

RONALD  REAGAN
INSTITUTE

REAGAN INSTITUTE SUMMER SURVEY



SURVEY CONDUCTED SUMMER 2025

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ABOUT THE REAGAN INSTITUTE SUMMER SURVEY

The Ronald Reagan Institute, the Washington, DC office of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute (RRPFI), sponsored a national public opinion survey, conducted by Beacon Research and Shaw & Company, to assess the priorities and opinions of Americans across an array of foreign policy issues. It builds on the 2023 and 2024 Reagan Institute Summer Survey, as well as the Reagan National Defense Survey, which has been conducted since 2018.

This survey was conducted from May 27-June 2, 2025. It features a mixed-mode design, with 478 responses collected by live telephone interviewers and another 779 responses gathered online. The telephone portion of the survey is a probability sample, relying on a multi-stage cluster design. Fifty percent of the calls were completed via landline and 50 percent were completed via cell phone. On average, the interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes. To ensure that results accurately reflect the demographics of the country, they were weighted by age/gender, race/region, and education targets drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey. The probability sample was then used to calibrate the non-probability online sample (conducted over the same dates) by key demographic and attitudinal variables. For the full sample of 1,257 respondents, the estimated margin of error is +/- 2.5 percentage points. Some questions were asked of half the respondents, with an associated margin of error of +/- 4 points. The margin of error for sub-groups is larger.

Introduction

The 2025 Reagan Institute Summer Survey reveals a striking resurgence in support for American leadership in the world. Nearly two-thirds of Americans now say the United States should be more engaged in international affairs—up over 20 points in less than two years, with growing support across party lines, including among MAGA Republicans.

Americans are not retreating from the world; they are rallying around a foreign policy grounded in peace through strength, strong alliances, and morality in foreign policy. They want the United States to counter authoritarian adversaries, to support our allies and friends, and to uphold freedom and democracy worldwide.

Rejecting Isolationism

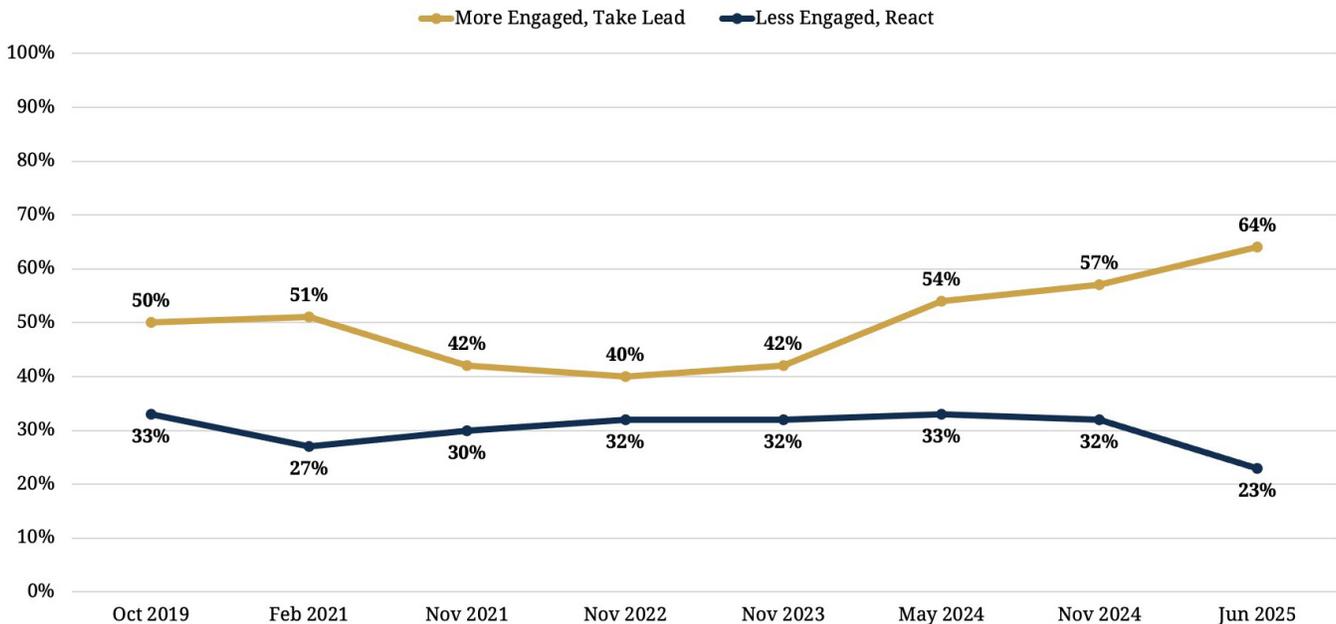
A bipartisan majority of Americans believe U.S. international engagement benefits both America (66%) and the world (67%). The preference for American global leadership over a more isolationist approach is on the rise, up from 40% in 2022 to 64%. Americans of all political stripes want the United States to lead on the international stage, including 65% of Democrats, 69% of Republicans, and 73% of MAGA Republicans. A shift in Republican opinion (up from 59% of Republicans and 61% of MAGA Republicans who supported greater engagement in November 2024) is driving this increase in support for U.S. international leadership; there is no evidence of rising isolationism among the Republican base.

Support for a more isolationist approach to America’s role in the world, in fact, is falling. Less than a quarter (23%) would prefer the United States be less engaged and react to international events, which is down ten points from last summer. Only 57% overall (down five points

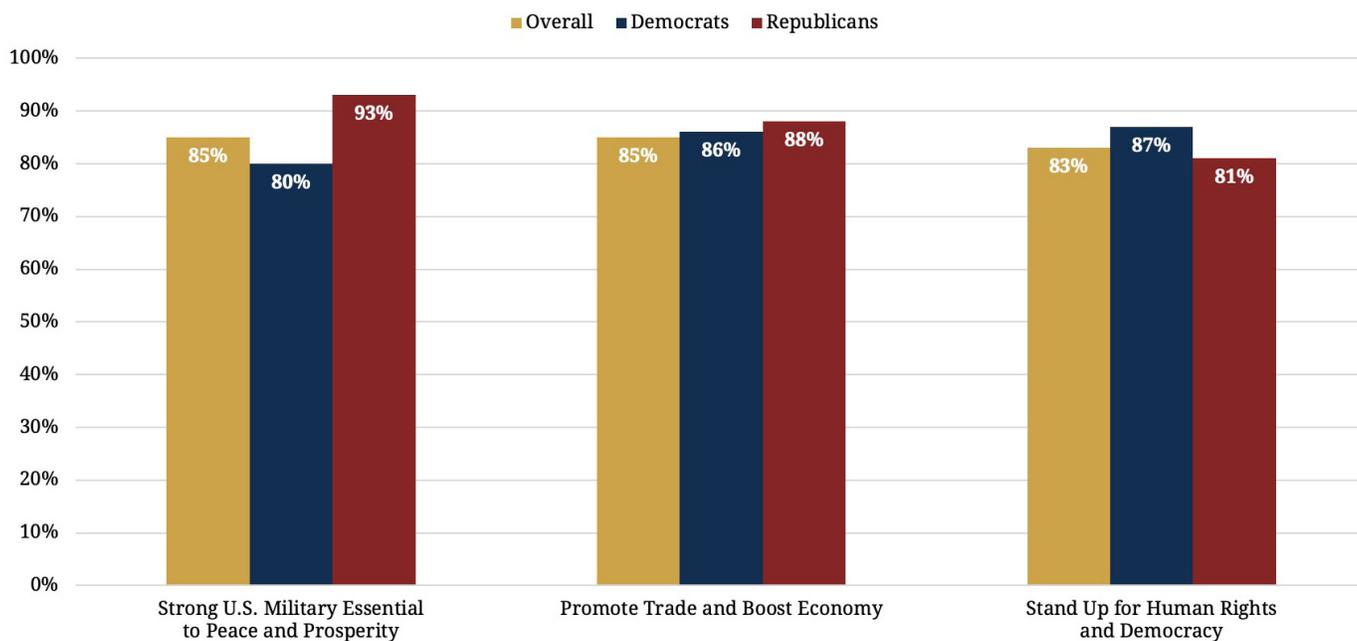
since last summer) agree with the idea that the United States is better served by withdrawing from international events and focusing on problems here at home.

Growing support for U.S. international engagement is not merely in the abstract; even larger majorities support what American leadership means in practical terms. Eighty-five percent believe that a strong U.S. military is essential to maintaining peace and prosperity, including 80% of Democrats, 93% of Republicans, and 96% of MAGA Republicans. Another 85% believe that American leadership is essential for promoting trade and boosting the economy, which is up from 78% last summer, including 86% of Democrats, 88% of Republicans, and 92% of MAGA Republicans. More than eight in ten (83%) say the United States has a moral obligation to stand up for human rights and democracy whenever possible, with agreement among 87% of Democrats, 81% of Republicans, and 84% of MAGA Republicans. A broad consensus across party lines still believes in the enduring principles of American leadership articulated by President Reagan.

Preference for U.S. International Engagement



Support for Foreign Policy Principles



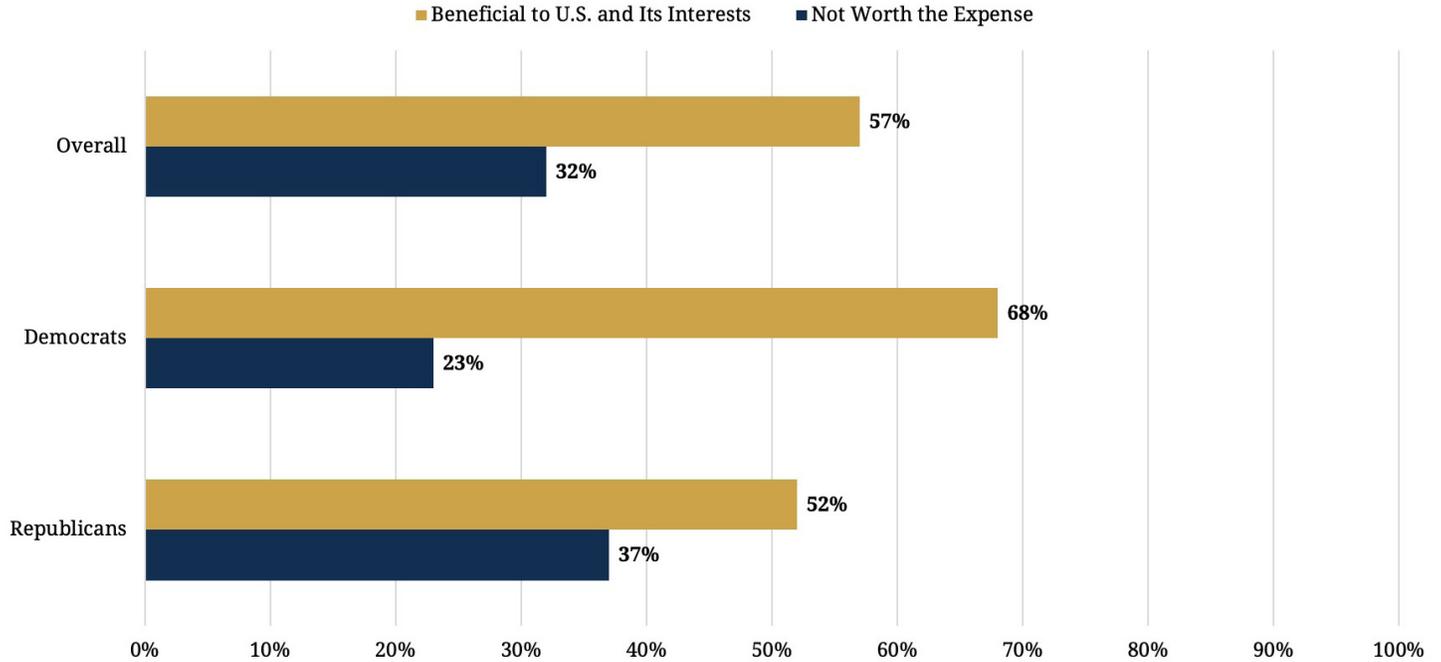
The survey reflects a recognition that America’s position as the preeminent global power cannot be taken as a given. Less than half (44%) say that the United States is the country “winning” the 21st century so far. More than a quarter (27%) believe China is “winning” the era, and 20% say they do not know. There is a partisan distinction here: Among Democrats, 36% think the United States is winning, and 30% think China is winning; Republicans are more bullish, with 59% saying the United States is winning, and only 21% believing China is winning.

FREEDOM PROMOTION INVESTMENTS

Americans continue to support efforts to promote freedom and democracy abroad. A majority (57%) says funding programs and organizations designed to advance these goals benefits the United States and its interests—while only 32% say it is not worth the expense. Support is strongest among Democrats at 68%, but a majority of Republicans at 52% and MAGA Republicans at 54% agree that this funding benefits America.

At the same time, Americans express ambivalence when asked about specific institutions associated with this work. Pluralities support cutting funding to the National Endowment for Democracy (45% support vs. 36% oppose) and the U.S. Agency for Global Media and outlets like Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Asia (47% support vs. 40% oppose). While Americans back the mission in principle, they are not wedded to the particular institutions that have historically carried it out.

Views on U.S. Funding for Freedom Promotion Programs



A few reasons to continue funding programs and organizations designed to advance freedom abroad resonate with the American public. Over seven in ten (73%, including 81% of Democrats and 67% of Republicans) say a good reason is the fact that they help combat extremism and authoritarianism abroad, which helps mitigate threats before they end up in the United States. A similar percentage (72%, including 85% of Democrats and 65% of Republicans) says a good reason is that these programs strengthen freedom worldwide by supporting democratic institutions, protecting religious freedoms, fighting corruption, and aiding dissidents of authoritarian regimes. The least persuasive reason for continuing funding (with 58% identifying it as a good reason) is that adversaries like China, Russia, and Iran would be glad to see the United States spend less on foreign aid and could step up and fill the gap.

TERRITORIAL EXPANSION

Regarding recently-discussed proposals for U.S. territorial expansion, a majority of Americans (55%) support pursuing the Panama Canal to protect a strategic transit route and counter Chinese influence over the canal. Almost half (47%) support pursuing Greenland, to provide the United States with critical minerals and increased access to the Arctic. There is significant partisan distinction on these issues, with 81% of Republicans but only 35% of Democrats supporting U.S. acquisition of the Panama Canal, and 72% of Republicans but only 28% of Democrats supporting U.S. expansion to include Greenland. Only 33% overall, including 24% of Democrats but 47% of Republicans, support pursuing U.S. acquisition of Gaza to transform the region into a hub for tourism and economic growth.

Trade Policy & Tariffs

Americans are divided along party lines about the use of tariffs as a tool of U.S. foreign policy. Nearly eight in ten (78%) of Republicans support using tariffs as a foreign policy tool, compared with only 22% of Democrats. However, Americans overall still favor a Reagan-style approach to trade—one that embraces free markets while recognizing that if tariffs must be used, they should only be temporary and selective. When it comes to America’s overall approach to trade policy, two-thirds (66%) think the United States should favor more of a free market approach with temporary and selective tariffs, while only 20% think the United States should favor more of a protectionist approach with broad, long-term tariffs. Bipartisan majorities support a free market approach: 72% of Democrats and 62% of Republicans.

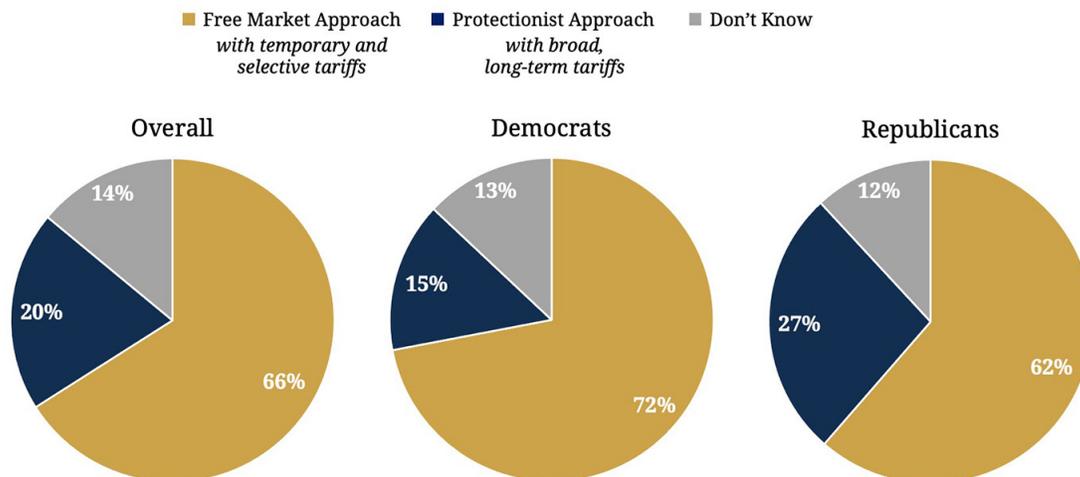
Americans express deep concern about China’s trade policy, with 79% overall (including 85% of Republicans and 77% of Democrats) saying they are worried about Beijing’s unfair trade practices. It is little surprise then that tariffs on China garner particularly high support from 53% overall—but there is a partisan divide, with 72% of Republicans and only 35% of Democrats supporting tariffs on China.

Support for tariffs on China diminishes to a minority when pitted against rising consumer prices. Twelve points fewer (41%) say they would support imposing tougher trade restrictions on China if it meant higher prices for consumer goods in the United States—whereas for 53%, keeping prices low is the priority. Support for tariffs against China drops by only five points among Republicans (to 67%) but by 15 points among Democrats (to 20%) when considering price consequences.

Tariffs on China are significantly more popular than tariffs on traditional U.S. allies. Only 40-45% of Americans support tariffs on Canada, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, Israel, the United Kingdom, and countries in the European Union. This distinction suggests that most Americans view tariffs less as a general economic tool and more as a targeted measure aimed at geopolitical adversaries.

There is partisan divide on this issue as well. A majority (52%, including 80% of Democrats but only 25% of Republicans) believes that tariffs on U.S. allies hurt American credibility and leadership, whereas four in ten (39%, including 16% of Democrats but 65% of Republicans) see tariffs on U.S. allies as necessary to protect American industries.

Preference for U.S. Trade Policy



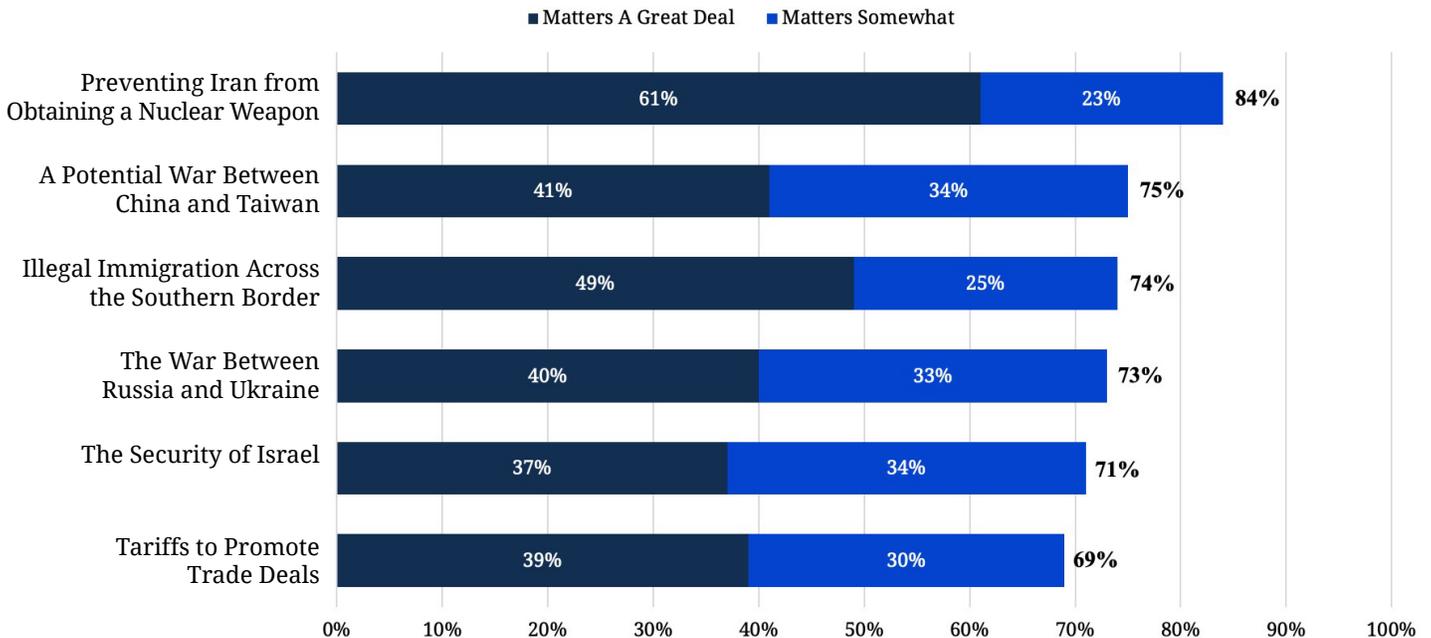
Iran, Israel, & Gaza

Among all the geopolitical issues tested, Americans are most concerned about Iran’s nuclear ambitions: 84% say preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon matters to U.S. security and prosperity, including 89% of Republicans and 84% of Democrats. Two-thirds (66%) approve of negotiating a nuclear deal designed to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons in exchange for easing economic sanctions on the regime, whereas only 20% disapprove. Support for such negotiations is bipartisan, including 69% of Democrats and 71% of Republicans. A plurality (45%) supports Israel conducting targeted airstrikes against Iran’s nuclear facilities if diplomatic efforts with Iran fail, with support coming from 60% of Republicans but only 32% of Democrats.¹

A bipartisan majority (71% overall, including 66% of Democrats and 81% of Republicans) believes the security of Israel matters to U.S. security and prosperity. When it comes to the U.S. posture towards Israel’s military actions against Hamas in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon, opinion is more divided. Around one-quarter of Americans (28%) think the United States should do more to support Israel, another quarter (26%) think the United States should do less, and over one-third (36%) believe the United States is striking a good balance.

Partisan divisions emerge around the question of how far the United States should go in backing Israeli military actions. About half (49%) support the United States sending weapons to Israel, including 67% of Republicans but only 39% of Democrats. Overall support is down five points (from 54%) since last November. On the idea of relocating Palestinians to other countries in the region to improve Israel’s security and allow for reconstruction in Gaza, opposition (41%) outweighs support (36%).

Perception of Importance for U.S. Security and Prosperity



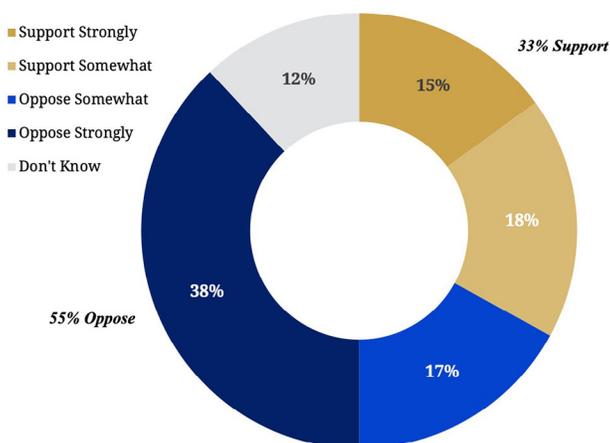
¹ The 2025 Reagan Institute Summer Survey was conducted prior to the June 13 Israeli strikes on Iran.

NATO, Ukraine, & Russia

A majority of Americans continue to recognize the strategic value of NATO and support the transatlantic alliance. Consistent with all Reagan Institute polling since 2018, over six in ten (62%) hold a favorable view of NATO, including 80% of Democrats and over half (51%) of Republicans. Support is even higher for America keeping its Article V collective defense commitments, with 71% saying the United States should use military force to defend a NATO ally if attacked. This includes 80% of Democrats, 68% of Republicans, and 71% of MAGA Republicans. A smaller majority of Americans (54%) say the United States should defend NATO allies under attack even if they have not met their defense spending pledges.

In response to a new survey question this year, most Americans (55%) oppose withdrawing the United States from NATO, but there is stark partisan distinction: 75% of Democrats, 53% of Independents, and only 37% of Republicans oppose leaving the defense pact. At the same time, six in ten (59%) support increasing the U.S. military's presence in Eastern Europe to counter Russian aggression, including 68% of Democrats and 55% of Republicans.

Views on the U.S. Withdrawing from the NATO Alliance



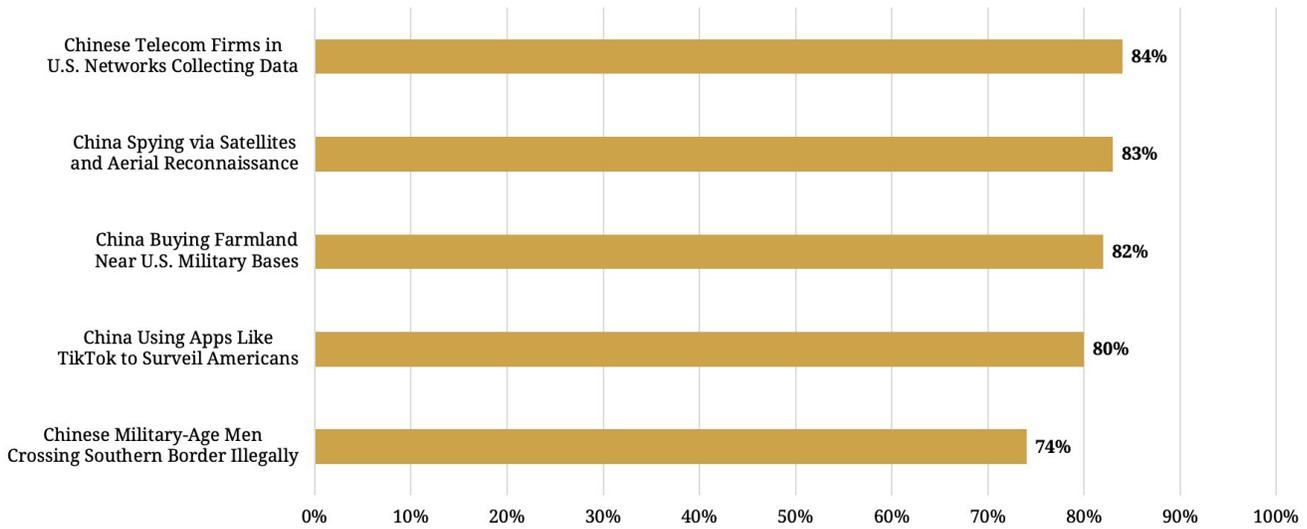
Russian aggression continues to weigh on Americans' minds. Three-quarters (73%) say that the war between Russia and Ukraine matters to the security and prosperity of the United States, with no differences across party lines. Most Americans (58%) want Ukraine to win the war, while only 7% say they would prefer a Russian victory. Support for a Ukrainian victory is particularly high among Democrats at 80%, while a plurality (47%) of Republicans share that preference. Only 12% of Republicans back Russia, but over a quarter (28%) hope neither country wins.

Still, on the negotiations to end the war, only 14% overall think the Trump Administration is favoring Ukraine; 37% think it is favoring Russia, and 36% think it is taking a neutral approach. There is a significant partisan divide in perceptions: Two-thirds (68%) of Democrats believe the administration is favoring Russia, while a majority (56%) of Republicans believe the administration is taking a neutral approach.

China & Taiwan

Eighty percent of Americans say they are concerned about the overall threat China poses to the United States. For specific Chinese activities, technology theft and other countries becoming reliant on Chinese development top the list of concerns at 80%. Nearly as many (79%) express concern about Chinese human rights violations and Beijing's holding of U.S. government debt. Seventy-eight percent are concerned about the prospect of China overtaking the United States as the world's number one superpower, as well as Beijing's military build-up and efforts to develop more advanced artificial intelligence (AI) technology. Americans' concern about the challenge posed by China cuts across economic, military, technological, and moral dimensions—and is shared broadly across party lines without partisan distinction.

Concern About Chinese Threats to the U.S. Homeland

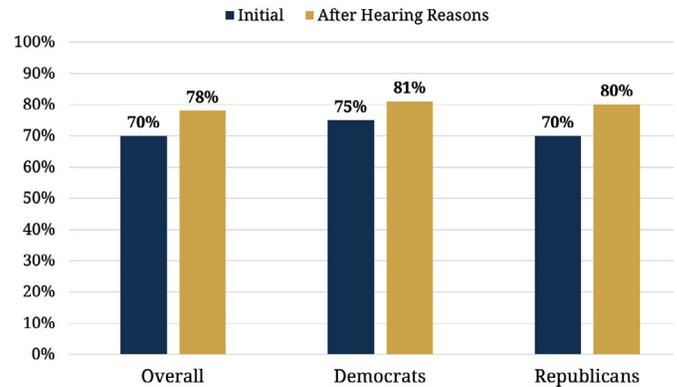


This year’s survey introduced a new series of questions, which reveal that Americans perceive China as a direct threat to the U.S. homeland—not just a distant geopolitical challenge. Eighty-four percent say they are concerned about Chinese telecom companies, like Hauwei and ZTE, integrating into U.S. networks and collecting Americans’ data. Eighty-three percent express concern about China spying on the United States with satellites and air reconnaissance; 82% are concerned about China purchasing land near U.S. military bases; 80% are concerned about TikTok and other social media platforms being used by China to surveil Americans; and 74% are concerned about Chinese military-age men illegally entering the United States via the southern border.

Three-quarters of Americans (75%) say that a war between China and Taiwan would matter to U.S. security and prosperity, reflecting a broad awareness of the strategic and economic stakes involved. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, support for U.S. military action to defend Taiwan is high. In a new line of questioning in this survey, a strong majority (70%) would support the U.S. taking military actions to defend Taiwan if China were to invade or blockade the island. Support for military action is bipartisan, including 75% of Democrats

and 70% of Republicans. When provided with reasons for defending Taiwan, support rises even higher, up to 78% overall and with a six-point jump among Democrats (to 81%) and a ten-point jump among Republicans (to 80%).

Support for U.S. Military Action Defending Taiwan



The most compelling reasons that would make respondents more likely to support committing U.S. forces to Taiwan’s defense are: Taiwan is one of the world’s largest producers of semiconductors (71%); defending Taiwan is critical for the defense of other allies, such as Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines (70%); and if Taiwan is not defended, it will send a message to China and other adversaries that the United States is not willing to stand up for its friends (70%). These reasons demonstrate a clear desire for peace through strength and strong American leadership in the Indo-Pacific.

Conclusion

Americans are once again embracing the idea that U.S. international engagement is not only beneficial—it is essential. They believe it keeps the peace, strengthens the economy, defends our values, and deters the world’s most dangerous regimes.

This renewed consensus is not theoretical. Across every major region of the world—from Eastern Europe to the Middle East to the Indo-Pacific—Americans support a foreign policy rooted in strength, resolve, and moral clarity. They want to stand by democracies like Taiwan, Ukraine, and Israel, confront authoritarian adversaries like China, Russia, and Iran, and support freedom abroad. They continue to back a Reagan-style economic approach that prioritizes free markets while using tariffs as targeted tools.

And Americans understand the stakes. As President Ronald Reagan warned in his 1980 Republican National Convention speech: ***“We know only too well that war comes not when the forces of freedom are strong, but when they are weak. It is then that tyrants are tempted. [...] The United States has an obligation to its citizens and to the people of the world never to let those who would destroy freedom dictate the future course of human life on this planet.”***

This year’s Reagan Institute Summer Survey makes one thing clear: The American people have not forgotten that obligation. They are calling on their leaders to meet the moment—with clarity, courage, and a renewed commitment to American leadership in the world.



RONALD REAGAN INSTITUTE

About the Ronald Reagan Institute

The Ronald Reagan Institute, the Washington, DC, office of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute, promotes our 40th President's ideals, vision, and leadership example through substantive, issue-driven forums, academic and young professional programming, and scholarly work.



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