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Reagan National Defense Survey Shows Strong, Growing Support for U.S. Leadership in the World

The survey, which was conducted immediately after the 2024 presidential election, shows a bipartisan supermajority wants the United States to spend more on national defense

SIMI VALLEY, California — The Ronald Reagan Institute today released its seventh annual Reagan National Defense Survey, showing Americans believe the United States must lead on the world stage, backed by a strong U.S. military.

“Year after year, this survey shows continued, unwavering support for peace through strength,” said Roger Zakheim, Director of the Ronald Reagan Institute. “Trust and confidence in the military is rebounding after hitting a low in recent years, and Americans support increased defense spending to build a military able to deter and defeat adversaries in multiple theaters.”

The survey, which went into the field immediately after the 2024 elections, shows Americans want more—not less—engagement in international affairs. Fifty-seven percent—including 61% of Trump voters—believe the United States should be more engaged and take the lead on the world stage, a 15-point increase from last year.

A summary of the survey and the full polling data are available online at www.reaganfoundation.org/defensesurvey.

Other key takeaways from the survey include:

- **A supermajority of Americans wants the United States to spend more on national defense.** Seventy-nine percent of respondents want the United States to spend more on the military, including nearly nine out of ten (89%) Trump voters.
- **Trust in the U.S. military is rebounding, with 51% of respondents reporting a great deal of confidence, up 5% from last year.** However, this number is still nearly 20 points lower than in 2018, when 70% of respondents reported high confidence in the military.
- **A majority of respondents (61%) believe the United States military should be large enough to win two simultaneous wars at once.** Half of Americans (49%) believe China poses the greatest threat to the United States, and 25% believe Russia poses

the greatest threat. Only 52% of respondents think the U.S. military would win a war against China, while 64% believe the United States would win a war against Russia.

- **Americans still favor sending military aid to Ukraine but want a negotiated end to the war.** Fifty-five percent of Americans believe the United States should send weapons to Ukraine, a slight decline from recent years. There are major partisan differences on this issue, with 74% of Harris voters supporting sending aid and only 42% of Trump voters. A bipartisan majority (59%) supports Ukraine negotiating for peace, even if it requires conceding some territory to Russia.
- **In the Middle East, freeing American hostages is a top priority.** A majority (61%) wants freeing Americans held hostage by Hamas to be a top priority in the Middle East. A majority (54%) also supports the United States providing military aid to Israel, including 67% of Trump voters and 46% of Harris voters.

The survey was conducted between November 8 and November 14, 2024 by a bipartisan research team at Beach Research and Shaw & Company Research. The overall sample size was 2,510, including 1,008 telephone interviews and 1,502 online surveys.

On Saturday, December 7, national security experts will discuss the survey results in a panel discussion at the Reagan National Defense Forum beginning at 7:45 am PT. Moderated by CNN's Abby Phillip, "The People's Perspective: Public Opinion on Defense and National Security Issues After the Elections" will feature Senator Deb Fischer, Palantir Technologies CEO Dr. Alex Karp, former State Department Spokesperson Morgan Ortagus, and House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Adam Smith.

[RSVP](#) to watch the session and additional RNDF programming virtually, live-streamed from the Reagan Library.

About the Reagan Foundation and Institute

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute (RRPFI) is the sole nonprofit organization created by President Reagan charged with advancing his legacy and principles – individual liberty, economic opportunity, freedom and democracy, peace through strength, and national pride.

A globally recognized nonpartisan organization based in Simi Valley, CA, with a leading policy institute in Washington, DC, RRPFI delivers impactful public affairs programming, policy convenings and projects of national and international significance, and distinctive educational initiatives. In addition, RRPFI sustains the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, the largest and most visited presidential library, which routinely hosts major special exhibitions.

An hour from Los Angeles International Airport, RRPFI's Simi Valley campus sits on 400 acres, serves as the final resting place of America's 40th President and former First Lady Nancy Reagan, displays a chunk of the Berlin Wall, and houses the plane President Reagan flew as Air Force One to 26 countries. Onsite are the Reagan Center for Public Affairs, Presidential Learning Center, Air Force One Pavilion, and the Reagan Leadership Academy. More information is available at www.reaganfoundation.org

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