



**Anxious Americans Seek
a New Direction in
United States Foreign Policy**
Results of a 2008 Survey of Public Opinion



THE CHICAGO COUNCIL
ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS



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GLOBAL VIEWS 2008

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Foreword

The international challenges facing the United States in early 2009 may be the most daunting to confront any president since the late 1940s. The international financial crisis, a looming recession of historic severity, the India-Pakistan and Palestine-Israel crises, two ongoing wars, and an array of transnational challenges all require urgent attention and all have the potential to dramatically reshape America's global role. At the same time, as the stress increases on the international order, there is considerable risk in the world's major powers of creeping protectionism, beggar thy neighbor policies, and an excessively narrow conception of the national interest. In this environment, developing and sustaining domestic support for American foreign policy is crucial to the United States effectively addressing the most difficult challenges of our times.

Measuring and understanding popular attitudes about U.S. foreign policy is perhaps more important at this moment in history than at any time since the end of World War II. Many questions need to be asked and answered. Are Americans turning inward and away from a traditional support of U.S. international leadership? Do Americans still believe that the international order the United States helped create serves broader U.S. interests? And do they still think that U.S. economic and military power translate into effective influence internationally?

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2008 Global Views survey is the latest edition in a long-running study, conducted every four years since 1975 and biennially since 2002. Recent iterations have devoted considerable attention to international views of U.S. foreign policy and world affairs. This year, given the extraordinary challenges that the United States faces and the opportunities that the presidential election presented, The Chicago Council returned to the study's roots and refocused its attention on American attitudes exclusively. The poll, conducted in July 2008, offers an important benchmark for popular attitudes about foreign policy immediately prior to the triggering of the international financial crisis in the fall of 2008. After the sharp economic downturn in September, the Council conducted a short follow-up poll focused on American attitudes towards trade and globalization as they related to the domestic economy. The same anxieties toward globalization evident in the July survey were also present in September with almost no change in intensity (see Appendix A for detailed analysis).

As always, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs is indebted to a great number of people and institutions for making this study possible. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has been a core funder of The Chicago Council studies for many years. The McCormick Foundation provided critical funding for this as well as the past four

Chicago Council public opinion studies. Support from the United States-Japan Foundation made the extensive probing into American attitudes towards the U.S.–Japan alliance possible.

The Chicago Council was very fortunate once again to have such a distinguished project team that contributed to every phase of the study's development. This year's project team included Steven Kull, director, Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA); Benjamin I. Page, Gordon Scott Fulcher Professor of Decision Making, Department of Political Science, Northwestern University; and Michael Green, senior adviser and Japan chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies. Special recognition is due to Christopher Whitney, now former executive director for studies at The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, who had overall responsibility for developing the study in its initial stages. Gregory Holyk, visiting lecturer in American politics, University of Illinois at Chicago, ably stepped in and took over the role of project director and guided this project to its conclusion. Silvia Veltcheva, served as the project officer, produced the survey reports and coordinated all stages of the project. Rachel Bronson, vice president of programs and studies, helped shape and guide the project, and Thomas Wright, executive director for studies, joined at the end and helped steer the final product. As always, Catherine Hug, president of Hug Communications, was an essential contributor to the team and this final report. Clay Ramsay and Evan Lewis of PIPA provided important support to the project. Andrew Sherry, senior vice president for online communications at the Center for American Progress provided invaluable help with the earlier short reports that serve as the basis for this report. Other staff, interns, and contributors who worked hard on the project and made this report possible include Rehana Absar, Rajni Chandrasekhar, Zachary Gebhardt, and Stephen Wittles.

The Chicago Council is also grateful to Mike Dennis, William McCready, and Stefan Subias at Knowledge Networks for all the hard work they dedicated to the study.

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; the Roper Center for Public Opinion in Storrs, Connecticut; and NORC (National Opinion Research Center) at the University of Chicago. It 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

Executive Summary

Part I: Foreign Policy

The survey conducted in July of 2008 reveals an American public concerned about U.S. standing in the world and supportive of a series of targeted changes in foreign policy to address perceived problems. While the changes appear more pragmatic than ideological, they add up to a strong shift in direction, with an emphasis on using diplomacy and working through multilateral institutions to tackle problems, even while keeping a strong military presence worldwide.

Overall

- An exceptional bipartisan majority of Americans think that improving America's standing in the world should be a "very important" foreign policy goal of the United States (see Appendix B for a detailed analysis of all fourteen foreign policy goals asked about in the study).
- A slight majority conclude that the ability of the United States to achieve its foreign policy goals has decreased.
- Republicans are more likely than Democrats to believe that the ability of the United States to achieve its foreign policy goals has stayed the same.
- Most Americans believe the United States is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be.
- A strong majority of Americans want the United States to play an active part in world affairs. However, a record 36 percent think the United States should stay out of world affairs, up 8 points since 2006 and the highest percentage since pollsters began asking this question in 1947.

Diplomacy

- Bipartisan majorities of Americans endorse U.S. leaders talking with the leaders of hostile or unfriendly countries, including Cuba, North Korea, Iran, and Burma.
- Slight majorities of Americans also support talks with Hamas and Hezbollah, although majorities of Republicans do not.

Iran

- Three-quarters of Americans favor applying diplomatic or economic pressure to Iran.
- A slight majority believes that if Iran were to allow United Nations inspectors permanent and full access throughout Iran to make sure it is not developing nuclear weapons, the country

should be allowed to produce nuclear fuel for producing electricity.

Iraq

- Sixty-one percent of Americans expect there would be increased violence and greater instability over the next several years if the United States pulled most of its combat troops from the country; 28 percent believe pulling troops out would have no effect on stability and the levels of violence; and only 11 percent believe there would be decreased violence and increased stability. Sixty-seven percent say the United States should withdraw most of its combat troops “right away” or within “two years.”
- A majority of Americans now support long-term U.S. military bases in Iraq.
- Three-quarters agree that the war cost hundreds of billions of dollars that could have been spent on needs at home, although there is near unanimity among Democrats and only a slight majority among Republicans on this issue.
- A majority overall says the threat of terrorism has not been reduced by the war, though two-thirds of Republicans think it has been.

Terrorism

- Exceptional majorities favor working through the UN to strengthen international laws against terrorism and support the trial of suspected terrorists in the International Criminal Court.
- Seventy percent of Americans still consider international terrorism a critical threat, down from 74 percent in 2006 and 75 percent in 2004 (see Appendix C for a detailed analysis of all twelve threats asked about in the study).
- Strong majorities favor the following measures to fight terrorism: U.S. air strikes against terrorist training camps and other facilities, assassination of individual terrorist leaders, attacks

by U.S. ground troops against terrorist training camps and other facilities, helping poor countries develop their economies, and making a major effort to be even-handed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- A majority of the public opposes using torture to extract information from suspected terrorists.

Pakistan

- Slightly more than two-thirds say the United States “should” take military action to capture or kill 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.
- Only slightly more than one-third say the United States should use military force to secure Pakistan’s nuclear weapons “even without UN approval” if its government fell into the hands of Islamic extremists.

Religion and Diplomacy

- A majority of Americans believe it is possible to find common ground between Muslims and Christians, although a considerable minority thinks violent conflict between the two is inevitable.
- A strong majority of Americans oppose the U.S. government funding humanitarian work undertaken by Muslim organizations in developing countries. Yet majorities favor the U.S. government funding humanitarian work undertaken by Christian and interfaith organizations.
- A majority thinks religious values and institutions should be openly discussed by U.S. government leaders as part of international diplomatic efforts.

Treaties

Strong majorities support U.S. participation in international treaties and agreements, including a treaty

that bans nuclear weapon test explosions worldwide, a new international treaty to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and an agreement on the International Criminal Court.

United Nations and International Institutions

Strong majorities of Americans favor giving the United Nations the authority to go into countries to investigate violations of human rights; creating an international marshals service that could arrest leaders responsible for genocide; having a standing UN peacekeeping force selected, trained, and commanded by the United Nations; having a UN agency control access to all nuclear fuel in the world to ensure that none is used for weapons production; and giving the United Nations the power to regulate the international arms trade (though a slight majority of Republicans oppose this last proposal).

- Sixty-seven percent think 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.
- Americans support adding Japan (67%), Germany (66%), Brazil (53%), and India (53%) as permanent members of the UN Security Council, but are divided regarding the addition of South Africa (47% favor, 49% oppose).
- A slight majority agrees that the United States should be more willing to make decisions within the UN even if this means that the United States will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice. However, support for joint decision making with the UN is down 8 percentage points from 2006, continuing a downward trend in support in recent years.
- Majorities favor new international institutions to monitor the worldwide energy market and predict shortages, monitor compliance with climate change treaties, monitor worldwide financial markets, and provide information and assistance to countries dealing with large-scale migration.

Peacekeeping

- Large majorities favor using U.S. troops to stop a government from committing genocide and killing large numbers of its own people and to be a part of an international peacekeeping force to stop the killing in Darfur.
- A slight majority supports using troops to keep a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

U.S. Leadership

- Majorities believe the United States provides leadership in efforts to fight international terrorism, promote international trade, and at the United Nations, but attitudes are evenly split on the topic of climate change.

Part II: Globalization, Immigration, Energy, and Jobs

Anxiety among Americans over economic issues is causing a shift in foreign policy views and priorities. Energy is a major source of concern, along with jobs and the distribution of income and wealth. These concerns are negatively impacting views of globalization, immigration, NAFTA, and the economic future of the United States. Americans believe the solution to these economic problems lies at home.

Overall

Nearly two-thirds of Americans believe the distribution of income and wealth in the United States has recently become less fair, and most of those who say the distribution of income and wealth has become less fair indicate that globalization and international trade are either very important or somewhat important in causing the change.

- A majority believes the next generation of Americans will be economically worse off than today's working adults.

- An exceptional majority favors fixing pressing problems at home rather than addressing challenges to the United States from abroad.
- Strong majorities believe investing in renewable energy, improving border security, improving public education, and reducing federal budget deficits are very important to the United States remaining competitive in the global economy.
- Less than one-third think that continuing high levels of legal immigration and supporting open trade around the world are very important to the United States remaining competitive in the global economy.

Globalization

- A majority of Americans still think globalization, especially the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is mostly good for the United States, although this is down slightly in comparison to previous polls.
- The minority of Americans who believe globalization is mostly bad has been steadily growing.
- Forty percent believe economic globalization is occurring too quickly, while 57 percent disagree (39 percent say it is happening at the right pace, and 18 percent say it is happening too slowly).
- Majorities believe globalization is bad for the job security of American workers and creating jobs in the United States.
- Protecting the jobs of American workers remains a very important goal for most Americans.
- Majorities believe globalization is good for consumers, for American companies, and for their own standard of living.
- Americans are divided on whether globalization is good or bad for the next generation.

- A strong majority of the public is against allowing foreign government investors to invest in U.S. companies and banks.

Energy

- Very strong majorities think that securing adequate supplies of energy is a very important foreign policy goal and that disruption in the energy supply is a critical threat.
- A majority of Americans now favor the use of U.S. troops to ensure the oil supply, a large increase from 2006.
- Nearly three-quarters say investing in renewable energy is very important to the United States remaining competitive with other countries in the global economy, placing this first out of nine items asked about.

Immigration

- Forty-six percent of Americans favor decreasing legal immigration, with 39 percent preferring to keep it at present levels and only 15 percent favoring an increase.
- Majorities of the public think immigration is bad for job security, for creating jobs in the United States, for the U.S. economy, for the country as a whole, for their community, and for their standard of living. Opinion is divided on whether it is good or bad for U.S. companies.

NAFTA

- Majorities believe NAFTA is bad for the U.S. economy and the job security of Americans (both higher than in 2004), although majorities still think NAFTA is good for consumers and the Mexican economy.

Federal Government Programs

- Americans continue to support spending on domestic programs over foreign aid programs.

- Large majorities favor expanding health care programs, Social Security, and aid to education.
- Slight majorities also favor expanding programs for improving public infrastructure such as highways, bridges, and airports, and expanding homeland security.
- Majorities favor cutting back military and economic aid to other nations.
- Views are mixed on defense spending and on gathering intelligence information about other countries.

Effects of the Financial Crisis

- The results of a small, September follow-up survey of key economic questions from the July survey broadly confirmed the overall trends identified in July and outlined in this report.
- The one exception was a sharp decline in the number who see improving America's standing in the world as a very important foreign policy goal (see Appendix A for a more detailed analysis of the September follow-up survey).

Part III: China's Rise

Americans now clearly perceive China as a rising global power, with profound consequences for the United States. For the first time, a plurality of the public is aware of the financial imbalance between the United States and China, and there is a general consensus among Americans concerning China's increased importance and influence in the world. There is a segment of the public that feels threatened by China's rise, especially in the realm of economics. However, the public opposes active efforts to limit China's rise.

Overall

- Nearly two-thirds oppose active efforts to limit China's rise, instead favoring friendly cooperation and engagement.

- A slight majority considers China very important to the United States. Only Canada and Britain are perceived as very important by more Americans.
- China rates as the second most influential country in the world after the United States, ahead of Great Britain, the European Union, Japan, and Russia.

Awareness of the Rise of China

- For the first time, a plurality of Americans now know that China loans more money to the United States than the United States loans to China.
- Three-quarters now believe China's economy will someday grow to be as large as the U.S. economy, up considerably from 2006.
- Two-thirds believe that "another nation" (presumably China) will become as powerful or will surpass the United States.

Economic and Geopolitical Concerns Regarding China

- Two-thirds say that China practices unfair trade (up from 2006).
- China is the only one of six major U.S. trading partners that a majority of Americans now see as an unfair trader.
- A rather large minority of Americans (40%) see the development of China as a world power as a critical threat to the vital interests of the United States.

Policy Responses to China's Rise

- A majority opposes using U.S. troops if China invaded Taiwan—the only scenario out of six presented that a majority opposes. In addition, very few Americans see confrontation between China and Taiwan as a critical threat.

- Americans show little support for making greater economic sacrifices than China or India in a new climate change treaty, and a slight majority opposes providing technological and financial aid to help China and India limit the growth of greenhouse gas emissions.

Part IV: U.S.–Japan Relationship

The American public continues to see Japan as an influential partner in the international system. Rather than causing “Japan passing,” the rise of China’s power is increasing the importance of the U.S.–Japan alliance in the view of the American public. Americans see Japan as an economic friend now that China has taken on the mantle of the Asian economic threat. While Americans see Japan as influential and important, they also want Tokyo to do more to contribute to international security.

Overall

- Japan rates in the top four countries in terms of importance to the United States (behind Britain, Canada, and China and ahead of fourteen other countries, including Israel, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Russia).
- A slight majority of Americans say China is more important to the vital interests of the United States than Japan.
- Americans have much warmer, more favorable overall feelings toward Japan than China.

Sources of Japan’s Influence

- Japan is considered quite influential in the world, although slightly less so in comparison to China.
- Two-thirds of Americans think technological innovation is a very important source of Japan’s influence, while nearly half say Japan’s economic power is important to its influence.

- Other factors are viewed as less important to Japan’s influence, including its leadership in Asia, its democratic system, its economic assistance to other countries, and its military strength.

Importance of U.S.–Japan Alliance in Light of China’s Rise

- A slight majority believes that the United States and Japan should work together to limit the rise of Chinese power in the years ahead.
- Fifty-four percent of Americans prefer to make no change in its alliance with Japan rather than seek to strengthen the alliance to offset China’s power (32% prefer the latter).
- Two-thirds agree that because of China’s growing military power and the threat from North Korea, Japan needs to be freer to project its own military power.
- Half also agree that a Japanese military buildup would probably lead to an arms race with China and be destabilizing for Asia.
- Strong majorities favor Japan taking a more active military role, including independent combat missions consistent with international law, just like any other country.

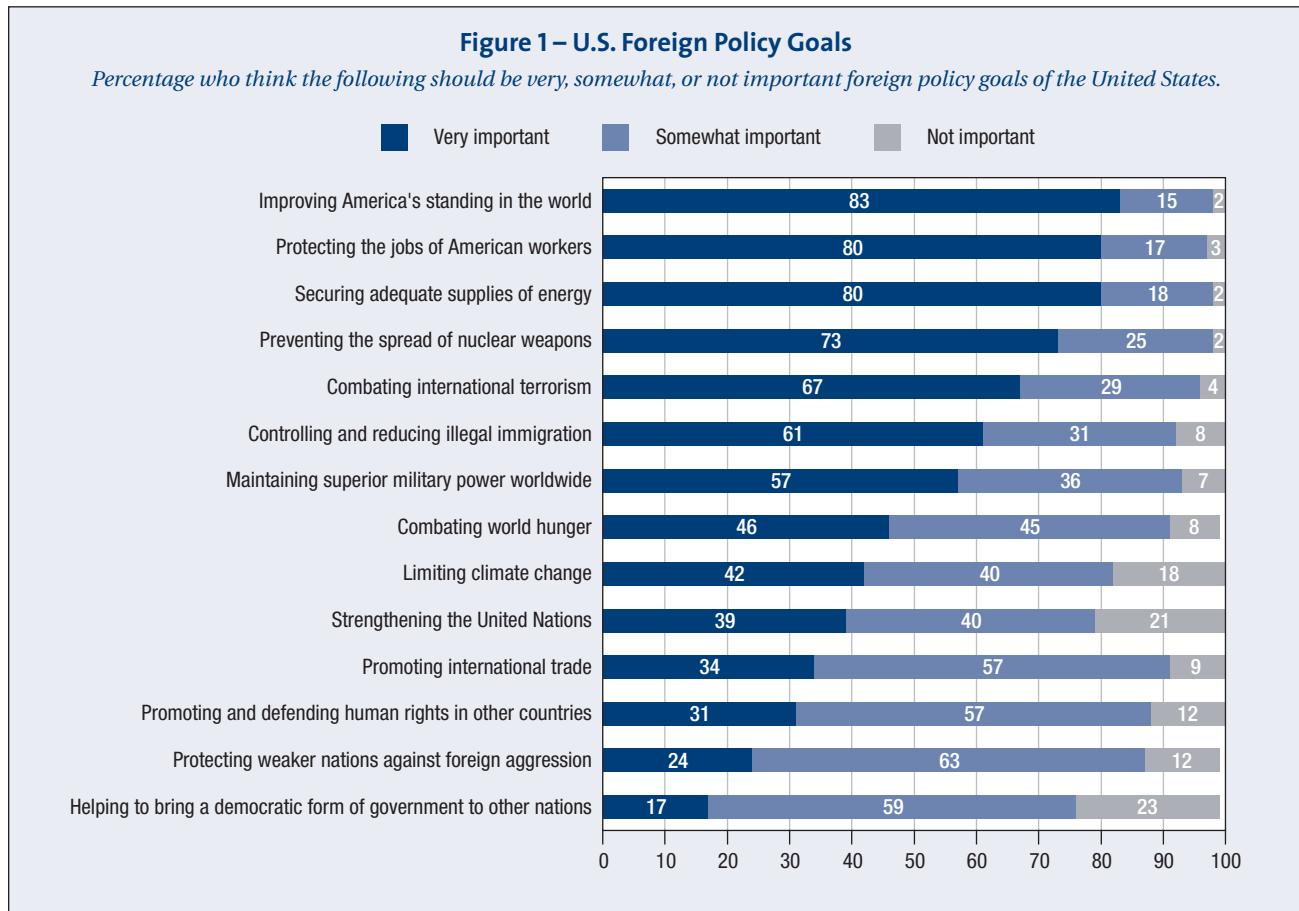
Japan and Nuclear Weapons

- An exceptional majority of Americans are opposed to Japan’s possession of nuclear weapons.
- Americans do not see any positive benefits from possible Japanese development of nuclear weapons. Strong majorities agree that it would encourage other countries such as Iran to develop nuclear weapons and would create the possibility of a rivalry with China that could escalate into a nuclear war. A majority believes that Japanese development of nuclear weapons would not reduce the U.S. burden of defending Japan.

Part I: Foreign Policy

Americans—Democrats and Republicans alike—are overwhelmingly concerned about America’s standing in the world. Accordingly, they support new policy directions, such as talking to America’s enemies, setting a timetable to withdraw from Iraq, making a deal with Iran, using force to strike lead-

ers of terrorist groups operating in Pakistan, working more through international institutions, and participating in a new climate-change treaty. Since this survey was conducted in July of 2008, the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States has indicated a shift in direction.



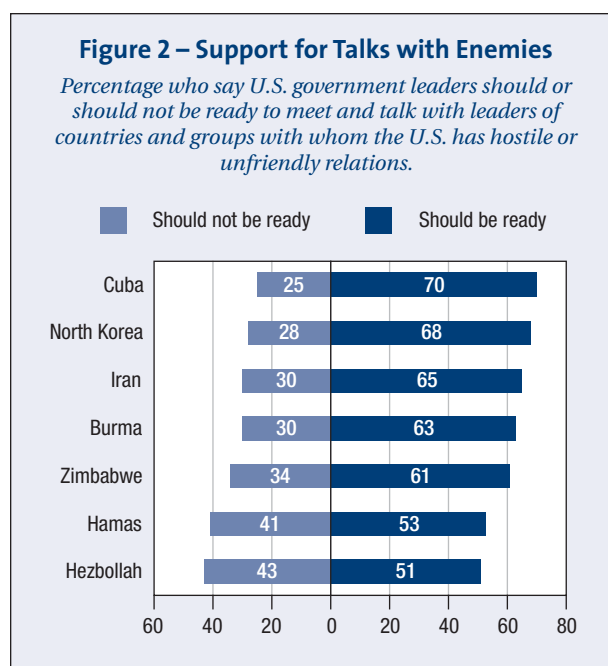
Overall, 83 percent of Americans—including 81 percent of Republicans and 87 percent of Democrats—think that improving America's standing in the world should be a "very important" foreign policy goal of the United States (see Figure 1). This places it first among fourteen goals presented, higher than protecting the jobs of American workers (80%), securing adequate supplies of energy (80%), preventing the spread of nuclear weapons (73%), and combating international terrorism (67%).

Americans also worry that the United States has recently lost leverage in the world. Asked whether over the last few years the ability of the United States to achieve its foreign policy goals has increased, decreased, or remained about the same, 53 percent say that it has decreased, while only 10 percent say it has increased. Thirty-six percent say it has stayed about the same. Republicans are more likely to believe it has stayed the same (46% same and 39% decreased) than Democrats (23% same and 69% decreased).

Despite these concerns, Americans' international commitment remains strong. Solid majorities continue to support the United States taking an active part in world affairs and maintaining a global military presence, even though there appears to be a growing international fatigue among some Americans. Yet instead of turning inward, Americans overall show support for major, pragmatic changes in the course of U.S. foreign policy.

Talk with Unfriendly Governments and Groups

Americans demonstrate a substantial willingness to have the United States talk with leaders of unfriendly governments and groups. Reminded of the ongoing debate about whether U.S. government leaders should be ready to meet and talk with leaders of countries and groups with whom the United States has hostile or unfriendly relations, majorities of Americans—including majorities of both Republicans and Democrats—endorse talking with all countries asked about (see Figure 2), including Cuba (70%), North Korea (68%), Iran (65%), and Burma (63%). A majority of Americans overall



support talks with Zimbabwe (61%), but the level of support is only a plurality among Republicans. Slight majorities of Americans also support talking with Hamas (53%) and Hezbollah (51%). While higher majorities of Democrats support talks with these two groups, majorities of Republicans do not.

When it comes to Iran and the dispute over its nuclear program, support for talks does not mean Americans want to back down.¹ While support for a military strike authorized by the UN Security Council against Iran's nuclear energy facilities if Iran continues to enrich uranium remains low (20%), 75 percent of Americans favor applying diplomatic or economic pressure, with support for economic sanctions up 7 points from The Chicago Council's 2006 study to 48 percent.

At the same time, a bipartisan majority of Americans show a readiness to make a deal with Iran. If Iran were to allow United Nations inspectors permanent and full access throughout Iran to make sure it is not developing nuclear weapons, 56 percent say that Iran should be allowed to produce nuclear fuel for producing electricity.

1. A finding from The Chicago Council's *Global Views 2006* public opinion study indicated that 80 percent of Americans believe Iran is producing enriched uranium in an effort to produce nuclear weapons.

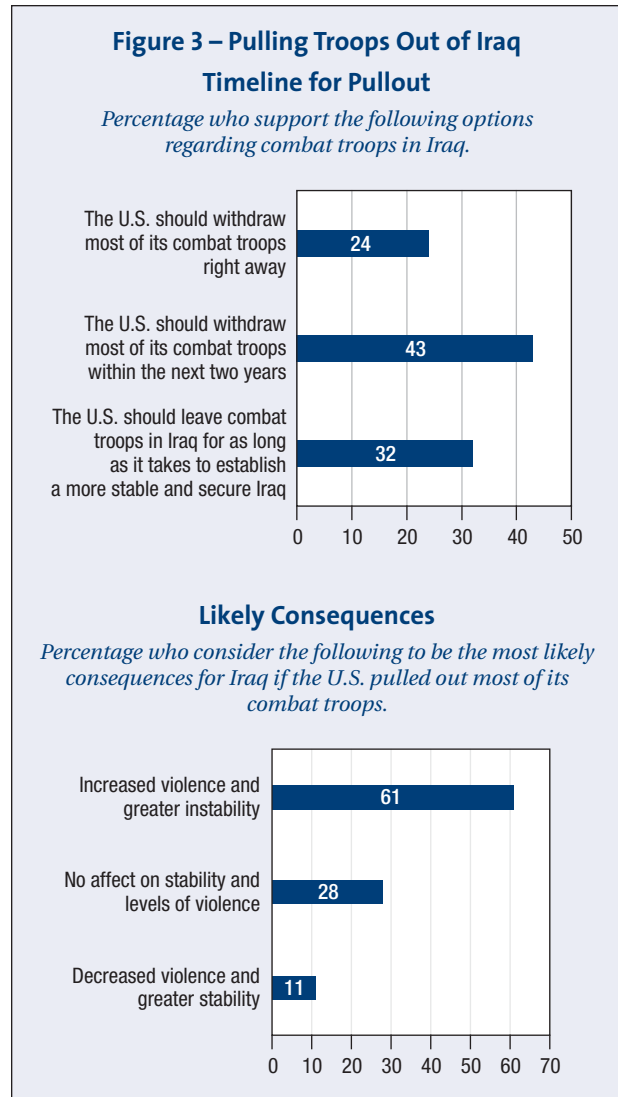
This is consistent with a more general readiness to give the United Nations a stronger role in dealing with the potential for nuclear proliferation. Sixty-three percent of Americans favor having a UN agency control access to all nuclear fuel in the world to ensure that none is used for weapons production. Only 35 percent oppose this.

Set a Timetable to Withdraw from Iraq

Even prior to the August 21, 2008, announcement of “aspirational timetables” for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq by the Bush administration, a majority of Americans say they do not want to maintain an open-ended commitment to Iraq. Only 32 percent favor keeping combat troops in Iraq for as long as it takes to establish a more stable and secure Iraq (see Figure 3). Sixty-seven percent want to withdraw U.S. troops right away (24%) or within the next two years (43%). However, there is a huge divide on this question between Republicans and Democrats, with 58 percent of Republicans and only 9 percent of Democrats favoring an open-ended commitment. A still significant 42 percent of Republicans favor withdrawal, compared with an overwhelming 91 percent of Democrats.

When asked about the likely consequences of a pullout from Iraq, 61 percent of Americans expect there would be increased violence and greater instability over the next several years if the United States pulled most of its combat troops from the country (see Figure 3). Twenty-eight percent believe pulling troops out would have no effect on stability and the levels of violence, and only 11 percent believe there would be decreased violence and increased stability.

Among Republicans and Democrats, views of the likely consequences appear to color opinions on pulling out. With 80 percent of Republicans convinced there will be increased violence and greater instability if most U.S. troops are withdrawn, a majority (58%) is in favor of staying as long as it takes. A majority of Democrats (53%), on the other hand—who overwhelmingly favor withdrawal within two years (91%)—believe there will either be



no effect on the level of violence (37%) or decreased violence (16%). Forty-six percent of Democrats think there will be increased violence. These results also show, however, that there are notable numbers in both parties who support withdrawal despite the expectation of increased violence in Iraq.

To be sure, Americans do not support a *total* withdrawal from Iraq, with 57 percent (8 points higher than in 2006) supporting long-term U.S. military bases there.

A bipartisan majority of Americans express regret about the Iraq war. Three-quarters (76%) agree that the war cost hundreds of billions of dollars that could have been spent on needs at home (54% among Republicans, 95% among Democrats). Fifty-nine percent overall say the threat of terror-

ism has not been reduced by the war, though 65 percent of Republicans think it has.

Pursue Terrorists

While the intensity of fear about international terrorism has been slowly declining in Chicago Council surveys, it is still a great concern. Seventy percent of Americans still consider international terrorism a critical threat (down from 74% in 2006, 75% in 2004, and 91% in 2002).² Not surprisingly, then, Americans continue to show strong support for most measures to combat terrorism, views which have not changed substantially since they were last surveyed in 2004. The largest majority (84%) favors working through the UN to strengthen international laws against terrorism and making sure UN members enforce them. Strong majorities also support the trial of suspected terrorists in the International Criminal Court (79%), U.S. air strikes against terrorist training camps and other facilities (79%), assassination of individual terrorist leaders (68%), attacks by U.S. ground troops against terrorist training camps and other facilities (72%), helping poor countries develop their economies (69%), and making a major effort to be even-handed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (67%).

These findings suggest that Americans do not consider terrorism to be a unidimensional problem with one neat solution. Americans favor numerous approaches to combating terrorism, from addressing poverty to launching military strikes. The only measure a majority of the public does not support is using torture to extract information from suspected terrorists, with 61 percent opposed. However, the percentage of Americans favoring the use of torture in the fight against terrorism increased from 29 to 36 percent between 2004 and 2008.

Americans are clearly concerned about where terrorist threats originate, with 55 percent considering violent Islamist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan as a critical threat. Consistent with these concerns, Americans strongly favor pursuing terrorists in their Pakistani hideouts. Asked what the

United States should do if it locates high-ranking members of terrorist groups operating in Pakistan that threaten the United States, 68 percent say the United States “should” 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 (29% say it “should not” do this).

On the other hand, there are limits to what Americans are willing to do unilaterally. Reminded that Pakistan possesses nuclear weapons and then asked what the United States should do if the government of Pakistan fell into the hands of Islamic extremists, only 36 percent say the United States should use military force to secure Pakistan’s nuclear weapons “even without UN approval.” Forty-three percent favor such military action “only with UN approval,” and 18 percent oppose the use of military force to secure Pakistan’s nuclear weapons. More Republicans favor using force without UN approval (48%), while more Democrats favor using force only with UN approval (55%).

Selectively Fund Religious Aid Organizations

Americans demonstrate a complex array of attitudes regarding the role of religion in international politics and the role it should play in U.S. foreign policy. More Americans are optimistic than pessimistic about the ability of societies with differing religions to cooperate. Fifty-eight percent of Americans believe it is possible to find common ground between Muslims and Christians. However, there is a considerable minority that thinks violent conflict between Muslims and Christians is inevitable (41%).

Despite an optimistic belief that there is common ground between Muslims and Christians, Americans demonstrate a substantial bias toward Christian aid organizations. Majorities of Americans favor the U.S. government funding humanitarian work undertaken in developing countries by Christian (57% in favor) and interfaith (52% in favor) organizations. Yet they are divided on providing government funding for Jewish organizations (47% in favor, 50% opposed), and an exceptional

2. The 2002 study was conducted by telephone. Subsequent studies were conducted via the Internet.

majority of Americans (70%) oppose funding for Muslim organizations.

Americans do not support suppressing religion in the diplomatic realm. A majority (56%) thinks that religious values and institutions should be openly discussed by U.S. government leaders as part of international diplomatic efforts, while 42 percent think they should not be discussed.

Sign Treaties on Nuclear Tests, Climate Change

Contrary to current U.S. policy and consistent with previous Chicago Council studies, an overwhelming majority of Americans (88%) favor signing a treaty that bans nuclear weapon test explosions worldwide (see Figure 4), and three in four are opposed to any possible first-use of nuclear weapons. This is consistent with a high level of concern over the potential for nuclear proliferation—67 percent say that the possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers is a critical threat, and 73 percent say that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is a very important foreign policy goal.

Earlier Chicago Council polls found that Americans favored U.S. participation in the Kyoto treaty on climate change. In 2009 in Copenhagen, countries will attempt to reach agreement on a successor treaty. When asked whether the United States should participate in a new international treaty to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, 76 percent say that the United States

should participate (see Figure 4). This is 6 percentage points higher than those who thought the country should participate in the Kyoto agreement in 2006 and includes majorities of both Democrats and Republicans. There is also bipartisan support for the International Criminal Court (ICC), with 68 percent of Americans saying the United States should participate in the agreement on the ICC that can try individuals for war crimes, genocide, or crimes against humanity if their own country won't try them (see Figure 4).

Work through International Institutions

As Chicago Council polls have found in the past, Americans do not want to play the role of world policeman, with 77 percent believing the United States is playing this role more than it should be. This belief is accompanied by solid support for the work of international institutions. For example, there is bipartisan support for strengthening the United Nations in many areas. Majorities favor giving the United Nations the authority to go into countries to investigate violations of human rights (73%); creating an international marshals service that could arrest leaders responsible for genocide (71%); having a standing UN peacekeeping force selected, trained, and commanded by the United Nations (70%); and, as mentioned, having a UN agency control access to all nuclear fuel in the world to ensure that none is used for weapons production

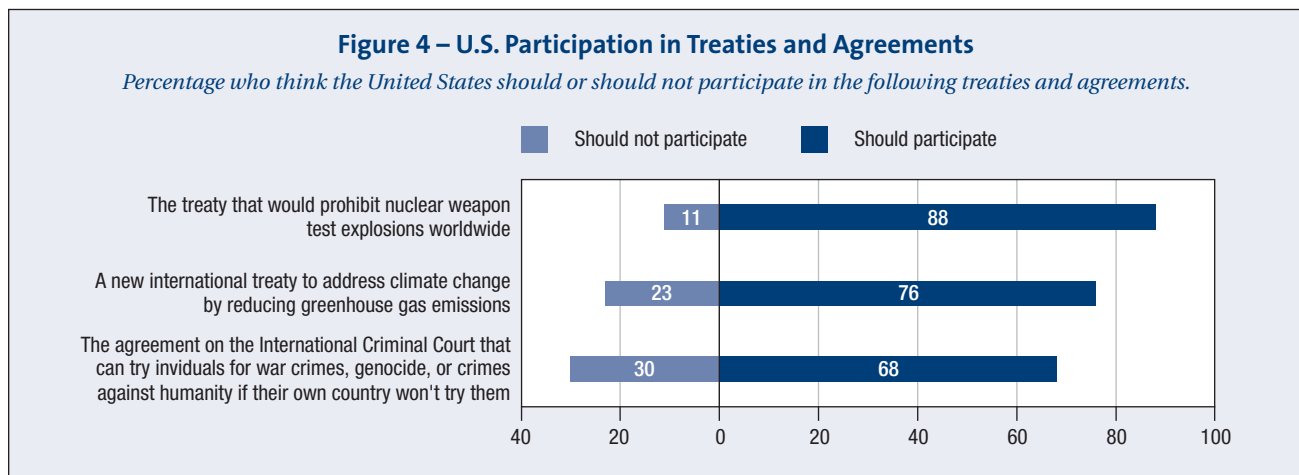
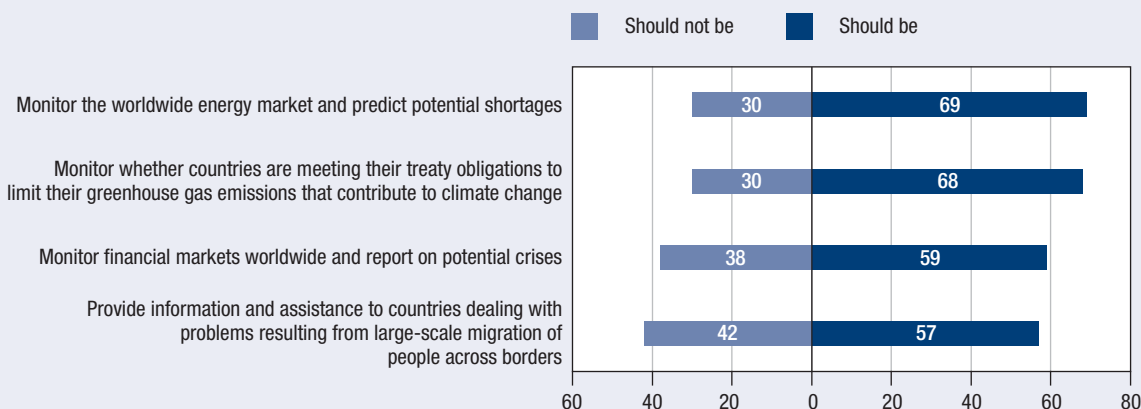


Figure 5 – Support for New International Institutions

Percentage who think there should or should not be new international institutions to do the following.



(63%). An overall majority of Americans (57%) also favor giving the United Nations the power to regulate the international arms trade, though a majority of Republicans (54%) oppose this. A 67 percent majority of Americans think 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 public support for U.S. participation in international organizations and regimes is evident in attitudes towards the World Trade Organization (WTO). While Americans are lukewarm in their attitudes towards trade, globalization, and immigration, if another country files a complaint with the WTO and the WTO rules against the United States, 72 percent of Americans favor U.S. compliance with that decision. This level of support is only 1 point lower than 2006, but is up 8 points from 2002 when this question was first asked.³ It seems that growing economic anxieties have not eroded support for compliance with this important international economic regime.

In addition, the public is not opposed to giving more countries a say in the United Nations. Americans support adding Japan (67%), Germany (66%), Brazil (53%), and India (53%) as permanent members of the UN Security Council, while Americans are split regarding the addition of South

Africa (47% favor, 49% oppose). Strong majorities of both Republicans and Democrats favor the additions of Japan and Germany, two close allies of the United States, to the Security Council. There is a partisan split in the cases of India and Brazil—majorities of Democrats favor their inclusion, while majorities of Republicans oppose such action.

When it comes to decision making, a majority of Americans (52%) agree that the United States should be more willing to make decisions within the UN even if this means that the United States will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice. Yet signs of frustration with this idea can be seen in the 10-point jump (from 36% to 46% between 2006 and 2008) among those who believe the United States should not be more willing to make decisions within the UN, including 65 percent of Republicans.

There is strong support for new international institutions to deal with new problems the world is facing (see Figure 5). Americans favor new institutions to monitor the worldwide energy market and predict shortages (69%), to monitor compliance with climate change treaties (68%), to monitor worldwide financial markets (59%), and to provide information and assistance to countries dealing with large-scale migration (57%). Republicans are divided in their support of institutions to monitor climate change compliance and financial markets and to provide assistance with migration.

3. See footnote 2.

Most international organizations receive favorability ratings on the slightly “warm” side (between 50 and 60 on a 100-point scale where 50 is neutral), showing little change from 2006. The most highly rated organization is the World Health Organization (61), followed by international human rights groups (59), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (57), the United Nations (54), the International Criminal Court (52), and the World Trade Organization (52). Only the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund receive ratings below 50 (48 and 44, respectively). Interestingly, the three institutions with the lowest ratings are all international economic organizations.

Provide Leadership

Americans believe that the United States is providing leadership in important areas of international relations. Considerable majorities believe the United States provides leadership in efforts to fight international terrorism (83%) and promote international trade (71%) as well as at the United Nations (65%). However, there is no agreement on American leadership in terms of international efforts to address climate change, an area where the United States government has been reluctant to participate in international treaties until recently. Forty-nine percent of Americans believe the United States does not provide leadership on climate change, and 47 percent believe it does.

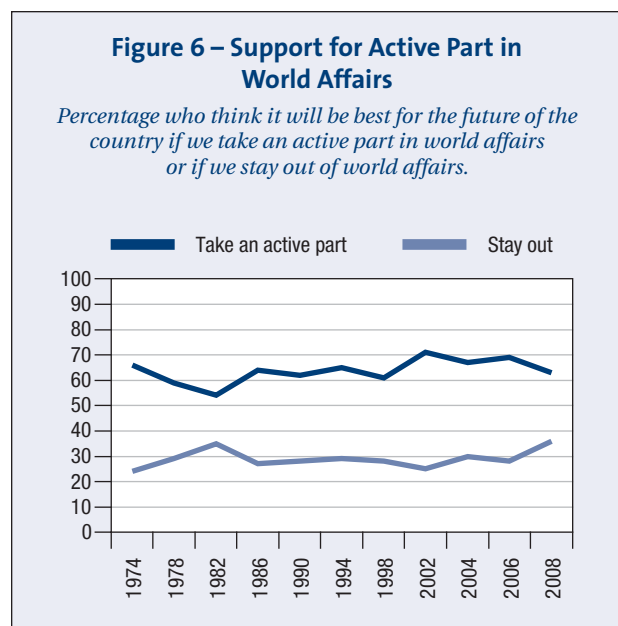
Citizens have a pragmatic view of the impact of American leadership. When asked whether U.S. leadership primarily benefits Americans, people in other countries, or both, majorities of Americans feel that everyone benefits from U.S. leadership on climate change (67%), terrorism (62%), the United Nations (55%), and international trade (54%). Of those who do not think everyone benefits from U.S. leadership, more say that U.S. leadership at the United Nations and U.S. efforts to promote international trade primarily benefit people in other countries, while U.S. leadership on climate change and international terrorism primarily benefits Americans.

Make Exporting Democracy a Low Priority

The U.S. public does not view helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations as a high priority. This foreign policy goal is considered “very important” by only 17 percent of Americans, placing it at the bottom of the list of fifteen goals. This goal has long been at or near the bottom of the list, but has been at historically low levels in the last three surveys since the Iraq war began. Further, a majority (57%) believes the United States should not support a country becoming a democracy if there is a high likelihood that the people will elect an Islamic fundamentalist leader.

The Bottom Line: A Change in Course, But Not in Commitment

While Americans support many changes in U.S. foreign policy, they also continue to show support for a robust U.S. presence in the world. Consistent with previous polls, The Chicago Council survey shows that a strong majority of Americans (63%) want the United States to play an active part in world affairs (see Figure 6). Yet perhaps reflecting economic anxieties, increased suspicion of globalization (see Part II), and fatigue with the war in Iraq,



a record 36 percent think the United States should stay out of world affairs, up 8 points since 2006 and the highest percentage recorded since public pollsters began asking this question in 1947.

Support for maintaining superior military power worldwide is holding steady, with 57 percent saying it is a very important foreign policy goal. Only 28 percent of Americans favor cutting defense spending, with 40 percent in favor of keeping it the same and 31 percent favoring an increase. Public support for maintaining military bases around the world remains strong, and in cases such as Iraq and Afghanistan, support has increased notably. As mentioned, a majority of 57 percent (8 points higher than in 2006) believes that the United States should have long-term military bases in Iraq. The same percentage agrees that the United States should have a base in Afghanistan (5 points higher than in 2006).

Americans also support the use of U.S. troops for a variety of international peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. Large majorities (69% and 62%, respectively) favor using U.S. troops to stop a government from committing genocide and killing large numbers of its own people and to be part of an international peacekeeping force to stop the killing in Darfur. A smaller majority of 52 percent supports using troops to keep a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

A Pragmatic New Direction in Foreign Policy

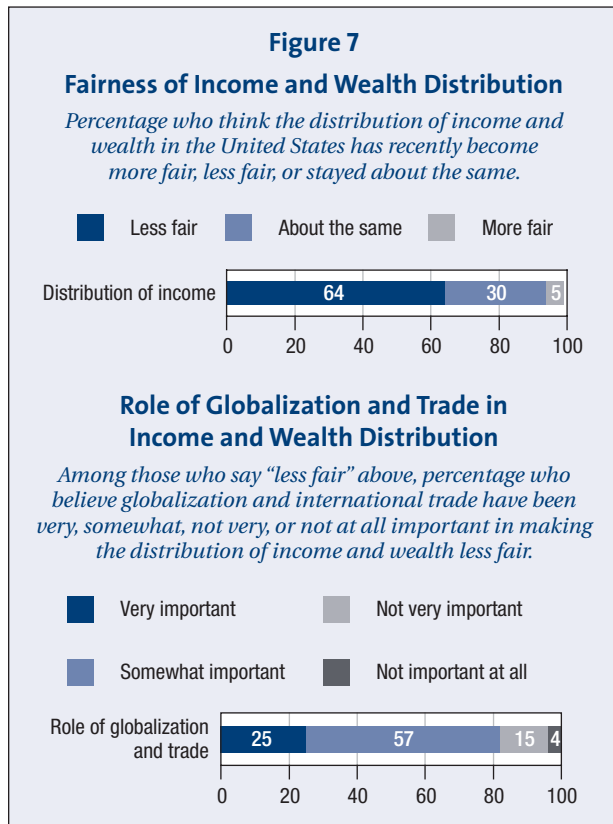
Overall, in terms of general foreign policy, the survey reveals an American public concerned about U.S. standing in the world and supportive of a series of targeted changes in foreign policy to address perceived problems. While the changes appear more pragmatic than ideological, they add up to a strong shift in direction, with an emphasis on using talks and multilateral institutions to tackle problems, even while keeping the military strong.

Part II: Globalization, Immigration, Energy, and Jobs

In addition to America's standing in the world and the struggle against international terrorism, Americans are very concerned about factors contributing to economic well-being such as energy, jobs, and the distribution of income and wealth. These concerns are negatively affecting views of globalization, immigration, NAFTA, and the economic future of the United States.

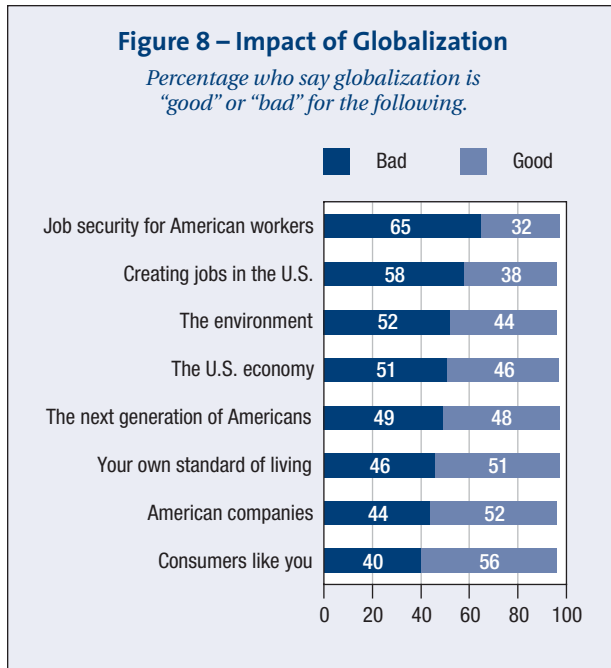
The American public's economic unease is evident in the strong majority (64%) that believes the distribution of income and wealth in the United States has recently become less fair (see Figure 7). Eighty-two percent of those who answered less fair on this question indicate that globalization and international trade are "very important" (25%) or "somewhat important" (57%) in causing the change. And Americans do not see things getting better, with 60 percent believing the next generation of Americans will be economically worse off than today's working adults (30 percent say about the same, and 9 percent say better off).

A striking 82 percent of Americans favor fixing pressing problems at home rather than addressing challenges to the United States from abroad (17%). Americans believe that remaining competitive in the global economy can be best addressed from within—through investing in renewable energy, stabilizing U.S. financial institutions, and improving public education.



Globalization: Good for Consumers and Companies, Bad for Workers

Economic anxieties are having a clear impact on views of globalization. Although a majority of Americans (58%) think that globalization, especially the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is mostly good for



the United States, this is down 6 points from a high of 64 percent in 2004. The number of Americans who believe globalization is mostly bad has been steadily growing, from 31 percent in 2004, to 35 percent in 2006, and 39 percent in July 2008. In a further sign of concern, when asked specifically whether globalization is good or bad for the U.S. economy, 51 percent of Americans say it is bad.

Americans are clearly concerned about globalization’s effect on jobs, with 65 percent saying globalization is bad for the job security of American workers and 58 percent saying it is bad for creating jobs in the United States (see Figure 8). This concern over jobs is reflected in the large majority of Americans (80%) who view protecting the jobs of American workers as a “very important” foreign policy goal (up from 76% in 2006). Nevertheless, majorities still believe globalization is “good” for consumers (56%), for American companies (52%), and for their own standard of living (51%).

Americans are divided over whether globalization is good or bad for the next generation of Americans, with 48 percent believing it is good and 49 percent believing it is bad. On the other hand, while a substantial 40 percent of Americans believe “economic globalization” is occurring too quickly, 57 percent disagree (39 percent say it is happening

at the right pace, and 18 percent say it is happening too slowly). Developments on Wall Street have not altered views on this question, with results from the July and September tracking polls virtually identical (see Appendix A).

Overall, however, Americans are increasingly uneasy about the effects of globalization. And, they are especially concerned about the role of foreign government investors in the economy: 68 percent of the public does not favor allowing foreign government investors to invest in U.S. companies and banks, while only 29 percent favor it.

Energy: A Top Concern

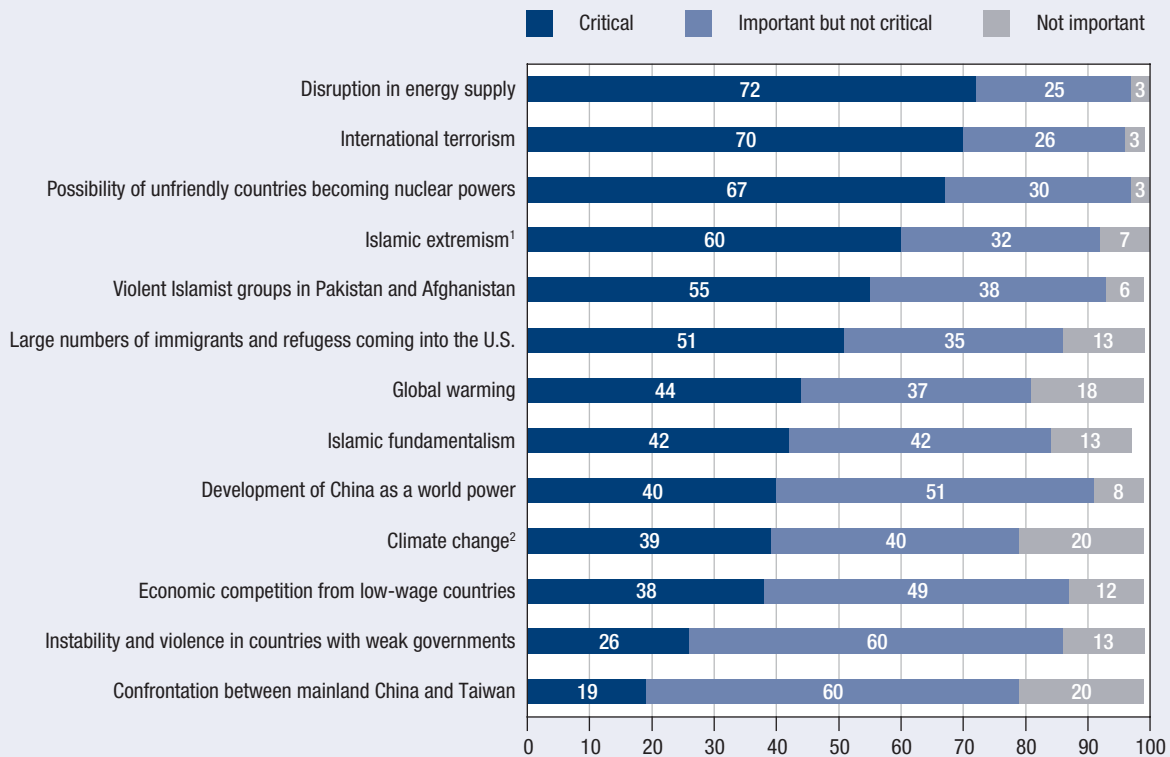
Another clear shift in priorities is the emergence of energy as a top foreign policy issue. The foreign policy goal of securing adequate supplies of energy is at its highest level in these Chicago Council surveys since the oil crises of the 1970s. Eighty percent of Americans see this as a “very important” goal of U.S. foreign policy. This puts it on par with the long-time popular goal of protecting the jobs of American workers (80%). These two goals are now at the top of the list of “very important” foreign policy goals and are significantly higher than the goals of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and combating international terrorism.

In addition, disruption in energy supply is now seen as one of the top critical threats to the vital interests of the United States in the next ten years (see Figure 9). This threat is considered critical by 72 percent of Americans, up 13 points from 2006 and slightly ahead of international terrorism (70%), which has topped this list in every Chicago Council survey over the past decade (since 1998).

In a finding that may underline their concerns about energy, a majority of Americans are willing to rely on the military to help ensure the free flow of oil. Fifty-nine percent of Americans favor the use of U.S. troops to ensure the oil supply, a 14-point increase from 2006. This is a higher percentage than those who favor using U.S. troops to protect American allies like South Korea if attacked by North Korea (41%) and Taiwan if invaded by China (32%).

Figure 9 – Critical Threats to U.S. Vital Interests

Percentage who see each of the following as critical, important but not critical, or not important threats to U.S. vital interests in the next ten years.



¹ "Islamic extremism" is new wording in 2008 tested against the wording "Islamic fundamentalism" used since 1994. This new wording elicited a much stronger response, registering 18 percentage points higher as a critical threat than "Islamic fundamentalism."

² "Climate change" is new wording in 2008 tested against the wording "global warming" used since 1998. This new wording elicited a weaker response, registering 5 points lower as a critical threat than "global warming."

At the same time, Americans are ready to find new answers to the energy problem. Seventy-four percent say investing in renewable energy is very important to the United States remaining competitive with other countries in the global economy. This places first out of ten possible items asked about (see Figure 10).

Immigration: Continued Unease

Immigration is another issue colored by feelings of economic insecurity. There is strong agreement among respondents that immigration at current levels (not specified as legal or illegal) is bad for most aspects of the U.S. economy (see Figure 11). A significant majority of Americans (76%) view immigration as "bad" for job security, and a solid major-

ity (67%) believes it is bad for creating jobs in the United States. Majorities of the public also think that immigration is bad for the U.S. economy (61%), the country as a whole (60%), their community (59%), and their standard of living (57%). Opinion is divided on whether immigration is good for U.S. companies, with 49 percent saying it is good and 48 percent saying it is bad.

American concerns about immigration remain significant even when immigrants are explicitly defined as "legal." When asked whether legal immigration into the United States should be kept at its present level, increased, or decreased, 46 percent of Americans favor decreasing legal immigration, with 39 percent preferring to keep it at present levels and only 15 percent favoring an increase.

Figure 10 – Factors in Remaining Competitive

Percentage who indicate that the following factors are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all important to the United States remaining competitive with other countries in the global economy.

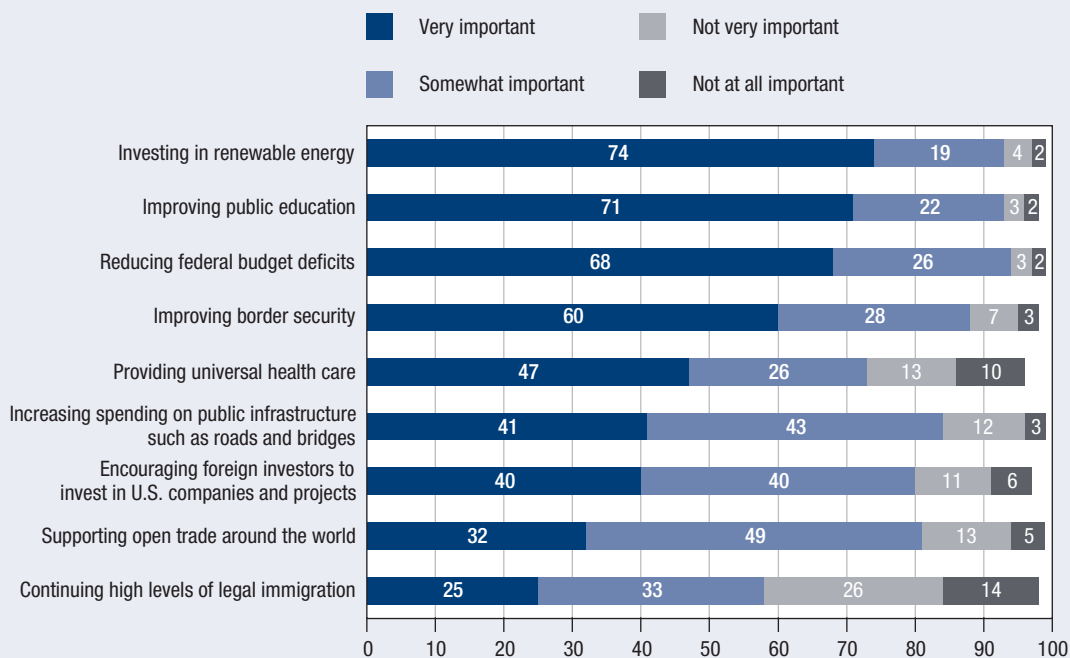
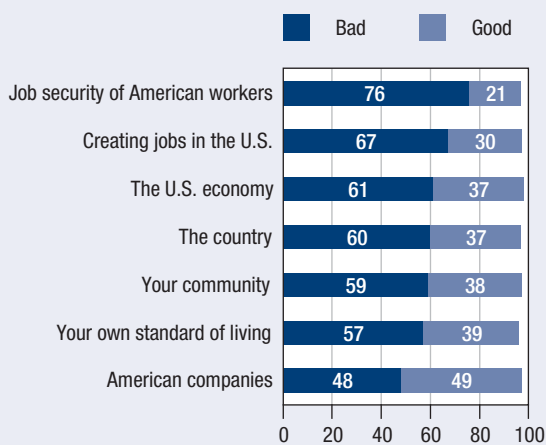


Figure 11 – Impact of Immigration

Percentage who think immigration at current levels is “good” or “bad” for the following.



NAFTA: Bad for the U.S. Economy

Views on North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) are also shifting because of economic worries. An increasing number of Americans believe

that the NAFTA is generally “bad” for the United States. Fifty-five percent of Americans believe that NAFTA is bad for the U.S. economy, up 12 points from 2004 when the question was last asked, and 64 percent say it is bad for the job security of American workers, up 4 points from 2004 (see Figure 12).

Interestingly, the number that says it is good for job security is up 7 points over 2004 from 25 to 32 percent, though still more than half the respondents say it is bad (64%). As in 2004, majorities of Americans still think NAFTA is good for consumers like them (53%) and the Mexican economy (70%). Generally speaking, the percentages thinking NAFTA is good on these questions have remained relatively unchanged since 2004. However, the percentage of respondents having “no opinion” on whether NAFTA is good or bad for the United States has decreased since 2004 and corresponds with an increase in those believing NAFTA is bad. This shift may be a result of increased attention to the North American Free Trade Agreement during the 2008 presidential primaries.

Figure 12 – Impact of NAFTA

Percentage who think NAFTA is “bad” for the following.

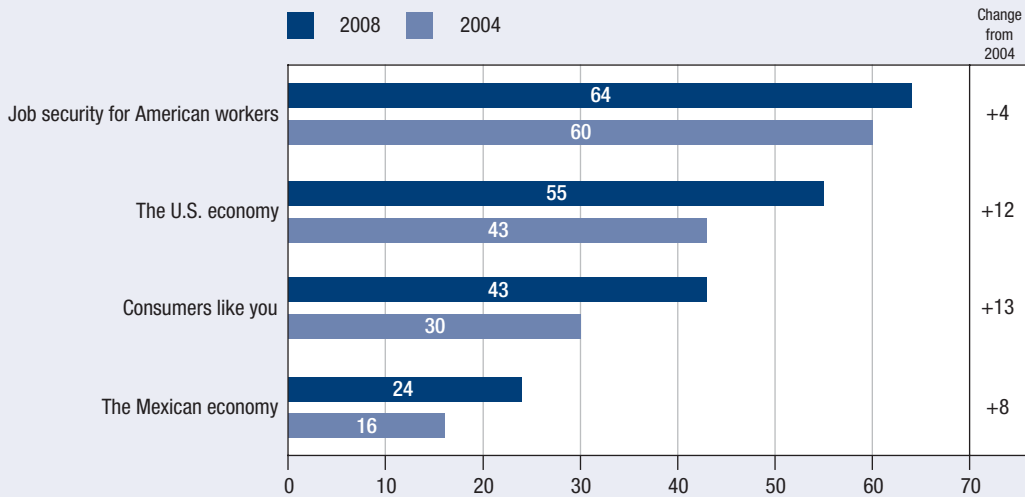
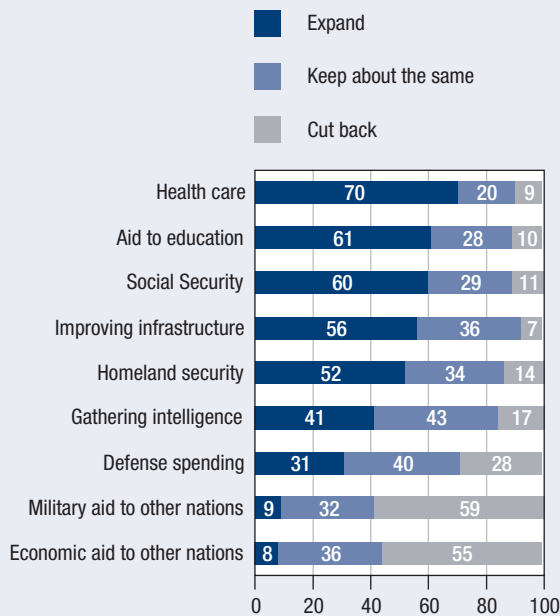


Figure 13 – Government Spending

Percentage who think immigration at current levels is “good” or “bad” for the following.



aid to education, and 60 percent favor expanding Social Security (see Figure 13). Majorities also favor expanded funding for improving public infrastructure such as highways, bridges, and airports (56%) and for Homeland Security (52%). By contrast, Americans believe the United States spends too much on foreign aid. Fifty-nine percent think the federal government should cut back military aid to other nations, with 32 percent saying keep it the same and 9 percent favoring expansion. Fifty-five percent think the government should cut back economic aid to other nations, with 36 percent saying keep it the same and 8 percent favoring expansion. Views are mixed with regard to defense spending. Forty percent say keep it the same, 31 percent say expand it, and 28 percent say cut it back. Regarding spending on intelligence gathering operations, 43 percent say keep it the same, 41 percent say expand it, and 17 percent say cut it back.

Effects of the Financial Crisis

The dramatic events on Wall Street in September 2008 appear to have had only a minor effect on the overall findings of the study, with one exception. Based on a short follow-up poll conducted between September 22 and September 26 to assess whether the financial crisis is affecting attitudes

Federal Government Programs

As in the past, the U.S. public favors spending on domestic government programs over foreign aid programs. Seventy percent favor expanding health care programs, 61 percent favor expanding

on key questions, the one notable change is the sharp decline in the number of Americans who see improving America's standing in the world as a very important foreign policy goal for the United States. This number went down 32 points, from 83 percent in the July poll to 51 percent in the September poll. This suggests that Americans are focusing even further inward, not outward, as the financial crisis unfolds. Otherwise, the September results broadly confirm the overall trends identified in July and outlined here. See Appendix A for the full results of the September follow-up survey.

Conclusions

Americans are experiencing deep anxiety over their economic situation and future. This is not leading to disengagement from the rest of the world, with globalization increasingly becoming a fact of life. It is, however, influencing the way Americans view the country's relations with the rest of the world, with the survey reflecting concerns that closer connections with foreign economies, immigration (both legal and illegal), China's economic rise (see Part III of this report), and competition for energy resources are negatively affecting Americans' economic well-being.

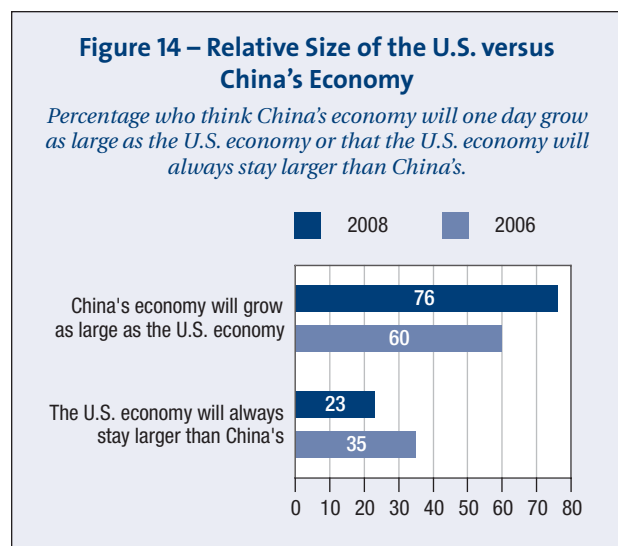
Part III: China's Rise

Americans now clearly perceive China as a rising global power, with profound consequences for the United States. A large minority of Americans (43%) think the development of China as a world power is a critical threat to the vital interests of the United States. But a large majority of Americans (64%) oppose active efforts to limit China's rise, instead favoring friendly cooperation and engagement.

Awareness of the Rise of China

There has been a sharp rise in the number of Americans who think China's economy will someday grow to be as large as the U.S. economy. Three-quarters of Americans (76%) foresee this, up from 60 percent two years ago (see Figure 14). More broadly, two-thirds (65%) now reject the idea that over the next fifty years the United States will continue to be the world's leading power, saying instead that "another nation" (presumably China) will become as powerful or will surpass the United States.

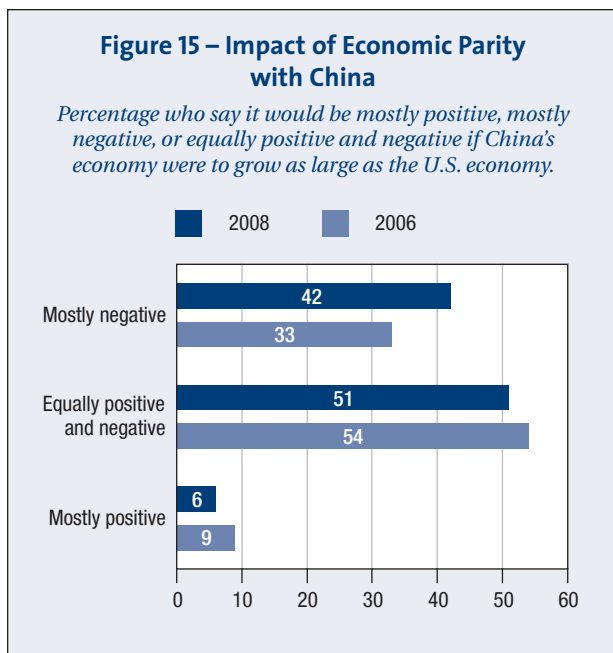
Already Americans see China as the second most influential country in the world after the United States. Ratings of China's influence have now surpassed those of Great Britain and Japan as well as the European Union, Russia, and all other countries the survey inquired about. In terms of importance to the United States, China is considered very important by 52 percent of Americans, with only Canada (53%) and Britain (60%) perceived as very important by more Americans.



Many more Americans are also now aware of the large current account imbalances between the United States and China. Asked whether the United States loans more money to China or whether China loans more money to the United States, a plurality (40%) for the first time correctly responds that China loans more to the United States, with 34 percent believing the opposite is true. Two years ago only one-quarter of Americans (24%) were aware of this fact.

Economic and Geopolitical Concerns

Americans are worried about China's rise, especially about the economic implications. Reactions



to the idea of China's economy growing as large as the U.S. economy tilt toward apprehension, with 42 percent saying this would be mostly negative and only 6 percent saying mostly positive. Fifty-one percent say this development would be equally positive and negative (see Figure 15). A rising proportion of Americans (38%, up from 32% in 2006) see economic competition from low-wage countries as a critical threat.

Trade with China stands at the center of these worries. Fully two-thirds of Americans (67%) now say that China practices unfair trade. This is up significantly (9 percentage points) since 2006. China is the only one of six major trading partners that a majority of Americans now see as an unfair trader. This may partly reflect publicity about unsafe Chinese imports, but the results of past Chicago Council surveys suggest that charges of unfairness are often leveled at any country that is seen as competing vigorously with the United States in world markets.

Geopolitical worries are less intense but still substantial. A rather large minority of Americans (40%) see the development of China as a world power as a critical threat to the vital interests of the United States in the next ten years. This figure has edged up a bit since 2006, but it remains substantially lower than in the 1990s when this number

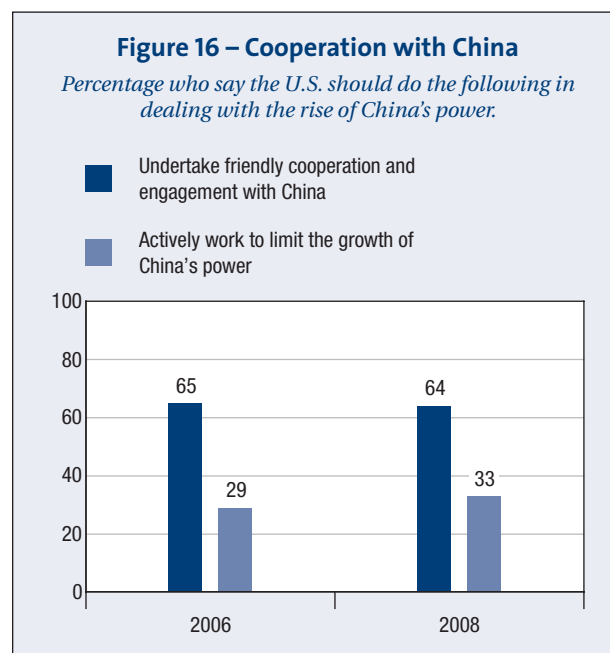
was over 50 percent. It is also lower than the level of many other perceived threats, from terrorism and energy disruptions to global warming.

Measured Policy Responses

Despite these worries, large majorities of Americans reject any drastic policy response. Asked whether the United States should actively work to limit the growth of China's power or whether it should undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China, a nearly two-to-one majority (64% to 33%) chooses cooperation and engagement, nearly unchanged since 2006 (see Figure 16).

Overall feelings toward China are not cold or hostile, but remain fairly cool. On a 0 to 100 scale of feelings, where 50 is neutral, China receives an average of 41, no lower than two years ago.

Few Americans display any interest in military confrontation with China. When asked about a variety of circumstances that might justify using U.S. troops in other parts of the world, only 32 percent favor using U.S. troops if China invaded Taiwan. This is about the same proportion as has favored such troop use over the last decade and the lowest level of support for any of the six scenarios asked about. Only 19 percent of Americans see a confrontation between mainland China and Taiwan



as being a critical threat to the vital interests of the United States.

Yet there is sentiment in favor of balancing Chinese power in Asia, especially through Japan, a highly esteemed country that Americans see as very important to the vital interests of the United States. A majority of Americans (54% to 42%) say that the United States and Japan should work together to limit the rise of Chinese power in the years ahead.

On the economic front, Americans appear wary of giving China any advantages. There is little support (34%) for making greater economic sacrifices than China or India in a new climate change treaty. A small majority (52%) opposes providing technological and financial aid to help China and India limit the growth of greenhouse gas emissions. Forty-eight percent are in favor.

All in all, Americans are somewhat worried about the rise of China. But the worries are chiefly economic, and Americans favor measured policy responses. Most Americans continue to seek a friendly and cooperative relationship with China.

Part IV: The U.S.–Japan Relationship

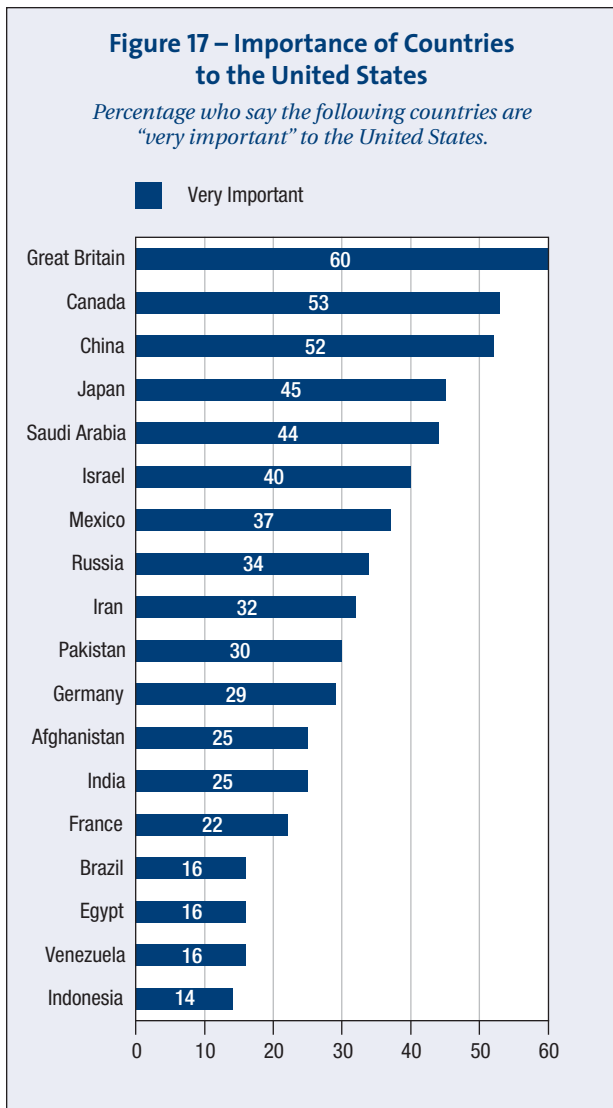
Events in Asia have ranked well behind the economy, energy prices, and the war in Iraq as major issues of concern among Americans. Some observers expected that China might become a significant focus of the U.S. presidential campaign after the Olympics, yet this did not materialize. Japan also did not enter into the foreign policy debate during the election cycle, partly because of the looming financial crisis, but also because there is currently no major controversy between Japan and the United States. There is instead general agreement among both the public and policy elites in the United States that Japan is a very important ally and that the U.S.–Japan relationship is strong.

In spite of this strong momentum behind the U.S.–Japan alliance, many Japanese analysts and commentators have worried that the United States is losing interest in Japan. Japanese anxiety about the American commitment to the alliance grew out of the Bush administration's active (and to many Japanese, unconditional) engagement of North Korea since 2007 as well as Japan's own inability to take decisive action in international affairs because of the impasse in the Diet between the LDP-controlled Lower House and the opposition-controlled Upper Chamber. This new dynamic has evoked memories of "Japan passing," a phrase coined during President Bill Clinton's nine-day visit to China in 1998 on a trip to Asia that did not include a stop in Japan.

Nevertheless, the study shows that the American public continues to see Japan as an influential partner in the international system. Rather than causing "Japan passing," the rise of Chinese power is increasing the importance of the U.S.–Japan alliance in the view of the American public. But while Americans see Japan as influential and important, they also want to see Japan do more to contribute to international security at a time when Japan's domestic politics are leading to a decrease in international operations by the Japan Self Defense Forces.

Japan as a Critical Partner

Forty-five percent of Americans say that Japan is very important to the United States, placing it fourth internationally (see Figure 17) behind Britain (60%), Canada (53%), and China (52%). When asked whether Japan or China is more important to the United States in terms of vital interests, a majority of Americans say China is more important (51%), while 44 percent say Japan is more important. The fact that Americans believe China is more important than Japan when the two countries are placed in direct comparison provides further evidence that Americans recognize the increased importance of China in terms of U.S. interests. However, several important caveats should be noted before concluding that "Japan passing" has returned.



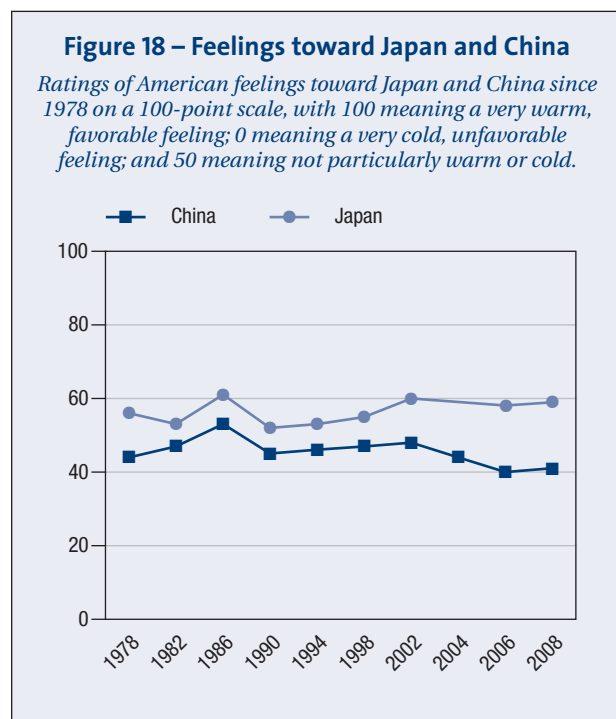
First, Japan’s fourth-place ranking in terms of importance to the United States is still ahead of other close allies like Israel (40%) and Germany (29%) and is also ahead of nations with significant impact in world affairs such as Russia (34%) and Saudi Arabia (44%).

Second, on a thermometer of how Americans feel towards other nations (with 0 meaning a very cold, unfavorable feeling; 100 meaning a very warm, favorable feeling; and 50 being neutral), Japan ranks well ahead of China, with a mean rating of 59 compared to China’s 41 (see Figure 18). Positive feelings toward Japan today are close to the highs of 61 and 60 reached in 1986 and 2002, respectively, and higher than in the early and mid-1990s when Japan was considered a fierce economic

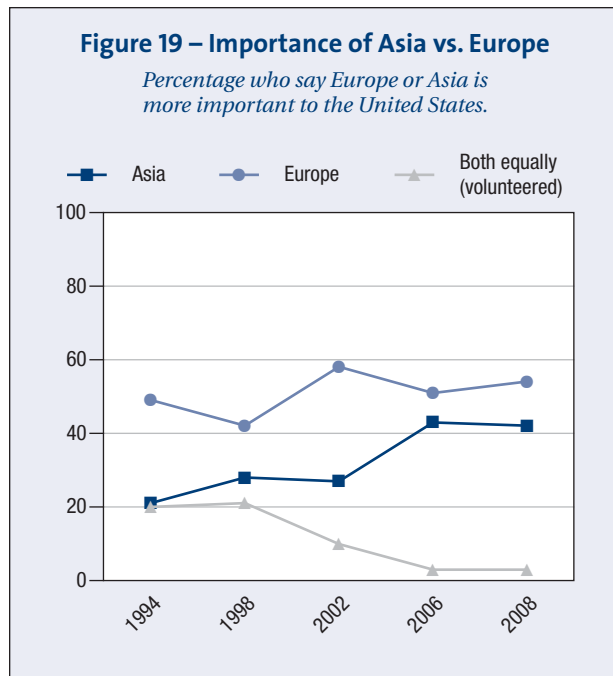
competitor to the United States.⁴ Feelings towards China, although always cooler than those towards Japan, have gone in the opposite direction as the perceived threat from China has increased. These diverging trends in feelings toward China and Japan parallel the changing perception of economic and overall threat faced by the United States from these countries. The survey findings suggest that Japan has benefited from concerns over the rise of China. They also demonstrate that Americans recognize the importance of relations with both countries and the qualitative difference between a traditionally close ally and an increasingly important new power in the international system.

Japan as an Influential Player Despite Declining Relative Economic Power

On a 10-point scale of overall influence in the world (with 0 meaning not at all influential and 10 meaning extremely influential), Japan receives an average of 7.5 (up from 6.4 in 2006), while China receives 7.9 (up from 6.4). Americans certainly think Japan has a great degree of influence in the



4. Surveys from 2002 and prior were conducted by telephone.



world and do not perceive that this influence has decreased in an absolute sense. However, they perceive China as having gained a slight advantage in terms of overall influence. These numbers show an increase for both countries and are consistent with a larger trend since 1994 of increasing numbers of Americans saying Asia is more important to the United States than Europe (from 21% in 1994 to 42% today), even though a narrow majority still sees Europe as more important (54%—see Figure 19). In The Chicago Council’s June 2008 Asia Soft Power study, Japan came out ahead of China and South Korea on an index of American perceptions of cultural, economic, diplomatic, political, and human capital influence in Asia.⁵

Japan’s declining relative economic weight internationally has not led to a decline in the American public’s view of Japan’s overall international influence. Americans view Japanese technological innovation as a key source of its power and influence. Sixty-five percent of Americans list technological innovation as a very important source of Japan’s

5. Citizens in the United States, China, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, and Vietnam were surveyed regarding their perceptions of American, Chinese, Japanese, and South Korean soft power in Asia. See Christopher B. Whitney and David Shambaugh, eds., *Soft Power in Asia: Results of a 2008 Multinational Survey of Public Opinion*, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2009, <http://www.thechicagocouncil.org>.

relative power, compared to 49 percent who say this about Japan’s economic power (see Figure 20). Other factors are viewed as less important to Japan’s influence, including its leadership in Asia (39% very important), its democratic system (36% very important), its economic assistance to other countries (31% very important), and its military strength (17% very important). While very few Americans see Japan’s military power as “very important” to Japan’s influence, Americans are supportive of a stronger Japanese military and an increased Japanese role in managing international conflict.

Importance of U.S.–Japan Alliance in Light of Chinese Power

Americans seem to understand the complex mix of cooperation and competition in U.S.–China relations as well as the strategic importance of Japan in that regard. While 64 percent of Americans prefer to undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China rather than actively attempt to limit the growth of Chinese power (33% favor this), a majority (54%) believes that the United States and Japan should work together to limit the rise of Chinese power in the years ahead. This gap suggests that Americans see the importance of hedging against Chinese power and the centrality of the U.S.–Japan alliance to that strategy. Yet in a show of ambivalence, 54 percent of Americans prefer to make no change in the alliance with Japan rather than seek to strengthen it to offset China’s power (32%). In any case, only 9 percent would downplay the alliance with Japan so as to improve U.S. relations with China.

Americans do appear ready, however, to see Japan increase its military capabilities to balance China’s rising power. A significant majority (66%) agrees that because of China’s growing military power and the threat from North Korea, Japan needs to be freer to project its own military power, even though a plurality of 49 percent also agrees that a Japanese military buildup would probably lead to an arms race with China and be destabilizing for Asia.

In view of these and other arguments for and against a change in Japan’s Constitution that would

Figure 20 – Factors in Japan’s Influence

Percentage who say each of the following is very, somewhat, not very, or not at all important to Japan’s influence in the world today.

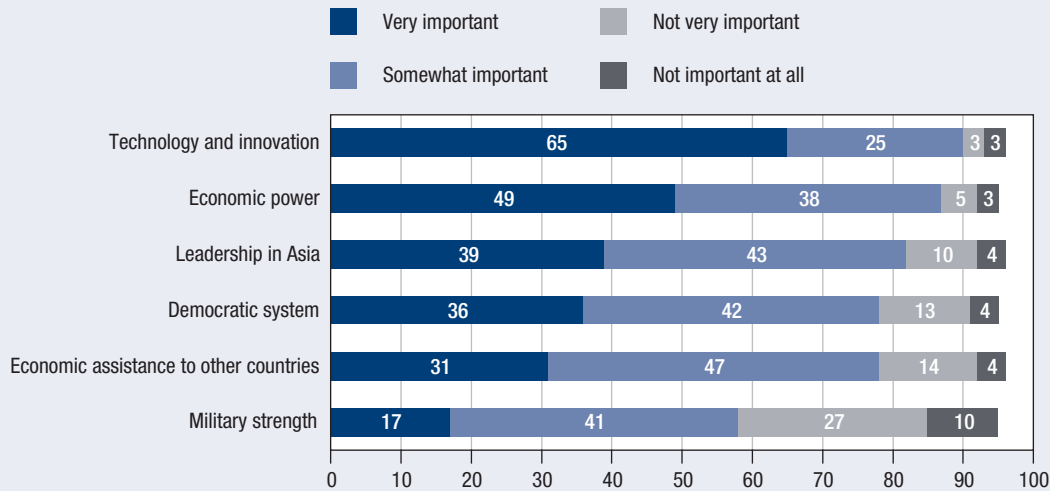
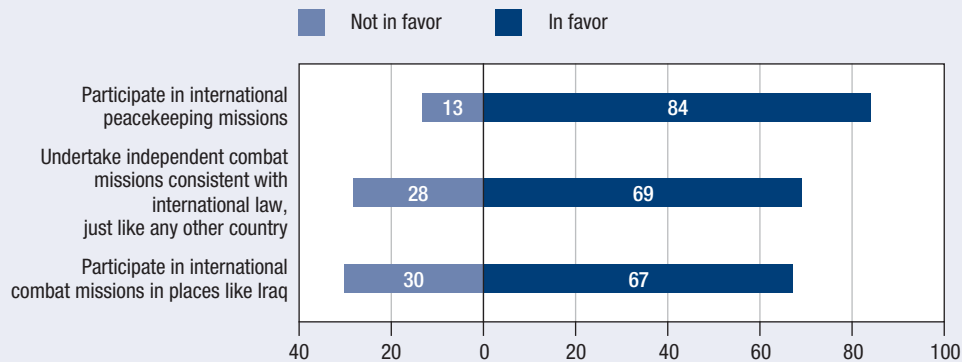


Figure 21 – Support for an Expanded Military Role by Japan

Percentage who would favor or oppose Japan being able to do the following military activities under a changed Japanese Constitution.



allow Japan to engage in a wider range of military activities—including the idea that if Japan were able to engage in a wider range of military activities it could more effectively help the United States in dealing with areas of instability or potential conflict around the world—57 percent of Americans favor the constitutional change. When asked about Japan’s participation in specific military activities that could be allowed under a changed Constitution, support is even higher. Eighty-four percent favor Japan’s participation in international peacekeeping operations. Sixty-seven percent favor its participation in international combat missions in places like Iraq, and 69 percent even favor its undertak-

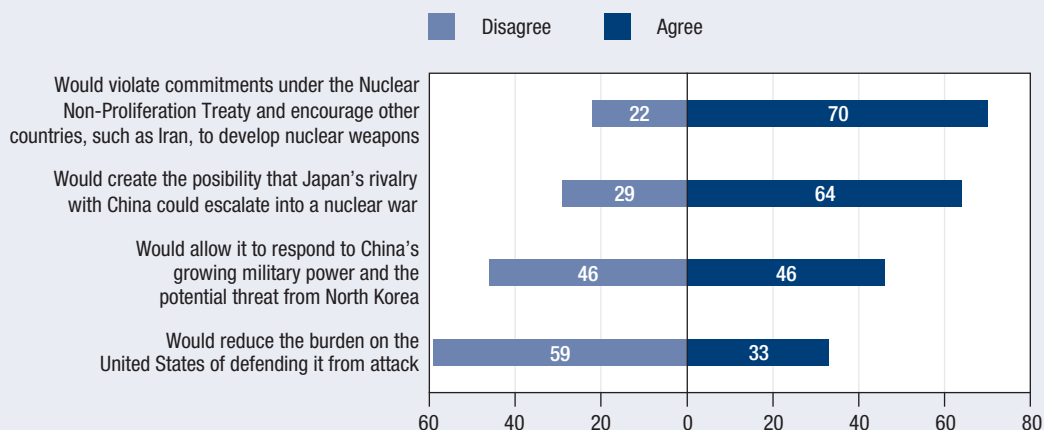
ing independent combat missions consistent with international law, just like any other country (see Figure 21).

The strong support among Americans (57%) for a change in Article Nine of Japan’s Constitution to allow Japanese forces to engage in the military activities is higher than support for such a change among the Japanese public.⁶ And, the American view that Japan should do more in combat opera-

6. The Mansfield Asian Opinion Poll Database, “Yomiuri Shimbun March 2008 Opinion Polls,” The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation, March 2008, <http://www.mansfielddn.org/polls/poll-08-06.htm>; “66% Opposed to Revising Article 9, 23% in Favor,” *Asahi Shimbun*, May 2, 2008 (in Japanese), <http://www.asahi.com/special/08003/TKY200805020272.html>.

Figure 22 – Arguments for and against Japan Building Nuclear Weapons

Percentage who agree or disagree with the following arguments for and against the idea of changing Japan's Constitution to allow Japan to build nuclear weapons.



tions far surpasses the Japanese public's views. The discrepancy in views between Americans and Japanese on Japan's military role could lead to a significant "expectations gap" about what military burdens Japan should share with the United States.

One area where American and Japanese public views on security are almost identical is opposition to Japanese possession of nuclear weapons. Eighty-three percent of Americans are opposed, a number identical with the most recent polling on the question in Japan. Americans foresee mostly negative consequences of Japan's possible development of nuclear weapons for the region and the world. Majorities of Americans agree that Japan's pursuit of nuclear weapons would violate commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and encourage other countries such as Iran to develop nuclear weapons (70%) and would create the possibility that Japan's rivalry with China could escalate into a nuclear war (64%—see Figure 22). A majority also disagrees that Japan's development of nuclear weapons would reduce the burden on the United States of defending it from attack (59%). Americans are evenly divided on whether nuclear weapons in Japan would allow it to respond to the rise of China and the threat from North Korea (46% agree, 46% disagree).

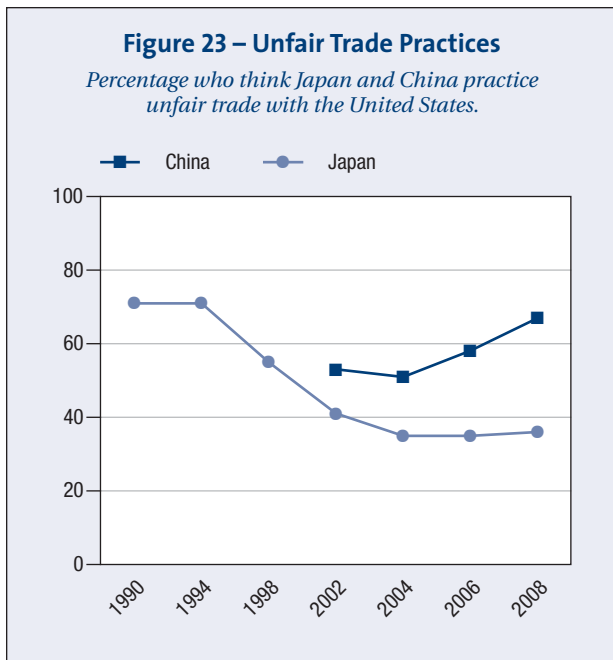
American desire for Japan to increase its military role—short of nuclear weapons—is accompanied by the desire for the United States to reduce

its troop commitment in Japan. While 58 percent of Americans think the United States should have long-term bases in Japan—numbers comparable to support for U.S. bases in Korea, Germany, and Iraq—55 percent agree that there are too many U.S. troops in Japan (39% say the number is about right). These numbers are similar to Japanese opinions on the same question and suggest support for relocation of U.S. Marines to Guam and other efforts to relieve the U.S. military footprint in Japan, while keeping a strong presence overall.

Expanded Economic Cooperation with Japan

This Chicago Council study demonstrates that there is support for expanding economic relations between the United States and Japan. With 57 percent of Americans believing that Japan engages in fair trade with the United States, 59 percent support a free trade agreement between the two countries, higher than U.S. public support for trade agreements with China and South Korea.⁷ Set against the overall lukewarm public attitudes toward free trade—34 percent oppose agreements to lower trade barriers, and 49 percent favor such agreements only if there are government programs to help workers who lose

7. See The Chicago Council on Global Affairs *Soft Power in Asia* report.



their jobs—Japan is a noteworthy exception. This is all the more surprising given the negative views about trade with Japan that appeared in Chicago Council surveys in the 1990s. In 1990 and 1994, 71 percent of respondents thought Japan practiced unfair trade. This has gone down over the years to 36 percent in 2008 (see Figure 23).

A Positive Agenda for U.S.–Japan Relations

The greatest challenge to U.S.–Japan relations that emerges from this poll is the “expectations gap” between the American and Japanese publics on Japan’s military role. Finding a mutually acceptable role for the Japan Self Defense Forces in the coming years will be tricky. Americans expect more, yet Japanese are becoming more reluctant to send forces abroad again. Narrowing the expectations gap and finding the right missions in places like Afghanistan will be a critical alliance management issue for the new U.S. administration.

The greatest opportunity for U.S.–Japan relations that emerges from the poll is in the area of bilateral economic cooperation. The U.S. and Japanese economies are the first and second largest in the world today. Common approaches on trade liberalization, regulatory issues, and stan-

dards would have a significant impact on China, the European Union, and other players attempting to take the lead in setting new rules and standards in the global economy. U.S.–Japan economic integration would also help both nations take the lead in creating an open and inclusive trans-Pacific economic architecture in Asia.

Another potential area for increased cooperation between the United States and Japan is in strengthening democratic institutions, the rule of law, and governance in Asia. While only 36 percent of American respondents listed Japan’s democracy as a very important source of its national power, Japan can certainly strengthen its influence by taking a more active role in this area. It would be particularly helpful to U.S. policy if democracy promotion were not being driven in Asia by “Western” powers alone. And given the steady progress in democratic governance in Asia over the recent years, Japan is well positioned to help build on that momentum.

Finally, the American public’s readiness for Japan to play a larger security role—in the context of the rise of China and a recognition that there is the possibility of an arms race—suggests that the United States and Japan should find strategies to work together to engage China. Despite the skepticism and pessimism among Japanese about their country’s relations with China,⁸ the United States and Japan share common interests based on a similar mix of military, diplomatic, and economic relations with China. Coordinated strategies could increase the opportunities to enjoy mutual economic benefits and to address critical challenges such as North Korea. Integrating various policies into a single national strategy is difficult enough for one government. It will prove even tougher for the U.S.–Japan alliance unless an effective mechanism for strategic dialogue and the coordination of China policy is established. Given the American public’s nuanced appreciation of the complexity of relations with China and high level of trust and expectations vis-à-vis Japan, the new Obama administration can expect support for a joint U.S.–Japan effort to coordinate strategies toward China.

8. Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister of Japan, *Gaiko ni Kansuru Yoron Chousa* (Public Survey on Diplomacy), December 3, 2007, <http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/index.html>.

Methodology

This report and Appendix A are based on the results of two separate surveys commissioned by The Chicago Council on Global Affairs. The main survey results are from The Chicago Council's 2008 *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 July 3 and July 15, 2008. In light of the U.S. financial crisis in September 2008, the Council also commissioned a smaller survey between September 22 and September 26, 2008, to gauge whether any substantial changes in attitudes occurred due to the financial crisis.

The surveys were conducted by Knowledge Networks (KN), a polling, social science, and market research firm in Menlo Park, California. The July survey has a total sample of 1,505 American adults. Some questions were given to the entire sample and others were given to a random two-thirds. The margin of sampling error for the July survey is between plus or minus 2.5 percentage points and plus or minus 3.7 percentage points. The September survey had a total sample size of 1,027 American adults. The questionnaire was given to the entire sample. The margin of sampling error for the September survey is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Both surveys were fielded using randomly selected samples of KN's large-scale, nationwide research panel. This panel is itself randomly selected from the national population of house-

holds with telephones. These households are subsequently provided Internet access for the completion of surveys (and 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.

Once the study data are returned from the field, the final qualified respondent data are subjected to an additional poststratification process to adjust for any nonresponse and noncoverage as a result of the study-specific sample design. The primary purpose of this poststratification adjustment is to reduce the sampling variance for any characteristics highly correlated with the representative study population's demographic and geographic totals

(these are referred to as the population benchmarks). This adjustment also helps reduce bias due to survey nonresponse.

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 necessary), which uses a telephone line to connect to the Internet and uses the television as a monitor. For more information concerning the methodology of the U.S. sample, please visit the KN Web site at www.knowledgenetworks.com.

Appendix A

Results of a September Poll Undertaken in Response to the Financial Crisis

Threats

Although there was a 6 to 10 percentage-point drop in the numbers, significant majorities continue to think that international terrorism (64%), disruption in energy supply (62%), and the possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers (60%) are critical threats to the vital interests of the United States.

A similarly high majority of Americans (58%) think instability in the global economy (a new item in the follow-up) is a critical threat.

There was no change in the perceived threat of economic competition from low-wage countries, which remains much lower than other foreign policy concerns (38% critical).

Goals

There was only a slight drop in the perceived importance of the five foreign policy goals that were polled again, with one notable exception.

There was a large 32-point drop in the percentage of Americans who think improving America's standing in the world is a very important foreign policy goal (from 83% to 51%).

Otherwise, percentages remained similar. Americans still think protecting the jobs of American workers (78%), securing adequate supplies of energy (77%), preventing the spread of nuclear weapons (66%), and combating international terrorism (65%) are very important foreign policy goals.

American Competitiveness

The view that solutions to American competitiveness and the economic crisis lie at home, not abroad, remained essentially unchanged.

Majorities believe investing in renewable energy (71%), stabilizing U.S. financial institutions (67%), improving public education (65%), and reducing federal budget deficits (65%) are very important to the United States remaining competitive.

Only minorities believe encouraging foreign investors to invest in U.S. companies and projects (32%), supporting open trade around the world (24%), and continuing high levels of legal immigration (21%) are very important to the United States remaining competitive in the global economy.

Globalization

A majority of Americans (56%) still think that globalization is mostly good for the United States, only a 2-point drop from July to September.

Exactly the same percentage in the July and September surveys (40%) think that economic globalization is happening too quickly. A similar percentage of Americans (37%) think it is happening at the right pace, down 2 points from July to September.

The Economy

There was essentially no change in views on the U.S. economic future: 62 percent think their children will be economically worse off, 2 points higher than in July.

The same number of Americans in July and September (68%) are opposed to foreign government-owned funds investing in American companies.

On a new question about the effects of the financial crisis, 48 percent believe the financial crisis will worsen America's standing in the world, 35 percent believe it will have no effect, and only 15 percent believe it will improve America's standing.

Appendix B

Foreign Policy Goals

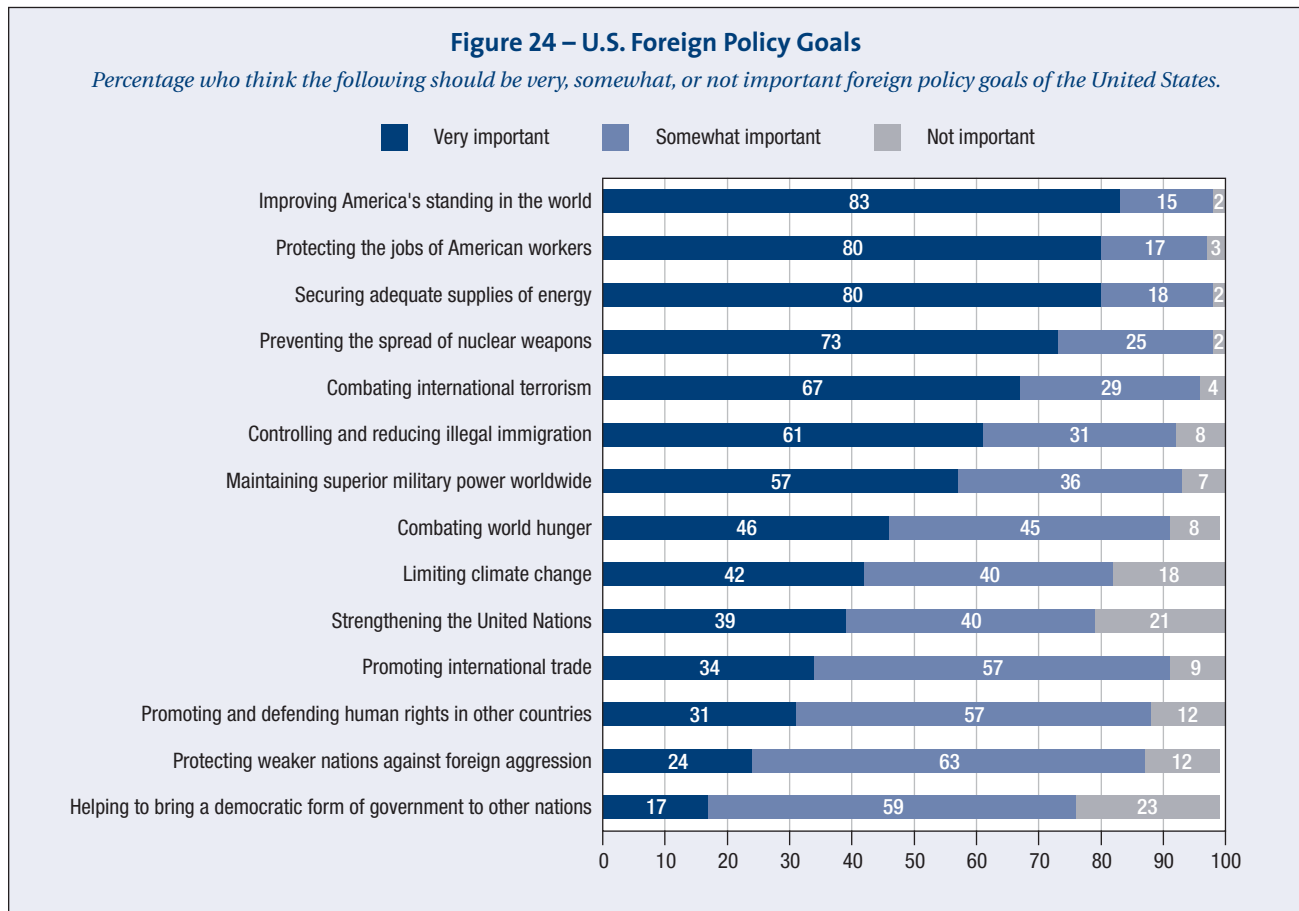
Respondents were asked to individually rate fourteen different foreign policy goals in terms of importance (very important, somewhat important, or not important). While respondents were not asked to directly compare and rank the goals against each other, the percentages rating each goal as very important give one an idea of the relative importance of the various goals (see Figure 24).

One of the most striking findings of the survey (before the financial crisis) is the 83 percent of Americans who rated improving America's standing in the world as a very important foreign policy goal, the highest percentage for any of the fourteen goals. Although concern with American standing dropped in the September survey in the midst

of the financial crisis (to 51% very important), a majority of Americans believe that a new administration should focus on improving America's image in the world.

The next tier of important foreign policy goals includes many of the same priorities that are traditionally at the top of the list. Eighty percent believe that protecting the jobs of American workers and securing adequate supplies of energy are very important foreign policy goals. Supporting U.S. jobs is usually a top priority for the public, and high energy prices at the time of the survey clearly has energy worries on the minds of Americans.

Significant percentages also think preventing the spread of nuclear weapons (73%) and



combating international terrorism (67%) are very important goals. These goals are not considered as important as they were in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, but they remain important concerns for the American public.

Large percentages of Americans think that controlling and reducing illegal immigration (61%) and maintaining superior military power worldwide (57%) are important foreign policy goals.

As in the past, all of the more “altruistic” foreign policy goals rank in the bottom half in terms of importance to the American public. Smaller percentages of Americans consider combating world hunger (46%), limiting climate change (42%), strengthening the United Nations (39%), promoting international trade (34%), promoting and defending human rights in other countries (31%), protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression (24%), and helping to bring a democratic form of government to other nations (17%) as very important goals.

Appendix C

Perceived Threats to the United States

As demonstrated in responses to foreign policy goals, energy was a top concern for the public at the time of the survey. As Figure 25 shows, disruption in energy supply is considered a critical threat by 72 percent of respondents, the highest percentage out of the twelve possible threats included in the survey.

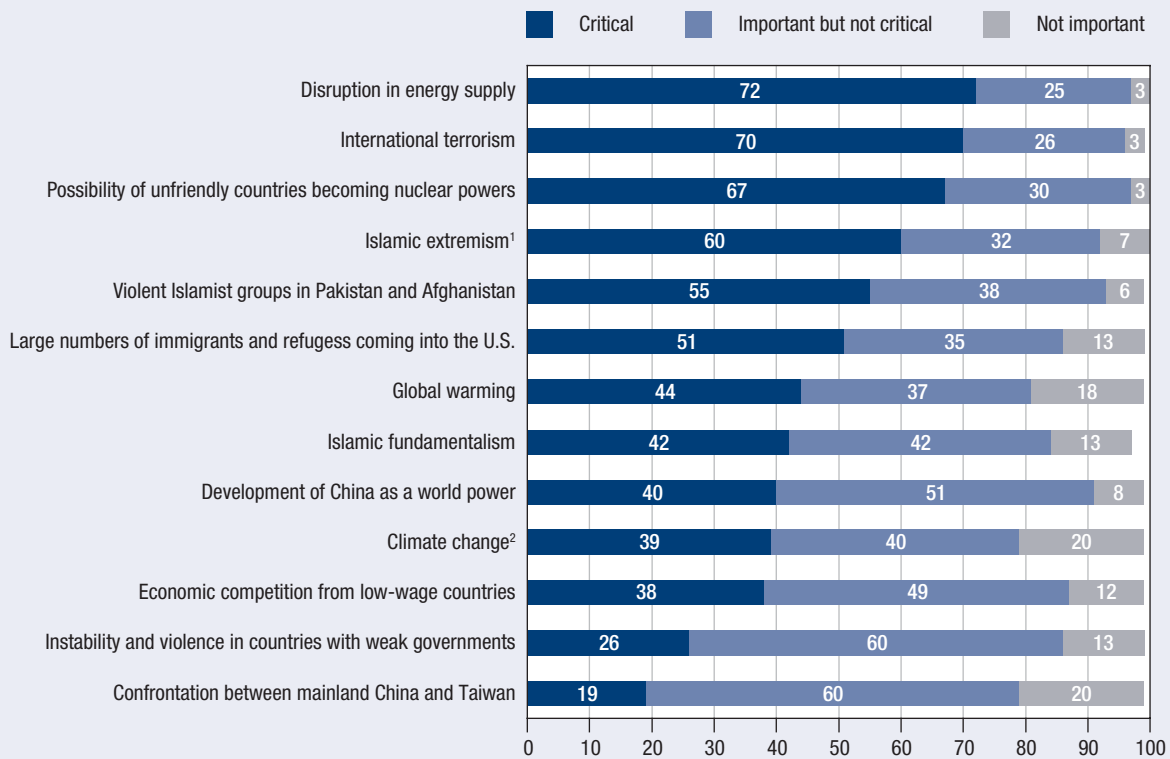
Again, as with the goals, terrorism and nuclear weapons are near the top of the list of critical threats. Seventy percent of Americans consider international terrorism a critical threat to the vital

interests of the United States, and 67 percent consider the possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers a critical threat. These findings clearly indicate that terrorism and nuclear weapons are still major concerns for the public years after 9/11.

Two wording experiments on the subjects of Islam and the environment were conducted to test the difference in responses to perceived threats. A greater percentage of the public perceives “Islamic extremism” as a critical threat in

Figure 25 – Critical Threats to U.S. Vital Interests

Percentage who see each of the following as critical, important but not critical, or not important threats to U.S. vital interests in the next ten years.



¹ “Islamic extremism” is new wording in 2008 tested against the wording “Islamic fundamentalism” used since 1994. This new wording elicited a much stronger response, registering 18 percentage points higher as a critical threat than “Islamic fundamentalism.”

² “Climate change” is new wording in 2008 tested against the wording “global warming” used since 1998. This new wording elicited a weaker response, registering 5 points lower as a critical threat than “global warming.”

comparison to “Islamic fundamentalism” (60% and 42%, respectively). Notably, a significant percentage also believes that violent Islamist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan are a critical threat (55%) to the United States. Islamic extremism and violent Islamic groups both rank in the top half of foreign policy threats.

In terms of the environment, a greater percentage of respondents believe “global warming” is a critical threat than “climate change” (44% and 39%, respectively), although the difference in this case was not great.

A significant proportion of the public is concerned about large numbers of immigrants and refugees coming into the United States (55% critical), but fewer are concerned with the development of China as a world power (40% critical) and economic competition from low-wage countries (38%). The significant economic anxieties that come through in the rest of the survey in terms of immigration, globalization, NAFTA, and China do not seem to be reflected in the relative perception of danger to the vital interests of the United States when compared to terrorism, nuclear weapons, and energy. Only 26 percent think that violence and instability in countries with very weak governments is a critical threat, which ranks last among all of the possible threats.