past few years, they have clearly become much more aware of it. In a dramatic reversal from 2006, 67 percent of Americans now understand that China loans more money to the United States than the United States loans to China (see Figure 25). In 2006 when the question was first posed, this percentage was only 24 percent. This has translated into considerable concern over this situation. On the question of threats to U.S. vital interest in the next ten years, a majority of Americans, however bare (51%), consider U.S. debt to China (a new item in 2010) as a "critical" threat. This threat is about in the middle of the threats list, placing it eighth out of a total of seventeen possible threats (see Figure 36).

Americans appear less concerned than in 2006 about China having an economic advantage because of its economic and political system. In this survey, when asked whether the way the Chinese government manages its economy and its political system is more of an advantage or disadvantage for China when it comes to economic development, 34 percent say it has no impact, with 32 percent saying it is an advantage and 25 percent saying it is a disadvantage. This is big shift away from both the "advantage" and "disadvantage" positions to one of neutrality since 2006, when 49 percent said China's management of its economy and political system





was an advantage, 41 percent said it was a disadvantage, and only 5 percent said it had no impact either way.

Preference for the Status Quo on Trade Agreements

While Americans remain comfortable with international trade in principle, they appear to favor the status quo on trade rather than actively promoting it or pursuing new trade relationships. Only 33 percent of Americans think “promoting international trade” should be a “very important” goal of U.S. foreign policy. Only 23 percent consider “supporting open trade around the world” as a “very important” factor in the United States remaining competitive with other countries in the global economy. In addition, while Americans are willing to comply with WTO rulings, there is a substantial change in their desire to strengthen the institution. In 2002 when the question was last asked, a solid majority of 63 percent thought the WTO needed to be strengthened, but in 2010 more Americans (48%) say it does not need to be strengthened than say that it does (44%).

As in the past, there is little enthusiasm for new free trade agreements. Americans do not support “a free trade agreement that would lower barriers such as tariffs” with most countries asked about, includ-

ing China, Colombia, India, and South Korea (see Figure 26). India is the closest, however, to gaining support for a free trade agreement, with those in favor up 9 points from 36 percent in 2008 to 45 percent today. For South Korea, even when asked a separate question explaining that the United States and South Korea negotiated a free trade agreement in 2007 and giving pro and con arguments for its approval by the Senate, only a minority of Americans favor an agreement (44% in favor to 47% opposed). Interestingly, in the case of South Korea there is a rather large misperception about the importance of trade with that country. Fully 71 percent do not realize that South Korea is one of the United States’ top ten trading partners, with 46 percent thinking it is in the top twenty but not the top ten, and 25 percent thinking it is not even in the top twenty.

An exception to this opposition to new trade agreements, though, is Japan. In the case of Japan, support for a free trade agreement increased 5 points, from a plurality of 47 percent to a majority of 52 percent.

Support for free trade agreements correlates strongly with perceptions of the fairness of trade. Japan is the only one of the countries surveyed about free trade agreements that is considered a fair trader by a clear majority of Americans (Colombia was not polled on fairness of trade). In fact, of those who say Japan practices fair trade, 67 percent favor having a free trade agreement with Japan. A simi-



lar pattern is clear with all countries on this question. Among those who say a country practices fair trade, a majority also favors a free trade agreement and vice versa. Trade agreements have also been associated with perceived challenges to job security, which may also account for opposition to new free trade agreements. In 2008 the Council survey found that 64 percent of Americans thought the North American Free Trade Agreement was bad for the job security of American workers.

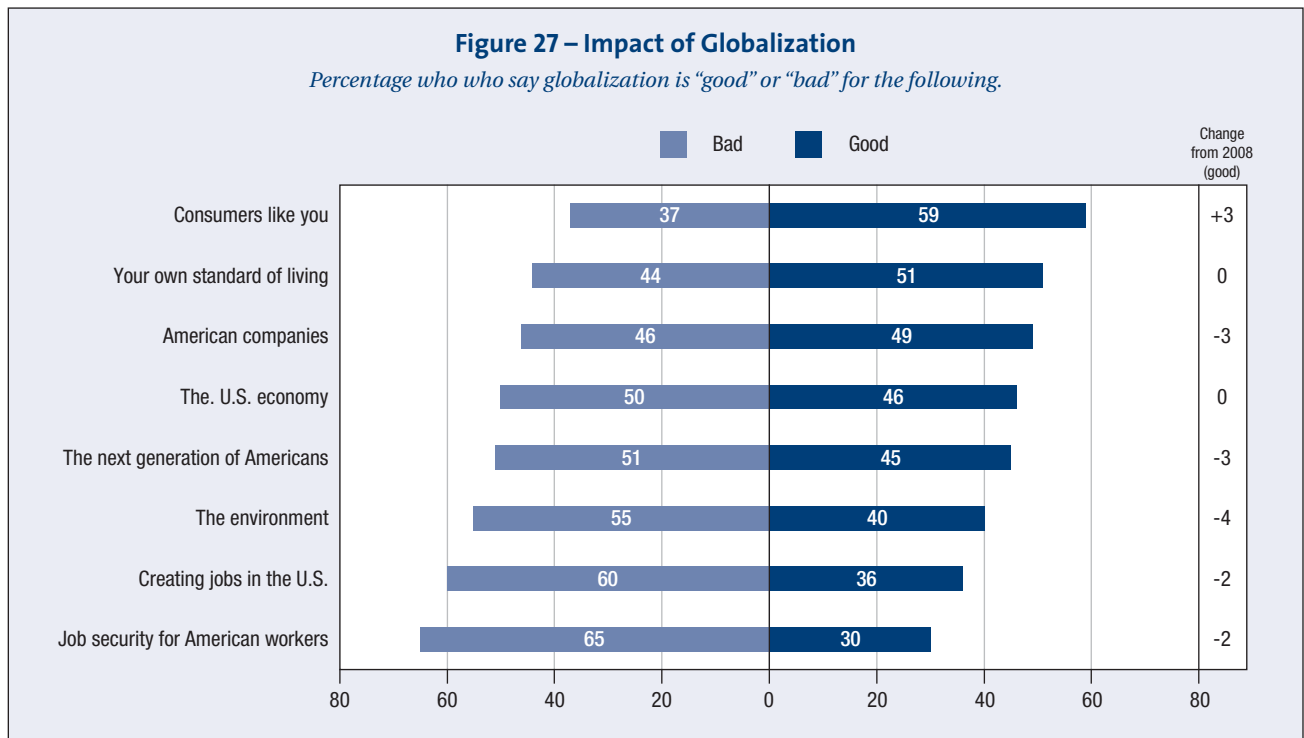
Worry about Globalization

The general opposition to new free trade agreements signals worries that show up more clearly on feelings about globalization. Globalization, which is presented to respondents as “the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world” is a much broader and perhaps more potentially threatening concept, as it emphasizes not just trade, but increasing interdependence on many levels—including global capital and financial flows, immigration, and technological advances—that may be perceived as harder to control and, as the recent crisis has shown, can be very desta-

bilizing. In fact, the survey shows that negative views of globalization correlate with more strongly negative views of immigration than in the survey overall (see “Immigration” later in this chapter for further discussion).

Feelings about globalization do not show a drastic change from 2008, but they do show a clear continuation of a longer-term trend. Overall, a solid majority of Americans (56%) continue to see globalization as “mostly good” rather than “mostly bad” for the United States. This is down only 2 points since 2008, but has slid 8 points from 64 percent in 2004 when support for globalization was the highest. In general, Americans see globalization as beneficial in terms of cheap consumer goods, which helps improve their overall standard of living. Majorities of Americans see globalization as good for “consumers like you” (59%) and, by a narrower margin, for “your own standard of living” (51%). A plurality, but a reduced one, continues to see globalization as good for American companies (49%, see Figure 27).

More telling is that there are now far more Americans (50%) who think it should be a goal of the United States to try to slow globalization down



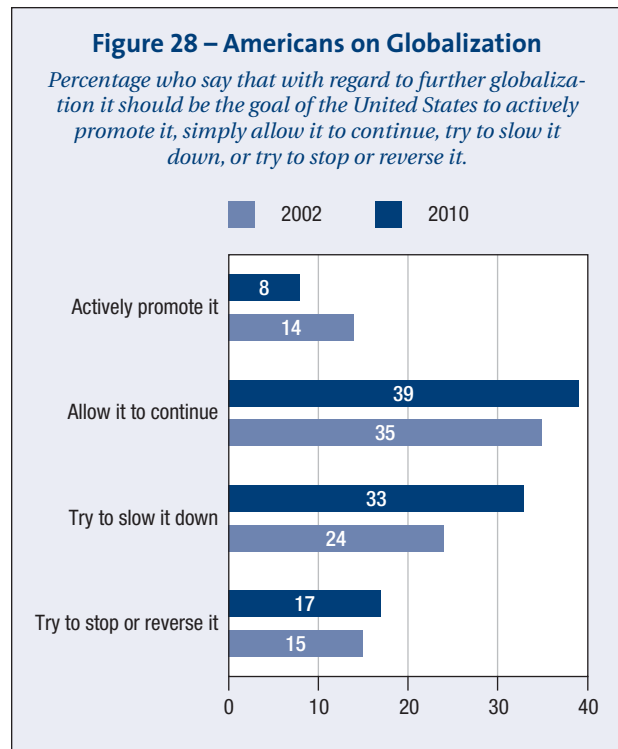
(33%) or try to stop or reverse it (17%) than want the United States to either allow it to continue (39%) or actively promote it (8%). This is up from 39 percent who wanted to slow it down or reverse it in 2002 (when the question was last asked) rather than allow it to continue (35%) or actively promote it (14%, see Figure 28).

The biggest concern about globalization appears to be its effect on jobs. The largest majorities of Americans see globalization as bad for the job security of American workers (65%) and for creating jobs in the United States (60%). Americans also see globalization as bad for the environment (55%) and the next generation of Americans (51%). Half of Americans (50%) see globalization as bad for the U.S. economy overall (see Figure 27).

Interestingly, the percentages saying that globalization is “good” for these various items is much higher among those who favor agreements to lower trade barriers *provided* the government has programs to help workers who lose their jobs than among those who oppose agreements to lower trade barriers. Strong majorities say globalization is good for five of the eight items in Figure 27 among those favoring trade agreements with job protections, whereas there are no majorities saying globalization is good for any of the eight items among those who oppose trade agreements. These findings underscore the concern about jobs Americans bring to their thinking about globalization.

The perception that globalization is having a negative impact on many people in the United States is also clear in the follow-up question asked of those who believe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States has recently become less fair. Seventy-eight percent (78%) say that globalization and international trade have been at least “somewhat important” in this, though only 27 percent say they have been “very important.” Interestingly, among those who think income and wealth distribution has become more fair, there are even more who give credit to globalization and international trade, with 80 percent saying they have been at least “somewhat important” and 43 percent saying “very important” in this.

Related to negative views of globalization’s impact on various aspects of American life is the



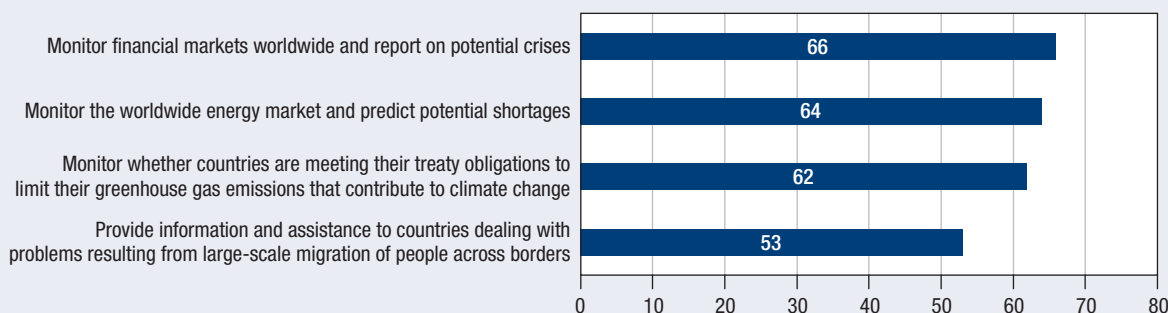
public’s feeling about the influence of large corporations on U.S. foreign policy. As shown in Figure 17 in Chapter 1, Americans think large corporations should have the least influence (4.1 on the 10-point scale) on foreign policy. Yet they believe that large corporations currently have nearly as much influence on foreign policy as the president of the United States (7.2 compared to 7.3 for the president). Among those who think globalization is “mostly bad” for the United States, large corporations are seen as currently having the most influence on foreign policy, even more than the president (7.2 for corporations and 6.8 for the president).

Shift in Emphasis toward New International Economic Institutions

In line with the preference to focus on problems at home and the growing sense of vulnerability to globalization, Americans are scaling back their support for strengthening existing international economic institutions. Three of the seven institutions asked about in this question are explicitly economic institutions (the WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF). These three institutions are the only

Figure 29 – New International Institutions

Percentage who think there should be new international institutions to do the following.



ones that now get more opposition than support for the idea that they should be strengthened. For the WTO, attitudes have shifted from a majority in favor of strengthening (63%) to a plurality opposed (48%). For the World Bank, attitudes have gone from a plurality in favor (49%) to a majority opposed (53%), as has the IMF (from 42% in favor to 57% opposed). These findings do not necessarily mean that Americans do not support these institutions. It simply means that they do not want—presumably—to invest more to strengthen them given their preference to focus on problems at home.

Americans show that they are not against international economic institutions per se by indicating support for a number of new institutions on issues of concern to them (see Figure 29). Sixty-six percent (66%) support a new international institution or agency to monitor financial markets worldwide and report on potential crises. This is up 7 points from 2008, no doubt due to concern about the recent financial crisis. It is also consistent with concern about global financial instability. Fifty-two percent (52%) think safeguarding against global financial instability should be a “very important” goal of U.S. foreign policy, with another 42 percent saying it should be “somewhat important.”

While support is down somewhat from 2008 on other new institutions, Americans still think there should be new international institutions or agencies to monitor the worldwide energy market and predict potential shortages (64%), to monitor whether countries are meeting their treaty obligations to limit their greenhouse gas emissions that

contribute to climate change (62%), and to provide information and assistance to countries dealing with problems resulting from large-scale migration of people across borders (53%). All of these issues are consistent with concerns expressed either in the perception of possible threats or the importance of possible foreign policy goals (e.g., energy, climate change, and immigration).

It is worth noting that all these proposed new institutions have to do with “monitoring” or providing information and assistance. These missions are rather modest compared to more controversial ambitions such as regulatory agencies. Indeed, despite the rise in support for an international organization to “monitor” worldwide financial markets, when asked about the possibility of a new global financial *regulating* body, a majority of Americans (53%) choose the position that such a body is “a bad idea because it would interfere in our economy and could make it less productive” over the position that “to prevent international economic instability, there should be a global body that regulates big financial institutions to make sure they follow international standards” (44%).

Immigration

Since the Council started polling on questions of immigration in 1994, Americans have always shown substantial concern about this issue, and they continue to do so. Given high unemployment and difficult economic times—along with the recent passage of a tough new law in Arizona

making the failure to carry immigration documents a crime and giving the police broad power to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally—the politics surrounding immigration has become more contentious. Despite this, responses on immigration questions have generally not grown more negative, even as overall negative sentiment persists.

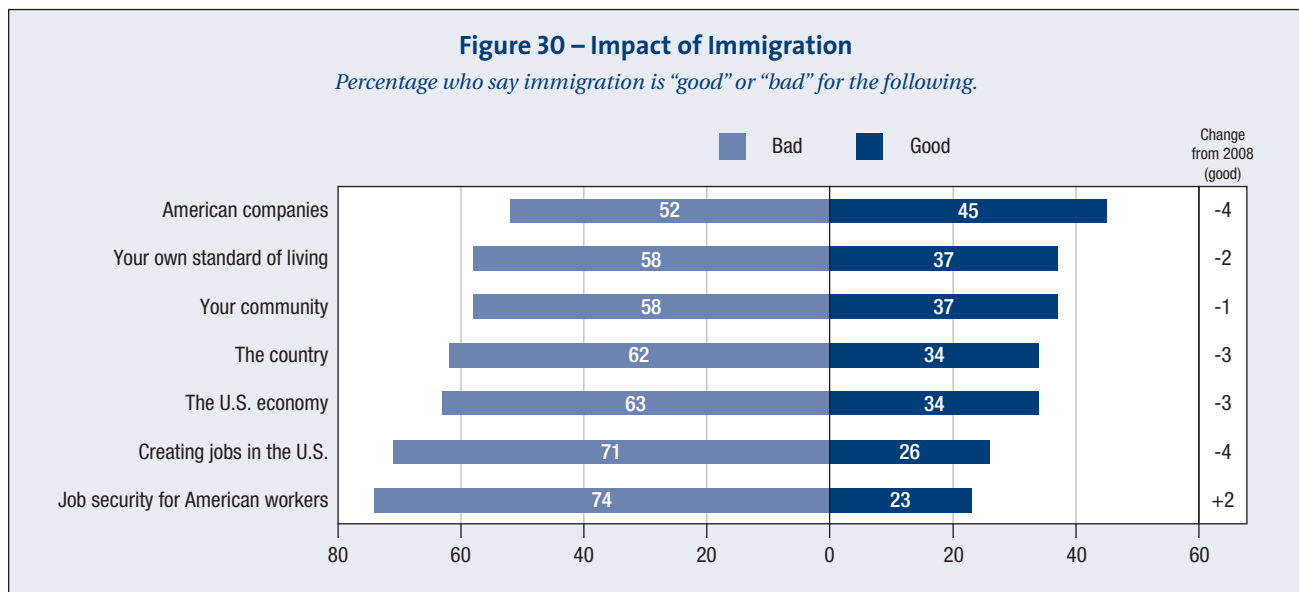
A solid majority (59%) says that controlling and reducing illegal immigration should be a “very important” goal of U.S. foreign policy, roughly constant since 2004. Even when immigration is not specified as either legal or illegal, a majority (51%) thinks that “large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the United States” constitutes a critical threat to the vital interest of the United States, also constant since 2004. While showing substantial concern, these percentages are markedly lower than the high of 72 percent for both these items in 1994, when the immigration debate exploded over calls to cut off public services to illegal immigrants, culminating in the passage of Proposition 187 in California (later ruled unconstitutional).

As with globalization more generally, immigration is seen as having a negative impact on many aspects of U.S. life. In fact, majorities think immigration is bad for every item asked about. The biggest concern, again, is jobs. Seventy-four percent

(74%) say immigration at current levels is bad for the job security for American workers, and 71 percent say it is bad for creating jobs in the United States. Majorities also say it is bad for the U.S. economy (63%), the country (62%), their own standard of living (58%), their community (58%), and American companies (52%, see Figure 30).

When asked specifically about illegal immigration, though, it is perhaps surprising that despite the high percentages of Americans who feel immigration is bad for jobs, many fewer think that illegal immigrants mostly take jobs away from people who need them (49%). This is a virtually even split with those who think they mostly take jobs nobody wants (48%). This suggests that concern about immigration, while highly tied to concern about jobs, may also be tied to other factors such as problems of integrating immigrants into local communities and resentment that illegal immigrants are receiving public services despite not paying taxes.

Interestingly, immigration is seen by many Americans as one of the negative results of globalization overall. Those who say that globalization is “mostly bad” are more likely than those who think globalization is “mostly good” to see immigration as a “critical” threat (64% to 41%), the goal of reducing illegal immigration as “very important” (69% to 52%), and immigration as taking jobs away from Americans who need them (62% to 38%).

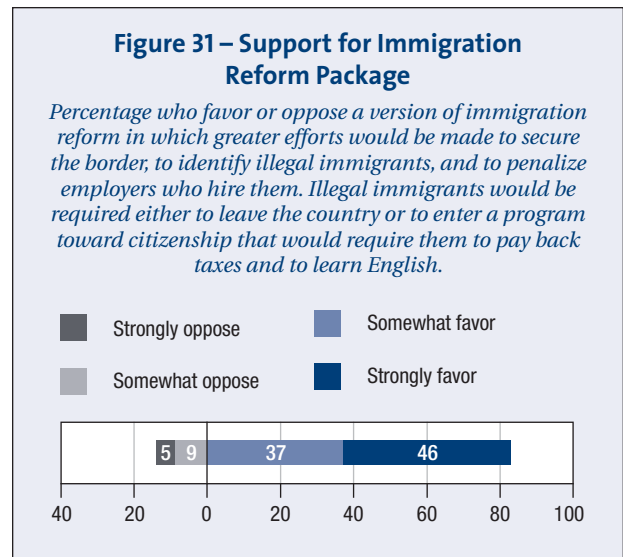


Those who see globalization as “mostly bad” for the country are also more likely to think that immigration is “bad” for the country (73% to 54%), the U.S. economy (74% to 54%), American companies (60% to 45%), creating jobs in the United States (80% to 64%), the job security of American workers (82% to 68%), their personal standard of living (69% to 50%), and their community (68% to 50%).

In terms of policy responses to immigration problems, most Americans do not appear to favor draconian measures. They do not want to shut off the immigration spigot entirely. Nor do they want to expel all undocumented immigrants who are here now. For example, this study now shows that while 42 percent of Americans favor a decrease in the present level of “legal” immigration, nearly as many (40%) want to keep it at its present level (15% favor an increase). This represents a less negative view of immigration than in post-9/11 2002, when fully 61 percent of Americans wanted to decrease levels of legal immigration and only 30 percent wanted to keep it at present levels (a meager 7 percent wanted to increase it). At that time, concern was high about the possibility of terrorists getting into the United States.

Because views of immigration are highly colored by emotions over illegal immigration, the flip side is often missed. Indeed, many would argue that immigrants have long been and still are indispensable to the American economy, bringing new perspectives, creativity, a strong work ethic, and other benefits that drive innovation and help keep the country competitive. When the idea of “legal” immigration is presented in the context of various factors that may or may not be important to the United States remaining competitive with other countries, a majority of Americans (57%) consider “continuing high levels of legal immigration” at least “somewhat important,” of which 20 percent consider it “very important.”

Further, it may come as a surprise to nervous Washington, D.C., policymakers that it is possible to find a broad consensus around a comprehensive package of immigration reforms. A package that includes stronger enforcement measures (greater efforts to secure the border, identify illegal immi-



grants, and penalize employers to hire them) as well as a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants (a program that would require them to pay back taxes and to learn English) is supported by an overwhelming majority of Americans. Fully 83 percent support this package, either “strongly” (46%) or “somewhat” (37%), while only 14 percent are either “strongly” or “somewhat opposed” (see Figure 31). Large majorities across party lines favor this sort of immigration reform, with Republicans actually somewhat more supportive than Democrats.

Energy Supply

Energy supply is the lifeblood of American economic power. Not surprisingly, this issue ranks high as a concern for Americans and as a foreign policy priority. In the Council’s 2008 survey, energy spiked to the top of concerns. While it has become somewhat less worrisome for Americans in 2010, energy continues to play a major part in the American public’s thinking about U.S. foreign policy.

Since the very beginning of the Council’s surveys in 1974, large majorities of Americans have always said that securing adequate supplies of energy should be a “very important” goal of U.S. foreign policy, generally ranging from a low of 61 percent to a high of 78 percent. Then in the summer of 2008, when gasoline prices reached an all-time high, an overwhelming 80 percent of Americans

called the goal of securing adequate energy supplies “very important.” Energy supplies were seen as a higher priority goal than either combating international terrorism or preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. Today the number is down 12 points to 68 percent, given the easing of gas prices, yet energy is still a “very important” concern for more than two-thirds of Americans.

Similarly, in 2008, 72 percent of Americans said that a possible disruption in energy supply was a “critical” threat to the vital interest of the United States, more than said this for either international terrorism or the possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers. Today this number is down 18 points to 54 percent, having already dropped to 62 percent in September 2008 as gas prices eased (as measured by a Council survey at that time, following the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the onset of the financial crisis).

Even though concerns about the energy supply are diminished from their high in 2008, Americans still support strong measures to continue protecting it. Sixty-four percent (64%) of Americans favor a new international institution to monitor the worldwide energy market and predict potential shortages, down just 5 points from 2008. And despite their reluctance to use force in many circumstances, a majority of Americans (55%) favor the use of U.S. troops to ensure the oil supply, down just 4 points since 2008 (see Figure 32).

Related to the issue of oil supply in general is that of dependence on foreign oil. The two concepts are related, both involving concerns about disruption in the provision of a critical economic resource by often hostile regimes. The idea of dependence, however, more fully conjures up the extent of U.S. vulnerability to political leverage, price manipula-

tion, and entanglement with unstable and oppressive governments that cost the U.S. dearly and potentially threaten its national security. Concern about dependence on foreign oil ranks higher as a potential “critical” threat and as a “very important” goal for U.S. foreign policy than concern about oil supplies and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Climate Change and the Environment

In past Council surveys as well as this one, Americans have shown considerable concern for the environment. Indeed, in this survey when asked to choose between two statements about the environment and economic growth, 56 percent of Americans say that protection of the environment should be given priority even at the risk of curbing economic growth, rejecting the idea that economic growth should be given priority even if the environment suffers to some extent.

Yet, on the issue of climate change specifically, while there is continued concern, there is a diminished sense of urgency. Overall, climate change is seen less as a “critical” threat (34%), than as an “important” threat to U.S. vital interests (41%). Similarly, as a goal of U.S. foreign policy, more consider limiting climate change as “somewhat important” (42%) than “very important” (35%). Climate change ranks low on the lists of both “critical” threats and “very important” goals. In both cases the level of concern has dropped since 2008 (down 5 points as a “critical” threat and down 7 points as a “very important” foreign policy goal). The November 2009 “Climategate” scandal—in which accusations of trumped up evidence supporting climate change were made against climate scientists—may have affected opinions, along with anxieties about the cost of action at a time of deep economic recession.

The assessment of climate change as an important but not critical phenomenon is reflected in the responses to a general question about the issue and what to do about it. Given three alternative views, 42 percent of Americans agree that the problem of climate change should be addressed,

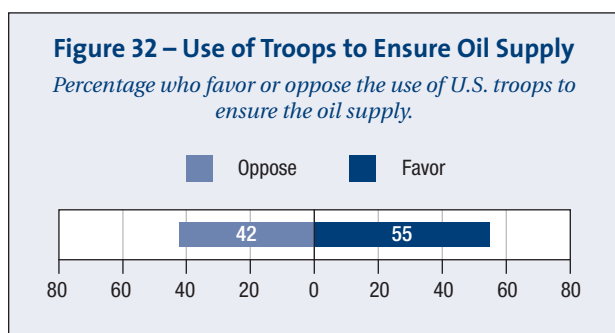
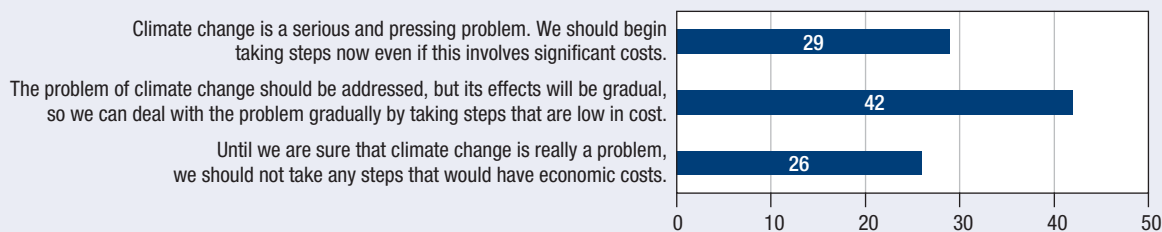


Figure 33 – Attitudes toward Climate Change

Percentage who say that each of the following statements about climate change comes closest to their point of view.



but its effects will be gradual so we can deal with the problem gradually by taking steps that are low in cost. Twenty-nine percent (29%) favor faster action, believing that climate change is a serious and pressing problem and that we should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs. This is almost exactly balanced by the skeptics (26%) who want slower action or none at all, agreeing that until we are sure that climate change is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs (see Figure 33).

In 2008 when this same question was asked about “global warming” (as opposed to climate change) more people agreed that global warming was a serious and pressing problem (43%), with most others (37%) preferring to address it gradually. Only 17 percent felt unsure that it was really a problem.

In any case, the survey numbers still show that 71 percent of Americans acknowledge climate change as a problem and feel something should be done about it, even if all are not convinced that it is necessary to make big, immediate sacrifices. Furthermore, nearly half of Americans (48%) think their government is not doing enough about climate change—far more than the 20 percent saying it is doing too much—while 30 percent say the government is doing about the right amount.

To address climate change, Americans support measures at home as well as cooperative measures abroad, though with considerably less conviction than in 2008. Strong majorities think that the United States should participate in a new international treaty to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions (67%) and that

there should be a new international institution or agency to monitor whether countries are meeting their treaty obligations to limit their greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change (62%). Fifty-six percent (56%) of Americans say that if the less-developed countries make a commitment to limit their greenhouse gas emissions, the developed countries should provide substantial aid to help them (see Figure 34). While all of these figures have declined since 2008 (by 9, 6, and 8 points, respectively), the majorities are still decisive.

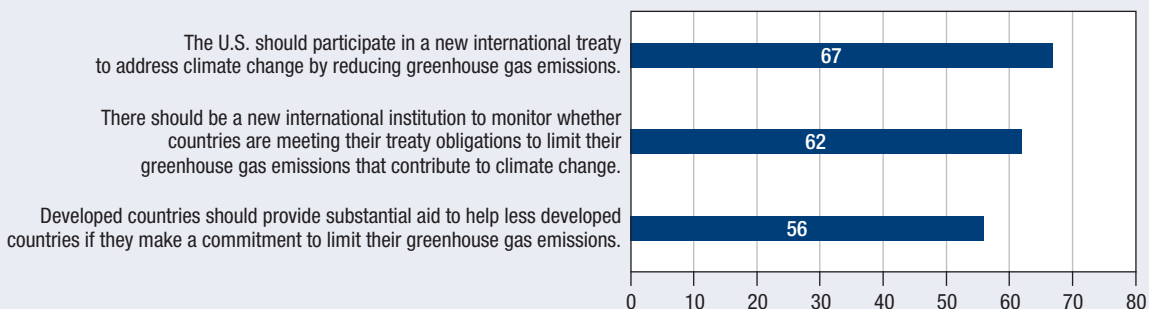
On a list of proposed measures that could be taken at home to address climate change, support is quite high. When asked whether they “strongly favor,” “somewhat favor,” “somewhat oppose,” or “strongly oppose” the measures, Americans on balance favor three out of four of them (combining “strongly favor” and “somewhat favor”):

- Creating tax incentives to encourage the development and use of alternative energy sources such as solar or wind power (80% favor).
- Requiring automakers to increase fuel efficiency even if this means the price of cars would go up (67% favor).
- Building nuclear power plants to reduce reliance on oil and coal (65% favor).

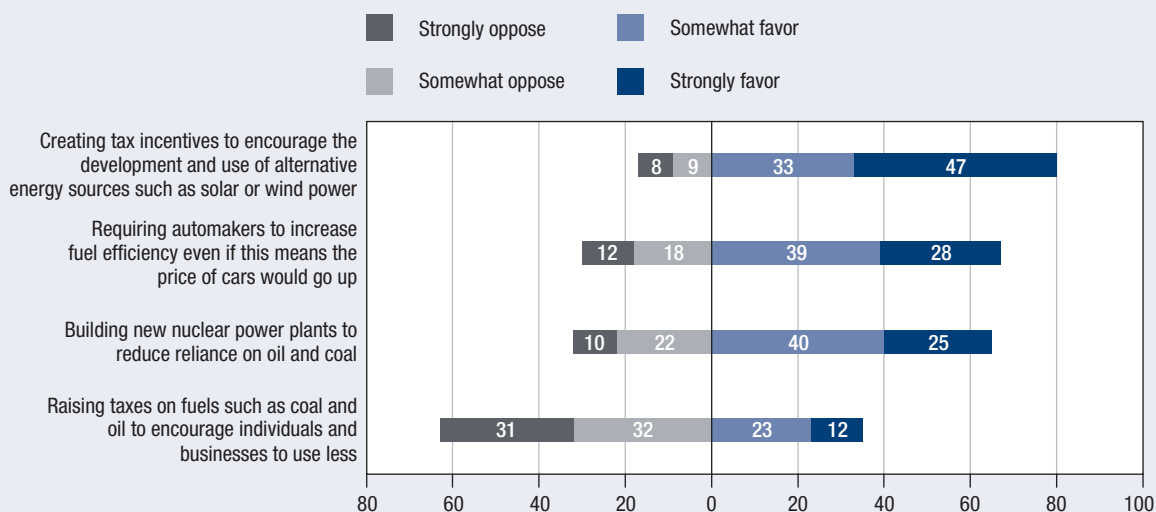
The only measure not earning majority support is raising taxes on fuels such as coal and oil to encourage individuals and businesses to use less. Sixty-three percent (63%) oppose this measure either “strongly” or “somewhat” (see Figure 34).

Figure 34 – Addressing Climate Change

Percentage who support each of the following measures to address climate change.



Percentage who favor or oppose each of the following to address climate change.



Chapter 3

International Security and Selective Engagement

The past decade has been a tumultuous one for the American people's experience of military power and national security. Ten years ago, the United States was at peace and had a defense budget of less than \$320 billion. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 shattered the relative tranquility of the 1990s and prompted calls for a more expansive and assertive foreign policy. For most of the decade since, the United States has been engaged in two difficult counterinsurgency wars in foreign nations and an ongoing global struggle against al Qaeda and its affiliated movements. The defense budget stands at \$708 billion. Yet, the most critical threats of terrorism and nuclear proliferation continue unabated.

As Americans enter the tenth year since 9/11, this survey indicates that Americans are still strongly committed to international engagement and support a variety of responses to threats to their security and to other international problems. Yet, strains are showing as they recognize the very real constraints they face economically at home and on their power and influence abroad. Americans are becoming more selective in what they are willing to put their resources behind, scaling back their ambitions to focus on issues of most critical importance.

Resisting Role as Global Hegemon

As discussed in Chapter 1, Americans appear to be uncomfortable with the role of global hegemon, overwhelmingly rejecting the idea that the United

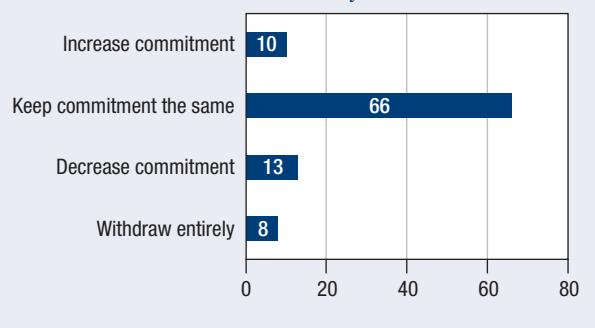
States should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems (8%). Instead, they think the United States should do its share in efforts to solve international problems together with other countries (71%). They also do not want to play the role of world policeman, with 79 percent thinking the United States is playing that role more than it should be. These findings are not unlike those going back to 2004. As other countries, especially China, rise in influence and the world moves toward increasing multipolarity, Americans appear to welcome the opportunity for friendly cooperation and engagement and less dependence on the United States to solve international problems.

Maintaining a Strong Global Military Posture

At the same time, this does not mean that Americans are not willing to maintain a strong military posture around the world. Even though Americans consider economic strength to be more important than military strength in determining a country's overall power and influence in the world (by 72% to 23%), 56 percent of Americans still believe that maintaining superior military power worldwide should be a "very important" foreign policy goal. About the same number (58%) think the United States should have about as many long-term military bases as it has now. The commitment to NATO,

Figure 35 – Commitment to NATO

Percentage who say we should increase our commitment to NATO, keep our commitment what it is now, decrease our commitment but still remain in NATO, or withdraw from NATO entirely.



one of the United States' most important military alliances, is strong, with 66 percent wanting to keep the commitment the same as it is now (see Figure 35). Again, these views do not show any striking differences with those over the past decade.

Despite huge increases in defense spending over the past decade, views on this have also remained relatively steady in these surveys. Preferences cluster around keeping defense spending about the same (43%), with nearly equal numbers wanting to expand (30%) and cut back (27%). As discussed in Chapter 1, when asked if defense spending should be cut in an effort to address the federal budget deficit, 58 percent of Americans do favor at least some cuts. At the same time, 41 percent think the defense budget should not be cut at all and 29 percent think it should be cut less than other programs. Together these numbers suggest that defense spending is an important priority.

The Principles of Selective Engagement

While committed to a strong global military posture, Americans are not readily willing to deploy force wherever conflicts arise. When it comes to putting lives and money on the line, Americans appear to be choosing more carefully what they will support and what they won't. They are wary of getting involved in major conflicts unless doing so would counter clear and direct threats to the homeland. And even then, as in the case of seeking

to prevent nuclear weapons from getting into the hands of unfriendly regimes, there is skepticism that military intervention would succeed. Indeed, Americans support a wide array of measures and actions beyond military intervention—and in some cases instead of it—to help achieve their foreign policy goals.

By looking at the responses to questions about various international actions in this survey, a few principles of “selective engagement” emerge:

- Principle #1: Support for actions against top threats
- Principle #2: Support for low-risk, low-cost humanitarian actions
- Principle #3: Support for multilateral actions through the United Nations
- Principle #4: Preference for lightening the U.S. military footprint
- Principle #5: Preference for staying on the sideline of conflicts that are not seen as directly threatening to the United States

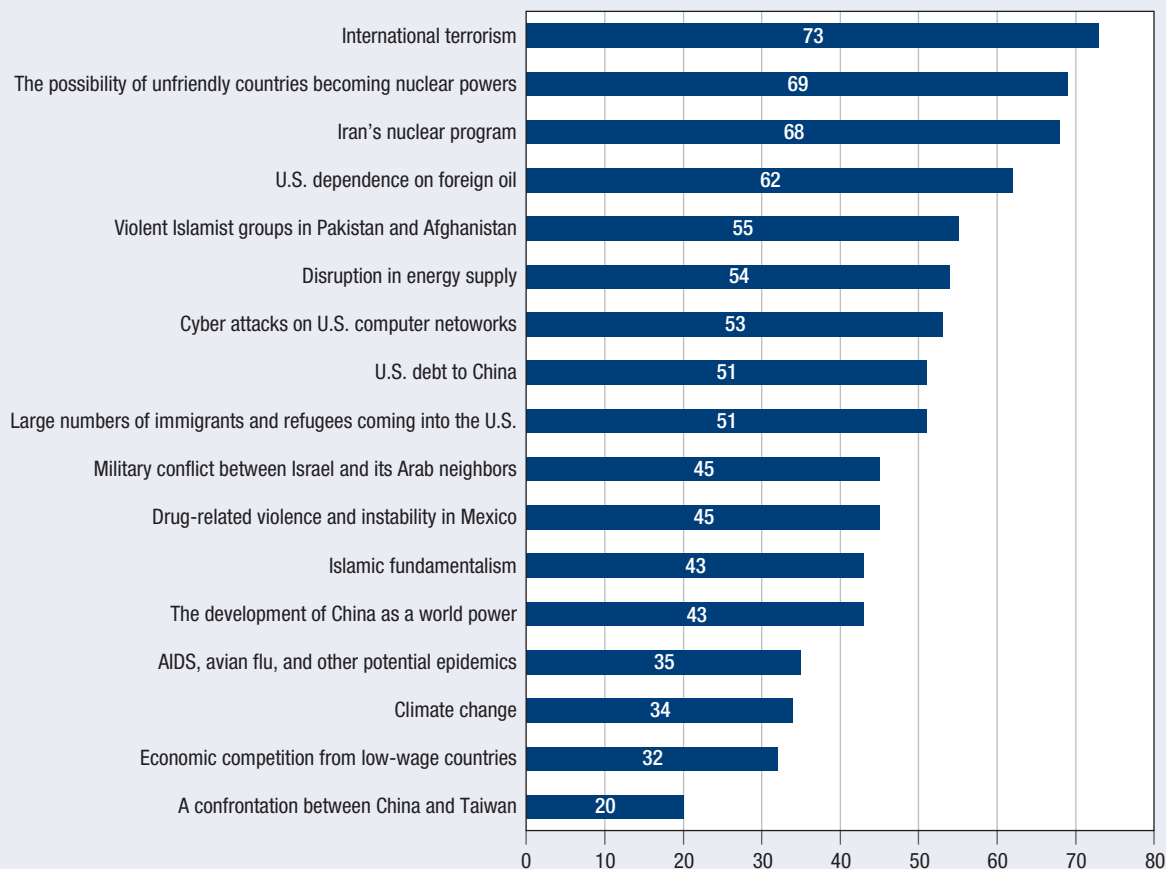
The first principle is clear when considering the list of possible threats considered by high numbers of Americans to be “critical” to the vital interest of the United States in the next ten years (which also correspond with many of the foreign policy goals considered “very important”). Across the survey, among the actions—both military and otherwise—that gain the most support are those directed at the threats and goals at the top of these lists, involving direct threats to the homeland.

The other primary area in which Americans can be reliably predicted to show strong support for international action is to address low-risk, low-cost humanitarian crises, especially genocide. This hints at the moral streak that has long been part of American foreign policy attitudes.

Beyond these two primary types of engagement—against top threats and human disasters—majorities of Americans show willingness to support other types of engagements if they are

Figure 36 – Critical Threats to U.S. Vital Interest

Percentage who see each of the following as a “critical” threat to U.S. vital interest in the next ten years.



multilateral actions through the United Nations. This demonstrates support for the notion of collective security and international law. Otherwise, Americans appear to be looking for opportunities to cut back on what they may perceive as unnecessary or unwanted commitments, including long-term military bases in certain countries. Americans also prefer to stay on the sideline of major conflicts between other countries, allowing them to work out conflicts on their own if they can. The next sections will explore each of these principles separately.

Principle #1: Support for Actions against Top Threats

A battery of questions about the perception of threats shows that Americans continue to see a variety of threats as “critical,” with results gener-

ally consistent with those of previous surveys (see Figure 36). Not surprisingly, Americans are most concerned with direct threats to the homeland. International terrorism tops the threat battery, with 73 percent of respondents viewing it as “critical.” The possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers ranks second with 69 percent of respondents viewing it as a “critical” threat, followed closely by Iran’s nuclear program (68% “critical”). The next three threats considered “critical” are U.S. dependence on foreign oil (62%), violent Islamist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan (55%), and disruption in energy supply (54%).

All of these top six threats are related to three main challenges: international terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and energy security. Among the international actions most supported by Americans across this survey are those aimed at countering each of these threats.

International Terrorism

Against the threat of international terrorism—the top threat in this survey—Americans appear willing to take a wide array of possible actions, both military and nonmilitary. In general, a large majority of Americans see this threat as undiminished since the 9/11 attacks nearly a decade ago. When asked if the ability of terrorists to launch another major attack on the United States is greater, the same, or less than at the time of the 9/11 attacks, half say it is the same (50%), with another 26 percent saying it is greater. Only 23 percent say it is less (see Figure 4 in Chapter 1).

Despite the perceived lack of progress against the threat of international terrorism, Americans are not giving up the fight. Of eight proposed measures for combating international terrorism, strong majorities support all but one: using torture to extract information from suspected terrorists (see Figure 37).

There is overwhelming support for the multi-lateral measures of working through the United Nations to strengthen international laws against terrorism (82% in favor) and trial of suspected ter-

rorists in the International Criminal Court (78% in favor). There is also very strong support for unilateral U.S. action: U.S. air strikes against terrorist training camps and other facilities (81% in favor), attacks by U.S. ground troops against terrorist training camps and other facilities (73% in favor), and assassination of individual terrorist leaders (73% in favor). Majorities also support helping poor countries develop their economies (69% in favor) and making a major effort to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (58% in favor) as ways to combat international terrorism. These numbers have remained basically steady since 2008.

When asked if the United States should take military action to capture or kill terrorists if it locates high-ranking members of terrorist groups operating in Pakistan that threaten the United States, even if the government of Pakistan does not give the United States permission to do so, 71 percent say it should, up 3 points from 2008. This was a key promise of President Barack Obama in his election campaign and is something he has followed through on while in office, significantly increasing the scope and frequency of the drone war inside Pakistan’s borders.

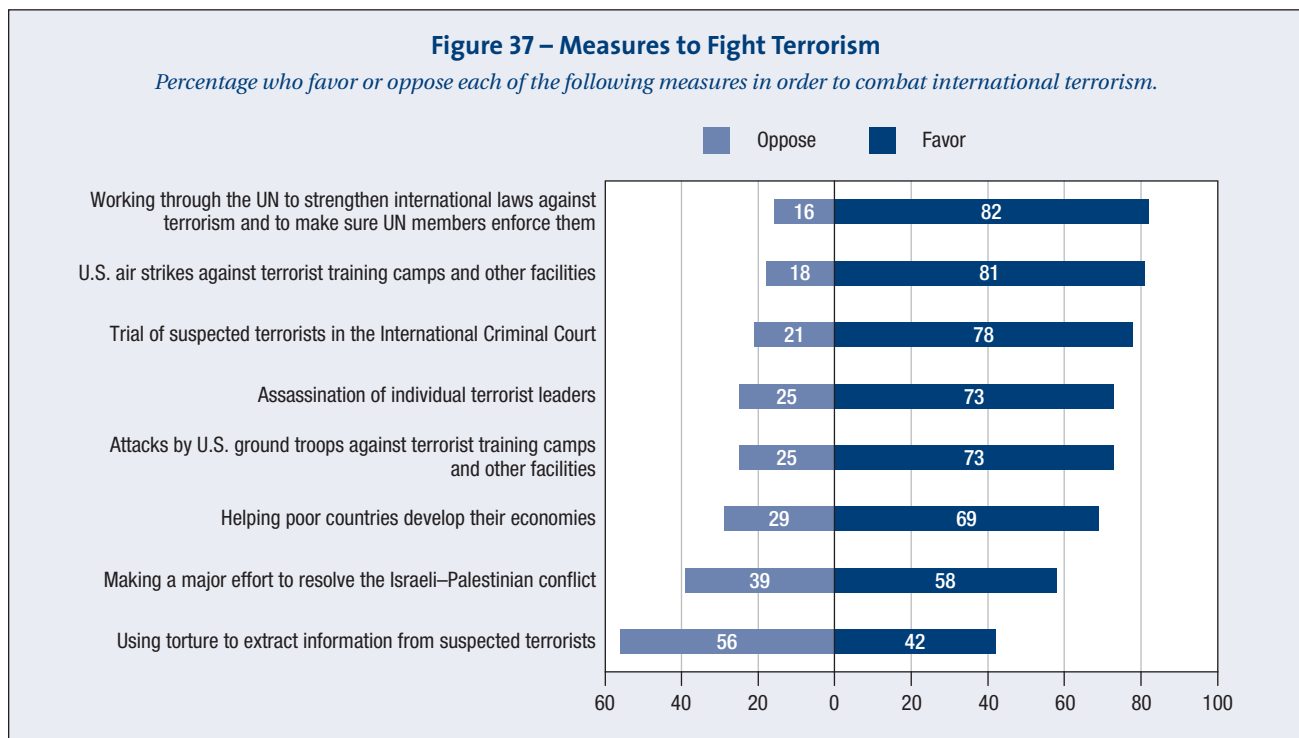
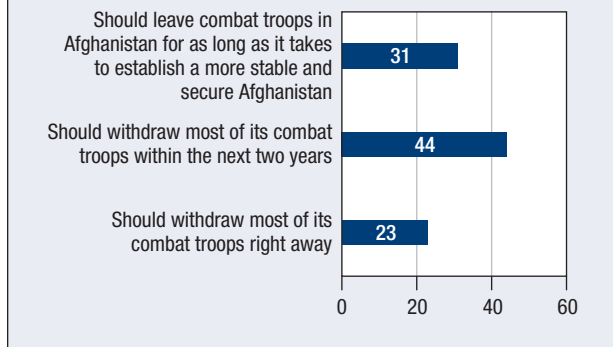


Figure 38 – Withdrawing or Keeping Troops in Afghanistan

Percentage who agree with one of the following options regarding U.S. troops in Afghanistan.



In terms of the threat from Afghanistan, a strong majority (59%) thinks that eliminating the threat from terrorists operating from Afghanistan is a worthwhile goal for American troops to fight and possibly die for. While 53 percent think that the Afghanistan war is going either not too well (43%) or not at all well (10%)—only 6 percent say it is going very well—a majority of Americans still support the effort. Seventy-five percent (75%) support either withdrawing forces within two years (44%) or an even longer commitment—“as long as it takes to establish a more stable and secure Afghanistan” (31%). Only 23 percent believe that the United States should withdraw its forces from Afghanistan right away (see Figure 38). Americans are split on whether U.S. government leaders should be ready to meet and talk with leaders of the Taliban, with 48 percent saying they should and 47 percent saying they should not.

While Americans are supportive of U.S. actions in Afghanistan and Pakistan to address the terrorist threat, they are largely divided on economic aid to these countries. In the case of Pakistan, 48 percent want to decrease or stop economic aid altogether, with 42 percent wanting to keep it about the same, and 7 percent wanting to increase it. For Afghanistan, 45 percent want to decrease or stop economic aid altogether, while 41 percent want to keep it about the same and 10 percent want to increase it. While there is no majority for cutting aid in either case, the high numbers wanting to cut

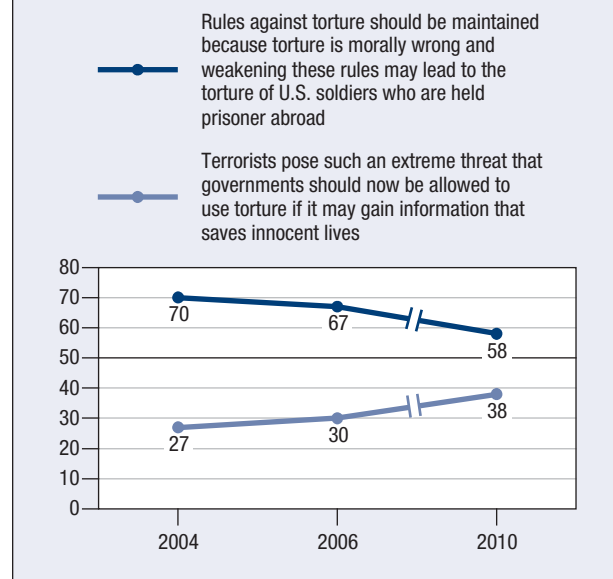
aid despite the critical nature of the threat this aid is addressing may reflect the strong desire to direct those resources to problems at home.

As mentioned, the one exception to the strong support for action against international terrorism is the use of torture to extract information from suspected terrorists, which Americans reject by a margin of 56 percent to 42 percent. The proportion supporting torture, however, has increased by 6 points since 2008 and by 13 points since the question was first asked in 2004.

This finding is backed up by another question on torture in which 58 percent say that rules against torture should be maintained because torture is morally wrong and weakening those rules may lead to the torture of U.S. soldiers who are held prisoner abroad. Just 38 percent choose the contrary position that terrorists pose such an extreme threat that governments should now be allowed to use torture if they may gain information that saves innocent lives. Here again, there was a shift of 8 points in favor of the position of allowing torture when compared with 2006, the last time the question was posed (see Figure 39).

Figure 39 – Torture of Prisoners

Percentage agreeing with one of the following positions regarding torturing prisoners to extract information.



Nuclear Proliferation

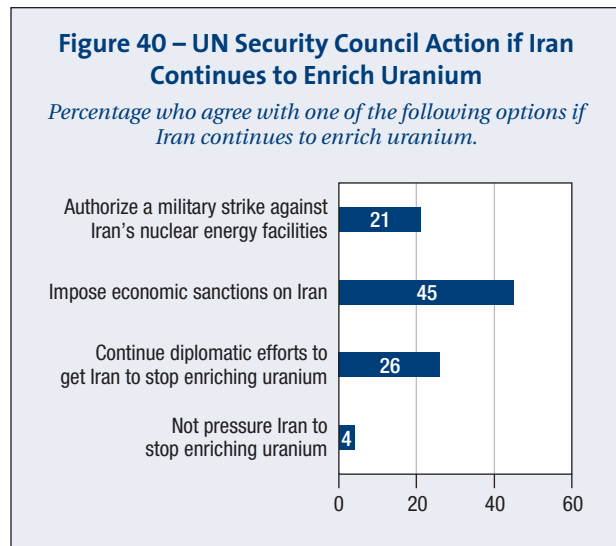
As the second most prominent perceived threat to the United States, the prospect of unfriendly countries acquiring nuclear weapons also draws strong policy responses. This includes specifically Iran acquiring nuclear weapons, which is third on the list of threats, and North Korea. Both countries are believed to be pursuing active nuclear programs. Both are tied for last on the scale of “feelings” toward other countries as the United States’ least favorite countries (see Figure 56 in Chapter 4). As in the case of terrorism, the goal of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is among the highest priorities on the list of U.S. foreign policy goals (73% “very important”).

To help address the threat of nuclear proliferation, 82 percent of Americans think the United States should participate in the treaty that would prohibit nuclear weapon test explosions worldwide, a treaty that has been signed but not ratified by the United States. A substantial majority of Americans (64%) favor strengthening the United Nations by having a UN agency control access to all nuclear fuel in the world to ensure that none is used for weapons production (see Figure 16 in Chapter 1). A bare majority (51%) thinks the International Atomic Energy Agency needs to be strengthened (see Figure 15).

Iran

In the case of Iran, while Americans favor actions to try to stop the country from enriching uranium and developing a weapons program, there is clear hesitation to resort to military action because of the perceived dangers and limits of such a response. At this point in time, Americans favor trying to resolve the problem of Iran’s nuclear program through non-military means. More significantly, even though 54 percent now oppose diplomatic relations (up 16 points from 38% in 2002 when 58% were in favor), 62 percent favor U.S. leaders meeting and talking with Iran’s leaders.

When asked their views of what the United States should do if Iran continues to enrich uranium in defiance of the UN Security Council, which



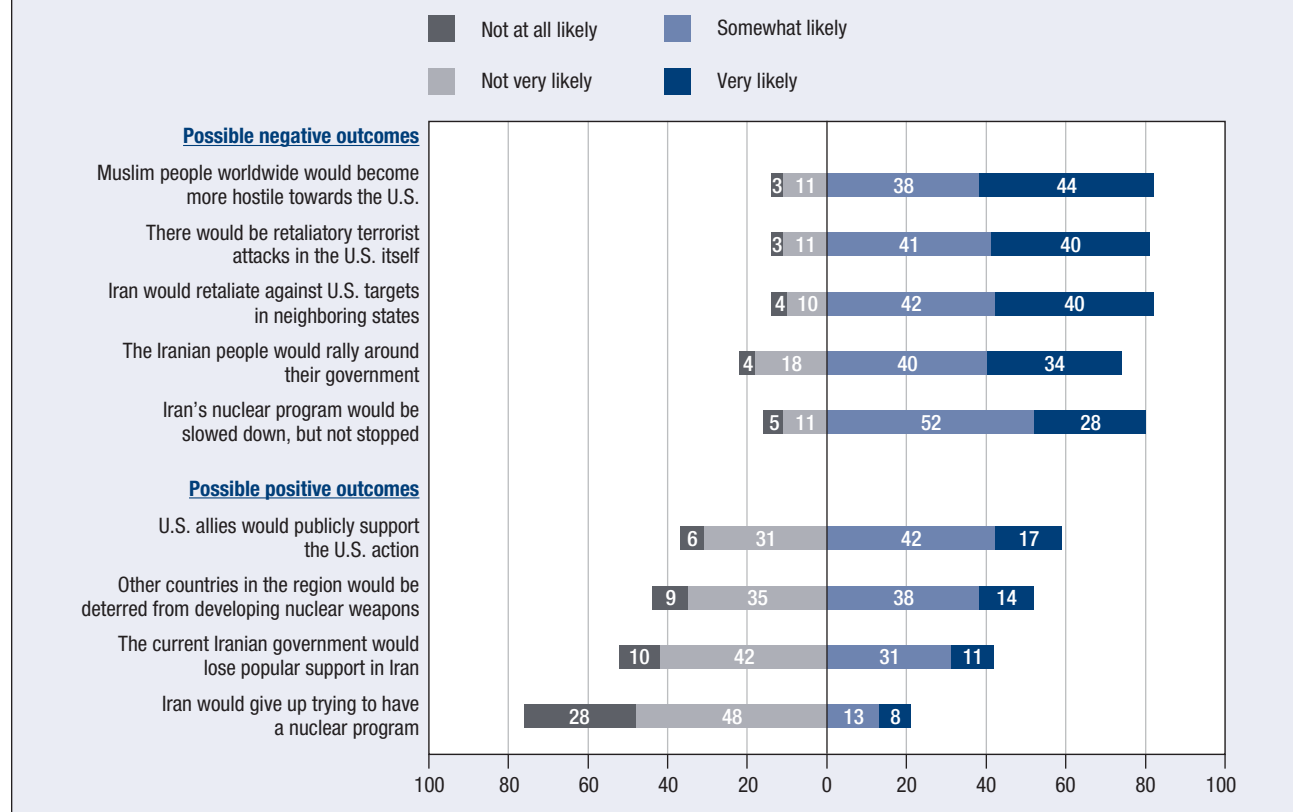
has asked it to stop enriching uranium, Americans are not immediately ready to resort to a military strike. Only 18 percent say the United States should carry out a military strike against Iran’s nuclear energy facilities, with 41 percent preferring to impose economic sanctions and 33 percent wanting to continue diplomatic efforts to get Iran to stop enriching uranium (only 4% do not want the United States to pressure Iran to stop enriching uranium). Consistent with their support for sanctions, 77 percent oppose engaging in trade with Iran.

When asked the same question about what the UN Security Council should do, only a few more (21%) say that it should authorize a military strike, again with more favoring economic sanctions (45%) or continuing diplomatic efforts to get Iran to stop enriching uranium (26%, see Figure 40). This is broadly consistent with the Council survey findings in 2006 and 2008, when this question was also posed.

Yet, the question still stands as to how Americans are likely to feel if diplomatic efforts fail and Iran persists in moving toward building a nuclear weapon. Would they become more ready to undertake a military strike? First, respondents were asked to think through the likelihood of the possible outcomes of a military strike (“very likely,” “somewhat likely,” “somewhat unlikely,” or “not at all likely”). Overall, their prognosis is quite pessimistic (see Figure 41), with large majorities saying that it is likely (either “somewhat” or “very”) that a military

Figure 41 – Possible Outcomes of a Military Strike on Iran’s Nuclear Facilities

Percentage who think that if the United States were to conduct a military strike against Iran’s nuclear program, the following outcomes would be “very likely,” “somewhat likely,” “not very likely,” or “not at all likely.”



strike would not cause Iran to give up trying to have nuclear program (76%), would slow Iran’s nuclear program down but not stop it (80%), would cause Muslim people worldwide to become more hostile toward the United States (82%), would lead to retaliatory attacks against U.S. targets in neighboring states (82%), and would lead to retaliatory terrorist attacks in the United States itself (81%).

Seventy-four percent (74%) assume that the Iranian people would rally around their government, and 52 percent assume that the Iranian government would not lose popular support. On a somewhat positive note, 59 percent think U.S. allies would likely support the U.S. action, and 52 percent think it is likely that other countries in the region would be deterred from developing nuclear weapons.

Despite these largely pessimistic assumptions, when finally asked what the United States should do if diplomatic efforts and economic sanctions

fail to stop or slow down Iran’s nuclear program, nearly as many would favor a military strike (47%) as would oppose it (49%). Support for a strike is slightly greater among those who see the possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers as a “critical” threat, with 53 percent favoring a strike. Support for a strike is much less among those who think this threat is “important, but not critical” (31%).

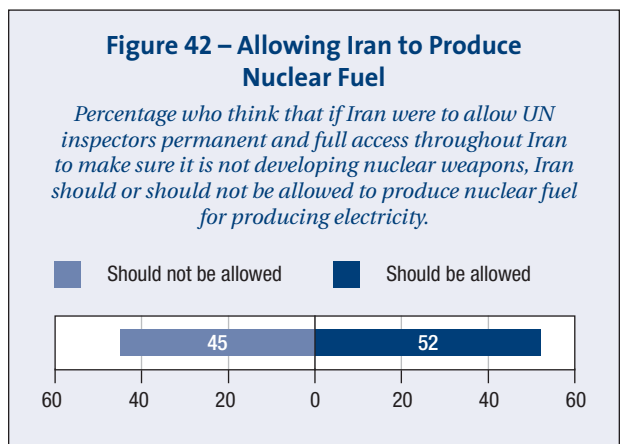
In comparing the responses about the possible outcomes of a military strike among those who would favor or oppose it if all else fails, it is striking that large majorities of both those who favor and oppose a strike agree that such strikes would *not* lead Iran to give up trying to have a nuclear program and that strikes might slow but would not stop Iran’s program. Large majorities on both sides also agree that retaliatory attacks against U.S. targets in neighboring states and the United States itself are likely. The key difference is that those who would

favor a strike believe that a military strike would deter other countries from developing nuclear weapons (67%), while only 38 percent of those who would oppose a strike concur.

Another key difference is on the question of whether the United States could contain Iran in much the same way that it contained the Soviet Union if Iran acquired a nuclear weapon. Overall Americans lean slightly to the view that the United States would not be able to contain Iran (49% *cannot* be contained to 45% *can* be contained). Among those who would favor a strike, however, 55 percent say that Iran *cannot* be contained, while among those who would oppose a strike, 54 percent say that it *can* be.

Given the pervasive pessimism about the effectiveness of military strikes, it is not surprising that Americans show interest in an alternative approach to the problem of Iran’s nuclear program.

Americans show a readiness to consider allowing Iran to enrich uranium if they are provided assurance that Iran will not develop nuclear weapons. If Iran were to allow UN inspectors permanent and full access throughout Iran to make sure it is not developing nuclear weapons, a majority of Americans (52%) believe that Iran should be allowed to produce nuclear fuel for producing electricity. Forty-five percent (45%) are opposed (see Figure 42). This is down somewhat from 2008, when 56 percent said Iran should be allowed to produce nuclear fuel in this circumstance, and 41 percent said they should not.

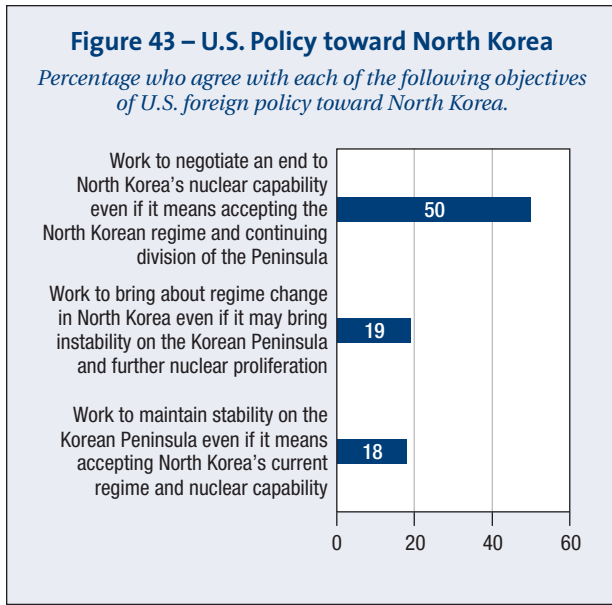


North Korea

North Korea, like Iran, is one of Americans’ least favorite countries, tying for last with Iran at a very cold 27 (out of a possible 100) on the scale of “feelings” toward various countries. Seventy-five percent (75%) of Americans are opposed to engaging in trade with the country. There are no official diplomatic relations with North Korea, yet again, as with Iran, Americans think U.S. leaders “should be ready to meet and talk” with the country’s leaders (62%).

The Korean problem is complicated in its own way because the challenge is not just North Korea’s nuclear program, but also a divided peninsula with opposing regimes in the north and south. When asked to choose between three policy options related to these two problems, Americans clearly show more concern about the nuclear threat than the divided peninsula (see Figure 43). Fifty percent (50%) of Americans prefer to “work to negotiate an end to North Korea’s nuclear capability even if it means accepting the North Korean regime and continuing division of the Peninsula.” Only 18 percent prefer to “work to maintain stability on the Korean Peninsula even if it means accepting North Korea’s current regime and nuclear capability,” and 19 percent would rather “work to bring about regime change in North Korea even if it may bring instability to the Korean Peninsula and further nuclear proliferation.”

Concern over the potential nuclear threat from North Korea appears to be contributing at least in part to support for a U.S. military presence in South Korea. Among those who see the possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers as a “critical” threat, 63 percent support having long-term U.S. military bases in South Korea. Among those who see the threat as “important but not critical,” 55 percent support bases in South Korea, and among those who say the threat is “not important at all,” only 41 support bases in South Korea. A similar pattern also emerges on preventing the spread of nuclear weapons as a possible foreign policy goal. The support for bases in South Korea declines as the perceived importance of this goal goes down.



Overall, given the high level of the perceived threat from nuclear proliferation (69% “critical”), South Korea receives the highest level of support for having long-term military bases (62%) among all countries asked about, 10 points higher than Afghanistan and Germany, the other two countries with majority support for bases. It is also the only country of those asked about in which there has been no statistically significant drop since 2008 in the desire to have bases in that country. There is also evidence that support for troops in South Korea is related to the desire to counterbalance the rising power of China (see page 55 under Principle #4).

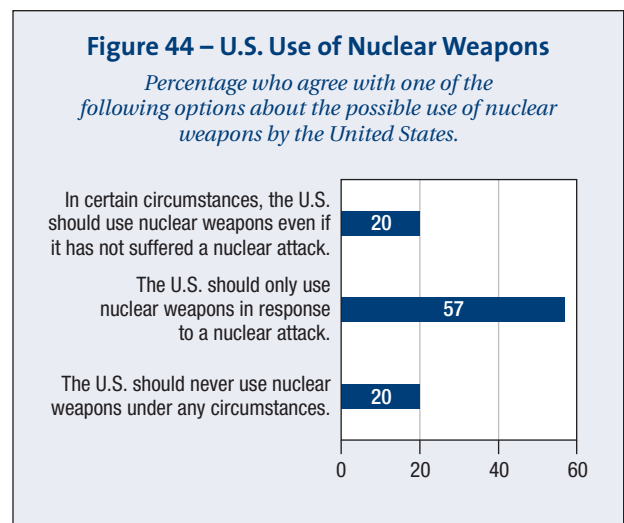
But despite the support for having troops in South Korea, Americans show reluctance to use them to defend that country unilaterally. Only 40 percent of Americans support using U.S. troops to defend South Korea against a North Korean invasion. Nevertheless, this support jumps to 61 percent if the United States were to contribute troops to a UN sponsored effort to reverse a North Korean attack of South Korea. This is consistent with previous survey findings showing that Americans are more inclined to use U.S. troops if it is done in a multilateral framework.

Interestingly, in the hypothetical scenario in which North and South Korea reunify as a single nation—the implication being that the threat from North Korea and its nuclear weapons is then

removed—51 percent favor options that include the removal of ground troops: either maintaining the U.S. alliance with South Korea but removing ground troops (37%) or ending the alliance with South Korea and removing ground troops (14%). Forty-three percent (43%) support maintaining the alliance and keeping U.S. ground troops so as to counterbalance China. Viewed in another way, a very high 80 percent favor maintaining the alliance with South Korea in some way, and among those, more want to keep U.S. ground troops to counterbalance China than remove them (see page 55 for further discussion).

U.S. Use of Nuclear Weapons

As a final note on the issue of nuclear proliferation, Americans clearly support a highly restrained approach to the use of nuclear weapons by the United States. This takes on special significance in light of the Obama administration’s 2010 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), which reduced the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. security strategy in an effort to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and move the world toward less emphasis on nuclear weapons. The NPR, however, did not go so far as to promise never to use nuclear weapons first (the so-called no-first-use policy). The American people, on the other hand, do appear to be ready for such a step. Twenty percent (20%) say the United States should never use nuclear weapons under any circumstances, and



57 percent say the United States should only use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack (77% total support for a no-first-use policy). Only 20 percent think that “in certain circumstances,” the United States should use nuclear weapons even if it has not suffered a nuclear attack (see Figure 44).

Energy Dependence

The other issue highest on the list of threats is related to energy dependence. As one of the world’s largest consumers of energy—and with energy consumption having increased at a faster rate than energy production over the last fifty years in the United States—the United States relies heavily on oil imports to meet this crucial demand. U.S. dependence on foreign oil, a new question in 2010, is in fourth place among all the perceived threats facing the United States—right up with Iran’s nuclear program and violent Islamist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Sixty-two percent (62%) consider it “critical.” Even more Americans (74%) say that reducing U.S. dependence on foreign oil should be a “very important” foreign policy goal. Reducing oil dependency is the second most widely embraced goal on our entire list of nineteen goals, right after protecting the jobs of American workers.

Disruption of energy supply rounds out the top six threats, with 54 percent calling it “critical.” In the summer of 2008, when gasoline prices reached an all-time high, 72 percent called this a “critical” threat, making it the number one threat in 2008, higher than both international terrorism and the possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers. While this number has now declined 18 points with the easing of gas prices, it is clearly still a concern. Indeed, since the very beginning of the Council’s surveys in 1974, large majorities of Americans have always said that securing adequate supplies of energy should be a very important goal of U.S. foreign policy, ranging from a low of 61 percent to a high of 78 percent until 2008 when it reached 80 percent. Today it stands at 68 percent.

While both disruption of supply and dependence on foreign oil elicit majority concern as critical threats, the higher response to dependence on

foreign oil likely signals that more is at stake than purely the availability or the disruption of energy supplies themselves (as discussed in Chapter 2.) Most of the world’s oil reserves are concentrated in the Middle East, where the United States has been mired in conflict, toward which feelings are highly negative (see Chapter 4), and to which high oil prices have led to a massive transfer of wealth. Calls have been growing in the United States to reduce this dependence not only to help insulate the country from price shocks and price manipulation, but to help reduce our involvement in violent conflicts that are often perceived as oil-driven, avoid entanglement with undemocratic regimes, and reduce the political leverage that those regimes have over U.S. policy as a result of oil dependence.

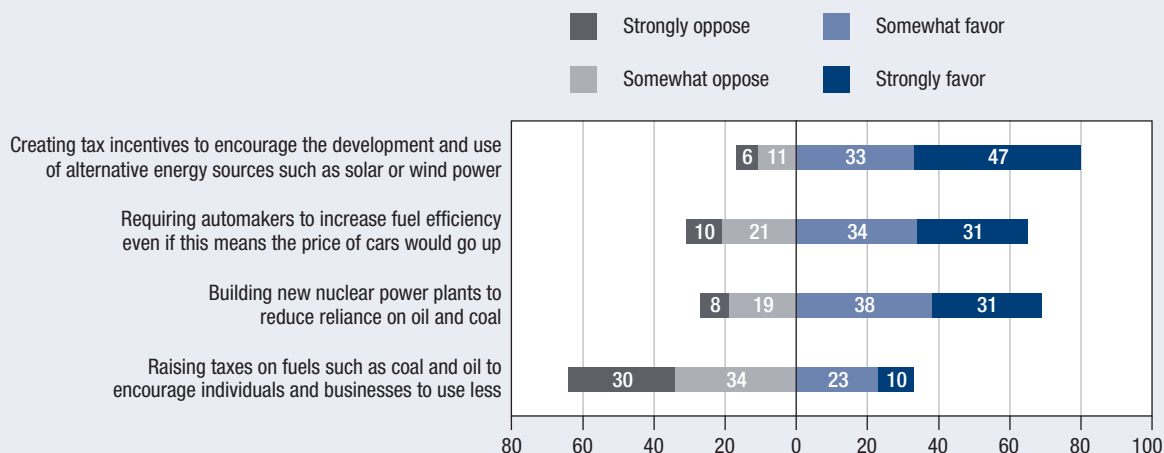
Americans support substantial action—cooperative measures abroad as well as measures at home—to protect energy supplies and reduce dependence on foreign oil. Sixty-four percent (64%) of Americans favor a new international institution to monitor the worldwide energy market and predict potential shortages. Despite their reluctance to use force in many circumstances, a majority of Americans (55%) favor the use of U.S. troops to ensure the oil supply. A solid majority (58%) favors expanding offshore drilling for oil and natural gas off the U.S. coast—22 percent “strongly” and 36 percent “somewhat”—even after the disastrous British Petroleum blowout in the Gulf of Mexico earlier this year highlighted the risks of such drilling.

In terms of oil dependence, respondents were asked whether they “strongly favor,” “somewhat favor,” “somewhat oppose,” or “strongly oppose” four ways to address the country’s dependence on foreign energy sources. Americans on balance favor three out of the four measures (combining “strongly favor” and “somewhat favor,” see Figure 45):

- Creating tax incentives to encourage the development and use of alternative energy sources such as solar or wind power (80% favor)
- Requiring automakers to increase fuel efficiency, even if this means the price of cars would go up (65% favor)

Figure 45 – Addressing America’s Dependence on Foreign Energy

Percentage who say they “strongly favor,” “somewhat favor,” “somewhat oppose,” or “strongly oppose” each of the following measures to address America’s dependence on foreign energy sources.



- Building nuclear power plants to reduce reliance on oil and coal (69% favor)

Underscoring the economic pinch felt by Americans during this economic downturn, the only measure not earning majority support is raising taxes on fuels such as coal and oil to encourage individuals and businesses to use less. Sixty-four percent (64%) oppose this measure.

These measures are, of course, identical to those proposed for addressing climate change. The questions were designed to find out whether support for the measures would be stronger when put in the context of dependence on foreign oil—about which more people are greatly concerned—than in the context of climate change. Interestingly, responses were virtually the same in both contexts.

The strong support for tax incentives to encourage development of alternative energy sources is also reflected in the 61 percent of Americans who say that investing in renewable energy is “very important” to the United States remaining competitive with other countries (see discussion of this question in Chapter 2).

The Case of China

The previous sections demonstrate one of the main principles of selective engagement, namely that large majorities of Americans favor a wide range of direct actions against what they perceive as the most critical threats facing the nation. Yet, when it comes to potential long-term threats that are not widely perceived as “critical,” such as the rise of China, the public is much less likely to support direct action against the threat and takes a more nuanced approach toward dealing with it.

As discussed in previous chapters, Americans are keenly aware of the rise of China’s power and influence in the world. They see China’s influence pulling essentially even with the United States in ten years (7.8 to the United State’s 8.0 on a scale of 0 to 10) and another nation—presumably China—becoming either as powerful as the United States (40%) or surpassing it (26%) in fifty years (see Figure 46).

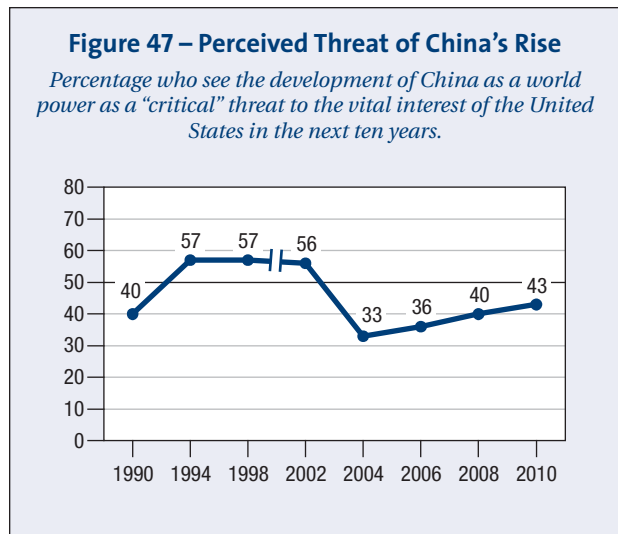
In a change from 2008, more Americans now see China as “very important” to the United States than any of the other seventeen countries asked about, moving it ahead of Canada and Great Britain. By a wide margin, more Americans (68%) consider China to be more important to the United States in terms of vital interests than Japan (27%). This is

a dramatic increase of 17 points in favor of China from 2008, when 51 percent considered China more important, compared to Japan's 44 percent.

Even though there is a rise in concern about China in some respects, Americans do not at this point view China as a highly critical threat. The development of China as a world power is considered a “critical” threat by less than a majority of Americans (43%). While this has been slowly rising since 2004 when it stood at 33 percent, it is still much lower than concern about China in the 1990s and early 2000s, when it was as high as 57 percent (see Figure 47).

There is some concern about how China’s military power and intentions may evolve over time. Even though only 17 percent say they are “very worried” that China may become a military threat in the future (a drop of 8 points since 2008), 48 percent say they are “somewhat” worried. Americans are not very concerned about one of the most likely ways in which a U.S.–China crisis could emerge in the near term. Only 20 percent view a confrontation between mainland China and Taiwan as a critical threat to the United States.

Overall, relations with China are viewed by Americans as mostly “neutral” (42%) or “pretty good” (34%). Relations are also considered to be “staying about the same” (47%) rather than “improving” (19%) or “worsening” (29%). Notably, however, these percentages viewing relations as “improving” or “worsening” are almost exactly reversed from 2006 when this question was last



asked. At that time, only 17 percent said relations were “worsening,” compared to 30 percent believing relations were “improving.”

Military concerns appear to be playing a role in this reversal. Eighty percent (80%) of those who say relations are “worsening” are “very” or “somewhat” worried that China could become a military threat in the future, compared to 65 percent overall and 57 percent among those who say relations are “improving.” Economic concerns, as discussed in Chapter 2, are also playing a role in the view of relations with China. Among those who see relations as “worsening,” 62 percent say U.S. debt to China is a “critical” threat, compared to 51 percent overall and 42 percent among those who think relations are “improving.” Similarly, 77 percent of those who think relations are “worsening” think China practices unfair trade, compared to 63 percent overall and 57 percent among those who think relations are “improving.”

Americans do not support strong actions to try to limit China’s growth. In terms of an overall strategy, 68 percent of Americans believe that the United States should undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China rather than work actively to limit the growth of China’s power (28%). This is an increase of 4 points in favor of friendly cooperation and engagement since 2008 (see Figure 11).

Yet, this does not mean that Americans think relations with China should trump the maintenance of strong alliances with other countries in the

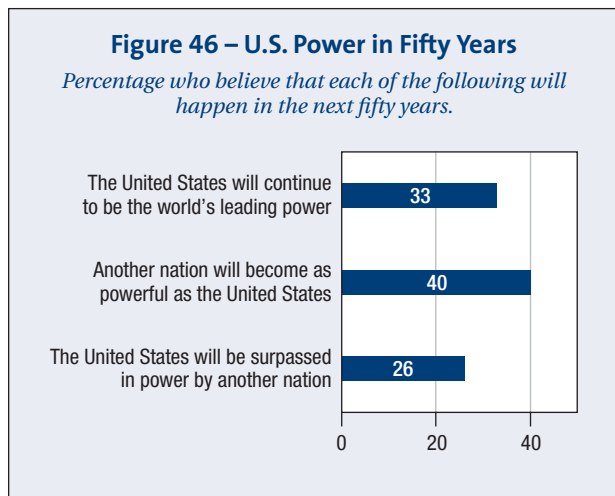
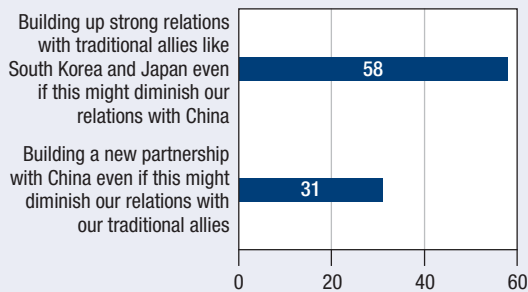


Figure 48 – U.S. Foreign Policy in Asia

Percentage who think the United States should put a higher priority on the following in thinking about U.S. foreign policy in Asia.



region. When asked to choose between an Asia policy that focuses attention on traditional allies or on China, Americans come down squarely on the side of allies. This perhaps suggests a desire to preserve the United States' ability to hedge against a possible future military threat from China. Fifty-eight percent (58%) support building up strong relations with traditional allies like South Korea and Japan even if this might diminish relations with China. Thirty-one percent (31%) favor the reverse—building a new partnership with China even if this might diminish U.S. relations with its traditional allies (see Figure 48).

While overall most Americans do not prefer to actively work to limit the growth of China's power, when put in the context of working with allies, they show support for a strategy of balancing. Fifty-five percent (55%) think the United States and South Korea should work together to limit the rise of China in the years ahead, with 38 percent opposed.

Consistent with the desire to stay on the sideline of conflicts (see page 55) as well as the relatively low perceived threat of a confrontation between mainland China and Taiwan, 71 percent of Americans do not favor using U.S. troops if China invaded Taiwan (only 25% are in favor).

Principle #2: Support for Low-Risk, Low-Cost Humanitarian Actions

As we have seen in the first principle of selective engagement, Americans are clearly comfortable responding internationally to threats they are most concerned about. They support a variety of responses, including multilateral actions, unilateral U.S. actions, working through international institutions, and participating in international agreements, to help deal with these threats. Another principle of selective engagement that emerges in the findings is support for active intervention to help address humanitarian crises, especially genocide. This is the second principle of selective engagement, which reflects a moral component in foreign policy preferences and signals support for combating problems viewed as affronts to American (and human) values.

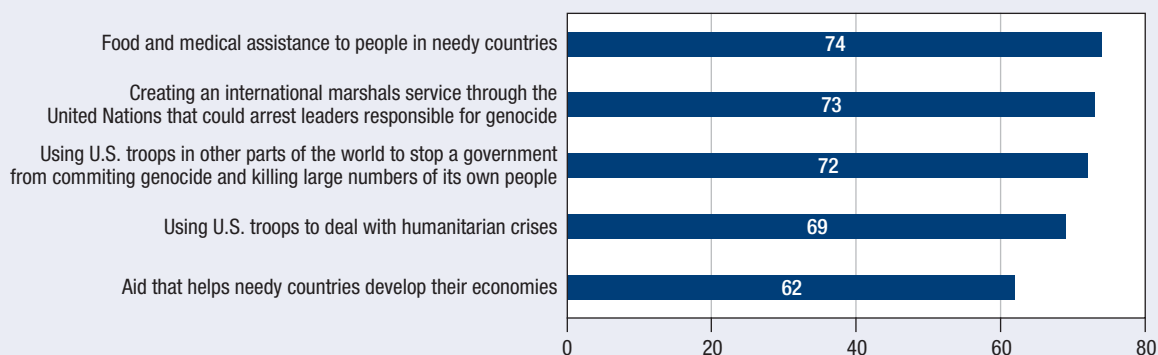
On a question about circumstances that justify the use of U.S. troops in other countries, 69 percent favor using U.S. troops to deal with "humanitarian crises" as a broad category. A stronger 72 percent favor using U.S. troops in other parts of the world to stop a government from committing genocide and killing large numbers of its own people (see Figure 49).

Americans also show strong support for international norms and institutions to respond to humanitarian needs. Sixty-six percent (66%) agree that the UN Security Council has the responsibility to authorize the use of military force to protect people from severe human rights violations such as genocide, even against the will of their own government. Further, 73 percent favor creating an international marshals service through the United Nations that could arrest leaders responsible for genocide. These numbers have mostly stayed steady since the last survey.

Support for humanitarian forms of foreign aid is also strong, even after declining somewhat over the past decade. Seventy-four percent (74%) favor food and medical assistance to people in needy countries, while 62 percent favor aid that helps needy countries develop their economies (see Figure 49). While still high, these percentages are

Figure 49 – Support for Humanitarian Measures

Percentage who favor each of the following.



both down 8 points since 2004 and down 13 and 12 points, respectively, since 2002.

While promoting and defending human rights in other countries has never been a high priority in terms of U.S. foreign policy goals (only 30% consider it “very important”), Americans support multilateral efforts to defend human rights when specific problems arise. Seventy-two percent (72%) favor giving the United Nations the authority to go into countries in order to investigate violations of human rights.

As noted, these responses point to a strong moral component in U.S. internationalism. Yet they also reflect support for actions that are presumably relatively low in cost in terms of blood and treasure. In contrast, the longer-term strategies of promoting and defending human rights in other countries, protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression, and helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations, all of which are arguably moral missions, are not considered “very important” goals of U.S. foreign policy. All might involve substantially greater cost and major long-term efforts as well as the possibility of potentially dangerous foreign entanglements.

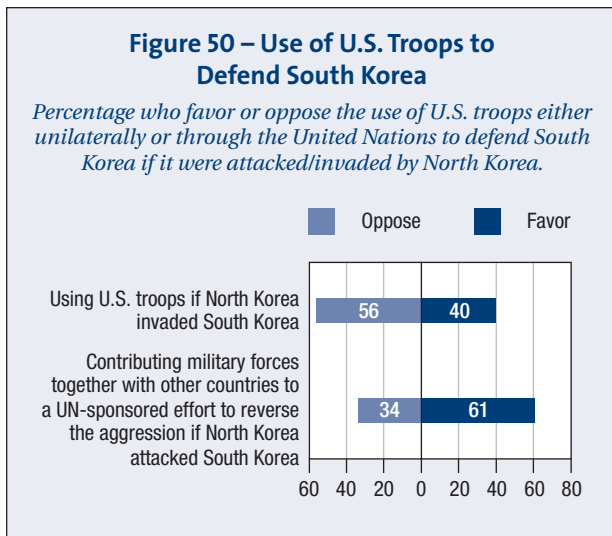
A case in point is the question of whether the United States should put greater pressure on countries in the Middle East, like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, to become more democratic. Americans soundly reject this idea, with 59 percent saying the United States should not do this.

Principle #3: Support for Multilateral Actions through the United Nations

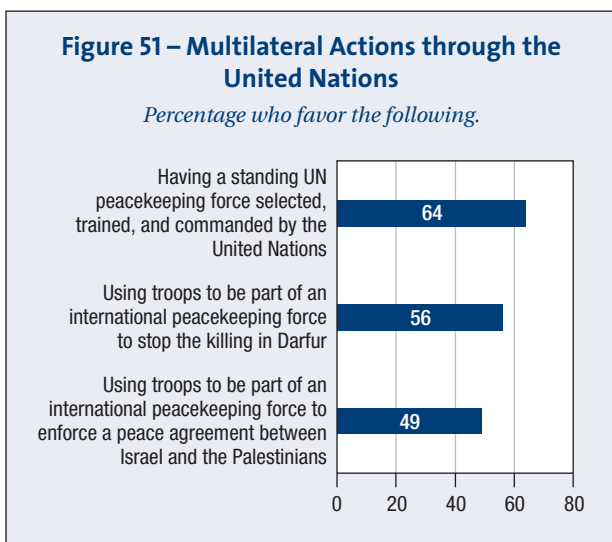
As discussed in Chapter 1, the United Nations, which plays an important role in many policy decisions related to international conflicts, has been losing its luster among Americans steadily since the Chicago Council’s 2002 survey. This coincides with the failed attempt to reach agreement within the Security Council on how to deal with Iraq’s alleged weapons of mass destruction leading up to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. Yet, a majority of Americans (54%) continue to favor strengthening the United Nations, and the United Nations continues to be seen as serving positive functions in many circumstances.

In past surveys Americans have shown a greater willingness to act in certain circumstances if the action is multilateral rather than unilateral on the part of the United States. This is confirmed again in this survey in the case of conflict on the Korean Peninsula. When asked if they favor or oppose using U.S. troops if North Korea invaded South Korea, 56 percent are opposed, the same as in 2008. Yet, when asked if they would favor or oppose the U.S. contributing military forces together with other countries to a UN-sponsored effort to reverse the aggression if North Korea attacked South Korea, 61 percent are in favor (see Figure 50).

Majorities still support various multilateral peacekeeping missions through the United



Nations, even though numbers are down. Sixty-four percent (64%), down 6 points from 2008 and 10 points from 2004, favor having a standing UN peacekeeping force selected, trained, and commanded by the United Nations. Fifty-six percent (56%) would favor using troops to be part of an international peacekeeping force to stop the killing in Darfur, down 6 points from 2008. Americans are evenly split, however, between those who favor and oppose being part of an international peacekeeping force to enforce a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians for the first time since this item was asked in 2002 (see Figure 51). In the past, a majority has always favored this.



Principle #4: Preference for Lightening the U.S. Military Footprint

Since the mid-1940s, the United States has maintained a vast number of bases overseas. While overall Americans favor something close to the status quo in terms of bases overseas, there has been a sharp decline in support for long-term bases in many specific locations. Again, given constraints on U.S. financial and power resources, Americans appear to be looking for opportunities to reduce unnecessary burdens wherever possible (see Figure 13 in Chapter 1).

Majorities still favor long-term military bases in South Korea (62%), Afghanistan, (52%) and Germany (52%), though the numbers for Afghanistan and Germany have dropped 5 and 7 points, respectively. Only pluralities now support long-term bases in Iraq and Japan (50% in both cases), a major shift from 2008 when solid majorities of 57 percent and 58 percent, respectively, supported long-term bases there. Attitudes were divided in 2008 on long-term bases in Pakistan and Turkey, but now majorities oppose them. Support for bases in Pakistan dropped from 49 to 45 percent, with 52 percent opposed. Support for bases in Turkey dropped from 50 to 43 percent, with 53 percent opposed.

In the case of Japan, the drop may be at least partly explained by the controversy with the Japanese government over troops in Okinawa. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama was elected partly on a promise to move those troops to the U.S. territory of Guam, but then reneged on that promise, leading to his resignation just before this survey was conducted. Yet on a further question on bases in Japan, when told that the United States currently has about 33,000 troops in Japan, including Okinawa, and asked to say if that amount is “too many,” “too few,” or “about right,” 47 percent say that is “about right,” with 44 percent of Americans saying it is “too many.”

In the case of Iraq, the drop in support for long-term bases may be impacted by the drawdown of U.S. combat troops being completed by the end of August 2010. The drop seen across almost all

locations asked about may point to a desire to lessen dangerous foreign entanglements (such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey) and reduce burdens in less threatening locations (such as Germany and Japan).

The only country (out of seven asked about) where there has been no statistically significant change since 2008 on support for bases is South Korea. Asked more specifically about the level of U.S. troops there (about 30,000), 50 percent say this number is “about right,” while 34 percent say it is “too many” and only 12 percent say it is “too few.” There has been an 8-point shift away from reducing current troop levels in favor of maintaining them since 2006 when the question was last posed.

Support for troops in South Korea appears to be at least partly viewed as a hedge against China. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of those who are “very worried” that China may become a military threat in the future think the United States should have long-term military bases in South Korea, compared to 62 percent overall. Among those who think the United States should work with South Korea to limit China’s rise, more support having long-term military bases in South Korea (69%), compared to 62 percent supporting bases overall and 52 percent supporting bases among those who don’t think the United States and South Korea should work to limit China’s rise.

In addition, among those who say the United States and South Korea should work to limit the rise of China, 60 percent think that if North and South Korea were to reunify as a single nation, the United States should maintain the alliance with South Korea and keep U.S. ground troops to counterbalance China. This compares to 43 percent in the survey overall who would maintain the alliance and keep troops to counterbalance China and only 33 percent who would do this among those who say the United States and South Korea should not work together to limit the rise of China.

It is important to remember, however, that in the survey overall, a very high 68 percent of Americans prefer to undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China rather than actively work to limit the growth of its power. And, as mentioned on page 47, support for bases in

South Korea also correlates with concern about the nuclear threat from North Korea.

Principle #5: Preference for Staying on the Sideline of Conflicts That Are Not Seen As Directly Threatening to the United States

Americans have long been selective about wanting to intervene in major conflicts between other countries, even when U.S. interests are at stake. They are particularly sensitive about becoming involved in potentially dangerous, long-term foreign entanglements perceived as involving high costs in financial and human terms.

As in the past, without a clear specification that the intervention would be multilateral, majorities of Americans oppose most possible uses of U.S. troops cited in the survey, including if China invaded Taiwan (71% opposed, up 6 points since 2008) and if North Korea invaded South Korea (56% opposed, see Figure 52). Majorities have nearly always rejected these uses of U.S. troops going back to the 1990s. In light of financial constraints at home and the limits of American power abroad, however, there are some signs that support for engagement in major conflicts has softened even more.

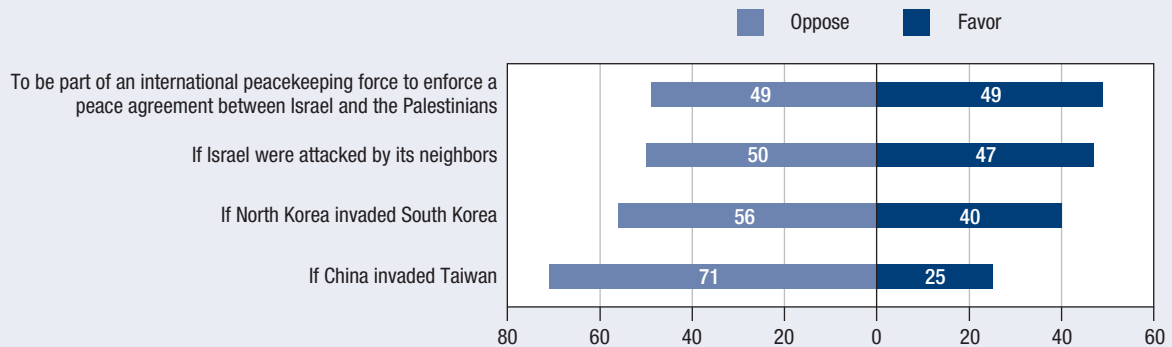
A Strike by Israel on Iran’s Nuclear Facilities

As discussed earlier, Americans are gravely concerned about Iran’s nuclear program. Yet they are also quite concerned about the possible negative impact of a military strike to try and stop it. Only a small minority favors the use of military force now, and if all efforts to stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons fail, Americans are essentially evenly divided over whether to conduct a strike.

They also appear to be very wary of being dragged into a conflict prompted by an Israeli strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities. In this survey, conducted in June 2010, a clear majority of Americans (56%) say that if Israel were to bomb Iran’s nuclear facilities, Iran were to retaliate against Israel, and the two were to go to war, the United States *should not* bring its military forces into the war on the side of Israel and against Iran (see Figure 14 in Chapter 1).

Figure 52 – Support for U.S. Troop Use

Percentage who favor or oppose the use of U.S. troops in each of the following scenarios.



An Attack on Israel by Its Neighbors

Americans continue to show wariness about defending Israel from an attack by its neighbors. Despite an increase in the percentage of Americans who think military conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors is a critical threat (from 39% in 2008 to 45% today), Americans are divided on using U.S. troops to defend Israel if it were attacked by “its neighbors” (50% opposed, 47% in favor, see Figure 52). This question was also asked with a slightly different wording in surveys from 1990 to 2004 (if Arab forces invaded Israel). In none of these surveys was there majority support for an implicitly unilateral use of U.S. troops.

The Israeli–Palestinian Conflict

Views on U.S. involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are also rather restrained. In this survey—prior to the announcement of planned peace talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Washington, D.C., in September 2010—40 percent of Americans say the United States has been doing more than it should to resolve the conflict, with 36 percent saying the United States is doing about the right amount, and 20 percent saying the United States should be making greater efforts than it has been making. For the first time since 2002 in these surveys, there is no majority support among Americans for using U.S. troops to be part of an international peacekeeping force to enforce a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians (see

Figure 52). Instead, views are evenly split (49% in favor to 49% opposed). There is also a clear decline in support for the idea that U.S. government leaders should be ready to talk with leaders of Hamas, now showing a nearly even split between those saying U.S. leaders should be ready to talk with leaders of Hamas (48%, down 5 points from a majority in 2008) and those saying U.S. leaders should not be ready to do this (46%).

Despite strongly negative views of the Palestinian Authority (a mean rating of 32, nearly as low as for North Korea and Iran on the 0 to 100 scale of “feelings” where 50 is neutral), two-thirds (66%) of Americans think the United States should not take any side in the Middle East conflict (28% prefer that the United States take Israel’s side and 3% want the United States to take the Palestinian’s side). There has, however, been an 8-point drop from 2004 in the percentage that does not want to take sides and an increase of 11 points in the percentage that thinks the United States should take Israel’s side (28%, up from 17% in 2004). At the same time, Americans are not in favor of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, a major sticking point in the conflict, with 62 percent saying Israel “should not build” these settlements.

Interestingly, when resolving the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is put in the context of a top, direct threat to the United States, namely terrorism, a majority of Americans (58%) favor making a “major effort” to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict as a way to combat international terrorism.

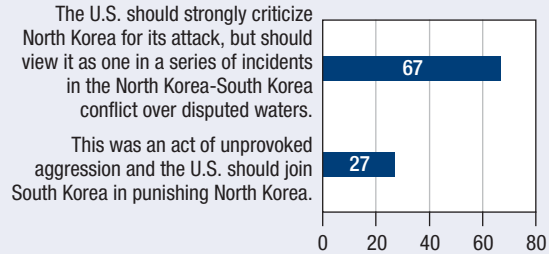
An Invasion by North Korea of South Korea

The conflict between North and South Korea is another example of Americans' reluctance to intervene in military conflicts abroad, even when close allies are threatened. As mentioned earlier, only 40 percent of Americans support using U.S. troops to defend South Korea against a North Korean invasion even though the United States would be obligated to come to the aid of South Korea under the terms of the alliance. Nevertheless, this support jumps to 61 percent if the United States were to contribute troops to a UN-sponsored effort to reverse a North Korean attack of South Korea.

When asked their view of the recent North Korean attack on a South Korean naval vessel that killed forty-six sailors, 67 percent of Americans say the United States should strongly criticize North Korea for the attack, but should view it as one in a

Figure 53 – Response to the Attack on a South Korean Naval Ship

Percentage who say each of the following views on the recent torpedoing of a South Korean naval ship killing forty-six sailors is closest to their own.



series of incidents in the North Korea–South Korea conflict over disputed waters. Only 27 percent say it was an act of unprovoked aggression and the United States should join South Korea in punishing North Korea (see Figure 53).

Chapter 4 Americans in an Emerging Multipolar World

More than two decades after the fall of Berlin Wall broke the rigid blocks of East and West in a bipolar global system, the world looks dramatically different. As U.S. dominance has remained undisputed, other powers have been steadily gaining strength. China, especially, is now emerging as a possible challenger to U.S. hegemony. Overall, the world appears to be headed in a multipolar direction, as countries rely increasingly less on the United States and pursue strategic interests that may or may not be at odds with U.S. objectives. As is clear throughout this report, while Americans do not want to disengage from the world, economic recession at home and limits on U.S. power abroad have led

Americans overwhelmingly to the desire to focus on problems at home. These circumstances have led to some clear changes in the way Americans view the world. In this section we look more closely at changing perceptions of the international order as well as U.S. regional and bilateral relationships.

The Geopolitical Landscape

Influence of Countries: China Reaches the Top

As seen throughout this report, Americans perceive a world in which the United States is becom-

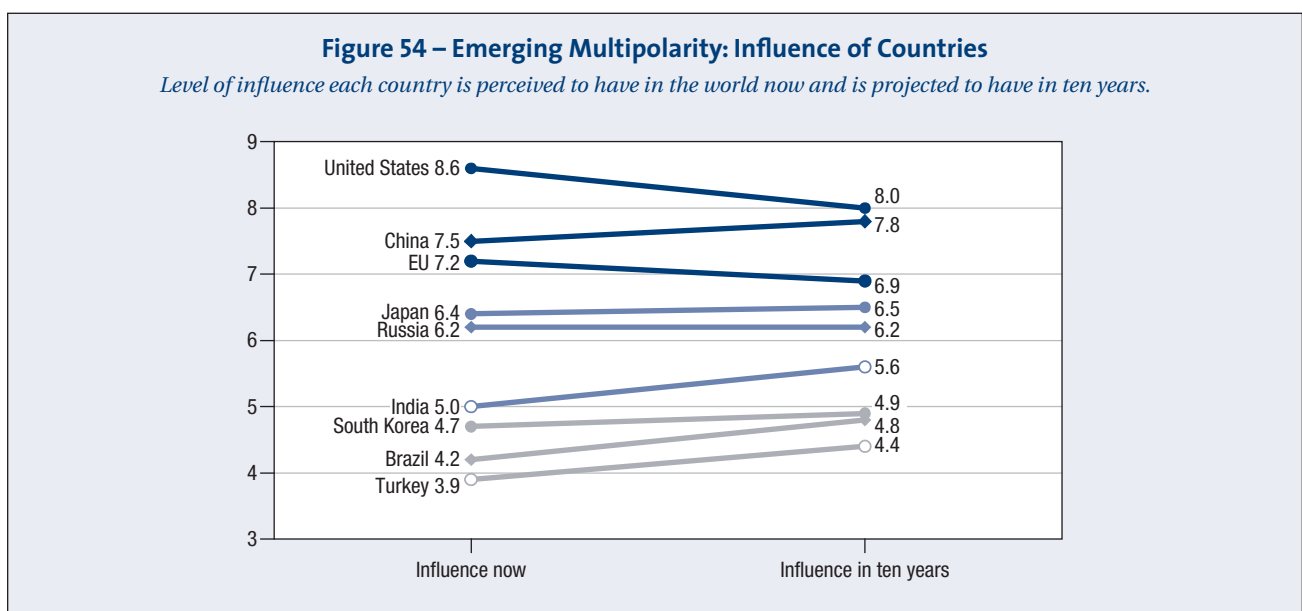


Figure 55 – Importance of Other Countries

Rank order of countries as “very important” to the United States in 2008 and 2010 and as “very” and “somewhat” important combined in 2010.

Rank in 2008 (Very important)	%	Rank in 2010 (Very important)	%	Rank in 2010 (Very and somewhat important combined)	%
Great Britain	60	China	54	China	87
Canada	53	Great Britain	52	Great Britain	86
China	52	Canada	50	Japan	86
Japan	45	Japan	40	Canada	84
Saudi Arabia	44	Israel	33	Germany	77
Israel	40	Mexico	31	Israel	74
Mexico	37	Saudi Arabia	30	Saudi Arabia	74
Russia	34	Germany	27	Russia	74
Iran	32	Iraq	26	Mexico	72
Pakistan	30	Russia	26	India	68
Germany	29	Iran	25	South Korea	67
India	25	Afghanistan	21	Iraq	63
Afghanistan	25	South Korea	21	Afghanistan	60
France	22	Pakistan	19	Iran	59
Venezuela	16	India	18	Pakistan	59
Egypt	16	Brazil	10	Brazil	54
Brazil	14	Turkey	10	Turkey	52
Indonesia	9	Nigeria	6	Nigeria	35

ing less dominant and other countries are rising in influence, especially China. These perceptions are revealed by two questions about the influence of countries: how much influence Americans think each of the countries asked about has in the world now and how much influence Americans think each will have ten years from now on a scale of 0 (not at all influential) to 10 (extremely influential). As Figure 54 shows, there is no change in the rank order of countries in terms of the perceived influence of countries today and in ten years. Yet there are clear shifts within that rank order.

In terms of influence today, the United States stands alone at the top, followed by a cluster of “middle” powers and a cluster of less influential countries much lower on the scale. Projecting ten years into the future, however, the picture is much different. With the rise of China’s influence and decline of U.S. influence, the two are almost even in influence at the top, with the others pulling somewhat closer together. In terms of shifts, the EU is the only other “country” besides the United States

seen as declining in influence in the next ten years. The largest increases in influence are for Brazil, India, and Turkey. India, in the lower cluster today, is seen as gaining on the “middle” powers. Brazil, while still quite low, is seen as pulling virtually even with South Korea.

Importance of Countries to the United States: All Countries Losing Ground except China

What is striking in this survey is the overall drop in the level of importance of virtually all countries to the United States since 2008 (see Figure 12 in Chapter 1). The one exception is China, the only country among the fourteen countries asked about in both 2008 and 2010 that has not declined in importance to the United States. Indeed, China has now moved ahead of Great Britain and Canada to top the list of important countries (see Figure 55).

Further, there are now only two countries in the world that a majority of Americans consider

“very important”: China and Great Britain. Some of the biggest drops in importance were for countries in the Middle East and other conflict areas: Iran, Israel, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia.

Rising powers Brazil, India, and Turkey still hover near the bottom of the relative rankings of importance, just above Nigeria. Saudi Arabia has fallen sharply to drop behind Israel and Mexico, though still ranks ahead of allies Germany and South Korea. Other shifts include Germany’s jump ahead of Russia, Iran, and Pakistan; and Afghanistan’s jump ahead of Pakistan and India.

It is important to note that even if many countries are not considered “very important,” they are considered at least “somewhat important.” When these responses are added together (and when “not very” and “not at all important” are added together), only Nigeria comes out with majority of “not very” or “not at all important.” Every other country has a majority saying it is at least “somewhat important” to the United States.

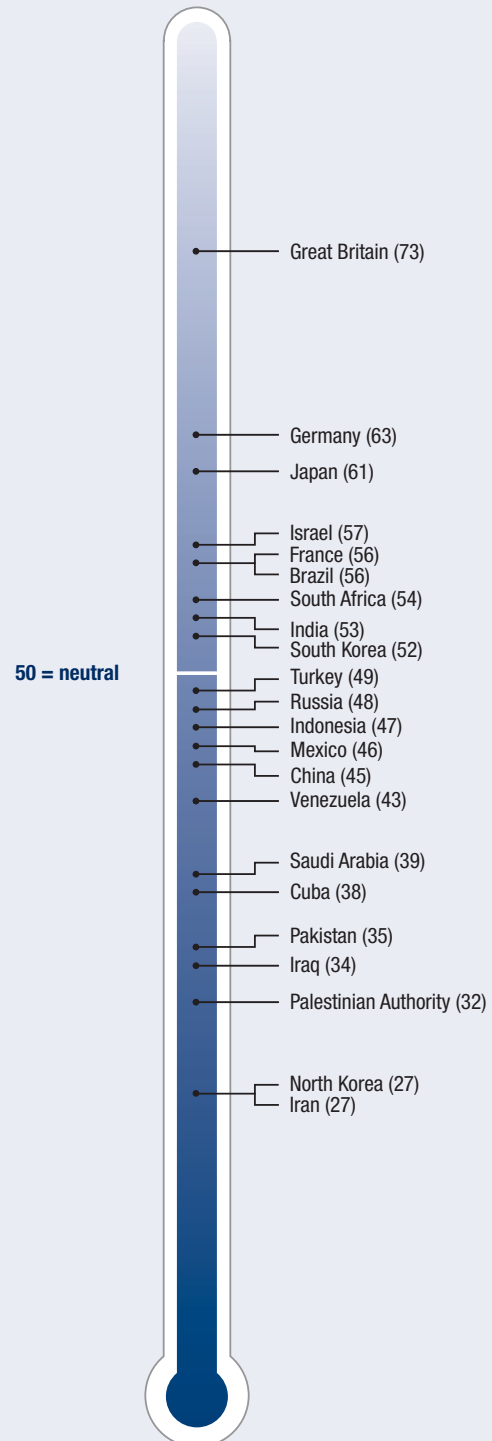
Feelings toward Other Countries: A Modest Shift toward the Positive

In another measure of American views of countries around the world, respondents were asked to rate their feelings toward twenty-two different countries on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 meaning a “very cold, unfavorable feeling,” 50 meaning “not particularly warm or cold,” and 100 meaning a “very warm, favorable feeling.” Not surprisingly, America’s closest allies rank at the top. Countries with the coldest ratings are a familiar group with which the United States has poor or outright hostile relations (see Figure 56).

What is striking is that while majorities of Americans see only two countries as “very important” to the United States, this does not mean they do not like many of the countries asked about. Americans feel decidedly warm toward nine out of the twenty-two countries—and not just toward traditional Western allies. Indeed, Americans have come to feel warmly toward a quite diverse array of countries located on several different continents, including Brazil, India, South Africa, and South Korea.

Figure 56 – Feelings toward Countries

Mean score on a scale of 0 to 100 with 100 meaning a very warm, favorable feeling; 0 meaning a very cold, unfavorable feeling; and 50 meaning not particularly warm or cold.



Since 2008 there has not been a significant change in feelings toward roughly half the countries. Where there is change, it is mostly toward the positive. Feelings are up modestly for an array of countries, including China, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey, and Venezuela. One of the biggest jumps is for South Africa, perhaps due to the highly publicized hosting of the World Cup while the survey was in the field. For the first time since India was included in this question, it has moved from the cold to warm side of feelings (47 in 2008 to 53 in 2010). The only notable change toward the negative was a modest drop for Mexico.

Relations with Other Countries

To further measure Americans' feelings about other countries, two additional questions were asked. Respondents were asked whether present relations with a country are "very good," "pretty good," "neutral," "pretty bad," or "very bad." They were also asked to estimate whether relations with a country are "improving," "worsening," or "staying about the same."

Overall, Americans do not see relations as being extremely positive or extremely negative with the countries included in one or the other of these questions, which are Brazil, China, the EU, India, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Russia, and South Korea. Relations with most countries are perceived to be on the neutral to the good side and are seen as "staying about the same" rather than "worsening" or "improving." The only country with which a substantial number of Americans perceive relations as "worsening" is Mexico (47%). The EU is the only "country" in which more Americans say relations are "improving" since 2006 when the question was last posed, though the percentage is still low (20%) and a majority still believes relations are about the same (56%). These findings will be discussed in more detail in the following sections on attitudes toward specific countries.

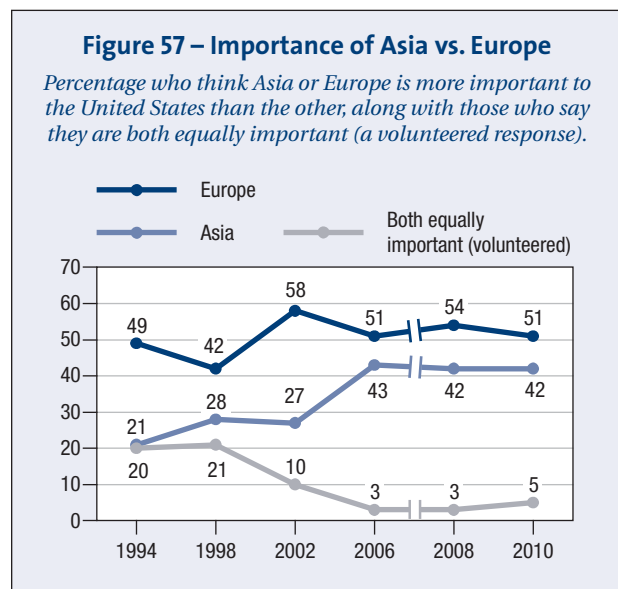
Regional and Bilateral Perceptions

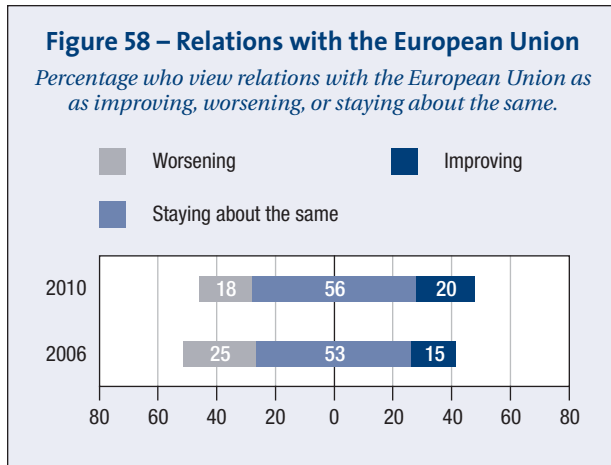
The previous sections detailing Americans' perception of the influence and importance of other countries as well as their general feelings toward them are instructive separately. But it is also helpful to take a look at specific regions and countries in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of what Americans think about them. The following sections are broken down by region and then by important individual countries within each region according to those for which there are survey data.

Europe

Europe remains a highly important region to the United States. European countries are well-liked, considered important to the United States, and are thought to be relatively influential in the world. In the debate over which continent is more important to the United States, Asia or Europe, Europe is still on top, with 51 percent saying it is more important, compared with 42 percent saying Asia (5% volunteer that both are equally important, see Figure 57).

Several questions asked respondents to rate the EU as a whole. When taken together, the EU fares quite well in the eyes of Americans. In terms of current influence in the world, the EU receives a high mean of 7.2 on a 10-point scale, behind the United





States and China, but well ahead of the rest of the countries on the list. Ten years from now, the relative influence of the EU is expected to drop slightly (to 6.9), but still remains ahead of all other countries except the United States and China. Relations are thought to be staying “about the same” (56%), with about equal numbers saying relations are “improving” (20%) than “worsening” (18%, see Figure 58). Europe is viewed as an economic partner rather than a competitor, with 68 percent of Americans thinking that in general, the countries of the EU practice fair trade with the United States.

Great Britain

Great Britain is still considered one of the United States’ closest friends and allies, befitting of a “special relationship” with the United States. Great Britain tops the list of countries on the scale of “feelings” at a very warm 73 on the 100-point scale. It is also considered “very important” to the United States by a majority of Americans (52%), trailing only China in this regard and far ahead of most other countries.

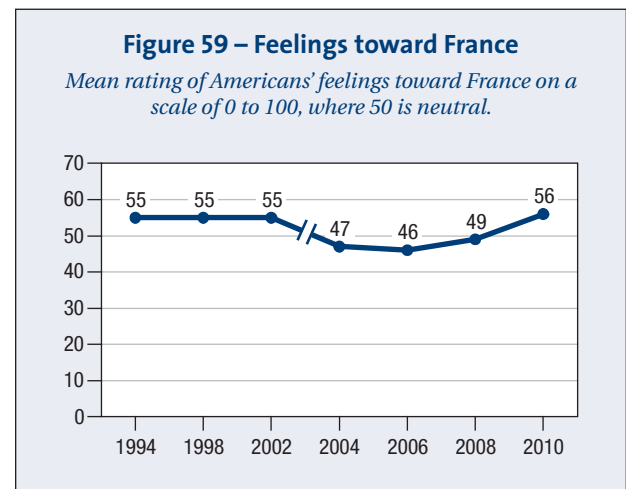
Germany

As a key political and economic partner, Germany is also well liked by Americans. They give Germany an average rating of 63 on the “feeling” scale, second only to Great Britain. Surprisingly though, despite Germany’s cultural similarities with the United States, its large economy, and its historically close

relationship with the United States during and since the Cold War, only 27 percent of Americans think it is “very important” to the United States, with 50 percent saying it is “somewhat important.” Unlike Great Britain, which scores high on this measure, Germany ranks eighth out of eighteen countries in importance, behind China, Great Britain, Canada, Japan, Israel, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, it has jumped ahead of Russia, Iran, and Pakistan since 2008.

France

Americans’ feelings toward France took a hit following the confrontation between France and the United States in the UN Security Council over the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Feelings seem to have healed now and have returned to their usual level of positivity, averaging 56 on the 100-point scale (see Figure 59). This puts France fifth from the top on the list of “feelings” toward other countries and 7 points higher than its previous rating of 49 in 2008.



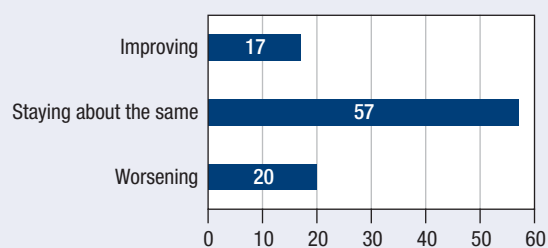
Russia

Americans grew much less negative toward Russia after the end of the Cold War, but feelings toward the country remain in the neutral area of the “feelings” scale at 48, placing it roughly in the middle compared to other countries.

In terms of influence, Americans see Russia as a middle power and do not think this situation will

Figure 60 – Relations with Russia

Percentage who think relations with Russia are improving, worsening, or staying about the same.



change in the next ten years. Russia rates ahead of rising powers Brazil, India, South Korea, and Turkey in present influence (6.2 on a 10-point scale), but behind major powers such as the United States, China, the EU, and Japan. Americans expect Russia to have the same degree of relative influence in ten years as it does now.

Similarly, Americans think Russia's importance to the United States is of a moderate level. Only 26 percent of Americans think Russia is "very important" to the United States, down 8 percentage points from 2008 and placing it tenth out of eighteen countries. Forty-eight percent (48%) think the country is "somewhat" important. Half of Americans think present relations with Russia are "neutral," with another 33 percent thinking they are "pretty good." Only 9 percent say relations are either "pretty bad" or "very bad." And, there appears to be no sign of immediate trouble in the relationship. A majority of Americans believe relations with Russia are "staying about the same" (57%), with roughly equal percentages saying relations are "worsening" (20%) and "improving" (17%, see Figure 60).

Asia

As is apparent throughout the survey, Americans perceive Asia's importance as growing relative to the other regions of the world. Although a slight majority of Americans still say that Europe is more important to the United States than Asia (51%), a substantial 42 percent say that Asia is more important than Europe. Japan has been important to the United States since the end of World War II and

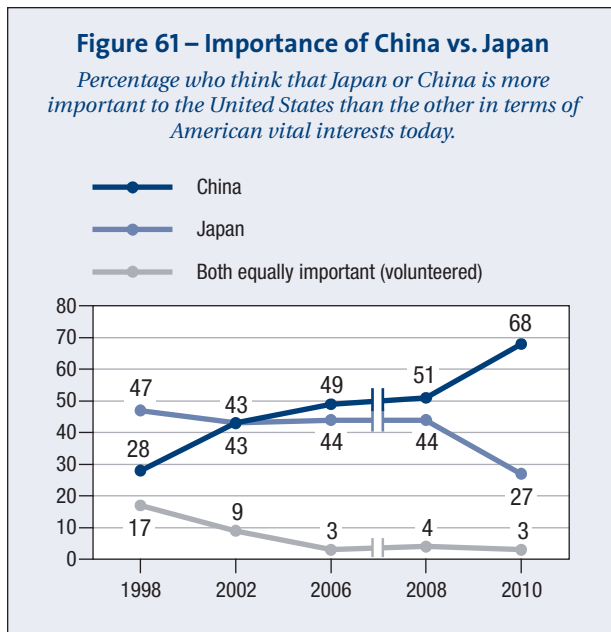
remains its strongest and closest ally in the region. South Korea also maintains a close economic and strategic partnership with the United States. India, while considered less important, is growing rapidly as an economic and strategic power in the region, and its relationship with the United States has improved markedly during the last decade. While all these countries play crucial roles in the U.S. relationship with Asia, there is no doubt that the driving force behind the changing global power dynamics is China. The survey is replete with examples of the rising influence of China and the growing role it plays in American thinking not just about Asia, but the world.

China

As we have seen, China tops the list of countries considered "very important" to the United States for the first time in this survey (54%). Its influence in the world is seen as second only to the United States (7.5 compared the United States' 8.6) and is projected to grow in the future (to 7.8 in ten years). Americans believe it is likely that someday China's economy will grow to be as large as the U.S. economy (75%) and that "another nation"—presumably China—will either become as powerful (40%) or surpass (26%) the United States in fifty years.

Within Asia, there has been a great shift in perceived importance from Japan to China. Whereas in the 1990s Japan was thought to be much more important to the United States than China (47% to 28% in 1998), for the first time, a strong majority thinks that China is more important than Japan (68% to 27%). This percentage for China is up a dramatic 17 points from 2008, with the percentage for Japan down by the same amount. The spread between the two numbers is now a huge 41 points, compared to only 7 points in 2008 when China was seen as more important by 51 percent, compared to Japan's 44 percent (see Figure 61).

Given this undeniable evidence of China's perceived ascent, the important question is how Americans view and respond to this development. In many ways, Americans seem to be on the fence in their views about China. Feelings toward China



as measured on the 0 to 100 scale (where 50 is neutral) remain on the cool side at 45, though this is up 4 points from 2008. Forty-two percent (42%) think present relations with China are “neutral,” and another 34 percent think they are “pretty good.” Thus, perceptions of relations lean toward the positive. Although 47 percent think relations with China are “staying about the same,” only 19 percent think they are “improving,” and 29 percent think they are “worsening” (see Figure 62). This is a marked increase in those who think relations are “worsening” (12 points since 2006) and a corresponding decrease in those who think they are “improving” (11 points since 2006).

If China’s economy were to grow as large as the U.S. economy, half of Americans think that this would be “equally positive and negative.” The rest lean heavily toward the negative side, with 38 percent saying this would be “mostly negative” and only 8 percent saying it would be “mostly positive.”

Economically speaking, Americans are concerned. Sixty-three percent (63%) believe that China practices unfair trade. Sixty-seven percent (67%) now understand that China loans more money to the United States than the United States loans to China, up 27 points from 2008 and 43 points from 2006 (when only 24% recognized this fact). Fifty-one percent (51%) consider debt to

China a “critical” threat to vital U.S. interests in the next ten years. Seventy-one percent (71%) are at least “somewhat” concerned about China’s keeping its currency cheap to make exports more competitive, though only 23 percent are “very concerned.” Fifty-six percent (56%) do not favor having a free trade agreement with China.

On the military side, Americans harbor some concern, though not urgent concern, about the impact of China’s rise on their security. Only a minority (though a substantial one—43%) views the development of China as a world power as a “critical” threat. Seventeen percent (17%) of Americans say they are “very worried” that China could become a military threat to the United States in the future, with 48 percent saying they are “somewhat worried.” Significantly, a strong majority of Americans prefer to undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China (68%) rather than actively work to limit the growth of China’s power (28%).

Americans, however, also exhibit a preference for hedging against the possibility of China becoming a threat in the future. They want to continue to work closely with U.S. allies in Asia, with 58 percent preferring to build up strong relations with traditional allies like South Korea and Japan even if this might diminish relations with China, rather than



building a partnership with China at the expense of allies. When asked specifically if the United States and South Korea should work together to limit China's rise in the years ahead, 55 percent are in favor.

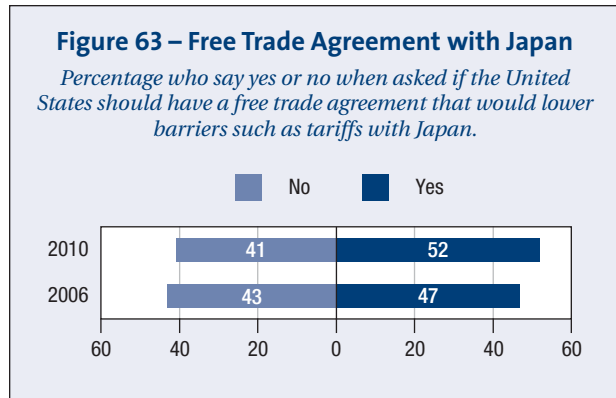
Only 20 percent view a confrontation between mainland China and Taiwan as a critical threat (58% say "important but not critical"), and only 27 percent say that making sure China does not dominate the Korean Peninsula is a "very important" foreign policy goal (58% say "somewhat important"). But Americans do not favor the use of U.S. troops if China invaded Taiwan (71% opposed).

On other issues in U.S.–China relations, there is also some concern, but no panic. While no more than 28 percent of Americans are "very concerned" about any of the following issues, when "somewhat" and "very concerned" responses are added together, Americans do show some concern about China's unwillingness to commit to limit its greenhouse gas emissions (68%), China's repression of pro-democracy dissidents (66%), China's treatment of Tibet (63%), the Chinese government limiting its people access to the Internet access (58%), and U.S. weapon sales to Taiwan despite China's objections (58%).

Japan

Despite the eclipse of Japan by China as the more important power to the United States in Asia (68% say China is more important than Japan compared to 27% who say Japan is more important), Japan remains very popular with Americans. Japan receives a very warm average rating of 61 in terms of "feelings," behind only Great Britain and Germany. Forty percent (40%) of Americans also think Japan is generally "very important" to the United States (46% say "somewhat important"), behind only China, Great Britain, and Canada and ahead of the other fourteen countries rated.

Overall, Japan is regarded as a middle power in terms of present and future world influence (ratings of 6.4 and 6.5, respectively, on a 10-point scale), behind the United States, China, and the EU, but ahead of Russia, India, South Korea, Brazil, and Turkey (see Figure 54).



Trade relations are viewed quite positively, with 58 percent of Americans believing that Japan practices fair trade. Japan was once considered Asia's unfair trader in the 1990s, but has been replaced by China as the main economic competitor in Asia according to Americans. In fact, a majority of Americans (52%) now think that the United States should have a free trade agreement that would lower barriers such as tariffs with Japan (41% disagree). This is up from a plurality of 47 percent in 2006 when the question was last posed (see Figure 63).

Relations overall with Japan are perceived to be positive, with 60 percent thinking present relations are either "very good" or "pretty good." Sixty-two percent (62%) believe that relations with Japan are staying "about the same." Although hardly anyone thinks relations with Japan are "worsening" (only 13%), there is a substantial decrease in those who think relations are "improving" (18%, down from 30% in 2006). As discussed elsewhere, this may reflect the controversy over the presence of U.S. troops in Okinawa that ultimately led to the resignation of Japan's prime minister just before this survey was conducted.

Although Americans view the relationship with Japan positively, they are about evenly divided on whether to have troops in Japan, including Okinawa. Overall, half of Americans (50%) say the United States should have long-term military bases in Japan, with 48 percent saying there should not be bases in Japan. When told that the United States currently has about 33,000 troops in Japan, including Okinawa, and then asked whether that is "too many," "too few," or "about right," 47 percent say it

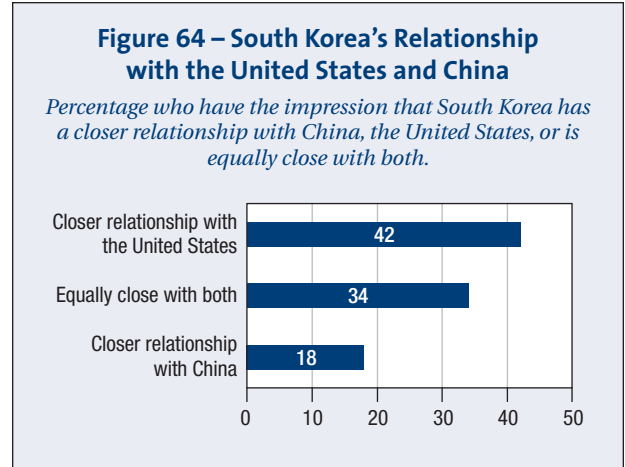
is “about right,” with 44 percent saying “too many” and only 5 percent saying “too few.” While there are still many Americans who think 33,000 troops in Japan are “too many,” this is actually down significantly from 2008, when a majority of 55 percent said this.

South Korea

South Korea is one of United States’ closest allies and friends in Asia. With an economy ranked fifteenth in the world by gross domestic product, it experienced rapid economic growth over the past decades and is among the United States’ top ten trading partners. Americans largely see South Korea in a positive light. Many more Americans have the impression that South Korea has a “closer relationship” with the United States (42%) than with its much closer neighbor China (18%). Thirty-four percent (34%) percent think South Korea has an equally close relationship with both (see Figure 64).

Feelings toward South Korea fall just to the warm side of neutral (52 on the 100-point scale). This places the country in the top half of the relative rankings (ninth out of twenty-two countries) and is quite an improvement over the 44 rating that South Korea received in 2006 (an 8-point jump). Most Americans think that relations with South Korea are stable, with 57 percent saying relations are staying “about the same.” Twenty-three percent (23%) think relations are “worsening” and 13 percent think they are “improving.” Forty-eight percent (48%) of Americans feel that the United States shares “similar values and a way of life” with South Korea “to some extent” (41%) or to a “great extent” (7%), with 35 percent saying to a “little extent” and 10 percent saying to “no extent.” The positive percentage is up 13 points from 2008, when 35 percent said to “some” or a “great” extent.³

These upward trends suggest that Americans are beginning to appreciate a country they actually know very little about. Only a slight majority of Americans (51%) know that South Korea is a



democracy, and only 20 percent know that South Korea is one of the United States’ top ten trading partners. Forty-six percent (46%) think it is in the top twenty but not the top ten, and 25 percent think it is not even in the top twenty.

Despite their perceptions that South Korea is not a very important trading partner, Americans are quite divided about the trade relationship. A plurality of 48 percent of Americans think South Korea practices fair trade with the United States, with 42 percent feeling it practices unfair trade. Yet, as with most countries asked about, Americans are not in favor of having a free trade agreement with South Korea (51% no to 42% yes). Even when asked a separate question explaining that the United States and South Korea negotiated a free trade agreement in 2007 and giving pro and con arguments for its approval by the Senate, only a minority of Americans favor an agreement (44% in favor, to 47% opposed).

Overall, Americans clearly do not see South Korea as belonging to the group of the world’s top powers. South Korea receives an influence rating of 4.7 (on a 10-point scale), well below the major powers and only slightly ahead of Brazil and Turkey. Looking to the future, Americans do not see South Korea’s influence changing much, with its influence expected to be at 4.9 on the 10-point scale in ten years. Despite the generally positive feelings toward South Korea, like many countries in this survey, it is not high on the list of “very important” countries to the United States. Only 21 percent say that South Korea is “very important,” (placing

3. The finding from 2008 is from the Council’s 2008 “Soft Power in Asia” study, available at www.thechicagocouncil.org under Studies & Conferences, Public Opinion Survey, Overview.

it thirteenth out of eighteen countries), though 46 percent say it is “somewhat important.”

Yet, Americans do see an important role for South Korea in terms of its military partnership with the United States. Sixty-two percent (62%) of Americans think the United States should have long-term military bases in South Korea, the most support of any country asked about and the only country in which support has not dropped. When told that the United States has about 30,000 troops in South Korea, 50 percent of Americans say this number is “about right,” with 34 percent saying it is “too many” and 12 percent saying it is “too few.”

While Americans are reluctant to use those troops against an invasion by North Korea of South Korea (only 40% support this when multilateral action is not mentioned), they are open to it if the United States contributes troop along with other countries to a UN-sponsored effort to reverse the aggression (61% in favor). Americans also prefer to stay out of disputes between North and South Korea. Regarding the recent North Korean attack on a South Korean naval vessel that killed forty-six sailors, only 27 percent say that it was an attack of unprovoked aggression and the United States should join South Korea in punishing North Korea. Instead, 67 percent say the United States should strongly criticize North Korea for the attack, but should view it as one in a series of incidents in the North Korea–South Korea conflict over disputed waters.

Even though Americans are much more focused on China as a growing power in the region, they do not want to compromise relations with important allies like South Korea. Fifty-eight percent (58%) prefer to build up strong relations with traditional allies like South Korea and Japan even if this might diminish relations with China rather than building a partnership with China at the expense of allies (31%). When asked specifically if the United States and South Korea should work together to limit China’s rise in the years ahead, 55 percent are in favor despite their preference to undertake friendly cooperation.

Among those who think the United States should work with South Korea to limit China’s rise

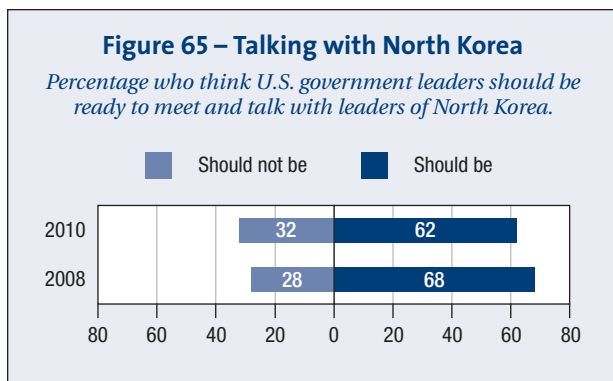
(55% of respondents overall), more support having long-term military bases in South Korea (69%), compared to 62 percent supporting bases in the survey overall and 52 percent supporting bases among those who don’t think the United States and China should work to limit China’s rise. In addition, among those who are “very worried” that China could be a military threat to the United States in the future (17% of respondents overall), more are inclined to support long-term military bases in South Korea (78%) than in the survey overall (62%). However, even among those who are “not very worried” about China becoming a military threat, a bare majority still supports long-term military bases in South Korea.

North Korea

Not surprisingly, North Korea shares the lowest rating on the “feelings” scale with Iran (27), a distinction that is common from past surveys. For the United States, North Korea remains the pariah of East Asia. There are no official diplomatic relations with the country, and the Six-Party Talks aimed at resolving the problem of North Korea’s nuclear program have been stalled over nuclear tests conducted by the country and other issues.

Given that the threat of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers is among Americans’ top concerns, stopping North Korea’s nuclear program is a top priority for Americans over the problem of a divided peninsula. When asked to choose one of three possible approaches to North Korea as the best option, 50 percent prefer to “work to negotiate an end to North Korea’s nuclear capability even if it means accepting the North Korean regime and continuing division of the Peninsula.” Only 18 percent choose working to “maintain stability on the Korean Peninsula even if it means accepting North Korea’s current regime and nuclear capability.” Nineteen percent (19%) prefer to work to “bring about regime change in North Korea even if it may bring instability to the Korean Peninsula and further nuclear proliferation.”

In dealing with the country, 75 percent of Americans are opposed to engaging in trade with

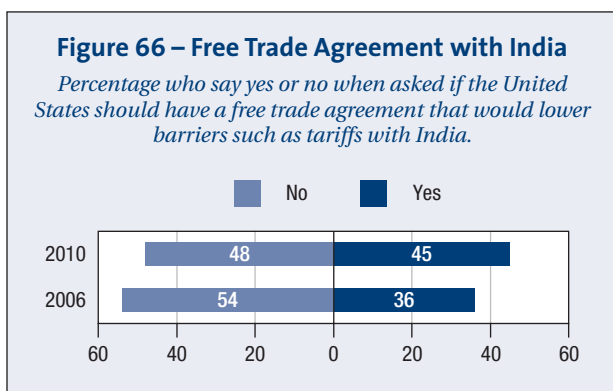


North Korea. But despite the lack of diplomatic relations, 62 percent of Americans do think U.S. leaders should be ready to meet and talk with North Korea's leaders (see Figure 65).

Americans also want to stay out of disputes between North and South Korea. As mentioned in the section on South Korea, 67 percent say the United States should criticize North Korea for its attack on a South Korean naval vessel that killed forty-six sailors, but not join South Korea in punishing North Korea (only 27% prefer this approach). Also as mentioned previously, Americans are reluctant to use U.S. troops to defend South Korea against an attack by North Korea (40% in favor), yet would do so if the United States contributes troop along with other countries to a UN-sponsored effort to reverse the aggression (61% in favor).

India

With a population over one billion people, India is the world's second most populous country. Since the introduction of market-based reforms in 1991, the country has become one of the fastest growing



major economies in the world, even as it continues to struggle with massive poverty and other problems. It has the third-largest standing armed force in the world and possesses nuclear weapons.

India receives a favorable 53 rating on the scale of "feelings" (0 to 100 scale), up 6 points from 2008. Americans see India as an emerging middle power (5.0 on a 10-point influence scale), ahead of South Korea, Brazil, and Turkey, and gaining on Russia, Japan, and the EU in the next ten years (going up 0.6 to 5.6). In terms of specific importance to the United States, however, India ranks well below its newfound world standing. Only 18 percent of Americans think India is "very important" to the United States, fifteenth out of eighteen countries. Another 50 percent, however, say that India is "somewhat important," putting it in tenth place when "very" and "somewhat" important are combined (see Figure 55).

Although India is not considered "very important" to the United States, Americans have balanced perceptions of the bilateral relationship. Most Americans think the U.S. relationship with India is either "neutral" (43%) or "pretty good" (40%) and see this current relationship as staying about the same (63%). A plurality of 49 percent sees India as practicing fair trade, with 41 percent saying unfair trade. Americans are roughly divided on whether or not the United States should have a free trade agreement with India, with 48 percent saying "no" and 45 percent saying "yes." This is a significant change in the positive direction from 2006 when the question was last posed. At that time a majority (54%) was against a free trade agreement with India and 36 percent were for it (see Figure 66).

Indonesia

While the study does not include much data on Indonesia, it is notable that the country's rating on the "feelings" scale has jumped 6 points from a cool 41 to an almost neutral 47. This may be a result of the attention the country has received as a childhood home of President Obama.

The Middle East and Nearby Muslim Countries

The predominantly Arab and Muslim countries or groups asked about in this study are not well liked by Americans, including Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, the Palestinian Authority, and Saudi Arabia. Iran, whose nuclear program is high on the list of perceived “critical” threats to the United States, ties with North Korea to receive the “coldest” rating on the “feelings” scale—a very cold 27 on the 0 to 100 scale where 50 is neutral. The Palestinian Authority and Iraq also receive very cold ratings (32 and 34, respectively). Even official allies Pakistan and Saudi Arabia receive cold ratings (35 and 39, respectively). These countries occupy five of the bottom seven spots on the list of “feelings” toward other countries (see Figure 56).

In addition, there is a growing sense that Muslim traditions may not be compatible with Western ways. Even though a slight majority of Americans (51%) still say that “because most Muslims are like people everywhere, we can find common ground and violent conflict between the civilizations is not inevitable,” there has been a remarkable jump in the percentage of Americans who do not feel that way. Forty-five percent (45%), up 18 points from 2002 when the question was last posed, now say that because Muslim religious, social, and political traditions are incompatible with Western ways, violent conflict between the two civilizations is inevitable (see Figure 67).

Americans have long viewed efforts at democratization abroad as a low priority—only 19 percent think helping to bring a democratic form of gov-

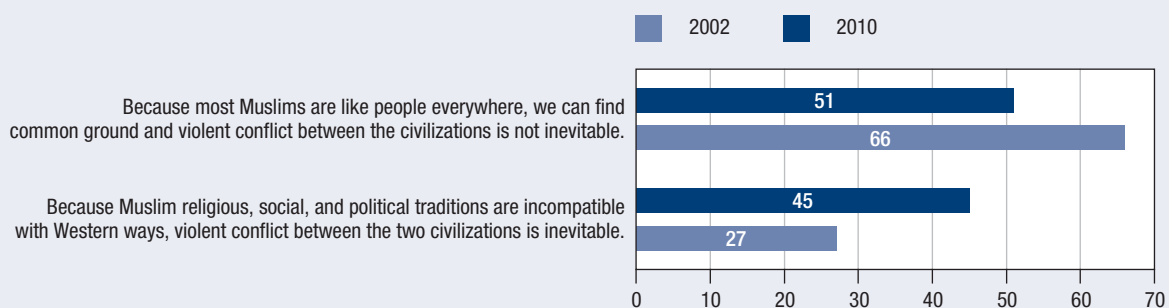
ernment to other nations should be a “very important” foreign policy goal—and the same is true for democracy promotion in the Middle East. A majority (59%) of Americans think the United States should not “put greater pressure on countries in the Middle East like Saudi Arabia and Egypt to become more democratic.” Likewise a very strong majority (68%) believes that the United States “should not take a position either way” if a Muslim country that is not democratic “would probably elect an Islamic fundamentalist leader” if it were democratic. Only 25 percent think the United States should encourage democracy in this situation, with 5 percent thinking it should discourage democracy.

Iran

The possibility of Iran gaining nuclear weapons is high on the list of concerns among Americans, with 68 percent of Americans saying “Iran’s nuclear program” is a critical threat. Not surprisingly, Iran is tied with North Korea at the bottom on the scale of “feelings” toward other countries (27 on the 0 to 100 scale). As with American attitudes toward many countries, Iran has dropped in perceived importance to the United States. Twenty-five percent (25%) see Iran as “very important” (down 7 points from 2008), with 34 saying it is “somewhat important” (down 5 points from 2008). Thirty-eight percent (38%) now consider it “not very” or “not at all” important, up 11 points from 2008. Findings on American views of how to deal with Iran’s nuclear program are covered in full in Chapter 3 (see pages 45-47).

Figure 67 – Compatibility of Muslim and Western Civilizations

Percentage who say each of the following statements is closer to their own view.



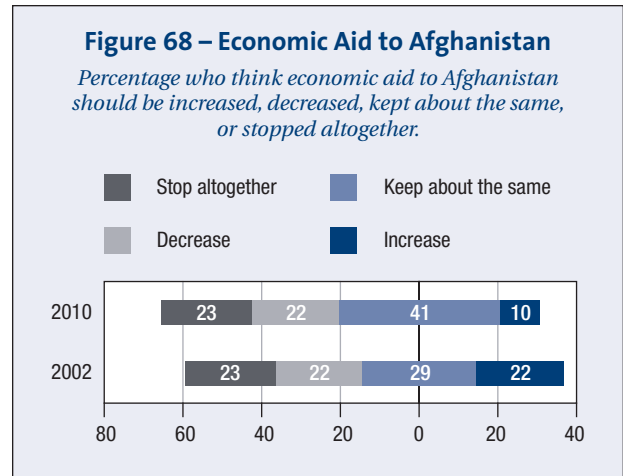
Afghanistan

The war in Afghanistan, now nine years running, may be the longest war in American history. After initial success at removing the Taliban, which was providing safe haven to al Qaeda and providing a base of operation for terrorist activities, over time the struggle against insurgents began losing ground as the Taliban regained strength. President Obama escalated the war in December 2009 by pledging an additional 30,000 troops to help reverse the Taliban gains. Recently leaked documents on the war have painted a grim picture of the situation in Afghanistan.

Overall, Americans do not see Afghanistan as “very important” to the United States. Only 21 percent say so, with 39 percent saying it is “somewhat important.” Yet, Americans are clearly troubled by the situation in Afghanistan and support efforts to combat the problem. Fifty-five percent (55%) consider violent Islamist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan a “critical” threat to U.S. vital interests. And, a fairly large majority (59%) thinks that eliminating the threat from terrorists operating from Afghanistan is a worthwhile goal for American troops to fight and possibly die for.

Fifty-three percent (53%) think the war is going either not too well (43%) or not at all well (10%)—only 6 percent say it is going very well. But at present, a large majority (75%) supports withdrawing forces within two years (44%) or an even longer commitment—“as long as it takes to build a stable and secure state” (31%). Only 23 percent believe that the United States should withdraw its forces from Afghanistan right away. A bare majority (52%) thinks the United States should have long-term military bases in the country, though this is down 5 points from 2008 (46% say it should not).

When asked whether they think most people in Afghanistan want NATO forces “to remain for now” or whether most want NATO forces to “leave now,” Americans are evenly split, with 47 percent for each position. Interestingly, among those who think that the Afghan people want NATO troops to remain, 90 percent support keeping combat troops in Afghanistan at least two years or longer (compared to 75 percent in the survey overall), with 10



percent preferring to withdraw troops right away (compared to 23 percent overall). Among those who think the Afghan people want NATO troops to leave now, 63 percent support keeping combat troops in Afghanistan at least two years or longer, with 37 percent preferring to withdraw troops from Afghanistan right away.

Americans are evenly split on whether U.S. government leaders should be ready to meet and talk with leaders of the Taliban, with 48 percent saying they should and 47 percent saying they should not.

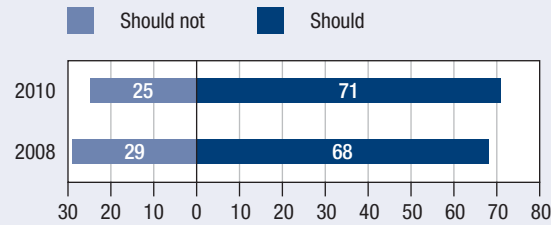
Americans support economic aid to Afghanistan, but barely. Fifty-one percent (51%) want to keep it “about the same” (41%) or increase it (10%), but 45 percent of Americans want to decrease (22%) or stop economic aid altogether (23%). This compares to an identical 51 percent who wanted to keep it “about the same” (29%) or increase it (22%) in 2002 and 45 percent who wanted to decrease (22%) or stop economic aid altogether (23%) in 2002 (see Figure 68).

Pakistan

Pakistan, a major non-NATO ally of the United States, has received a large amount of U.S. military and economic aid from the United States in return for its help in the war on terror. Yet the country’s fragile economy, tenuous political situation, and widespread corruption have undermined its ability to deliver on promises to crack down on terrorists within its borders and complicated relations with the United States.

Figure 69 – Action against Terrorists in Pakistan

Percentage who think that if the United States locates high-ranking members of terrorist groups operating in Pakistan that threaten the United States, the United States should or should not take military action to capture or kill these terrorists even if the government of Pakistan does not give the United States permission to do so.



Feelings toward Pakistan among the American public are quite cold, at 35 on the 0 to 100 scale. This places it near the bottom of the list of countries asked about, along with Iraq and the Palestinian Authority. Pakistan has dropped quite dramatically in terms of its perceived importance to the United States. Only 19 percent of Americans consider it “very important,” with 40 percent considering it “somewhat important.” The percentage considering it “very important” is down 11 points from 2008, with all of this drop moving to the negative side of “not very” or “not at all” important, which now stands at 39 percent (27% in 2008).

Yet, Americans know that a threat from Pakistan remains. Fifty-five percent (55%) consider violent Islamist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan a critical threat to the vital interest of the United States. When asked if the United States should take military action to capture or kill terrorists if it locates high-ranking members of terrorist groups operating in Pakistan that threaten the United States, even if the government of Pakistan does not give the United States permission to do so, 71 percent say it should, up 3 points from 2008 (see Figure 69). Nevertheless, support for long-term military bases in the country has dropped to well below a majority, with 52 percent saying the United States should not have such bases (up 5 points since 2008) and 45 percent saying it should (down 4 points).

Americans are evenly divided on economic aid to Pakistan, with 48 percent wanting to decrease (24%) or stop economic aid altogether (24%) and 49

percent wanting to keep it “about the same” (42%) or increase it (7%). In 2002, the last time this question was asked, a majority of 51 percent wanted to decrease or stop economic aid to Pakistan, with 32 percent wanting to keep it “about the same” and 12 percent wanting to increase it.

Israel

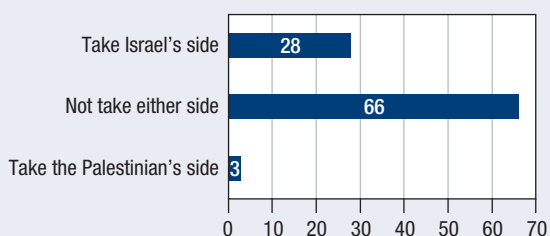
Israel continues to be seen as a critical ally and friend in the Middle East. Americans give Israel a very warm rating of 57 on the scale of “feelings.” This warmth trails only Great Britain, Germany, and Japan and is ahead of seventeen other countries on the list. A substantial number of Americans also feel that Israel is “very important” to the United States (33% are of this opinion, with 41 percent saying “somewhat important”), which is fifth highest among eighteen countries. But Israel is somewhat surprisingly not exempt from the perceptions of diminished importance seen elsewhere. The percentage who see Israel as “very important” is down 7 points from 40 percent in 2008 (see Figure 12 in Chapter 1).

There is some tangible worry regarding the direction of relations with Israel. Although 44 percent say that relations with Israel are “staying about the same,” a very high 38 percent think relations are “worsening,” and only 12 percent think they are “improving.” At the time of this survey, relations with Israel were colored by tensions between the Netanyahu and Obama administrations over Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the passage of a UN resolution that calls for a nuclear-free Middle East and for Israel to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. This may have contributed to perceptions that relations with Israel are worsening.

American views of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict—polled prior to the planned peace talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Washington in September 2010—show a rather restrained attitude toward being involved in the conflict. Forty percent (40%) of Americans think the United States has been doing more than it should to resolve the conflict, with 36 percent saying the United States is doing about the right

Figure 70 – Taking Sides in Middle East Conflict

Percentage who think the United States should take Israel's side, the Palestinian's side, or not take either side in the Middle East conflict.



amount and 20 percent saying it should be making greater efforts than it has been making. For the first time since 2002 in these surveys—again, prior to planned peace talks—there is no majority support among Americans for using U.S. troops to be part of an international peacekeeping force to enforce a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Instead, views are evenly split (49% in favor to 49% opposed).

While Americans have strongly negative feelings toward the Palestinian Authority (32 on the 0 to 100 scale where 50 is neutral, nearly as low as for North Korea and Iran), a strong majority of Americans (66%) prefer to “not take either side” in the conflict (see Figure 70). There has, however, been an 8-point drop in this attitude from 2004 and an increase of 11 points in those saying the United States should “take Israel’s side” (28%, up from 17% in 2004). At the same time, Americans are not in favor of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, a major sticking point in the conflict, with 62 percent saying Israel “should not build” these settlements. In terms of Hamas, there has been a decline in support for the idea that U.S. government leaders should be ready to talk with leaders of Hamas, now showing a nearly even split between those saying U.S. leaders should be ready to talk with the leaders of Hamas (48%, down 5 points from a majority in 2008) and those saying U.S. leaders should not be ready to do this (46%).

Interestingly, when resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is presented as a measure that could help in combating terrorism—a top, direct

threat to the United States—a clear majority of Americans (58%) favor making a “major effort” to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict as a way to combat international terrorism.

In terms of defending Israel more generally, Americans are divided. Despite an increase in the percentage of Americans who think military conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors is a critical threat (from 39% in 2008 to 45% today), half of Americans do not favor using U.S. troops to defend Israel if it were attacked by “its neighbors” (50% opposed, 47% in favor). This question was also asked with a slightly different wording in surveys from 1990 to 2004 (if Arab forces invaded Israel). In none of these surveys was there majority support for using U.S. troops in this scenario.

Egypt

On a question about Egypt, 53 percent think economic aid to that country should be kept “about the same,” with 21 percent wanting to decrease it and 5 percent wanting to increase it.

Turkey

Turkey has been a key U.S. strategic ally because of its location between Europe and the Middle East; its model as a stable, secular democracy in a predominantly Muslim country; and its key role as a partner in the war on terrorism. Yet, relations have been strained since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, when Turkey refused to allow the United States to use the U.S. military base in Turkey for actions against Iraq. Turkey has since been asserting itself more in the Middle East, building political and economic ties as it pursues its own strategic interests in the region. Its recent “no” vote in the UN Security Council on new sanctions against Iran have further strained relations.

Among the American public, Turkey receives a close-to-neutral average rating of 49 on the scale of “feelings.” Americans view Turkey as very low in influence in the world. The country receives the lowest rating for both present (3.9 on a 10-point scale) and future influence in ten years (4.4. on a

10-point scale) of all countries asked about (see Figure 54). These numbers do show, however, that Turkey's influence is expected to rise over the next ten years. Nevertheless, the country is not considered "very important" to the United States, with only 10 percent thinking this (42% say "somewhat important"). Of the eighteen countries asked about, only Nigeria ranks lower.

On a question about Turkey's growing policy independence from the United States, Americans do not appear much concerned. Sixty-nine percent (69%) think that as rising countries like Turkey and Brazil become more independent from the United States in the conduct of their foreign policy, this is "mostly good because then they do not rely on the U.S. so much." Only 28 percent say this is "mostly bad because then they are more likely to do things the U.S. does not support."

North America

There is a chasm between the U.S. public's feelings toward its neighbor to the north and its neighbor to the south. Attitudes towards Canada are very positive and unchanged, but attitudes toward Mexico are much more negative than in the recent past. Drug violence in Mexico, issues surrounding illegal immigration, and economic uncertainty in the United States have severely strained U.S. perceptions of Mexico.

Mexico

In terms of importance to the United States, Mexico ranks relatively high. While it is behind China, Great Britain, Canada, Japan, and Israel, it is ahead of twelve other countries asked about. Thirty-one percent (31%) consider it "very important," with 41 percent considering it "somewhat important."

Yet, general feelings toward Mexico dropped to the cool side in 2010 (46 degrees) from a neutral 50 degrees in 2008. In addition, 47 percent of the U.S. public thinks relations with Mexico are "worsening," while 38 percent think they are "staying about the same" and 10 percent think they are "improving." This is an 8-point increase for "worsening"



over 2006 when the question was last posed (see Figure 71).

One of the biggest issues with Mexico is trade. Fifty percent (50%) of Americans think Mexico practices unfair trade, with 41 percent saying it practices fair trade. Another issue is drugs. A substantial percentage (45%) of Americans consider drug-related violence and instability in Mexico a critical threat. Yet another issue is immigration. Concern about immigration is very high among those who think relations with Mexico are "worsening." The percentages believing that immigration is bad for various aspects of American life—including for the country, the U.S. economy, American companies, creating jobs in the United States, job security for American workers, their own standard of living, and their community—are on average nearly 25 points higher among those who think relations with Mexico are "worsening" than among those who think relations are "improving."

Canada

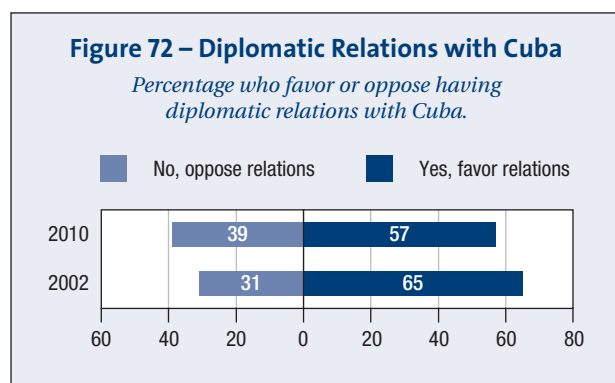
Canada is considered important to the United States and is well-liked by Americans, which is no surprise given the cultural similarities, friendly relations, and the importance of trade and tourism between the two countries. Fifty percent (50%) of the U.S. public thinks that when it comes to its role in the

world, Canada is “very important” to the United States, with another 34 percent saying “somewhat important.” This puts Canada third in importance behind only China and Great Britain. Canada is considered a fair trader by eight in ten Americans (81%), which puts it first within that category.

Cuba

America’s long-time nemesis Cuba receives one of the lowest ratings on the scale of “feelings” toward other countries at 38 on the 0 to 100 scale where 50 is neutral. This is, however, almost 10 points higher than the rating received by North Korea and Iran (perceived as the United States’ worst enemies), and higher than feelings toward Pakistan, Iraq, and the Palestinian Authority. Cuba’s rating is essentially unchanged since 1994 when this question was first asked.

While 54 percent of Americans oppose engaging in trade with Cuba (43% are in favor), 70 percent think U.S. leaders should be ready to meet and talk with leaders of Cuba, exactly the same percentage as in 2008. Further, despite cold feelings toward Cuba, 57 percent of the U.S. public favors diplomatic relations with the country, though this has dropped 8 points since 2002 when this question was last posed (see Figure 72).



South America

Most of the questions in the survey regarding South America focus on the most powerful country on the continent and a rising power—Brazil.

Brazil

Americans have a generally positive view of Brazil. It receives a warm average rating of 56 on the “feelings” scale, which is sixth out of twenty-two countries. A majority of Americans think relations with Brazil are stable, with 64 percent saying relations are “staying about the same” (15% say they are “worsening” and 15% say they are “improving”).

Despite stable relations and warm feelings towards Brazil, Americans do not think it is very important or influential. Only 10 percent of the public thinks Brazil is “very important” to the United States, which puts Brazil with Turkey and Nigeria at the bottom of the list of importance (44% say “somewhat important”). Brazil also receives low ratings of present influence (4.2 on a 10-point scale) and predicted influence in ten years (4.8), though is clearly seen as rising in influence. As with Turkey, Americans seem comfortable with a growing, more independent role for Brazil. Sixty-nine percent (69%) say that as rising countries like Turkey and Brazil become more independent from the United States in the conduct of their foreign policy, this is “mostly good because then they do not rely on the United States so much.” Only 28 percent say this is “mostly bad because then they are more likely to do things the United States does not support.”

Venezuela

In contrast, another South American country, Venezuela, receives a relatively cool rating of 43 on the scale of “feelings.” Despite historically close ties based on important trade and investment relations—along with cooperation in combating the flow of illegal drugs into the United States—antagonism with the country increased during the past decade under President Hugo Chávez, who has been highly critical of U.S. foreign and economic policy and finally broke off diplomatic relations with the United States in September 2008. In the meantime, relations have begun to improve, and diplomatic relations were reestablished in June 2009.

Africa

Africa, the world's second largest and most populous continent after Asia, is plagued by some of the world's most devastating problems, including persistent poverty, hunger, civil conflict, and instability. Americans continue to be supportive of economic aid to African countries. While fewer are calling for an increase in aid than in the past, there has been no increase in the small minority calling for cuts. Forty-six percent (46%) think economic aid to African countries should be kept "about the same," with 24 percent favoring an increase and 13 percent favoring a decrease (see Figure 73). In 2002 when this question was last posed, 37 percent wanted to keep aid "about the same," with 35 percent wanting an increase and 13 percent wanting a decrease.

Support for economic aid to African countries is in line with Americans' more general support of

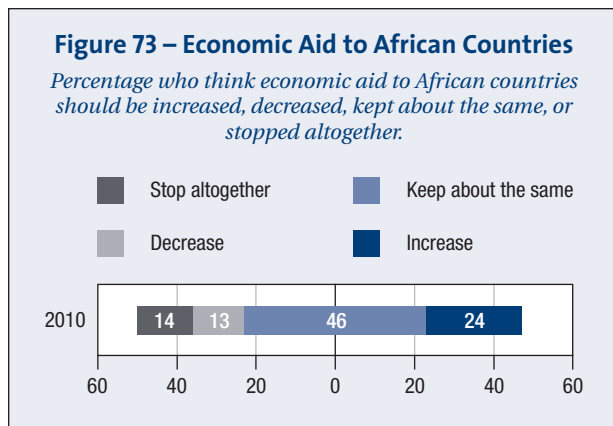
foreign aid. Seventy-four percent (74%) favor food and medical assistance to people in needy countries. The same percentage also favors aid to help farmers in needy countries become more productive. Sixty-two percent (62%) favor aid that helps needy countries develop their economies.

South Africa

One of the biggest jumps on the scale of "feelings" toward other countries is for South Africa. Feelings jumped from a cool 46 in 2008 to a decidedly warm 54 this time. Though the country has had a hard time shaking the legacy of apartheid, views of the country may have been helped by the highly publicized hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup of Soccer while the survey was in the field.

Nigeria

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, has one of the fastest growing economies in the world. It has played an important role in U.S. counterterrorism efforts over the last decade and is playing an increasingly important role as a regional power. Despite this, only 6 percent of Americans think that Nigeria is "very important" to the United States, which puts Nigeria last out of eighteen countries on this list. Indeed, 62 percent of Americans think Nigeria is either "not very" or "not at all" important to the United States, the only country for which there is no majority saying the country is at least "somewhat important."



Appendix A

Party Differences and Foreign Policy

On most foreign policy issues in this study, majorities of Americans who identify themselves as Republicans or as Democrats agree in their perspectives. Yet Democrats and Republicans have come to be rather sharply divided on some very important issues, including immigration, climate change, multilateral institutions, Israel, torture, and—more generally—the proper role of government. Nearly all of the examples below involve opposing majorities between the two major parties.

Government as a Positive or Negative Force

At the heart of the traditional party divide is the desired role of government in society, which produces the biggest party differences in our survey. An exceptionally large majority of Democrats (80%) think “government should do more to solve problems and help meet the needs of people,” while only 24 percent of Republicans share this view. This is a massive difference of 56 percentage points. As mentioned, government trust is low for all Americans, but Democrats are more likely to say that they can trust the government to do what is right “always” or “most” of the time (39% vs. 13%).

Globalization

Republicans view globalization more negatively than Democrats. A majority of Democrats think globalization is “mostly good” (67%), while only a minority of Republicans share this perception (49%). Fewer Republicans think that globalization is “good” for the U.S. economy, U.S. companies, consumers, creating jobs, job security, the environment, standards of living, and the next generation (by some 10 to 24 percentage points in each case).

Immigration

Related to globalization is the issue of immigration. At a time of economic difficulty and high levels of undocumented Mexican citizens entering the United States, immigration is of great concern, especially to Republicans. Strong majorities of Republicans think that “large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the United States” constitute a “critical” threat to the United States (74%) and that “controlling and reducing illegal immigration” should be a “very important” foreign policy goal (63%). Among Democrats, only 40 percent and 47 percent, respectively, take those positions.

A majority of Republicans believe illegal immigrants “mostly take jobs away from Americans who need them” (63%), while only a minority of Democrats share this belief (37%). Although there is a strong consensus across the political spectrum that immigration is generally bad for the economy, for job creation, for job security, for standards of living, and for “your own community,” fewer Republicans than Democrats (by some 7 to 18 percentage points) think immigration is “good” for these aspects of American life.

International Institutions

Democrats tend to support international institutions more strongly than Republicans do. They are more favorable about making decisions within the United Nations when dealing with international problems even if this means the United States will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice (62% vs. 35%). Democrats are also more likely to think the goal of strengthening the

United Nations is “very important” (50% vs. 24%). Democrats are more supportive of strengthening the United Nations in various ways (13 to 39 percentage points higher than Republicans across the options); strengthening other international institutions such as the World Health Organization, International Atomic Energy Agency, World Trade Organization, United Nations, International Criminal Court, and International Money Fund (17 to 34 percentage points higher than Republicans across the various institutions); and creating new international institutions to monitor global financial markets, monitor compliance with treaty obligations to limit greenhouse gas emissions, monitor worldwide energy markets, and provide assistance with problems resulting from large-scale migration (13 to 39 points higher than Republicans). Relatedly, a majority of Democrats favor a “global body that regulates big financial institutions to make sure they follow international standards” (62%), while only a small minority of Republicans favors this option (26%), a difference of 36 percentage points.

Support for Israel

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to support Israeli policies, such as further settlements in the Palestinian territories in the West Bank (41% vs. 23%), are more positive towards Israel in general, and support U.S. intervention on Israel’s behalf. Majorities of Republicans support using U.S. troops if Israel were attacked by its neighbors (60%) and bringing U.S. forces into a war with Iran on the side of Israel prompted by Israeli strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities (52%). Only 40 percent of Democrats support the former and 32 percent support the latter. In the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, Democrats overwhelmingly support “not taking either side” in the conflict (80%), while only a plurality of Republicans support neutrality (47%, a 33 percentage point difference).

The Acceptability of Torture to Fight Terrorism

A majority of Democrats think the “rules against torture should be maintained because torture is

morally wrong and weakening these rules may lead to the torture of U.S. soldiers who are held prisoner abroad” (73%), while only a minority of Republicans support this notion (42%). Instead, a majority of Republicans think “terrorists pose such an extreme threat that governments should now be allowed to use torture if it may gain information that saves innocent lives.” Similarly, in the fight against international terrorism, a slight majority of Republicans favor “using torture to extract information from suspected terrorists” (52%), while only a small minority of Democrats favor this policy (27%). Members of both parties think terrorism is a “critical” threat and that combating terrorism should be a “very important” foreign policy goal. But a majority of Democrats think conflict between Muslim and Western civilizations is not inevitable (62%), while only a minority of Republicans hold this view (41%).

Health Care

There is a stark difference between Republicans and Democrats on whether “providing universal health care” is “very important” to U.S. global competitiveness. A majority of Democrats (62%) think universal health care is “very important,” while only 17 percent of Republicans choose this option (a massive 45 percentage point difference). A greater proportion of Republicans also favor cuts to federal health care programs (28% vs. 3%), although this is not the plurality opinion for either party.

Climate Change

There has always been a gap between Democrats and Republicans regarding climate change, but that gap has widened to the range of 30 percentage points, with some sharply contrasting majorities. Democrats are much more likely than Republicans to think climate change is a “critical” threat (48% vs. 16%), that the goal of “limiting climate change” is “very important” (50% vs. 17%), and that climate change is a “serious and pressing problem” (47% vs. 12%). Democrats are also much more likely to think “protection of the environment should be

given priority even at the risk of curbing economic growth” (68% vs. 40%).

Democrats are much more supportive of measures to address climate change. More think the United States should participate in an international climate change treaty (85% vs. 50%), want to help less-developed countries reduce their greenhouse gas emissions (73% vs. 40%), and think the government is “not doing enough” to address climate change (61% vs. 27%).

Offshore Drilling

Perhaps surprisingly, Democrats are more likely to support offshore drilling for oil. A total of 68 percent say they “strongly” or “somewhat” favor offshore drilling, while only 40 percent of Republicans favor this.

Issues with Broad Bipartisan Consensus

Despite these notable differences between Democrats and Republicans, there are also numer-

ous foreign policy issues where there is general cross-party consensus among Americans.

Members of both parties are just as committed to an “active part” in world affairs. Majorities of both Democrats and Republicans agree that the way things are going the next generation will be “worse off” economically and that the distribution of wealth and income in the United States has become “less fair.” Americans of both parties also agree that terrorism and nuclear proliferation remain “critical” threats and that protecting the jobs of American workers, along with addressing the threats of terrorism and nuclear proliferation, are “very important” foreign policy goals.

There is also a fair amount of agreement on troop use and support for bases overseas as well as on policies towards Iran and China, two of the most pressing and important foreign policy areas for the United States moving forward. Most notably, there is little difference between Republicans and Democrats in the perceived consequences of a military strike on Iran, with negative outcomes seen as much more likely than positive outcomes.

Party Differences on Foreign Policy

Percentage based on party affiliation.

	Republican (%)	Democrat (%)	Difference (% points)
Role of government			
Percentage who say the government should do more to solve problems and help meet the needs of people.	24	80	-56
Percentage who say they can trust the government in Washington to do what is right “just about always” or “most of the time.”	13	39	-26
Immigration			
Percentage who see large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the United States as a “critical” threat to the vital interest of the United States in the next ten years.	63	40	23
Percentage who see the goal of controlling and reducing illegal immigration as a “very important” foreign policy goal for the United States.	74	47	27
Percentage who say illegal immigrants mostly take away jobs from Americans who need them.	63	37	26
Globalization			
Percentage who say that globalization, especially the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is “mostly good” for the United States.	49	67	-18
Percentage who say that overall globalization is “good” for the U.S. economy.	34	58	-24
Percentage who say that overall globalization is “good” for creating jobs in the United States.	27	46	-19
Percentage who say that overall globalization is “good” for the next generation of Americans.	36	57	-21
Climate Change			
Percentage who see climate change as a “critical” threat to the vital interest of the United States in the next ten years.	16	48	-32
Percentage who see the goal of limiting climate change as a “very important” foreign policy goal for the United States.	17	50	-33
Percentage who say that climate change is a serious and pressing problem and we should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs.	12	47	-35
Percentage who agree that if less-developed countries make a commitment to limit their greenhouse gas emissions, developed countries should provide substantial aid to help them.	40	72	-32
Percentage who say the government is not doing enough to deal with the problem of climate change.	27	62	-35
Percentage who say protection of the environment should be given priority even at the risk of curbing economic growth.	40	69	-29
Percentage who say the United States should participate in a new international treaty to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.	50	85	-35
International Institutions			
Percentage who 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.	35	62	-27

Party Differences on Foreign Policy

Percentage based on party affiliation.

	Republican (%)	Democrat (%)	Difference (% points)
Percentage who see the goal of strengthening the UN as a “very important” foreign policy goal for the United States.	24	50	-26
Percentage who say that to prevent international economic instability there should be a global body that regulates big financial institutions to make sure they follow international standards.	26	63	-37
Israel			
Percentage who favor using U.S. troops if Israel were attacked by its neighbors.	60	40	20
Percentage who say the United States should not take either side in the Middle East conflict.	47	80	-33
Percentage who think it is “all right” for Israel to build settlements in the Palestinian Territories.	41	23	18
Percentage who say that in a potential war between Israel and Iran started by an Israeli strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities, the United States should bring its military forces into the war on the side of Israel and against Iran.	52	32	20
Torture			
Percentage who favor using torture to extract information from suspected terrorists in order to combat international terrorism.	53	29	24
Percentage who agree that rules against torture should be maintained because torture is morally wrong and weakening these rules may lead to the torture of U.S. soldiers who are held prisoner abroad.	41	74	-33
Health Care			
Percentage who think the federal government program of health care should be cut back.	28	3	25
Percentage who say providing universal health care is a “very important” factor in the United States remaining competitive with other countries in the global economy.	17	63	-46
Offshore Drilling			
Percentage who favor expanding offshore drilling for oil and natural gas off the U.S. coast.	77	45	32

Appendix B

Methodology

This report is based on the results of a survey commissioned by The Chicago Council on Global Affairs. The survey results are from The Chicago Council's 2010 *Global Views* survey, which is a wide-ranging biennial survey on American attitudes towards U.S. foreign policy. The *Global Views* survey was conducted between June 11 and June 22, 2010. The Council also commissioned a smaller oversample of the six Midwest states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin conducted during the same time period. The Midwest oversample was conducted in order to gauge whether any substantial differences exist between the national population and the population of these six Midwest states, especially on issues of globalization and international engagement. Differences between the two sample populations were not statistically significant on the great majority of issues asked about, so Midwest data are not included in this report. For methodological details and data for the Midwest oversample please contact The Chicago Council.

The survey was conducted by Knowledge Networks (KN), a polling, social science, and market research firm in Menlo Park, California. Some questions were given to the entire sample population, others were given to a random half, and in rare cases questions were given to one-third. The national survey was fielded to a total of 4,135 respondents, of which 2,717 completed the survey, yielding a completion rate of 66 percent. The survey had a total sample size of 2,717 American adults. Seventy-one cases were excluded from the national sample due to completing the survey in ten minutes or less, and an additional forty-nine cases were excluded for failing to reply to at least half of the questions in the questionnaire. The final number respondents, after the application of demographic weights, is 2,596. The margin of sam-

pling error for the national survey is plus or minus 1.9 percentage points.⁴

Additionally, some respondents showed a tendency to skip entire questions in which there were long batteries of items. If this behavior was exhibited by the same respondent for two or more batteries, the Council team opted for casewise deletion, thus deleting the responses only for the battery in question of those respondents who skipped a particular battery and at least one whole other battery. This resulted in the following number of deletions from responses to the following list of batteries:⁵

- Q40 = 25 extra cases excluded
- Q45 = 71 extra cases excluded
- Q120 = 47 extra cases excluded
- Q125 = 45 extra cases excluded
- Q142 = 18 extra cases excluded
- Q150 = 26 extra cases excluded
- Q160 = 70 extra cases excluded
- Q276 = 40 extra cases excluded
- Q395 = 40 extra cases excluded

The survey was fielded using a randomly selected sample of KN's large-scale, nationwide research panel. The panel is recruited using stratified random digit dialing (RDD) telephone sampling. RDD provides a nonzero probability of selection for every U.S. household with a telephone. Households that agree to participate in the panel are provided with free Web access and an Internet appliance (if

4. The margin of error for questions that were asked of the full sample is plus or minus 1.9 percentage points. The margin of error for questions that were asked of only one-half of the sample is plus or minus 2.72 percentage points. The margin of error for questions that were asked of only one-third of the sample is 3.33 percentage points.

5. Go to www.thechicagocouncil.org and choose "Studies and Conferences," then "Public Opinion Survey" for the topline report from this study, which includes information on these questions.

necessary), which uses a telephone line to connect to the Internet and uses 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 U.S. population eighteen years of age or older on age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, geographical region, employment status, income, education, etc. 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 variables include age, race, gender, Hispanic ethnicity, and education. This weighting adjustment is applied prior to the selection of any client sample from KnowledgePanelSM. These weights constitute the starting weights for any client survey selected from the panel. Party identification benchmarks were provided by The Chicago Council. The benchmarks used for the national sample—based on the Gallup six-month party average for the most recent months preceding the survey—were Republican, 28 percent; Democrat, 32 percent; and Independent, 40 percent.

The following benchmark distributions are utilized for this poststratification adjustment:

- Gender (male/female)
- Age (18-29, 30-44, 45-59, and 60+)
- Race (White/Non-Hispanic, Black/Non-Hispanic, Other/Non-Hispanic, 2+ Races/Non-Hispanic, Hispanic)
- Education (less than high school, high school, some college, bachelor and beyond)
- Census region (Northeast, Midwest, South, West)
- Metropolitan area (yes, no)
- Internet access (yes, no)
- Party identification (Republican, Democrat, Independent/Other)

Comparable distributions are calculated using all 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 data 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 the calculated weights are examined to identify and, if necessary, trim outliers at the extreme upper and lower tails of the weight distribution. The poststratified and trimmed weights are then scaled to the sum of the total sample size of all eligible respondents (entitled weight in the dataset).

For more information concerning the methodology of the U.S. sample, please visit the KN Web site at www.knowledgenetworks.com.



**The Chicago Council
on Global Affairs**, founded in 1922
as The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations,
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.



332 South Michigan Avenue
Suite 1100
Chicago, Illinois 60604-4416
T 312.726.3860
F 312.821.7555
thechicagocouncil.org