Constrained Internationalism: Adapting to New Realities

Results of a 2010 Chicago Council Survey of U.S. Public Opinion
Study Funding

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
The McCormick Foundation
The Chicago Council 21st Century Fund
The Korea Foundation
Methodology

**Sample:** 2,596 respondents, nationally representative

- Full sample margin of error: +/- 1.9%
- Half sample: +/- 2.72%
- Third sample: +/- 3.33%

**Fielding Dates:** June 11-22, 2010

**Fielding Method:** Knowledge Networks’ randomly-selected panel

Administered over internet
America’s Global Views in 2010—A Summary

• Americans view their role in the world as constrained by pressing economic problems at home and by lessening U.S. influence abroad.

• They have not retreated from the broad support for international engagement that has been a constant of U.S. policy and public opinion since World War II.

• But they prefer that the United States play a less dominant role in world affairs and pursue a policy of “selective engagement.”

• Selective engagement means that U.S. power should be used to counter critical threats to the homeland, to alleviate humanitarian crises, and to support multilateral actions.

• The United States should avoid military involvement in conflicts between other nations and should lighten its military presence outside the country.
America’s Views of Asia 2010
Summary

• Asia is the good news story, so far.
• China’s rise dominates American perceptions but overall Americans do not feel overly threatened by it.
• China is now seen as the most important nation to the United States in the world, and as more important to the United States in Asia than Japan.
• Looking to the future, however, Americans want to hedge against a possible Chinese threat.
• Americans look to U.S. allies and friends, particularly to Korea and Japan, to help balance China’s power.
• There is strong support for the U.S.-ROK alliance and for the U.S. military presence on the Peninsula, even after possible reunification.
Economic Constraints at Home
America’s Economic Future

The way things are going, the next generation of Americans will be economically:

- **Worse off**: 59%
- **About the same**: 32%
- **Better off**: 8%
Domestic vs. International Focus

Which is more important:

- Fix problems at home:
  - 2008: 91
  - 2010: 82

- Address challenges from abroad:
  - 2008: 9
  - 2010: 17
Impact of Globalization

Mostly good
Mostly bad

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What to Do About Globalization

- Actively promote it or allow it to continue
- Try to slow it down or try to reverse it

![Bar chart showing the percentage of people who actively promote globalization and those who try to slow it down or reverse it over the years 2002 and 2010.]

2002:
- Actively promote: 49%
- Slow down/reverse: 39%

2010:
- Actively promote: 47%
- Slow down/reverse: 50%
Perceived Lessening of U.S. Influence
Influence of the U.S. and China

Mean rating of perceived influence in the world in 2008, 2010, and projected to have in ten years

![Graph showing the influence of the United States and China in 2008, 2010, and projected for 2020. The graph indicates a decline in influence for both countries, with China projected to have a slightly higher influence than the United States by 2020.]
Influence of Nations

Influence Now

- United States: 8.6
- China: 7.5
- EU as a Whole: 6.4
- Japan: 5.0
- Russia: 6.9
- India: 4.7
- South Korea: 5.0
- Brazil: 5.6
- Turkey: 3.9

Influence in 10 years

- United States: 8.0
- China: 7.8
- EU as a Whole: 6.9
- Japan: 5.6
- Russia: 4.8
- India: 4.8
- South Korea: 4.2
- Brazil: 4.4
- Turkey: 3.9
U.S. Role as a World Leader

Percentage who think the United States plays a more important and powerful role as a world leader today compared to ten years ago.

![Graph showing percentage change over time.](image-url)
What Will Happen in 50 Years?

- The United States will continue to be the world’s leading power (33%)
- Another nation will become as powerful as the United States (40%)
- The United States will be surpassed in power by another nation (26%)
U.S. Ability to Achieve Foreign Policy Goals Over the Last Few Years

- Remained about the same: 35
- Decreased: 51
- Increased: 13
Ability of Terrorists to Launch an Attack on U.S. Compared to 9/11

- Greater: 26
- The same: 50
- Less: 23
Sustained Support for International Engagement Overall
Support for Active Part in World Affairs

Do you think it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs?
U.S. Role in Solving International Problems

As the sole remaining superpower, the U.S. should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems.

The U.S. should do its share to solve international problems together with other countries.

The U.S. should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems.
Commitment to NATO

- Increase commitment: 10
- Keep commitment the same: 66
- Decrease commitment: 13
- Withdraw entirely: 8
Participation in International Treaties and Agreements

Percentage who think the United States should participate in the following treaties and agreements

- **Allow inspections under Bio-weapons treaty**: 85% should participate, 12% should not participate.
- **Ban nuclear weapons tests**: 82% should participate, 15% should not participate.
- **Participate in the ICC**: 70% should participate, 26% should not participate.
- **Participate in new climate change treaty**: 67% should participate, 30% should not participate.

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

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Acceptance of Less Dominance
The U.S. is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be

Agree | Disagree

2002 | 65 | 34
2004 | 80 | 18
2006 | 76 | 21
2008 | 77 | 23
2010 | 79 | 20
Minding its Own Business

The U.S. should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can on their own.

Disagree: 49

Agree: 49
Selective Engagement
Continued Priorities for Engagement

- Principle #1: Support for actions against top threats
- Principle #2: Support for humanitarian actions
- Principle #3: Support for multilateral actions through the United Nations
- Principle #4: Preference for staying on the sideline of other nations’ conflicts
- Principle #5: Preference for lightening the U.S. military footprint
Nuclear Proliferation and Violent Islamist Groups as Critical Threats

- **Iran’s nuclear program**: 68 Critical, 27 Important but not critical, 4 Not important
- **Violent Islamist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan**: 55 Critical, 38 Important but not critical, 5 Not important
Addressing Nuclear Proliferation and Terrorism as Top Goals

- Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons: 73% very important, 24% somewhat important, 2% not important.
- Combating international terrorism: 69% very important, 27% somewhat important, 3% not important.
Support for Humanitarian Measures

- Food and medical assistance to people in needy countries: 74%
- Creating an international marshals service through the United Nations that could arrest leaders responsible for genocide: 73%
- Using U.S. troops in other parts of the world to stop a government from committing genocide and killing large numbers of its own people: 72%
- Using U.S. troops to deal with humanitarian crises: 69%
- Aid that helps needy countries develop their economies: 62%
Support for Multilateral Actions Through the United Nations

Defending South Korea

- Using U.S. troops if North Korea invaded South Korea: 56% oppose, 40% favor
- Contributing military forces together with other countries to a UN-sponsored effort to reverse the aggression if North Korea attacked South Korea: 34% oppose, 61% favor

Multilateral Peacekeeping

- Having a standing UN peacekeeping force selected, trained, and commanded by the United Nations: 64% favor
- Using troops to be part of an international peacekeeping force to stop the killing in Darfur: 56% favor
- Using troops to be part of an international peacekeeping force to enforce a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians: 49% favor
Staying on the Sidelines of Other Nations’ Conflicts
Use of U.S. Troops in China-Taiwan Conflict

![Graph showing the trend of favor and oppose for the use of U.S. troops in China-Taiwan conflict from 1998 to 2010. The graph indicates an increasing trend in opposition over the years.](image-url)
Conflict Between Israel and Iran

If Israel were to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities, Iran were to retaliate against Israel, and the two were to go to war, should the United States bring its military forces into the war on the side of Israel?
The U.S. and Asia
Importance of Other Countries

Rank order of countries as “very important” to the United States in 2008 and 2010 and as “very” and “somewhat” important combined in 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank in 2008 (Very important)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rank in 2010 (Very important)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rank in 2010 (Very and somewhat important combined)</th>
<th>%</th>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>Nigeria</td>
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Importance of China vs. Japan

Percentage who think that Japan or China is more important to the United States than the other in terms of American vital interests today.

![Graph showing percentage of respondents who believe Japan or China is more important to the United States over time.](image-url)
Views of China Catching Up

Will China catch up with U.S. economically?

- China’s economy will grow as large as the U.S. economy
- The U.S. economy will always stay larger than China’s

If it does, would this be:

- Mostly positive: 8
- Equally positive and negative: 50
- Mostly negative: 38
Perceived Threat of China’s Rise

Percentage who see the development of China as a world power as a “critical” threat to the vital interest of the United States in the next ten years.
China as a Military Threat in the Future

- Somewhat worried
- Very worried

- 2010: 48 (Somewhat worried), 17 (Very worried)
- 2008: 46 (Somewhat worried), 25 (Very worried)

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Relations with China

Percentage who think relations with China are improving, worsening, or staying about the same.
How to Deal with the Rise of China

- Undertake friendly cooperation and engagement with China
- Actively work to limit the growth of China’s power

Graph showing data from 2006 to 2010.
Asian Security
Percentage who think the United States should put a higher priority on the following in thinking about U.S. foreign policy in Asia.

- Building up strong relations with traditional allies like South Korea and Japan even if this might diminish our relations with China: 58%
- Building a new partnership with China even if this might diminish our relations with our traditional allies: 31%
Long-term Military Bases

Percentage who think the United States should or should not have long-term military bases in the following countries.

South Korea: Should not have 36%, Should have 62%, Change from 2008 -1%
Germany: Should not have 46%, Should have 52%, Change from 2008 -7%
Afghanistan: Should not have 46%, Should have 52%, Change from 2008 -5%
Iraq: Should not have 48%, Should have 50%, Change from 2008 -7%
Japan: Should not have 48%, Should have 50%, Change from 2008 -8%
Pakistan: Should not have 52%, Should have 45%, Change from 2008 -4%
Turkey: Should not have 53%, Should have 43%, Change from 2008 -7%
The Korean Peninsula
U.S. Policy Toward North Korea

Percentage who agree with each of the following objectives of U.S. Foreign Policy toward North Korea.

- Work to negotiate an end to North Korea’s nuclear capability even if it means accepting the North Korean regime and continuing division of the Peninsula (50%)
- Work to bring about regime change in North Korea even if it may bring instability on the Korean Peninsula and further nuclear proliferation (19%)
- Work to maintain stability on the Korean Peninsula even if it means accepting North Korea’s current regime and nuclear capability (18%)
Talking with North Korea

Percentage who think U.S. government leaders should be ready to meet and talk with leaders of North Korea.

- 2010: 32% should not be, 62% should be
- 2008: 28% should not be, 68% should be
Response to the Attack on a South Korean Naval Ship

Percentage who say each of the following views on the recent torpedoing of a South Korean naval ship forty-six sailors is closest to their own.

The U.S. should strongly criticize North Korea for its attack, but should view it as one in a series of incidents in the North Korea-South Korea conflict over disputed waters.

This was an act of unprovoked aggression and the U.S. should join South Korea in punishing North Korea.
Use of U.S. Troops to Defend South Korea

Percentage who favor or oppose the use of U.S. troops either unilaterally or through the United Nations to defend South Korea if it were attacked/invaded by North Korea.
Maintaining the Alliance if North and South Korea Reunify

Percentage who think the United States should do each of the following if North and South Korea were to reunify as a single nation.

- Maintain its alliance with Korea and keep U.S. ground troops to counterbalance China (43%)
- Maintain its alliance with Korea but remove U.S. ground troops (37%)
- End its alliance with Korea and remove U.S. ground troops (14%)
- Not sure, decline (6%)

With troops to counterbalance China (43%)
Without troops (37%)
U.S. – ROK Trade Issues
U.S. Trade with Other Countries

Percentage who think the following countries practice fair trade or unfair trade with the United States.

- **Canada**: Fair - 81%, Unfair - 11%
- **The countries of the European Union**: Fair - 68%, Unfair - 23%
- **Japan**: Fair - 58%, Unfair - 34%
- **India**: Fair - 49%, Unfair - 41%
- **South Korea**: Fair - 48%, Unfair - 42%
- **Mexico**: Fair - 41%, Unfair - 50%
- **China**: Fair - 29%, Unfair - 63%
Free Trade Agreements

Percentage who say “yes” or “no” when asked if the United States should have a free trade agreement that would lower barriers such as tariffs with the following countries.
END