

The Ronald Reagan Institute recently released the results of the sixth annual [Reagan National Defense Survey](#). The national opinion poll showed Americans want the United States to increase its military spending and provide security assistance to Israel, Ukraine, and Taiwan.

The survey reveals a disconnect between the American public, with 77% supporting increased military spending, and debates in Congress over defense cuts. A supermajority of Americans supports maintaining military bases around the world and fear budget cuts by Congress will threaten the military's capabilities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Americans support continued military assistance to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan.** A strong, bipartisan majority supports the idea that America should help its allies and friends defend themselves if they are willing to fight aggression against their own countries. Support for Ukraine has remained consistent over the last three Reagan Institute surveys, despite the narrative about waning support for Ukraine.
- **Americans want a global military presence.** When asked to allocate U.S. military resources and attention globally, respondents gave roughly equal percentages to the Middle East, East Asia, and Europe, demonstrating that Americans generally recognize which regions are U.S. strategic priorities. The diverse distribution, including resources throughout the world with no region ignored, reflects that Americans support a global military posture.
- **Republicans and Democrats are united in viewing China as the greatest threat to the United States.** More than half of Americans view China as the country that poses the greatest threat to the United States, up from 43 percent last year and just 21 percent in 2018. Americans' top concerns about China are its military build-up and human rights abuses.
- **Perceptions of American military superiority are overly confident.** Belief in the superiority of U.S. military capabilities—especially air and naval forces—over China's is misaligned with expert assessments of America's eroding military advantage. On more cutting-edge technologies, Americans view China as having the upper hand, with 33 percent viewing China as having superiority in cyber, as opposed to only 24 percent reporting U.S. superiority.
- **Over half of Americans (52 percent) favor increased military spending on AI.** However, they are unsure about the military applications of AI: Only 20 percent of respondents deemed greater AI integration into the military a good idea, while 27 percent said it was a bad idea, and 49 percent considered it premature to form an opinion.
- **Confidence in the military remains at record lows.** Only 46 percent of Americans report a great deal of confidence in the U.S. military, a number that has plateaued after falling 25 points from 70 percent in 2018.
- **Public opinion of Ronald Reagan remains strong.** Two-thirds of Americans have a favorable view of Ronald Reagan, and his defense and foreign policy worldview continues to reflect the views of most Americans today. Ronald Reagan also remains the most popular recent former president, with 65 percent of Americans viewing him favorably.

Learn more: www.ReaganFoundation.org/DefenseSurvey

Questions? Interested in a member or staff briefing? Email tkenna@reaganfoundation.org



RELEVANT QUOTES FROM PRESIDENT REAGAN

- *“We must stand by all our democratic allies. And we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives—on every continent...to defy...aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth...I want to work with you to support the democratic forces whose struggle is tied to our own security.”* 1985 State of the Union Address
- *“Our government must stop pretending that it has a choice between promoting the general welfare and providing for the common defense. Today they are one and the same.”* 1980 Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention Address
- *“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.”* 1980 Republican National Convention Acceptance Speech

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