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 **PUBLIC AGENDA**

Confidence in U.S. Foreign Policy Index

Loss of Faith: Public's Belief
in Effective Solutions Eroding

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**FOREIGN
AFFAIRS**



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Introduction: What *will* work?

Since Public Agenda began the Confidence in U.S. Foreign Policy Index two years ago, public attitudes have grown darker and more anxious in almost every area we've examined. Perhaps that is not surprising in wartime. Yet we are reaching a point where the public seems to be questioning not just whether the current policies are working, but whether the United States can have an effective foreign policy at all. The public shows an increasing loss of faith in many policy options, while public approval in almost every policy area has declined.

If the public's concerns on foreign affairs have a place at the policy-making table—and we believe they do—then the fact that none of the trends have been positive should be a matter of grave concern. For example:

- The public shows a growing loss of confidence in many foreign policy strategies, including options that the public has always considered among the most promising, such as controlling immigration and improved intelligence gathering.
- Public anxiety about foreign policy remains at a high level. Our Anxiety Indicator stands at 136, down one point from six months ago and still uncomfortably close to the 150 mark we would consider a collapse of confidence in the government's foreign policy.
- Roughly half the public doubts the government is telling them the truth about our actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, while 57 percent doubt the government is telling the truth about relations with other countries in general.
- There is declining satisfaction with how the government is performing in foreign policy in areas that the public has long considered America's strongest points, such as disaster relief and maintaining a strong military

Iraq, of course, is the central foreign policy question for the public. Given the ferocious debate of the past six months—the much anticipated Petraeus report, Democrats' repeated attempts to set a withdrawal deadline or cut off funds and President Bush's announcement of a troop drawdown next year—it's remarkable how little public attitudes on the war have changed.

There does seem to be a modest “Petraeus effect,” with a small decline in those who give the United States failing grades for its efforts in Iraq. But when it comes to fundamental attitudes about the war, it is as if the last six months of debate never happened. More than two-thirds of the public believe we should withdraw within a year. Nearly 6 in 10 believe America's safety from terrorism does not depend on our success in Iraq. Half do not believe the United States can do much to control the violence or create a stable democracy. But 6 in 10 also believe we have a moral obligation to the Iraqi people. All of these results are essentially unchanged since the spring.

The pessimism about Iraq, combined with persistently high anxiety, sour grades and flagging confidence in solutions, is troubling because it suggests that the public hasn't heard anything to make them think America's global position is likely to improve—either from Congress, the White House or the presidential candidates. If anyone has presented a credible way out from the troubles facing the nation, the public has not yet acknowledged it.

This is the fifth edition of the Confidence in U.S. Foreign Policy Index, conducted every six months in association with “Foreign Affairs,” America's most influential publication on international relations. The index uses more than 110 questions to find out what worries the public about America's place in the world, to grade the government on its efforts and to determine what they believe the nation's priorities should be.

In addition, the Foreign Policy Anxiety Indicator is designed to measure the public's overall level of concern with or confidence in international affairs in much the same way the Consumer Confidence Index measures their view of the economy. (See the indicator on page 14 and the methodology section for more detail on how we calculate the indicator.)

The indicator is a useful tool for policy makers because the public approaches foreign policy very differently from domestic issues. Most people admit they don't have a deep understanding of international affairs and are usually willing to leave it to

the experts—unless they believe things are seriously off course. The indicator is designed to provide a guide to when the public believes foreign affairs demand their attention. The one-point decline in the indicator leaves it essentially unchanged from six months ago, with public concern at a high level.

Events in the news are a powerful force on public attitudes. Our survey was in the field the week following the Petraeus report and President Bush's address to the nation on Iraq. In addition, Iranian president Mahmud Ahmadinejad made a highly publicized (and criticized) visit to New York while the survey was under way.

Summary of findings

Over the last two years, the public shows a growing loss of faith in the United States' ability to have an effective foreign policy. Confidence in many strategies is falling, and public approval in almost every policy area has declined. 6

- There are significant declines in public confidence that a wide range of strategies would enhance U.S. security “a great deal,” including supporting women’s rights in Muslim countries (down 14 percent), showing more respect for the views of other countries (down 11 percent), improved effectiveness of intelligence operations (down 9 percent), and tighter controls on immigration (down 6 percent).
- There are also significant declines since 2005 in the public’s perception of how well the government is carrying out foreign policy in many areas.

Despite the past six months of ferocious debate over Iraq—or perhaps because that debate produced no shift in policy—public attitudes remain pessimistic about the war. 9

- The effect of the Petraeus report on public attitudes seems limited to how intensely the public disapproves of the conduct of the war. The number who give the United States grades of C or worse for “meeting our objectives in Iraq” is essentially unchanged, but the number who give clearly failing D or F grades declined six points. Those giving an A or B grade rose 4 points.
- There is hardly any change for our other Iraq indicators, with roughly two thirds favoring at least a gradual withdrawal and roughly half saying there’s not much the United States can do to create a democratic Iraq or to control the violence there.

While strong majorities continue to favor nonmilitary solutions, there is some evidence of a small shift away from diplomacy, particularly on Iran. 10

- Two thirds say the government should put more emphasis on diplomatic and economic efforts rather than force.
- Eight in 10 continue to reject the use of force against Iran, but, there is a slight shift towards a more aggressive stance, with those favoring “diplomacy to establish better relations” falling nine points to 35 percent. Those who favored threatening or using force rose six points, to 19 percent.

The public has become even more frustrated with the government's efforts on immigration and may be moving closer to a “tipping point”. 11

- More than 8 in 10 (83 percent) give the government grades of C or worse on controlling immigration, an increase of nine points since 2005.
- The number who give an outright F jumped eight points in six months, to 37 percent.
- This also ranks high as a public concern, with 45 percent saying they worry “a lot” that it’s too easy for illegal immigrants to enter the country.
- Substantial numbers (46 percent) believe the government can do “a lot” to slow illegal immigration, and very few say the government can do nothing at all about it.

Summary of findings (continued)

- The public continues to be sharply divided on ideological lines in foreign policy, but there has been a decline in Republican confidence for fostering democracy 12**
 - Democrats and Republicans continue to differ greatly on issues of foreign policy—nearly half of Republicans (49%) say U.S. foreign policy is heading in the right direction, compared with only 14 percent of Democrats. Also, 45 percent of Republicans give A or B grades for meeting our objectives in Iraq, compared with only 15 percent of Democrats.
 - Since 2005, there has been a 24-point drop in the number of Republicans who believe the United States can help other countries become democracies.

- Women are more worried about America’s position in the world and more fatalistic, while men are more critical about U.S. policy 13**
 - Women are more likely to be worried about security--53 percent of women say they worry “a lot” about a terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction, compared with 44 percent of men.
 - They’re also less likely to believe the government can do “a lot” about the problems facing the country. For example, only 42 percent of women say the government can do “a lot” to make the United States less dependent on foreign energy, compared with 58 percent of men.
 - Men are more likely to believe that criticisms of U.S. policy are at least partly justified, such as the United States has allied with governments that exploit their own people (73% of men agree compared to 61% of women agree); that the United States resorts to torture in the war on terrorism (65% of men/47% of women agree); and disregards the interests of other countries (70% of men/58% of women agree).

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Over the last two years, the public shows a growing loss of faith in the United States' ability to have an effective foreign policy. Confidence in many strategies is falling, and public approval in almost every policy area has declined

The public not only doubts that U.S. foreign policy is working, but they're increasingly skeptical about whether anything can turn the situation around.

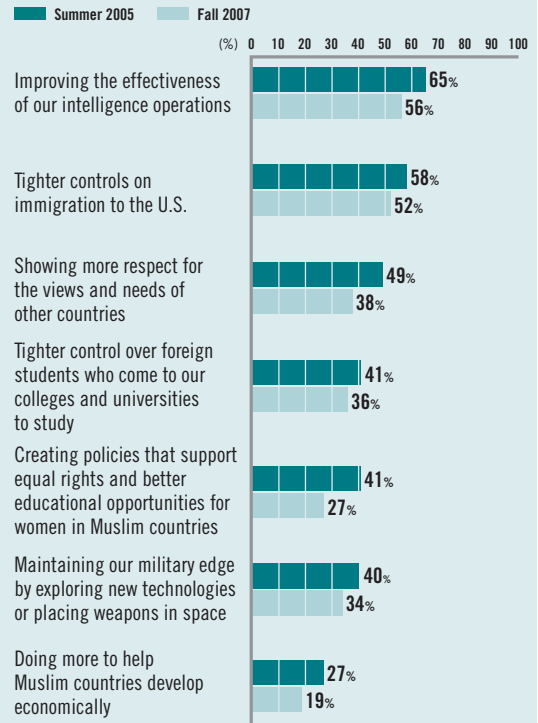
This decline in confidence seems to occur whether the proposed strategy is "hawkish" or "dovish," whether it involves "hard power" or "soft power" or whether or not the public put much stock in it in the first place. In some cases, confidence has declined slowly over two years, while in others it has dropped sharply in the past six months.

For example, since 2005 there have been declines in those who think any of these strategies would do "a great deal" to strengthen U.S. security:

- Supporting women's rights in Muslim countries, down 14 points
- Showing more respect for the views and needs of other countries, down 11 points
- Improved effectiveness of intelligence operations, down 9 points
- Helping Muslim countries develop economically, down 8 points
- Tighter controls on immigration, down 6 points
- Maintaining our military edge by exploring new technologies or placing weapons in space, down 6 points
- Tighter control over foreign students in the United States, down 5 points

Decline in confidence for these strategies

Percent who say that the following proposals would strengthen our nation's security a great deal:



Question wording may be slightly edited for space and clarity. Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding or the omission of some answer categories.

Since we began the Foreign Policy Index, the public has favored a small cluster of strategies to make the United States more secure—primarily better intelligence gathering, controlling illegal immigration and energy independence. These top three strategies still have considerable backing from the public, with a little more than half persuaded they would do “a great deal” to enhance national security. But they have not been immune from the overall decline in confidence.

This trend is particularly worrisome combined with two other factors. One is that the public has a steadily more negative view of how well the government is conducting foreign policy. Although the public has been highly critical of government policy in many areas, there’s been a significant decline in ratings for areas that were previously seen as America’s “strong suits.”

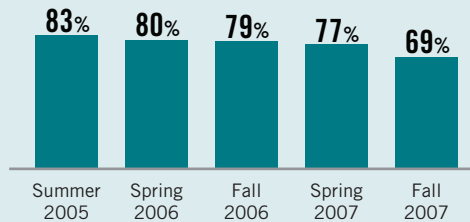
For example, there’s been a 16-point drop since 2005 in those who give the United States an “A” grade for helping out during natural disasters (although the 2005 survey probably reflected positive feelings about the successful Indonesian tsunami relief effort). There have also been declines in A and B grades for hunting down anti-American terrorists (down 13 points), doing our best to bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians (down 12), giving the war on terror the attention it deserves (down 10) and having a strong military (down 9 points).

In many of these areas, half or more of the public still give high grades (69 percent still give A’s and B’s for disaster relief and 58 percent for having a strong military, for example). But the decline in satisfaction is significant and troubling.

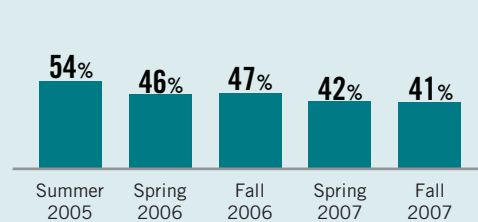
Decline in favorable grades over two years

What grade would you give the U.S. when it comes to achieving the following goals? Percent who say A or B:

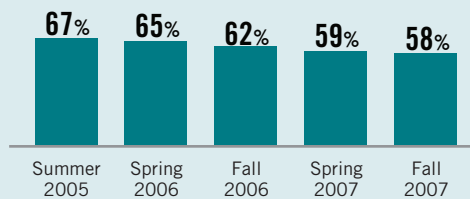
Helping other countries when they are struck by natural disasters



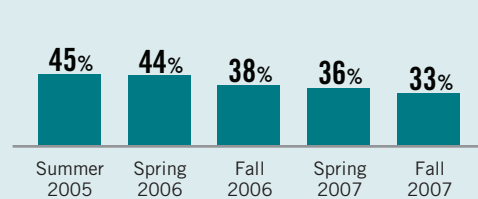
Hunting down anti-American terrorists



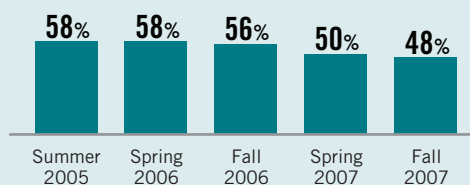
Making sure we have a strong, well-supplied military



Doing our best to bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians



Giving the war on terror all the attention it deserves



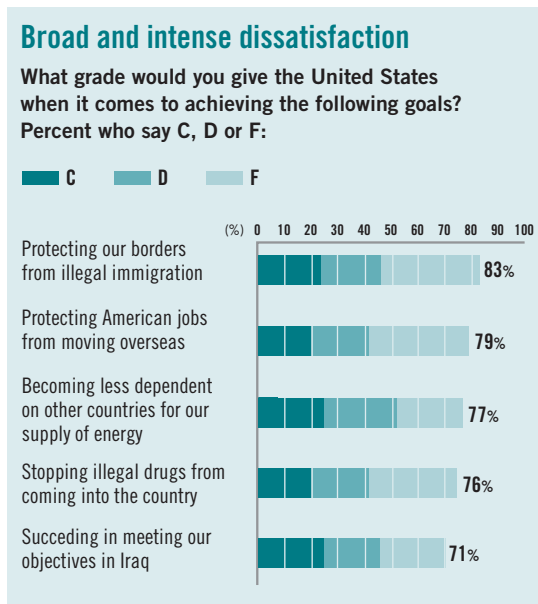
As in previous editions of the index, there are also four areas of serious public dissatisfaction that is both broad (with three-quarters of the public giving a grade of C or worse) and intense (with about half giving a D or F mark), and one area that is approaching this threshold. Illegal immigration, protecting U.S. jobs, stopping illegal drugs from entering the country and achieving energy independence can be characterized as having both broad and intense dissatisfaction and in addition “meeting our objectives in Iraq” is very close to these marks (71% of the public gives a grade of C or worse and 46% gives it a D or F).

Significantly, two of those areas of high dissatisfaction (immigration and energy independence) have also consistently been among the public’s most favored strategies. So the public still sees them as promising strategies for the United States—but the low grades suggest they don’t think the government is getting very far in implementing them.

The second troubling factor is that large segments of the public doubt the government is telling the truth on foreign policy. Some 57 percent say they trust the government “not too much” or “not at all” to tell them the truth about relations with other countries. That’s essentially unchanged from a year ago.

The government gets better grades for telling the truth in specific areas, although the levels of doubt are still uncomfortably high for Iraq (52 percent), Afghanistan (48 percent), the war on terror (42 percent) and homeland security (40 percent). The number who say they trust the government to tell the truth on homeland security, in particular, dropped six points in a year.

These high and consistent levels of distrust may be having a corrosive effect on public attitudes, in the public’s perception both of what is working and of what is achievable.



Despite the past six months of ferocious debate over Iraq—or perhaps because that debate produced no shift in policy—public attitudes remain pessimistic about the war

There's no question Iraq is the central foreign policy question for the American public—fully 25 percent in our survey volunteer it as the nation's biggest international problem. And no political issue has been as intensely debated over the last six months, with the Democrats' repeated attempts to force a deadline for withdrawal, a major White House campaign to build up support and the much anticipated “benchmark” report by General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker. Whether you were a supporter or an opponent, September 2007 was considered to be a make-or-break month for the war.

Yet when it comes to public attitudes, very little seems to have changed. Compared with six months ago, the public is slightly less pessimistic about U.S. progress in Iraq, but just as doubtful about our prospects.

The “Petraeus effect” on public attitudes seems to be mostly a modest reduction in how intensely the public disapproves of the conduct of the war. The number who give the United States a grade of C or worse for “meeting our objectives in Iraq” hasn't really budged (it's only down 2 points), but the number who give a clearly failing D or F grade declined six points, to 46 percent.

Those who are satisfied with the war effort increased slightly, with A or B grades edging up four points, to 25 percent. In 2005, that figure stood at 39 percent.

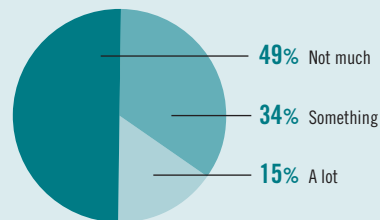
When it comes to many fundamentals, however, the Foreign Policy Index shows hardly any change at all. In these areas, it is almost as if the last six months of debate never happened. For example:

- Roughly two thirds say the United States should withdraw (48 percent within the next 12 months, 19 percent immediately).
- About half say there's “not much” the United States can do to create a democratic Iraq (51 percent) or to control the violence there (49 percent).
- Nearly half (47 percent) consider Iraq “mostly a civil war.”

- Six in 10 do not believe America's safety from terrorism depends on success in Iraq.
- Half (52 percent) say they don't think the government has told the public the truth about the war in Iraq.

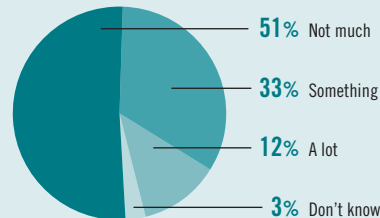
About half say there is not much the government can do to control the violence in Iraq ...

Is controlling the violence in Iraq something our government can do a lot, something or not much about?



... or to create a democratic Iraq

Is creating a democratic Iraq something our government can do a lot, something or not much about?



In each case, the results are essentially the same as last spring.

Another attitude that hasn't changed is the public's sense that the United States owes something to the Iraqi people. Nearly 6 in 10 say we have a moral obligation to the Iraqi people, while only one-third say the United States should act in its own interest without regard to how it affects the Iraqis.

Yet this sense of obligation also has limits. When asked if U.S. troops should stay in Iraq to control the violence even if it means more American casualties or withdraw even if it means more Iraqi casualties, 55 percent said the United States should still withdraw.

While strong majorities continue to favor nonmilitary solutions, there is some evidence of a small shift away from diplomacy, particularly on Iran

One major trend we have seen is a strong preference for nonmilitary solutions in foreign affairs. Some 65 percent say the government should put more emphasis on diplomatic and economic efforts rather than military solutions, and even more reject force in specific situations like dealing with Iran and Pakistan. Yet while substantial majorities (nearly two-thirds) continue to prefer diplomatic action or sanctions over force with Iran, there is slight movement towards a more aggressive stance in the latest edition of the index.

This is most notable in survey results on Iran, where people appear to be less confident in diplomacy, if far from ready to embrace the use of force. Given options on how to cope with Iran, the number who favor “diplomacy to establish better relations” fell nine points, to 35 percent, while the number who favored threatening or using force rose six points.

This may have something to do with the fact that the index was in the field during Iranian president Mahmud Ahmadinejad’s visit to the United Nations. The highly negative media coverage, not to mention the fodder Ahmadinejad provided for commentators and comedians, may have powerfully influenced public attitudes. Given the overall

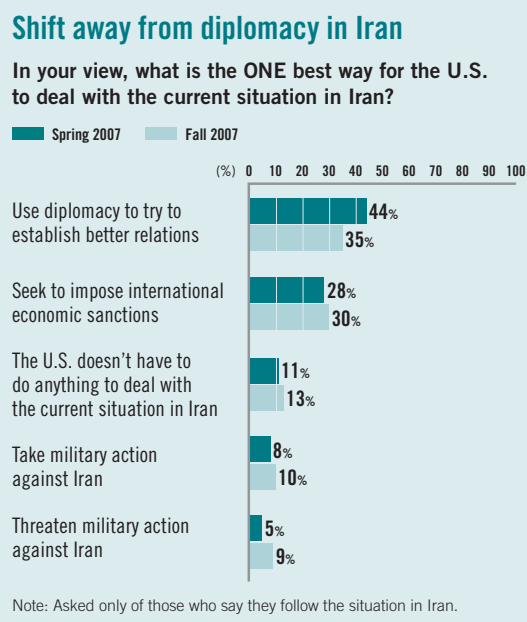
tone surrounding his visit, it’s perhaps not surprising that Americans are less optimistic about talking things over with him.

In addition, those who think that attacking countries that develop weapons of mass destruction would do “a great deal” for national security jumped up eight points, to 25 percent, and those who thought it would help our security “not at all” fell eight points, to 35 percent. This has proven to be a highly volatile question. In the last edition of the index, the number who thought this would do “a great deal” for security fell 19 points. Those huge swings suggest public opinion is highly unsettled in this area—not to mention highly susceptible to events in the news.

Still, a drop in support for diplomacy is not the same thing as an endorsement of military action. Only 19 percent of Americans all told back force or even the threat of force in Iran. And there’s a similar pattern in public attitudes about Pakistan, a U.S. ally that reportedly has al-Qaeda training camps in parts of the country not completely under the central government’s control. The public is divided on what to do there, but only 1 in 4 supports force to remove the camps even if the Pakistani government objects compared to diplomatic or economic actions intended to spur Pakistan into action.

It’s important to remember that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is the public’s first foreign policy priority, with 75 percent saying it should be “very important.” More than 4 in 10 say they worry “a lot” about unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers—yet a majority (62 percent) think it’s unrealistic to expect that the government can stop this.

Other factors may also be at work. The number of Americans who say they worry at least “some-what” about a terrorist attack has increased seven points in six months. There have also been very small decreases in the number who say it’s a “justified” criticism that the United States is too quick to resort to war or that it’s “very” or “somewhat” important that the United States use force only with the support of its allies.



The public has become even more frustrated with the government's efforts on immigration and may be moving closer to a “tipping point”

The past two years have dashed hopes on both sides of the immigration debate, with the collapse of a bipartisan reform plan in May just the latest in a series of failed attempts to address the problem. The deadlock has taken its toll on public attitudes, with a sharp jump in those who give the government flatly failing grades.

Since Public Agenda began this survey, the public's never been happy with government policy on illegal immigration, but over time attitudes have grown considerably worse. More than 8 in 10 (83 percent) give the government a grade of C or worse, an increase of nine points since 2005. But even more striking is the intensity of the public's shift toward the pessimistic end of the scale. Nearly 6 in 10 now give the government a D or F grade, with the number who give an outright F jumping eight points in six months.

What's more, the public believes illegal immigration is a critical problem that the government ought to be able to solve.

There are some problems, like protecting U.S. jobs, where the public gives the government terrible grades but also doubts whether anything can be done (three-quarters say it's unrealistic to expect companies to keep jobs here when labor is cheaper abroad). In other areas, the government gets poor grades, but the sense of urgency isn't as high (only 31 percent worry a lot about foreign debt for example).

Immigration is different. Half the public, 52 percent, think that tighter controls on immigration would enhance security “a great deal,” seeing this as an effective security strategy. Another 45 percent say they worry “a lot” that it's too easy for illegal immigrants to enter the country. That's among the highest-rated strategies—and the greatest public concern—in our survey. And 46 percent say the government can do “a lot” to slow illegal immigration. This is also an area where there is little or no political polarization. Only 16 percent of Republicans and 15 percent of Democrats give the government high grades for protecting our borders from illegal immigration.

Illegal immigration already has the elements that might constitute a “tipping point” in public attitudes—a substantial majority are strongly concerned about a problem and believe the government has the power to address it. Continuing public frustration implies continuing pressure on the political system to deal with this problem as the public demands that its concerns be met.

The public continues to be sharply divided on ideological lines in foreign policy, but there has been a decline in Republican confidence for fostering democracy

As in previous editions of the index, there are significant differences between Republicans and Democrats on many issues, including some basic points. For example, half of Republicans (49 percent) say foreign policy is heading in the right direction, compared with only 14 percent of Democrats. The differences are also striking in several specific areas:

- Some 45 percent of Republicans give an A or B grade for meeting our objectives in Iraq, compared with only 15 percent of Democrats who say the same. Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of Democrats worry “a lot” that the war in Iraq is leading to too many casualties, compared with 38 percent of Republicans.
- Showing more respect for the views and needs of other countries would strengthen U.S. security a great deal, according to 53 percent of Democrats, while only 23 percent of Republicans agree.
- Eight in 10 Democrats think there should be more emphasis on diplomatic and economic methods as opposed to military action, but just over 4 in 10 (41 percent) Republicans share this view.

But there is some common ground. More than two-thirds of both Republicans and Democrats worry about the growing strength of China. And nearly 9 in 10 of both parties (87 percent) say they worry that terrorists may use weapons of mass destruction to attack the United States.

Republicans have also seen a significant loss of confidence in one specific area: the idea of exporting democracy. Overall, three-quarters of Americans say that “democracy is something other countries can only come to on their own.” Since 2005, there has been a 24-point drop in Republicans who believe the United States can help other countries become democracies and a 15-point drop since January 2006 in Republicans who believe that creating a democratic Iraq is something our government can do “a lot” about.

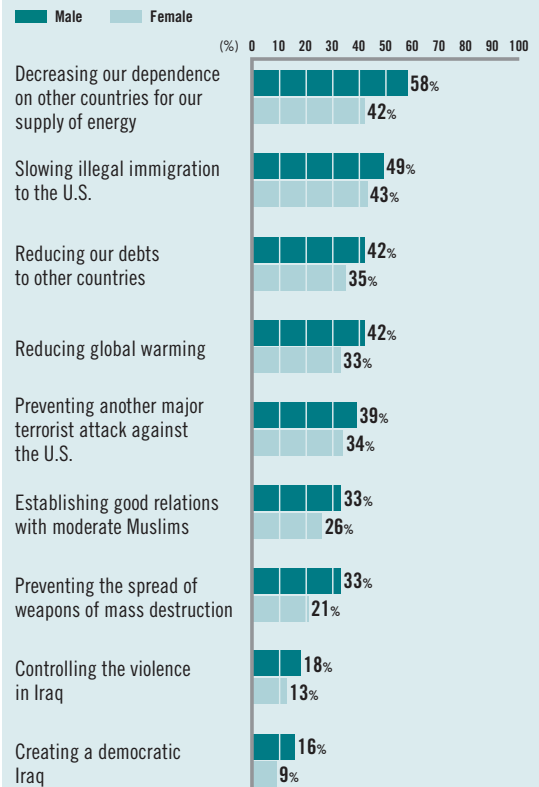
Women are more worried about America’s position in the world and more fatalistic, while men are more critical about U.S. policy

Women are more likely to be worried about security issues, including potential terrorist attacks (for example, 53 percent of women say they worry “a lot” about a terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction, compared with 44 percent of men). Yet they’re also less likely to believe the government can do “a lot” about the problems facing the country. Only 42 percent of women say the government can do “a lot” to make the United States less dependent on foreign energy, compared with 58 percent of men. And only 33 percent of women think the government can do “a lot” to reduce global warming, compared to 42 percent of men.

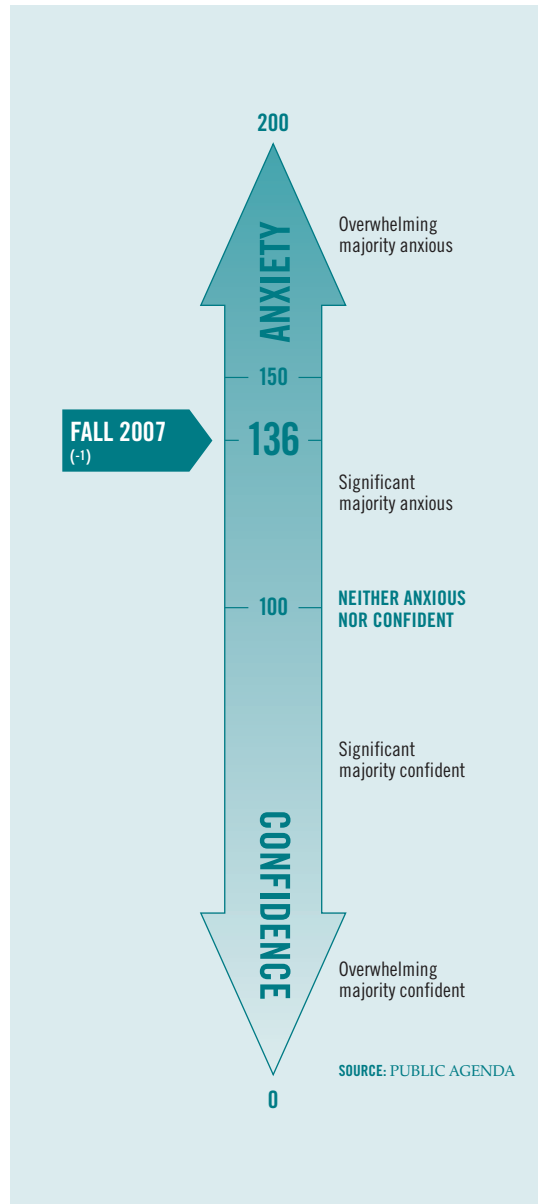
Men, however, are more likely to believe that criticisms of U.S. policy are justified—perhaps precisely because they have more confidence that the United States can be effective. Nearly three-quarters of men (73 percent) say it’s at least a partly justified criticism to say the United States has allied with governments that exploit their own people. Only 61 percent of women say that. Nearly two-thirds of men say it’s a justified criticism to say the United States resorts to torture in the war on terrorism, compared with 47 percent of women. And 70 percent of men say it’s at least partly justified to say the United States is concerned only with its own interests and disregards the interests of other countries, compared with 58 percent of women.

Women are less likely to think the government can do a lot about these issues

Is the following something the government can do a lot about?

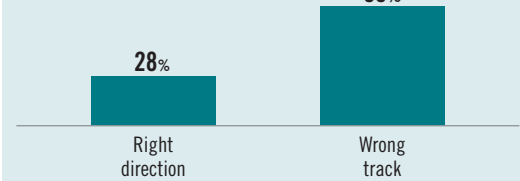


FOREIGN POLICY ANXIETY INDICATOR

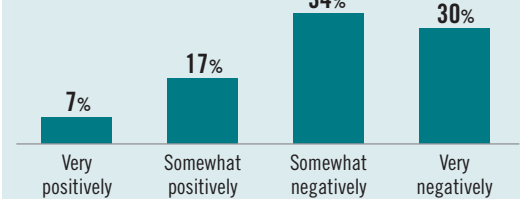


The Anxiety Indicator is designed to provide a measure of Americans' comfort level with the nation's foreign policy, much the same way the Consumer Confidence Index measures the public's satisfaction with the economy. Our indicator scale is divided into zones, with 100 serving as a neutral midpoint. We don't anticipate the indicator ever being at either the 0 or the 200 level, but a score of 50 or below would indicate a period of calm, perhaps even complacency. Above the "redline" of 150 would be anxiety shading into real fear and a withdrawal of public confidence in U.S. policy.

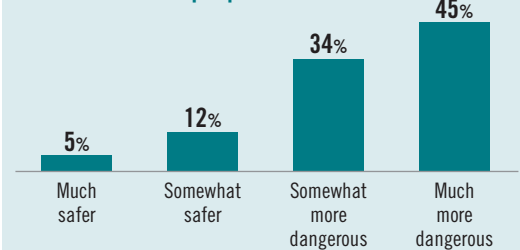
Thinking about recent U.S. relations with the rest of the world, would you say things are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?



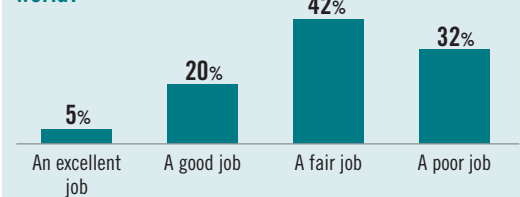
How do you think the rest of the world sees the U.S.?



Thinking about current US relations with the rest of the world, would you say that the world is becoming safer or more dangerous for the U.S. and the American people?



How good a job is the United States doing these days in creating a more peaceful and prosperous world?



Is "the way things are going for the United States in world affairs" something that you worry about?



Indicator methodology

The Anxiety Indicator is a figure on a scale from 0 to 200, with the neutral value being 100, and is derived by comparing the positive and negative responses to five key questions while disregarding non-responses (such as “not sure” or “no answer”).

The five questions are the following:

Thinking about recent U.S. relations with the rest of the world, would you say things are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?

How do you think the rest of the world sees the United States? Would you say they see the United States positively or negatively?

Thinking about current U.S. relations with the rest of the world, would you say that the world is becoming safer or more dangerous for the United States and the American people?

How good a job is the United States doing these days as a leader in creating a more peaceful and prosperous world?

Would you say you worry about the way things are going in world affairs a lot, somewhat or do you *not* worry about them?

These numbers are calculated in the following way:

1. If the question assumes either one positive or one negative response (right track or wrong direction, yes or no), the following formula is used to calculate this question index component:

$$K = 100 + (p(-) - p(+))$$

where $p(+)$ is the percent that answered positively, $p(-)$ is the percent that answered negatively.

2. If the question allows a choice from two positive or two negative responses (very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied), the following formula is used to calculate this question index component:

$$K = 100 + (p1(-) - p1(+)) + 0.5*(p2(-) - p2(+))$$

where $p1(+)$ is the percent that answered strongly positive, $p1(-)$ is the percent that answered strongly negative, $p2(+)$ is the percent that answered moderately positive, and $p2(-)$ is the percent that answered moderately negative.

The index question components are then averaged to calculate the index.

When the index level is more than 100, the number giving a negative response is more than the number giving a positive response. When all answers are strongly positive, the index is 0. When all answers are strongly negative, the index is 200.

Fall 2007: Grades at a glance

What grade would you give the United States when it comes to achieving the following goals?

	A (%)	B (%)	A+B (%)	A+B change since 2005 (%)	C (%)	D (%)	F (%)	C+D +F (%)	D+F (%)	D+F change since 2005 (%)
Helping other countries when natural disasters strike	38	31	69	-14	18	6	5	29	11	7
Making sure we have a strong, well-supplied military	27	31	58	-9	24	10	5	39	15	5
Giving the war on terror all the attention it deserves	22	26	48	-10	27	11	9	47	20	5
Stopping countries or groups from getting nuclear weapons	18	22	40	0	24	17	11	52	28	5
Conducting effective U.S. intelligence operations	13	24	37	—	28	12	8	48	20	—
Hunting down anti-American terrorists	12	29	41	-13	24	13	16	53	29	12
Helping improve the lives of people living in poor countries	12	27	39	-3	29	15	13	57	28	3
Living up to our ideals of human rights and justice in the way we conduct our foreign policy	12	24	36	-8	32	13	13	58	26	4
Doing our best to bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians	12	21	33	-12	27	17	14	58	31	13
Helping to create democracy in the rest of the world	11	24	35	-15	35	14	11	60	25	8
Protecting people or nations that are threatened with genocide or ethnic cleansing	10	18	28	-8	27	19	14	60	33	7
Having good working relations with other countries	9	35	44	-1	35	11	7	53	18	-2
Working with other countries to reduce global warming	9	18	27	—	26	15	18	59	33	—
Succeeding in meeting our objectives in Afghanistan	7	21	28	-12	26	19	18	63	37	14
Avoiding trade agreements that harm the United States	7	16	23	—	31	16	13	60	29	—
Reaching out to moderate Muslims overseas	7	14	21	—	28	17	11	56	28	—
Stopping illegal drugs from coming into the country	6	13	19	-4	20	22	34	76	56	6
Succeeding in meeting our objectives in Iraq	5	20	25	-14	25	21	25	71	46	13
Having good relations and reputation with Muslim countries	5	15	20	-8	33	21	18	72	39	7
Protecting our borders from illegal immigration	5	10	15	-10	24	22	37	83	59	14
Becoming less dependent on other countries for our supply of energy	4	15	19	—	25	27	25	77	52	—
Protecting American jobs from moving overseas	4	13	17	-1	20	22	37	79	59	7
Limiting the amount of money we owe other countries	4	10	14	—	28	18	23	69	41	—

Question wording may be slightly edited for space and clarity.
Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding or the omission of some answer categories.

Fall 2007: Worries at a glance

Is the following something that you worry about a lot, is this something you worry about somewhat or is this something you do not worry about?

	Worry a lot (%)	Worry a lot change since 2005 (%)	Worry somewhat (%)	Do not worry	Do not worry change since 2005 (%)
The war in Iraq is leading to too many casualties	60	4	27	13	-5
Rise in the cost of gas and fuel	54	—	32	13	—
Protecting American jobs from moving overseas	50	—	34	16	—
Terrorist groups may use biological, chemical or nuclear weapons to attack the United States	49	1	38	13	0
The war in Iraq is requiring so much money and attention that it may be distracting the United States from other threats in the world	46	3	34	19	-4
It may be too easy for illegal immigrants to come into the country	45	3	32	23	-4
The possibility of unfriendly nations becoming nuclear powers	42	—	43	15	—
There may be growing hatred of the United States in Muslim countries	41	1	38	21	-4
Global warming	41	—	33	26	—
There may be another major terrorist attack against the United States in the near future	40	3	46	14	-7
Problems abroad may hurt our supply of oil and raise prices for American consumers	40	-2	45	15	-4
The rise of Islamic extremism around the world	40	—	41	17	—
That our actions in the Mideast are aiding the recruitment of terrorists	39	—	38	21	—
The way things are going for the United States in world affairs	34	—	51	14	—
The United States may be losing the trust and friendship of people in other countries	34	-6	43	22	-3
The United States may owe too much money to other countries	31	-1	38	30	-6
The growing power of China may be a threat to the United States	30	1	40	28	-5

Question wording may be slightly edited for space and clarity.
Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding or the omission of some answer categories.

Fall 2007: Goals at a glance

How important to our foreign policy should each of the following be? Should this be very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Very + somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important	Not very + not at all important
Cooperating with other countries on problems like the environment or control of diseases	75	21	96	2	2	4
Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons	75	19	94	2	3	5
Helping other countries when they are struck by natural disasters	70	24	94	4	2	6
Assisting countries in developing clean water supplies	64	30	94	4	2	6
Improving the treatment of women in other countries	60	30	90	6	3	9
Cooperating with other countries on reducing global warming	56	28	84	7	6	13
Helping people in poor countries to get an education	53	35	88	9	4	13
Initiating military force only when we have the support of our allies	53	28	81	8	9	17
Taking into account the views and interests of other countries	47	43	90	6	4	10
Doing what we think is best for our own interests even if other nations oppose us	46	37	83	10	7	17
Helping poor countries move out of poverty	45	41	86	8	4	12
Doing what we think is best for our own interests even if our allies oppose us	43	43	86	6	7	13
Minding our own business and getting less involved with global issues	36	38	74	13	11	24
Actively creating democracies in other countries	16	51	67	19	10	29

Question wording may be slightly edited for space and clarity.
Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding or the omission of some answer categories.

Fall 2007: Strategies at a glance

Please tell me if each of the following would enhance our security a great deal, somewhat or not at all:

	A great deal	A great deal change since 2005	Somewhat	Not at all	Not at all change since 2005
Improving the effectiveness of our intelligence operations	56	-9	39	4	0
Becoming less dependent on other countries for our supply of energy	53	—	38	7	—
Tighter controls on immigration to the U.S.	52	-6	36	11	1
Showing more respect for the views and needs of other countries	38	-11	44	16	4
Tighter control over foreign students who come to our colleges and universities to study	36	-5	42	20	3
Closer cooperation with the UN	34	0	45	18	-8
Maintaining our military edge by exploring new technologies or placing weapons in space	34	-6	44	17	-6
Closer cooperation with the European Union	28	—	50	17	—
Creating policies that support equal rights and better educational opportunities for women in Muslim countries	27	-14	44	28	8
Giving gov't more power to investigate, even if we have to give up some of our privacy in order to do it	25	—	38	35	—
Attacking countries that develop weapons of mass destruction	25	—	35	35	—
Building large projects such as roads, dams, and hospitals in developing countries	23	6	48	27	1
Doing more to help Muslim countries develop economically	19	-8	52	25	-1

Full survey results

This fifth edition of the study was based on telephone interviews conducted between September 17 and September 27, 2007, among a nationally representative sample of 1,011 adults 18 years and older. It covered over 25 different issues in more than 110 different survey questions. The margin of error for this study is plus or minus three.

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
1 What do you think is the most important problem facing the United States in its dealings with the rest of the world?					
Middle East	39	40	42	36	—
Administration/politics	17	17	16	16	—
Domestic problems	16	11	12	10	—
Foreign policies	11	8	7	8	—
World peace	3	3	6	3	—
Trade deficit	*	1	2	3	—
Other	3	8	5	13	—
None	2	1	1	1	—
Don't know	7	11	8	9	—
2 How do you think the rest of the world sees the United States? Would you say they see the United States positively or negatively?					
Positively (net)	24	22	24	25	—
Very positively	7	7	9	—	—
Somewhat positively	17	15	15	—	—
Negatively (net)	64	68	64	62	—
Somewhat negatively	34	34	32	—	—
Very negatively	30	34	32	—	—
Neutral or mixed	10	8	8	10	—
Don't know	2	2	3	3	—
3 How important to our national security is it that the rest of the world sees the United States positively?					
Very important	67	67	65	—	—
Somewhat important	22	24	22	—	—
Not too important	4	5	5	—	—
Not at all important	5	3	6	—	—
Don't know	1	1	2	—	—
4 What one word or phrase best describes how you think the rest of the world sees the United States?					
Negative (net)	62	—	—	—	—
Bully	9	—	—	—	—
Arrogant/cocky	7	—	—	—	—
Bad/negatively (general)	6	—	—	—	—
Dominating/controlling	6	—	—	—	—
Spoiled/overindulgent	5	—	—	—	—
Weak/vulnerable	4	—	—	—	—
Aggressive/hostile	3	—	—	—	—
Interfering/meddlesome	3	—	—	—	—
Skeptical/corrupt	3	—	—	—	—
Threat/afraid	2	—	—	—	—

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
4 (continued) What one word or phrase best describes how you think the rest of the world sees the United States?					
Ignorant/uninformed	2	—	—	—	—
Evil/enemy	2	—	—	—	—
Self-centered/selfish	2	—	—	—	—
Conflicted/confused	2	—	—	—	—
Egotistical	1	—	—	—	—
Struggling/declining	1	—	—	—	—
Disrespectfully/a joke	1	—	—	—	—
Imperialistic	1	—	—	—	—
Hypocritical	*	—	—	—	—
Other negative	3	—	—	—	—
Positive (net)	26	—	—	—	—
Powerful/superpower	6	—	—	—	—
Positively (general)	4	—	—	—	—
Rich/prosperous	3	—	—	—	—
Envious/jealous	2	—	—	—	—
(World) leader	2	—	—	—	—
Helpful/dependable	2	—	—	—	—
Opportunistic/successful	2	—	—	—	—
Liberal/free	2	—	—	—	—
Protector/policing	1	—	—	—	—
(Leader in) democracy	1	—	—	—	—
Committed/enduring	1	—	—	—	—
Other positive	1	—	—	—	—
Neutral (net)	8	—	—	—	—
None/nothing/don't care/can't think of any	6	—	—	—	—
Other neutral	2	—	—	—	—
Other	*	—	—	—	—
Don't know	4	—	—	—	—
6 Thinking about recent U.S. relations with the rest of the world, would you say things are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?					
Right direction	28	26	35	37	—
Wrong track	65	67	58	59	—
Don't know	7	6	7	4	—
7 Thinking about things that the government must do to fight terrorism, in your opinion, should the government put more emphasis on military efforts, or should it put more emphasis on diplomatic and economic methods?					
More emphasis on military efforts	28	27	32	28	29
More emphasis on diplomatic and economic methods	65	67	61	61	64
Don't know	7	5	6	10	7
8 Thinking about current U.S. relations with the rest of the world, would you say that the world is becoming safer or more dangerous for the United States and the American people? Is that much or somewhat safer/more dangerous?					
Much safer	5	4	6	—	—
Somewhat safer	12	9	13	—	—
Somewhat more dangerous	34	34	36	—	—
Much more dangerous	45	48	43	—	—
Don't know	3	4	2	—	—

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
9 How good a job is the United States doing these days as a leader in creating a more peaceful and prosperous world? Would you say the United States is doing ...					
An excellent job	5	6	10	—	—
A good job	20	20	21	—	—
A fair job	42	39	39	—	—
A poor job	32	34	30	—	—
Don't know	1	1	1	—	—
9A Do you think U.S. troops should stay in Iraq to control the violence even though it may mean more U.S. casualties, or do you think we should withdraw even if that means more violence and more Iraqi casualties?					
U.S. troops should stay in Iraq	38	—	—	—	—
We should withdraw	55	—	—	—	—
Don't know	6	—	—	—	—
10 What grade would you give the United States when it comes to achieving the following goals?					
Helping other countries when natural disasters strike					
A	38	42	47	49	54
B	31	35	32	31	29
C	18	15	12	12	11
D	6	4	4	4	2
F	5	3	4	3	2
Don't know	3	1	1	1	1
Making sure we have a strong, well-supplied military					
A	27	29	30	32	30
B	31	30	32	33	37
C	24	20	20	20	19
D	10	10	8	8	5
F	5	7	7	4	5
Don't know	2	3	2	2	2
Giving the war on terror all the attention it deserves					
A	22	24	25	26	23
B	26	26	31	32	35
C	27	25	24	20	23
D	11	10	8	9	9
F	9	9	6	9	6
Don't know	6	5	5	4	3
Hunting down anti-American terrorists					
A	12	16	19	18	19
B	29	26	28	28	35
C	24	25	25	27	25
D	13	15	13	10	10
F	16	12	11	12	7
Don't know	6	6	4	6	4
Helping to create democracy in the rest of the world					
A	11	11	15	16	19
B	24	25	25	30	31
C	35	34	30	28	30
D	14	13	13	12	10
F	11	9	10	7	7
Don't know	6	8	6	6	4

10 (continued) **What grade would you give the United States when it comes to achieving the following goals?**

Doing our best to bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
A	12	14	13	15	16
B	21	22	25	29	29
C	27	27	34	24	30
D	17	14	10	12	11
F	14	14	12	9	7
Don't know	10	8	6	10	7

Helping improve the lives of people living in poor countries

A	12	15	13	14	15
B	27	27	25	31	27
C	29	29	32	28	28
D	15	13	12	11	16
F	13	10	12	11	9
Don't know	3	5	5	6	4

Living up to our ideals of human rights and justice in the way we conduct our foreign policy

A	12	11	13	14	15
B	24	27	27	31	29
C	32	29	29	27	29
D	13	12	13	11	12
F	13	13	11	10	10
Don't know	6	8	6	7	5

Stopping countries or groups from getting nuclear weapons

A	18	15	13	14	13
B	22	23	23	27	27
C	24	25	25	27	29
D	17	17	18	14	15
F	11	13	13	10	8
Don't know	8	8	7	7	7

Succeeding in meeting our objectives in Iraq

A	5	7	7	11	13
B	20	14	24	22	26
C	25	21	24	23	24
D	21	20	17	15	17
F	25	32	22	23	16
Don't know	4	5	5	6	4

Succeeding in meeting our objectives in Afghanistan

A	7	7	8	11	13
B	21	19	22	21	27
C	26	27	28	28	28
D	19	17	17	14	14
F	18	22	16	15	9
Don't know	10	8	9	11	10

10 (continued) **What grade would you give the United States when it comes to achieving the following goals?**

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
Protecting people or nations that are threatened with genocide or ethnic cleansing					
A	10	10	11	13	12
B	18	23	23	24	24
C	27	26	27	25	28
D	19	16	15	15	16
F	14	15	12	11	10
Don't know	12	10	12	11	10
Conducting effective U.S. intelligence operations					
A	13	11	12	11	—
B	24	25	29	26	—
C	28	26	31	28	—
D	12	12	9	11	—
F	8	8	7	10	—
Don't know	14	16	11	13	—
Having good working relations with other countries					
A	9	11	10	10	11
B	35	31	35	32	34
C	35	35	29	37	32
D	11	14	14	10	14
F	7	8	8	6	6
Don't know	3	1	4	4	4
Working with other countries to reduce global warming					
A	9	9	—	—	—
B	18	16	—	—	—
C	26	27	—	—	—
D	15	14	—	—	—
F	18	20	—	—	—
Don't know	14	13	—	—	—
Avoiding trade agreements that harm the United States					
A	7	8	—	—	—
B	16	18	—	—	—
C	31	28	—	—	—
D	16	15	—	—	—
F	13	11	—	—	—
Don't know	16	19	—	—	—
Stopping illegal drugs from coming into the country					
A	6	7	6	7	7
B	13	11	11	13	16
C	20	20	24	22	24
D	22	25	19	20	24
F	34	33	33	31	26
Don't know	5	4	7	6	3
Having good relations and reputation with Muslim countries					
A	5	5	5	6	7
B	15	15	14	19	21
C	33	28	32	28	32
D	21	23	17	19	19
F	18	22	22	17	13
Don't know	8	7	9	9	7

10 (continued) **What grade would you give the United States when it comes to achieving the following goals?**

Protecting our borders from illegal immigration

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
A	5	8	6	6	7
B	10	13	12	13	18
C	24	25	27	27	29
D	22	22	23	20	21
F	37	29	28	30	24
Don't know	2	4	4	4	7

Protecting American jobs from moving overseas

A	4	6	7	4	4
B	13	12	11	11	14
C	20	20	25	24	26
D	22	22	21	22	21
F	37	35	30	35	31
Don't know	4	5	6	4	5

Limiting the amount of money we owe other countries

A	4	5	7	6	—
B	10	11	13	14	—
C	28	22	26	25	—
D	18	17	15	16	—
F	23	27	21	17	—
Don't know	16	18	19	21	—

Becoming less dependent on other countries for our supply of energy

A	4	6	8	9	—
B	15	15	15	11	—
C	25	28	25	30	—
D	27	23	26	23	—
F	25	25	22	23	—
Don't know	3	3	4	5	—

Reaching out to moderate Muslims overseas

A	7	—	—	—	—
B	14	—	—	—	—
C	28	—	—	—	—
D	17	—	—	—	—
F	11	—	—	—	—
Don't know	22	—	—	—	—

11 **Is the following something that you worry about a lot, is this something you worry about somewhat or is this something you do *not* worry about?**

The war in Iraq is leading to too many casualties

Worry a lot	60	64	55	56	56
Worry somewhat	27	23	29	26	26
Do not worry	13	12	15	17	18
Don't know	*	*	1	*	*

Terrorist groups may use biological, chemical or nuclear weapons to attack the United States

Worry a lot	49	45	47	43	48
Worry somewhat	38	40	36	43	40
Do not worry	13	15	16	14	13
Don't know	*	*	1	*	*

11 (continued) **Is the following something that you worry about a lot, is this something you worry about somewhat or is this something you do *not* worry about?**

The war in Iraq is requiring so much money and attention that it may be distracting the United States from other threats in the world

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
Worry a lot	46	48	42	44	43
Worry somewhat	34	35	36	36	34
Do not worry	19	16	21	19	23
Don't know	1	*	1	*	*

Problems abroad may hurt our supply of oil and raise prices for American consumers

Worry a lot	40	45	46	55	42
Worry somewhat	45	37	37	33	39
Do not worry	15	17	17	11	19
Don't know	*	*	1	*	—

It may be too easy for illegal immigrants to come into the country

Worry a lot	45	43	39	41	42
Worry somewhat	32	36	33	36	31
Do not worry	23	21	27	22	27
Don't know	*	*	1	1	1

There may be growing hatred of the United States in Muslim countries

Worry a lot	41	42	42	34	40
Worry somewhat	38	36	36	42	34
Do not worry	21	21	20	22	25
Don't know	*	1	1	1	1

The United States may be losing the trust and friendship of people in other countries

Worry a lot	34	36	34	29	40
Worry somewhat	43	42	39	43	35
Do not worry	22	21	26	27	25
Don't know	1	1	1	1	1

There may be another major terrorist attack against the United States in the near future

Worry a lot	40	42	45	41	37
Worry somewhat	46	37	37	42	42
Do not worry	14	20	17	16	21
Don't know	*	*	1	*	—

The United States may owe too much money to other countries

Worry a lot	31	33	27	27	32
Worry somewhat	38	35	37	34	31
Do not worry	30	31	32	36	36
Don't know	1	1	3	2	2

The growing power of China may be a threat to the United States

Worry a lot	30	25	30	29	29
Worry somewhat	40	43	38	38	37
Do not worry	28	31	31	32	33
Don't know	1	1	1	*	1

11 (continued) **Is the following something that you worry about a lot, is this something you worry about somewhat or is this something you do *not* worry about?**

The way things are going for the United States in world affairs

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
Worry a lot	34	32	35	—	—
Worry somewhat	51	52	48	—	—
Do not worry	14	16	16	—	—
Don't know	1	*	2	—	—

Rise in the cost of gas and fuel

Worry a lot	54	57	—	—	—
Worry somewhat	32	30	—	—	—
Do not worry	13	12	—	—	—
Don't know	*	*	—	—	—

Protecting American jobs from moving overseas

Worry a lot	50	45	45	52	—
Worry somewhat	34	37	36	35	—
Do not worry	16	17	19	12	—
Don't know	*	*	*	1	—

Global warming

Worry a lot	41	41	33	32	—
Worry somewhat	33	34	35	37	—
Do not worry	26	24	30	29	—
Don't know	*	1	2	2	—

That our actions in the Mideast are aiding the recruitment of terrorists

Worry a lot	39	37	37	33	—
Worry somewhat	38	40	37	40	—
Do not worry	21	22	24	25	—
Don't know	1	1	2	2	—

The rise of Islamic extremism around the world

Worry a lot	40	40	38	31	—
Worry somewhat	41	39	41	45	—
Do not worry	17	19	18	22	—
Don't know	1	2	2	2	—

The possibility of unfriendly nations becoming nuclear powers

Worry a lot	42	41	38	31	—
Worry somewhat	43	41	41	45	—
Do not worry	15	17	18	22	—
Don't know	*	*	2	2	—

12 Do you think/believe that ...

... improved communication and dialogue with the Muslim world will reduce hatred of the United States?

Yes	53	53	53	56	59
No	43	43	41	37	38
Don't know	4	4	6	7	3

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
12 (continued) Do you think/believe that ...					
... we can fight terrorism without sometimes using torture against suspected terrorists?					
Yes	50	54	54	56	56
No	44	40	39	37	39
Don't know	6	6	6	7	5
... when more countries become democratic, there will be less conflict and violence in the world?					
Yes	46	50	52	53	51
No	48	46	42	42	45
Don't know	5	4	6	5	4
... if there is less poverty in the world, there will be less terrorism?					
Yes	46	45	44	47	46
No	52	51	53	49	52
Don't know	2	4	2	4	3
13 Do you think it's realistic or unrealistic to expect/believe that ...					
... U.S. companies will keep jobs in the United States when labor is cheaper elsewhere?					
Realistic	23	23	26	22	21
Unrealistic	75	75	70	74	78
Don't know	2	2	3	3	1
... the U.S. government will be able to maintain a stable supply of oil at a reasonable price?					
Realistic	41	41	41	35	—
Unrealistic	56	56	55	63	—
Don't know	3	3	4	3	—
... international cooperation can reduce global warming?					
Realistic	60	65	—	—	—
Unrealistic	34	29	—	—	—
Don't know	6	6	—	—	—
... the U.S. government can prevent more countries from developing nuclear weapons?					
Realistic	36	35	41	35	—
Unrealistic	62	63	55	63	—
Don't know	3	2	4	3	—
14 Is the following something our government can do a lot about, something about or not much about?					
Slowing illegal immigration in the United States					
A lot	46	47	49	48	—
Something	34	36	37	37	—
Not much	19	16	11	14	—
Don't know	1	1	3	1	—
Creating a democratic Iraq					
A lot	12	13	20	22	—
Something	33	35	36	39	—
Not much	51	49	40	35	—
Don't know	3	3	4	4	—

14 (continued) **Is the following something our government can do a lot about, something about or not much about?**

Preventing jobs from going overseas

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
A lot	44	42	42	44	—
Something	31	35	34	34	—
Not much	24	22	22	21	—
Don't know	1	1	1	1	—

Establishing good relations with moderate Muslims

A lot	30	33	36	35	—
Something	45	41	40	41	—
Not much	23	22	20	20	—
Don't know	2	3	3	4	—

Preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction

A lot	27	24	32	35	—
Something	42	43	43	44	—
Not much	30	30	23	19	—
Don't know	2	2	2	2	—

Preventing another major terrorist attack against the United States

A lot	37	36	45	39	—
Something	42	42	39	40	—
Not much	21	21	15	19	—
Don't know	1	1	2	2	—

Decreasing our dependence on other countries for our supply of energy

A lot	50	49	51	50	—
Something	35	36	36	35	—
Not much	14	14	11	12	—
Don't know	1	2	1	3	—

Reducing global warming

A lot	37	34	35	30	—
Something	33	36	36	40	—
Not much	26	26	24	26	—
Don't know	4	3	5	5	—

Reducing our debts to other countries

A lot	38	44	45	41	—
Something	39	40	36	39	—
Not much	20	14	13	15	—
Don't know	3	2	5	5	—

Controlling the violence in Iraq

A lot	15	17	—	—	—
Something	34	30	—	—	—
Not much	49	51	—	—	—
Don't know	1	2	—	—	—

15 Do you think the United States can effectively help other countries become democratic, or is democracy something that countries only come to on their own when they're ready for it?

The United States can help other countries become democracies	22	23	31	36	38
Democracy is something that countries only come to on their own	73	74	64	58	54
Don't know	5	3	5	6	4

17 How important to our foreign policy should each of the following be? Should this be very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

Taking into account the views and interests of other countries

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
Very important	47	47	49	40	—
Somewhat important	43	43	41	47	—
Not very important	6	6	6	6	—
Not at all important	4	4	3	4	—
Don't know	*	1	1	2	—

Minding our own business and getting less involved with global issues

Very important	36	32	30	31	—
Somewhat important	38	38	40	38	—
Not very important	13	12	14	13	—
Not at all important	11	16	13	14	—
Don't know	2	2	3	3	—

Actively creating democracies in other countries

Very important	16	17	24	20	—
Somewhat important	51	48	45	46	—
Not very important	19	20	17	18	—
Not at all important	10	12	11	12	—
Don't know	3	2	2	3	—

Helping other countries when they are struck by natural disasters

Very important	70	68	71	71	—
Somewhat important	24	28	26	24	—
Not very important	4	1	1	2	—
Not at all important	2	2	1	2	—
Don't know	*	1	*	1	—

Doing what we think is best for our own interests even if other nations oppose us

Very important	46	46	46	44	—
Somewhat important	37	36	33	34	—
Not very important	10	9	9	11	—
Not at all important	7	7	8	7	—
Don't know	1	3	4	3	—

Doing what we think is best for our own interests even if our allies oppose us

Very important	43	—	35	—	—
Somewhat important	43	—	48	—	—
Not very important	6	—	16	—	—
Not at all important	7	—	2	—	—
Don't know	2	—	—	—	—

Initiating military force only when we have the support of our allies

Very important	53	51	45	50	—
Somewhat important	28	33	36	31	—
Not very important	8	7	10	8	—
Not at all important	9	7	6	7	—
Don't know	2	2	3	3	—

17 (continued) **How important to our foreign policy should each of the following be? Should this be very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?**

Cooperating with other countries on problems like the environment or control of diseases

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
Very important	75	72	73	70	—
Somewhat important	21	24	22	25	—
Not very important	2	2	3	2	—
Not at all important	2	1	1	3	—
Don't know	*	*	1	1	—

Helping poor countries move out of poverty

Very important	45	44	46	40	—
Somewhat important	41	45	42	48	—
Not very important	8	7	8	6	—
Not at all important	4	3	4	4	—
Don't know	1	*	1	1	—

Assisting countries in developing clean water supplies

Very important	64	67	71	—	—
Somewhat important	30	27	24	—	—
Not very important	4	4	3	—	—
Not at all important	2	1	2	—	—
Don't know	*	*	*	—	—

Helping people in poor countries to get an education

Very important	53	51	54	51	—
Somewhat important	35	38	35	37	—
Not very important	9	7	6	8	—
Not at all important	4	4	4	4	—
Don't know	*	*	1	1	—

Improving the treatment of women in other countries

Very important	60	60	60	57	—
Somewhat important	30	29	30	35	—
Not very important	6	5	5	4	—
Not at all important	3	4	4	3	—
Don't know	1	1	1	1	—

Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons

Very important	75	75	—	—	—
Somewhat important	19	20	—	—	—
Not very important	2	3	—	—	—
Not at all important	3	1	—	—	—
Don't know	1	1	—	—	—

Cooperating with other countries on reducing global warming

Very important	56	60	—	—	—
Somewhat important	28	27	—	—	—
Not very important	7	5	—	—	—
Not at all important	6	6	—	—	—
Don't know	2	2	—	—	—

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
18 Thinking about the benefits of international trade, do you think for the most part the United States benefits more than other countries, or that other countries benefit more than the United States or are you unsure who benefits?					
The United States benefits more than other countries	15	17	—	—	—
Other countries benefit more than the United States	34	31	—	—	—
Unsure who benefits more	49	50	—	—	—
Don't know	2	1	—	—	—
Note: Questions 19 and 20 were asked later in the survey.					
21 How much do you trust our government to tell the public the truth about our relations with other countries? Would you say you trust them ...					
Very much	8	7	10	11	—
Somewhat	34	33	39	37	—
Not too much	28	32	27	28	—
Not at all	29	27	22	23	—
Don't know	*	*	1	*	—
21A How truthful do you think the government has been in what it told the public about our actions in Iraq?					
Completely	11	7	—	—	—
Somewhat	36	39	—	—	—
Not very	26	27	—	—	—
Not at all	26	27	—	—	—
Don't know	1	1	—	—	—
21B How truthful do you think the government has been in what it told the public about our actions in Afghanistan?					
Completely	9	—	—	—	—
Somewhat	41	—	—	—	—
Not very	24	—	—	—	—
Not at all	24	—	—	—	—
Don't know	2	—	—	—	—
21C How truthful do you think the government has been about how much progress we are making in homeland security?					
Completely	11	—	12	10	—
Somewhat	47	—	52	50	—
Not very	21	—	22	23	—
Not at all	19	—	12	14	—
Don't know	2	—	1	4	—
21D How truthful do you think the government has been about how well we are doing in the war on terrorism?					
Completely	10	—	—	—	—
Somewhat	46	—	—	—	—
Not very	22	—	—	—	—
Not at all	20	—	—	—	—
Don't know	2	—	—	—	—

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
22 How would you describe the current violence in Iraq? Would you say it is ... ?					
Mostly a civil war	47	50	—	—	—
Mostly an uprising opposing the United States's role in Iraq	42	42	—	—	—
Don't know	10	7	—	—	—
23 In your opinion ... ?					
Should the U.S. withdraw all troops from Iraq immediately	19	19	—	—	—
Should the U.S. gradually withdraw all troops over the next 12 months	48	51	—	—	—
Should troops stay in Iraq for as long as it takes to stabilize the country	30	27	—	—	—
Don't know	3	3	—	—	—
24 Does the United States have a moral obligation to the Iraqi people, or should we act exclusively in our own nation's interest without regard to how it affects the Iraqi people?					
Moral obligation	57	60	—	—	—
Nation's interest	33	31	—	—	—
Don't know	9	8	—	—	—
25 Do you think America's safety from terrorism depends upon our success in Iraq, or does it not depend on our success in Iraq?					
Depends upon our success in Iraq	36	34	—	—	—
Does not depend upon our success in Iraq	60	61	—	—	—
Don't know	4	5	—	—	—
Note: Questions 19 and 20 were asked out of numerical order.					
19 Now turning to the topic of Iran, how closely are you following recent news about the current situation in Iran? Would you say you are following it very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely or not at all closely?					
Very closely	19	21	—	—	—
Somewhat closely	45	43	—	—	—
Not too closely	21	19	—	—	—
Not at all closely	16	16	—	—	—
Don't know	—	*	—	—	—
20 In your view, of the five choices I read, what is the one best way for the United States to deal with the current situation in Iran? (Base: Respondents who have closely followed the current situation in Iran)					
Use diplomacy to try to establish better relations	35	44	—	—	—
Seek to impose international economic sanctions	30	28	—	—	—
Threaten military action against Iran	9	5	—	—	—
Take military action against Iran	10	8	—	—	—
The United States doesn't have to do anything to deal with the current situation in Iran	13	11	—	—	—
Don't know	4	3	—	—	—

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
20A What do you think is the best option for dealing with the al-Qaeda terrorist camps in Pakistan? Should the U.S. ...?					
Use force to remove the terrorist camps now, even if our ally, the government of Pakistan, objects	24	—	—	—	—
Give more aid and assistance to Pakistan and help them remove the terrorist camps themselves even though it may take longer	31	—	—	—	—
Reduce aid and assistance to the government of Pakistan to pressure them to remove the terrorist camps quickly	35	—	—	—	—
Don't know	10	—	—	—	—
26 Which statement comes closer to your own views even if neither is exactly right?					
The Islamic religion is more likely than others to encourage violence among its believers	49	48	46	45	—
The Islamic religion does not encourage violence more than others	39	42	39	39	—
Don't know	11	10	14	15	—
27 What is your impression—do you think the majority of Muslims support terrorism, or do you think a small minority of Muslims support terrorism?					
The majority of Muslims support terrorism	21	21	—	—	—
A small minority of Muslims support terrorism	74	71	—	—	—
Don't know	6	7	—	—	—
28 Please tell me if each of the following would enhance our security a great deal, somewhat or not at all.					
Improving the effectiveness of our intelligence operations					
A great deal	56	63	62	60	65
Somewhat	39	31	28	33	30
Not at all	4	3	6	3	4
Don't know	1	2	3	3	1
Tighter controls on immigration to the United States					
A great deal	52	51	51	50	58
Somewhat	36	38	40	41	30
Not at all	11	10	5	8	10
Don't know	1	1	3	*	2
Showing more respect for the views and needs of other countries					
A great deal	38	42	43	45	49
Somewhat	44	43	42	43	38
Not at all	16	14	13	11	12
Don't know	1	1	1	1	1
Creating policies that support equal rights and better educational opportunities for women in Muslim countries					
A great deal	27	29	32	30	41
Somewhat	44	43	44	45	37
Not at all	28	25	20	19	20
Don't know	2	2	3	4	2
Tighter control over foreign students who come to our colleges and universities to study					
A great deal	36	34	40	32	41
Somewhat	42	46	39	44	34
Not at all	20	18	19	21	23
Don't know	2	1	1	3	2

28 (continued) **Please tell me if each of the following would enhance our security a great deal, somewhat or not at all.**

Maintaining our military edge by exploring new technologies or placing weapons in space

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
A great deal	34	36	37	33	40
Somewhat	44	40	36	45	34
Not at all	17	19	21	16	23
Don't know	6	4	6	5	4

Closer cooperation with the UN

A great deal	34	33	36	33	34
Somewhat	45	45	40	46	37
Not at all	18	20	21	18	26
Don't know	2	2	3	3	3

Closer cooperation with the European Union

A great deal	28	—	—	—	—
Somewhat	50	—	—	—	—
Not at all	17	—	—	—	—
Don't know	5	—	—	—	—

Attacking countries that develop weapons of mass destruction

A great deal	25	17	36	29	—
Somewhat	35	37	30	40	—
Not at all	35	43	29	24	—
Don't know	4	3	5	6	—

Giving government more power to investigate, even if we had to give up some of our privacy in order to do it

A great deal	25	21	24	27	—
Somewhat	38	41	35	35	—
Not at all	35	36	37	36	—
Don't know	2	2	3	1	—

Building large projects such as roads, dams and hospitals in developing countries

A great deal	23	23	28	19	29
Somewhat	48	46	42	55	43
Not at all	27	30	26	23	26
Don't know	1	1	3	3	2

Doing more to help Muslim countries develop economically

A great deal	19	20	20	20	27
Somewhat	52	52	47	53	46
Not at all	25	27	29	23	26
Don't know	3	2	3	3	2

Becoming less dependent on other countries for our supply of energy

A great deal	53	55	57	57	—
Somewhat	38	34	30	33	—
Not at all	7	10	11	8	—
Don't know	1	1	1	2	—

29 Here are some criticisms of U.S. foreign policies that have been made in recent years. For each, please tell me if you find the criticism to be totally justified, partly justified or not justified at all.

The United States has been too quick to resort to war

(Base: Half of respondents)

	Sept 2007 (%)	March 2007 (%)	Sept 2006 (%)	Jan 2006 (%)	June 2005 (%)
Totally justified	29	31	27	34	35
Partially justified	35	39	36	31	27
Not justified at all	33	28	33	32	37
Don't know	2	2	3	3	1

The United States is so concerned with its own security that it sometimes abuses prisoners in the war on terrorism

(Base: Half of respondents)

Totally justified	19	20	—	—	—
Partially justified	44	39	—	—	—
Not justified at all	34	36	—	—	—
Don't know	2	4	—	—	—

The United States is so concerned with its own security that it sometimes resorts to torture in the war on terrorism

(Base: Half of respondents)

Totally justified	19	—	—	—	—
Partially justified	38	—	—	—	—
Not justified at all	37	—	—	—	—
Don't know	5	—	—	—	—

The United States has often been allied with governments that are unjust and exploit their own people

(Base: Half of respondents)

Totally justified	20	18	17	15	24
Partially justified	48	50	44	48	46
Not justified at all	27	26	32	30	26
Don't know	5	5	7	7	4

U.S. policies are too pro-Israel for the United States to be able to broker peace between Israel and the Palestinians

(Base: Half of respondents)

Totally justified	17	19	23	14	21
Partially justified	48	47	47	48	41
Not justified at all	29	25	22	25	30
Don't know	5	9	7	12	8

The United States is only concerned with its own interests and disregards the interests of other countries

(Base: Half of respondents)

Totally justified	15	20	15	16	19
Partially justified	49	40	46	40	36
Not justified at all	33	37	35	39	44
Don't know	2	2	3	5	1

Characteristics of the sample

	September 2007 (%)		September 2007 (%)
Gender		Race	
Male	48	White	68
Female	52	Black/African-American	11
Age		Hispanic	13
18–29	21	Asian	2
30–39	16	Something else	5
40–49	22	Income	
50–64	23	\$15,000 or under	12
65 or more	16	\$15,001 to \$25,000	12
Region		\$25,001 to \$35,000	11
Northeast	19	\$35,001 to \$50,000	13
Midcentral	22	\$51,001 to \$75,000	18
South	36	Over \$75,000	24
West	23	Religion	
Party		Christian	81
Republican	27	Protestant	57
Democrat	32	Roman Catholic	27
Independent	27	Mormon	2
Something else	10	Orthodox Church	1
Political ideology		Other	9
Liberal	19	Born-again/evangelical	42
Moderate	34	Not born-again/evangelical	54
Conservative	37	Jewish	1
Education		Muslim	1
Less than high school	15	Buddhist	*
High school graduate	31	Atheist	1
Some college or trade school, no degree	19	Agnostic	3
Associate's or 2-year degree	9	Something else	3
Bachelor's or 4-year degree	15	No religion	10
Graduate degree	10	Are you or is anyone in your household a member of the military or armed services?	
		Yes, self	2
		Yes, other	7
		No	91

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