



The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

PUBLIC OUTLOOK ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICY DIFFERS TWO YEARS INTO THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION COMPARED WITH TWO YEARS INTO THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Most of the public believes the U.S. relationship with traditionally hostile nations such as Russia and North Korea will worsen over the next year, while the U.S. standing in the world and its relationship with traditional allies such as the United Kingdom and the European Union will improve or remain the same.

These are among the findings from a new Pearson Institute/AP-NORC Poll being released in conjunction with the 2022 Pearson Global Forum, an event that will bring together researchers and policymakers to develop strategies to prevent and resolve international conflicts.

These results, coming two years into the Biden administration, stand in stark contrast to those from an AP-NORC survey¹ conducted two years into the Trump administration. That 2018 survey found about half of the public expected our relationship with allies to worsen and just a quarter expected those with traditionally hostile nations to worsen. This shift in opinion is tied to partisanship – Democrats, who four years ago expected worsening conditions, now see stability in the near future, while Republicans, who foresaw improvements in 2018, now expect the current administration to stumble.

Majorities of adults across party lines are largely supportive of several foreign policy goals, including the protection of women and minority groups, the protection of the environment internationally, the promotion of economic



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Three Things You Should Know About the Pearson Institute/AP-NORC Poll Among Adults:

- 1) 78% say relationships with traditional allies will improve or remain the same in the next year compared with 53% who said the same in 2018.
- 2) Three-quarters say that the U.S. government and the United Nations have a responsibility for protecting the rights of women and minority groups around the world.
- 3) 78% believe foreign nations that fail to protect the rights of women and minority groups should not receive financial support from the United States.

¹The June 2018 AP-NORC Center Poll, June 2018, https://apnorc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/June-2018-AP-NORC-Poll-Topline_Release2.pdf

growth worldwide, and especially the maintenance of a strong national defense.

Three-quarters of people say that the U.S. government has a similar degree of responsibility as the United Nations to protect the rights of women and minority groups around the world. But even as most see the United States as responsible for human rights abroad, only about 1 in 5 say the United States stands above all other countries in the world when it comes to protecting the rights of women, racial and ethnic minorities, religious minorities, or LGBTQ people.

Most adults believe nations which regularly fail to protect the rights of women and minority groups should face international repercussions, ranging from exclusion from international sporting events like the Olympics to an end of financial support from the United States.

The nationwide poll was conducted by the Pearson Institute and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research from September 9 to 12, 2022, using AmeriSpeak®, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Online and telephone interviews using landlines and cell phones were conducted with 1,003 adults. The margin of sampling error is +/- 4.0 percentage points.

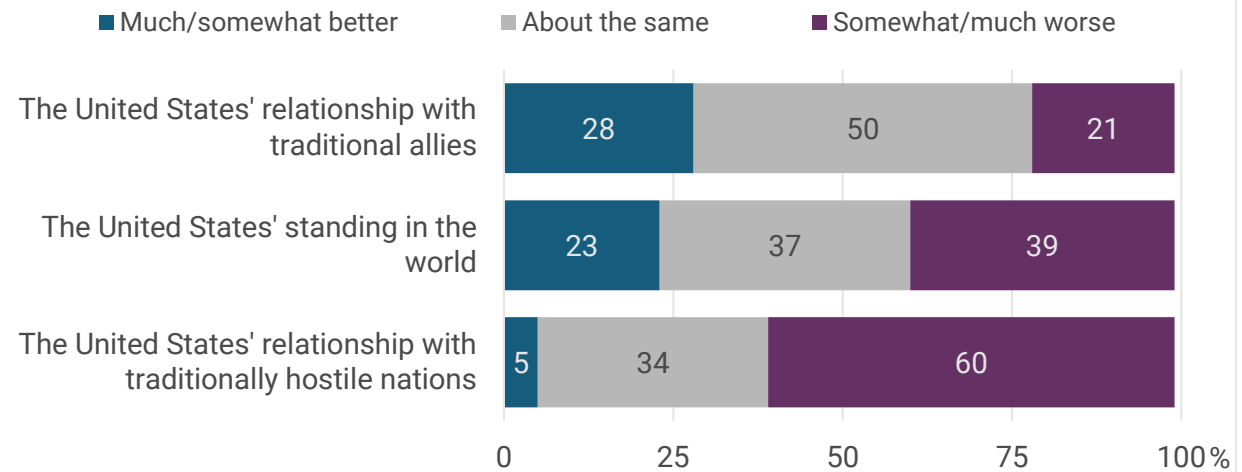
TWO YEARS INTO THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION, THE PUBLIC SEES STABILITY AMONG INTERNATIONAL ALLIES AND WORSENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH HOSTILE NATIONS.

With the midterm elections quickly approaching, adults are split on how the standing of the United States in the world will change in the next year. Thirty-nine percent expect the country's standing in the world to get worse, 37% expect it to hold steady, and 23% expect it will improve.

When it comes to U.S. interactions with other nations, however, the public is less divided. About half see relationships with allies like Canada, the United Kingdom, and the European Union staying about the same, while relationships with traditionally hostile nations like Russia and North Korea deteriorate over the coming year.

Many expect U.S. relationships with hostile nations to deteriorate over the coming year.

Percent of adults



Questions: In the next year, do you think each of the following will get better, get worse, or stay about the same?

Source: Pearson Institute/AP-NORC poll conducted September 9-12, 2022, with 1,003 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



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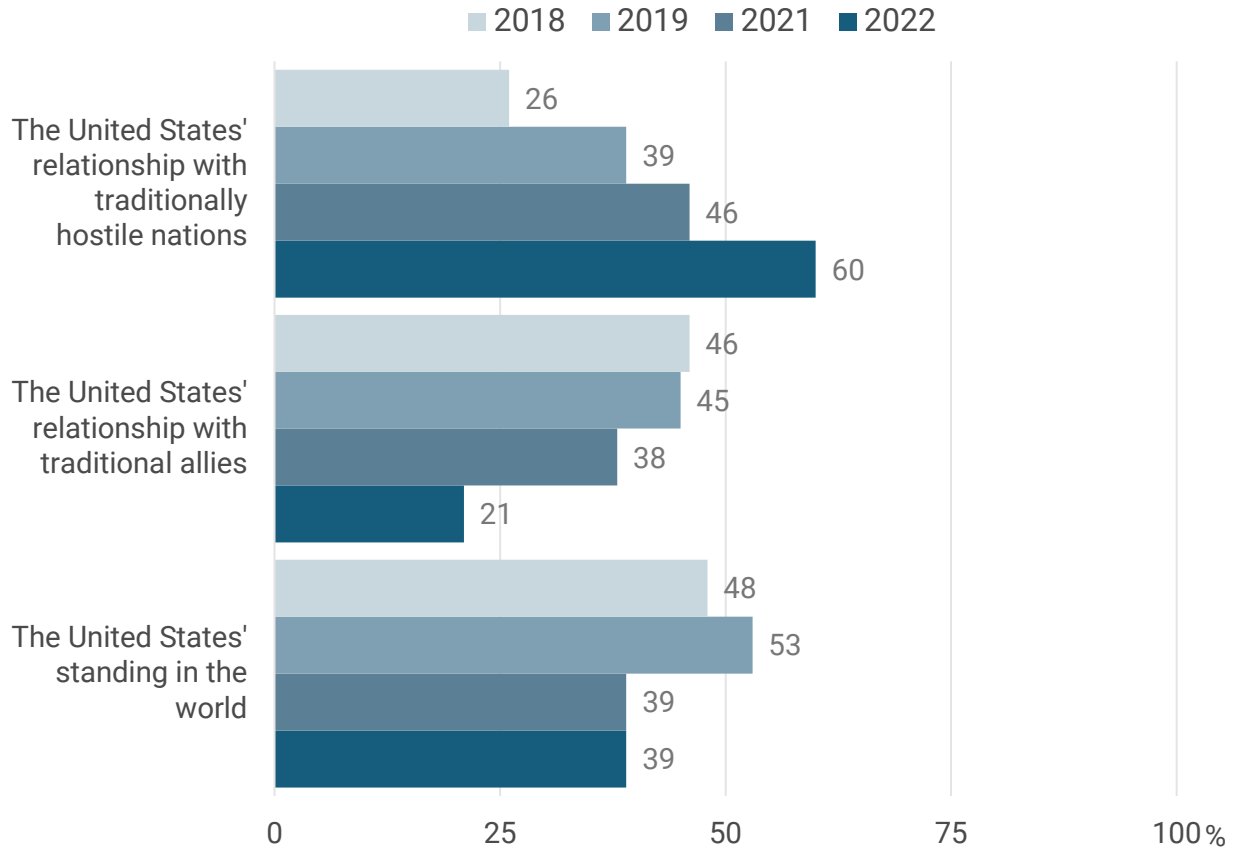
This foreign policy outlook is influenced by partisanship and age. Those age 50 and older are more optimistic than younger adults when it comes to expecting the United States to improve its standing over the next year (29% to 17%) and improving its relationships with allies (35% to 21%).

Democrats are more likely than Republicans and independents to expect an improvement in America's global standing (33% to 17% and 9%, respectively) and are also more likely to expect improved relations with allies over the coming year (41% to 17% and 18%). Republican voters are more likely than either independents or Democrats to expect relations with traditionally hostile nations to worsen over the coming year (69% to 56% and 54%, respectively).

Pessimism around America's global standing has remained constant at 39% since 2020 but is down dramatically from surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019, which found 48% and 53% of adults, respectively, predicting a worsening standing. However, adults' opinions on U.S. relationships with allies and traditionally hostile nations have changed since 2018. More adults think U.S. relationships with traditionally hostile nations will worsen: 60% in the latest poll, up from 26% expressing this opinion four years ago. Just 21% predict a worsening of relations with U.S. allies in the next year, down from 46% expecting worsening relations in 2018.

The public is growing more pessimistic about our relationships with hostile nations, but less concerned about allies.

Percent of adults who say worse in the next year



Questions: In the next year, do you think each of the following will get better, get worse, or stay about the same?

Source: Pearson Institute/AP-NORC polls conducted 2018-2022, with adults age 18 and older nationwide.

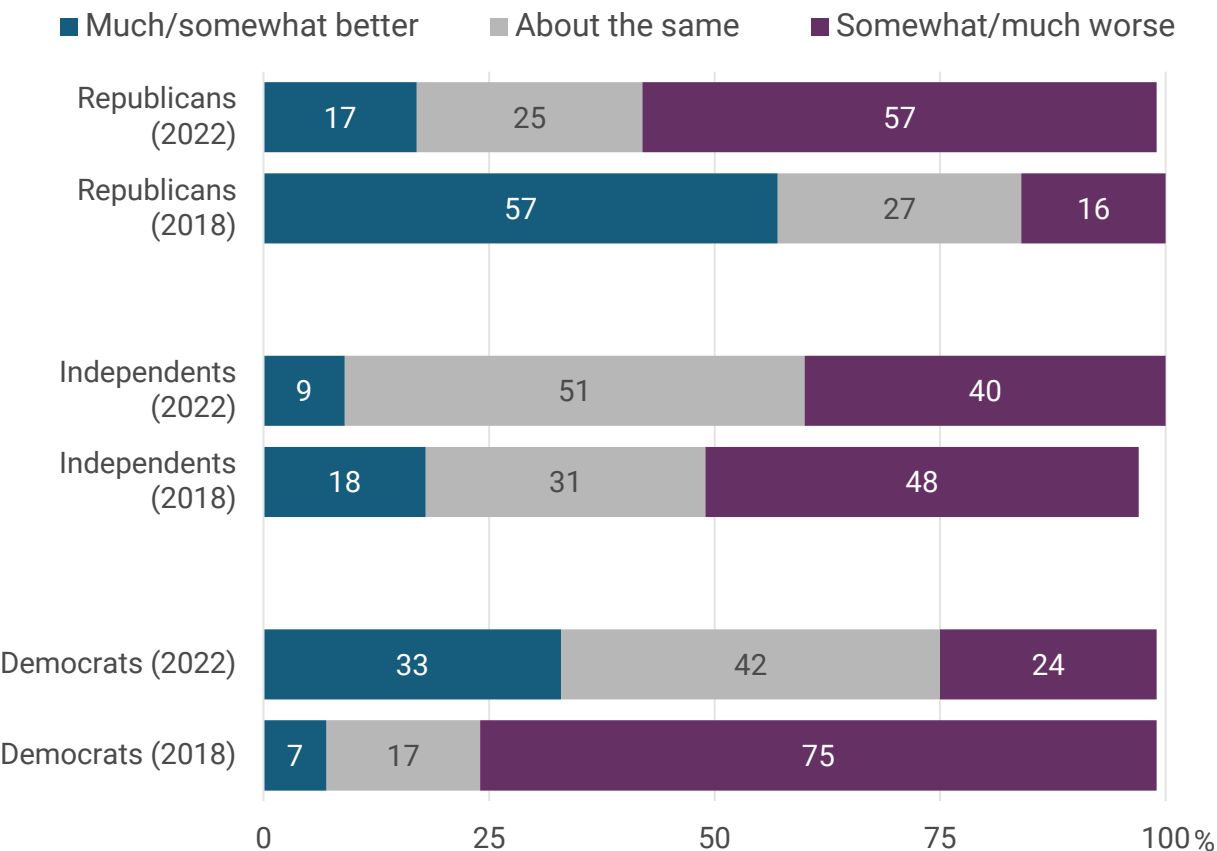


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Much of the change between 2018 and 2022 can be attributed to shifting partisan opinions under different presidential administrations. Compared to four years ago, Republicans have shifted their outlook across each issue from likely to improve to likely to worsen, while Democrats have shifted from likely to worsen to likely to remain the same.

Partisans believe that U.S. standing in the world will improve when their party holds the White House.

Percent of adults



Questions: In the next year, do you think each of the following will get better, get worse, or stay about the same? [The United States' standing in the world]

Source: Pearson Institute/AP-NORC polls conducted 2018 and 2022, with adults age 18 and older nationwide.



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PUBLIC ATTITUDES OF U.S. ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS TIED TO PARTISANSHIP AND RACE.

There is no public consensus about the role of the United States in solving the world’s problems. About a third of adults (34%) think the United States should take a less active role, 21% hope for a more active role, and 43% say that the current international role of the United States is about right. In 2019², the public was even more divided with 30% seeking a more active role, 31% a less active role, and 37% saying their role at that time was about right.

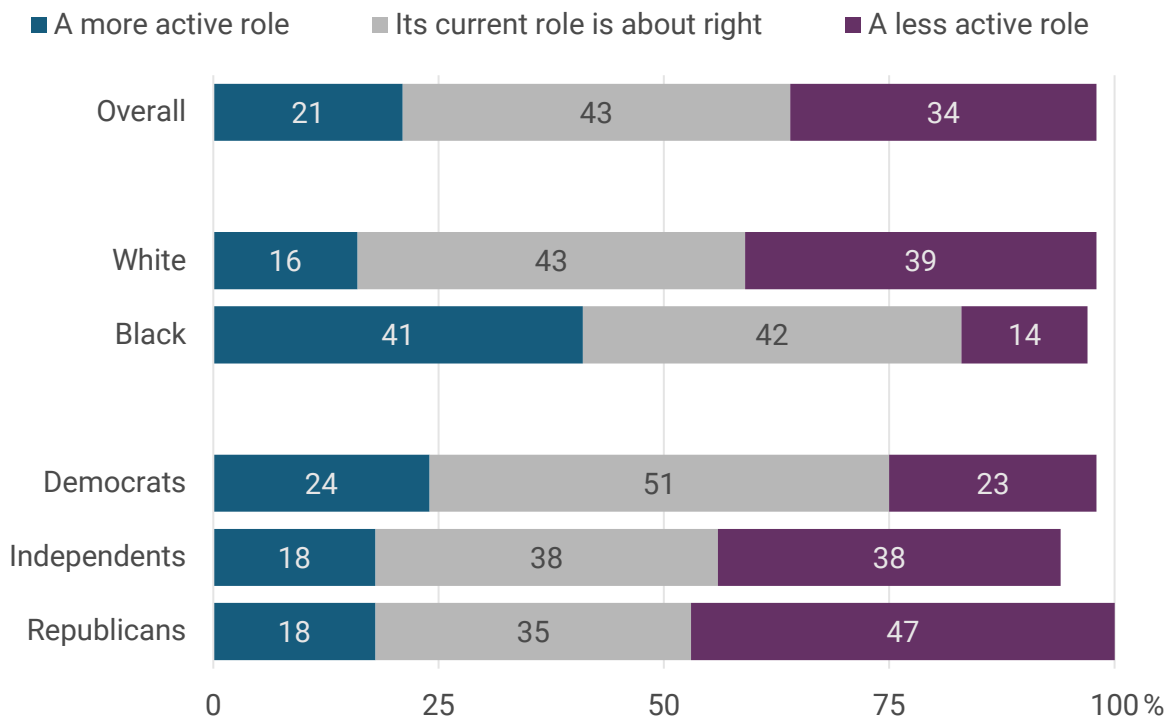
Partisanship and race are tied to views about the role the United States should take in the world. Black adults are more likely than white adults to believe that the United States should take a more active role in world affairs, 41% to 16%.

² “Foreign Policy and Threats to the United States”, AP-NORC Center (January 2019) <https://apnorc.org/projects/foreign-policy-and-threats-to-the-united-states/>

Both Republicans (47%) and independents (38%) are more likely than Democrats (23%) to advocate for a less active role. Democrats are more likely than independents and Republicans to say that the current role of the United States internationally is about right (51% vs. 38% and 35%).

While many adults think the country's current role in world affairs is about right, Democrats and Black adults seek a more active role.

Percent of adults



Questions: Do you think the United States should take a more or less active role solving the world's problems, or is its current role about right?

Source: Pearson Institute/AP-NORC poll conducted September 9-12, 2022, with 1,003 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



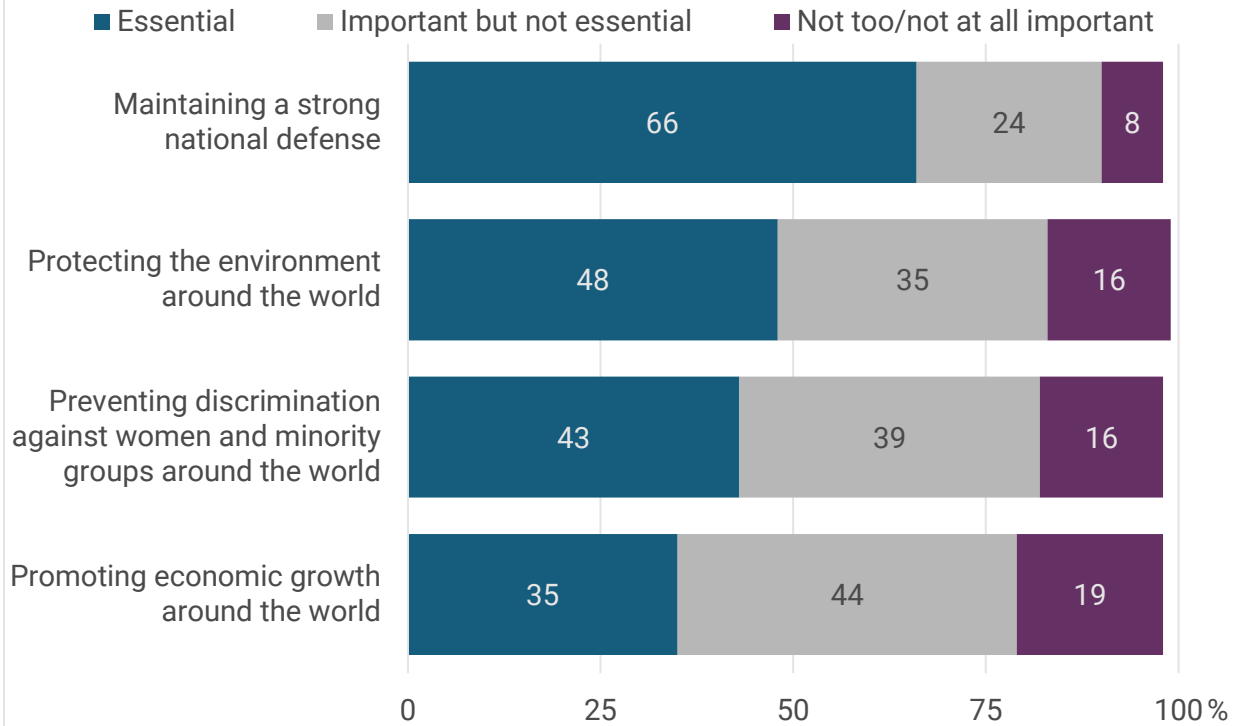
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MANY VIEW ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND PREVENTING RACIAL AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION AS ESSENTIAL FOREIGN POLICY GOALS, THOUGH A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE RANKS AS MOST IMPORTANT.

The maintenance of a strong national defense is viewed as an essential foreign policy priority by two-thirds of the public. Just about half say the same about environmental protection. The prevention of discrimination against women and minority groups and promoting economic growth are viewed as essential priorities by fewer people, though still more than a third agree they are high priorities.

While most support various foreign policy goals, U.S. adults split on which foreign policy goals are essential or just important.

Percent of adults



Questions: How important should each of the following foreign policy goals be for the United States?

Source: Pearson Institute/AP-NORC poll conducted September 9-12, 2022, with 1,003 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



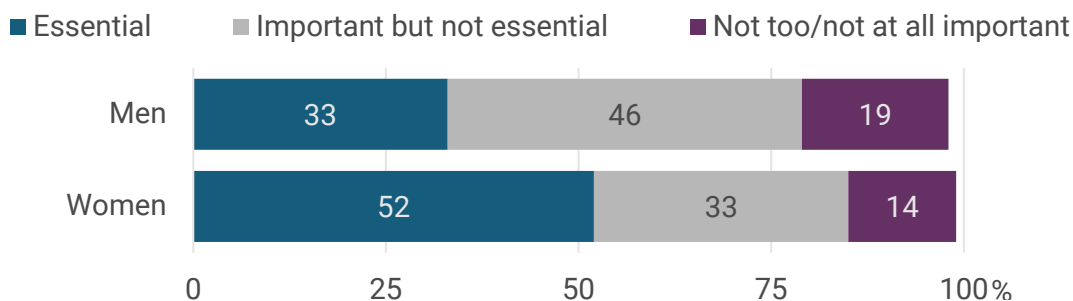
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However, there are some differences in attitudes about foreign policy goals related to gender, partisanship, and age.

About half of women believe that the prevention of discrimination against women and minority groups is an essential American foreign policy goal, while a third of men say the same.

Women are more likely than men to consider global prevention of gender and racial discrimination an essential U.S. foreign policy goal.

Percent of adults



Questions: How important should each of the following foreign policy goals be for the United States? [Preventing discrimination against women and minority groups around the world]

Source: Pearson Institute/AP-NORC poll conducted September 9-12, 2022, with 1,003 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



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Both Republicans (78%) and independents (67%) are more likely than Democrats (55%) to say the maintenance of a strong national defense is an essential goal.

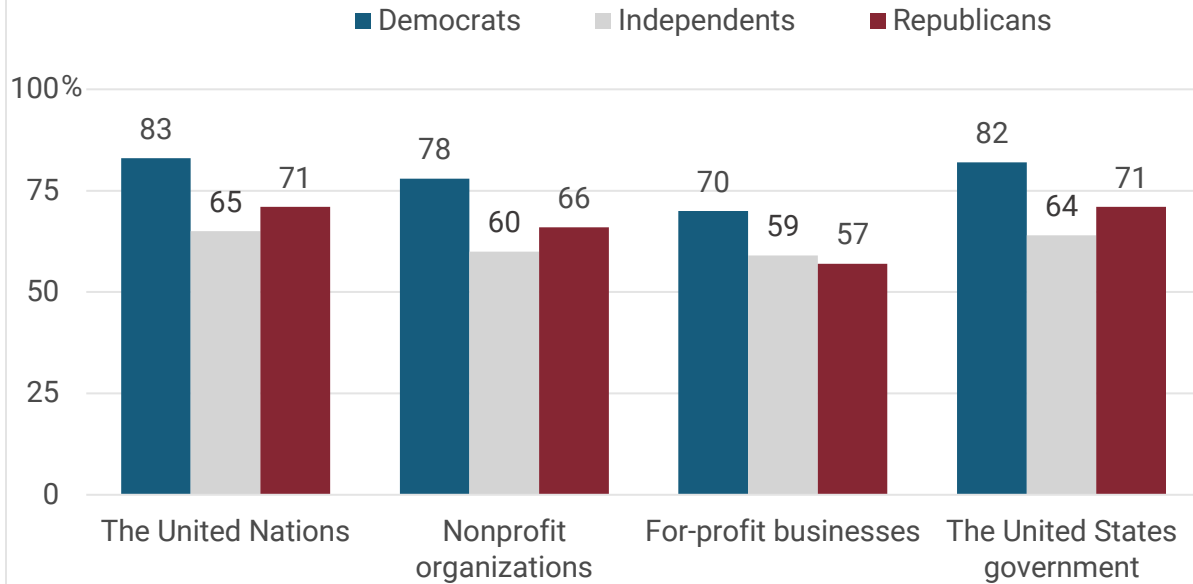
About three-quarters (76%) of adults 50 and older also say the maintenance of a strong national defense is essential, compared to 57% of younger adults.

THE PUBLIC SEES A GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE UNITED STATES TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND MINORITY GROUPS, AND MANY SEE ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT WITHIN THE UNITED STATES.

Most adults in the United States attribute some degree of responsibility for protecting the rights of women and minority groups around the world to the U.S. government (75%), the United Nations (75%), nonprofit organizations (70%), and for-profit businesses (63%). There are small differences along lines of age and educational attainment, with college graduates significantly more likely to say that the United Nations and United States have this responsibility: 83% to 71% for the former and 80% to 72% for the latter. But the largest divide is partisan: Democrats are more likely than independents and Republicans to say each entity has some level of responsibility.

Democrats are most likely to say international actors have a responsibility to protect the rights of women and minority groups.

Percent of adults who say a lot/some responsibility



Questions: How much responsibility do each of the following have for protecting the rights of women and minority groups around the world?

Source: Pearson Institute/AP-NORC poll conducted September 9-12, 2022, with 1,003 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



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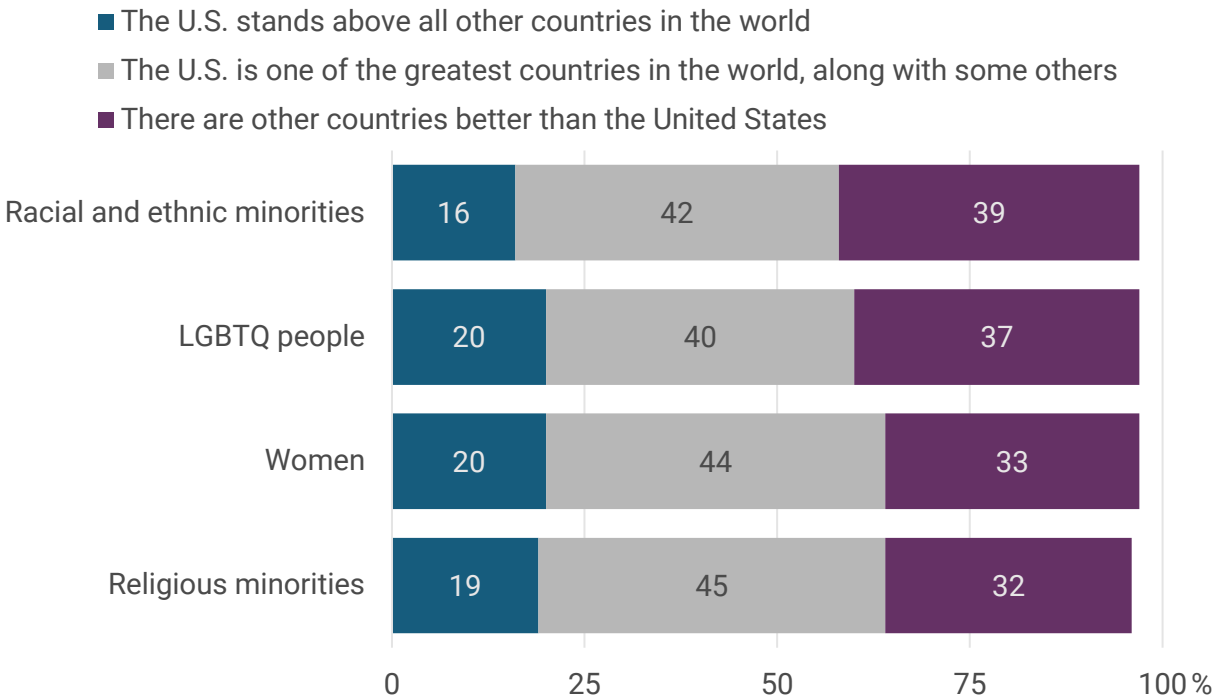


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Despite this responsibility to protect women and minority groups from discrimination, most adults do not see the United States as a standout nation in doing so. For example, when it comes to the protection of racial and ethnic minority groups, just 16% of adults think the United States stands above all other countries in doing so well. The rest of the public is divided – 42% think the United States is one of the best along with other countries, and 39% think there are other countries doing a better job.

Many see the United States as one of the greatest countries at protecting rights of various groups, though many say others are better.

Percent of adults



Questions: Thinking about how well the United States protects the rights of each of the following groups, which of these statements best describes your opinion?

Source: Pearson Institute/AP-NORC poll conducted September 9-12, 2022, with 1,003 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



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Those with a college degree, Democrats, and white adults are each more likely to hold more negative views of how well the United States protects the rights of these groups.

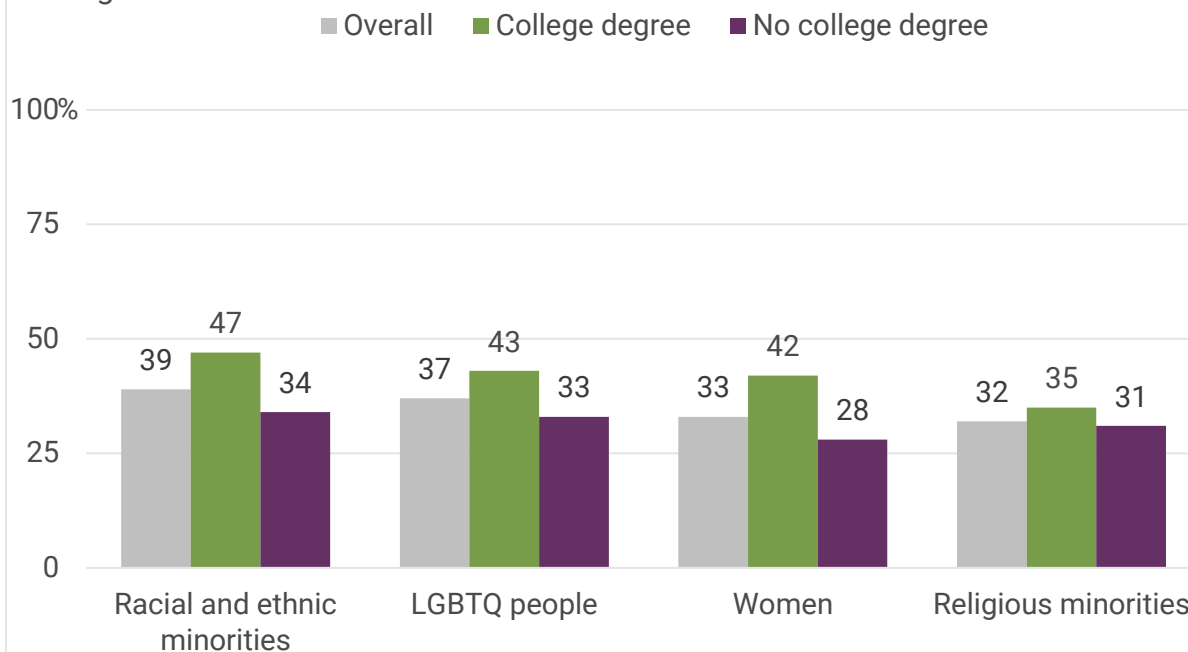
Adults with college degrees are more likely than those without to say there are other countries better than the United States in protecting the rights of racial and ethnic minority groups, women, and LGBTQ people.

Regarding protections for all four groups, Democrats are less likely than Republicans to say the United States stands above all other countries and are most likely to say that there are other countries better than the United States.

White adults are also more likely than Black adults to say that there are other countries better than the United States when it comes to protecting the rights of racial and ethnic minorities (39% to 26%).

College graduates are more likely to say that other countries are better than the United States at protecting the rights of oppressed groups.

Percent of adults who say there are other countries better than the U.S. at protecting the rights of ...



Questions: Thinking about how well the United States protects the rights of each of the following groups, which of these statements best describes your opinion? [There are other countries better than the United States]

Source: Pearson Institute/AP-NORC poll conducted September 9-12, 2022, with 1,003 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



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MAJORITIES BELIEVE FAILING TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND MINORITY GROUPS SHOULD RESULT IN INTERNATIONAL CONSEQUENCES.

Most adults think countries that regularly fail to protect the rights of women and minority groups should not be allowed to join international organizations like the United Nations, to receive aid from international organizations like the World Bank, to participate in international sporting events like the Olympics, or to receive financial support from the United States.

Most say countries that fail to protect the rights of women and minority groups do not deserve a seat at the international table nor foreign aid.

Percent of adults who say should not be allowed



Questions: Should countries that regularly fail to protect the rights of women and minority groups be allowed to...

Source: Pearson Institute/AP-NORC poll conducted September 9-12, 2022, with 1,003 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



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Younger adults – those age 18 to 49 – as well as women and college graduates are more opposed to U.N. membership by offending states than their older, male, and non-college educated counterparts. Partisanship comes most into play when considering the inclusion of these states in international sporting events such as the Olympics: just 29% of Democrats say such nations should be allowed to participate, while 38% of independents and Republicans would allow them to take part.

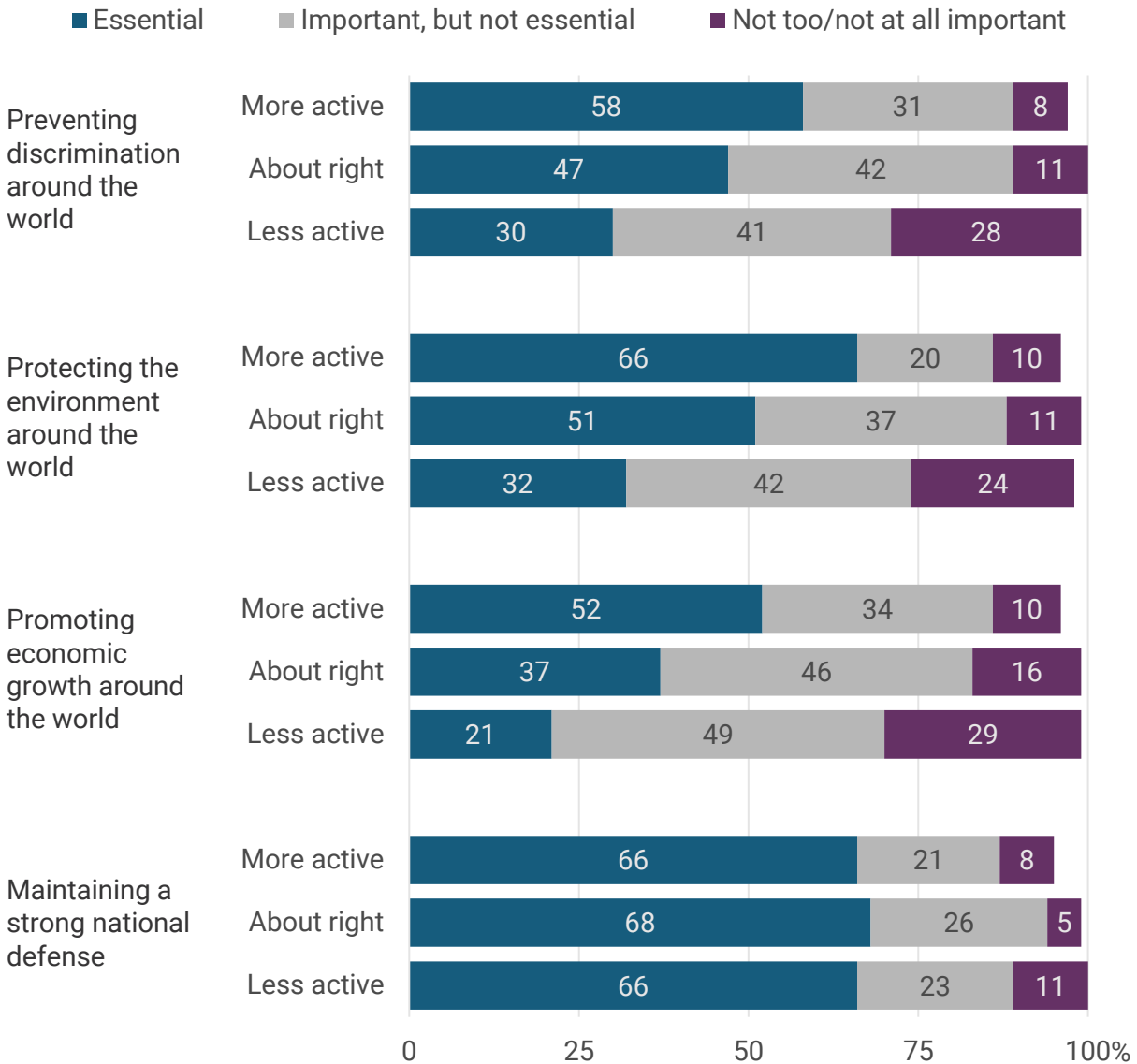
When it comes to nations receiving aid from the United States, the most significant demographic difference is along racial lines. White adults are far less likely than Black adults to favor allowing states that fail to protect the rights of women and minority groups to receive aid from the U.S. government (14% to 30%).

THE PUBLIC DIFFERS IN THEIR VIEWS OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS BASED ON HOW ACTIVE THEY WANT THE UNITED STATES TO BE ON THE WORLD STAGE.

Those who want the United States to play a more active role in world affairs are more likely to advocate for preventing discrimination against women and minority groups around the world, for fighting to protect the environment internationally, and to encourage economic growth around the world. There are no statistically significant differences when it comes to the maintenance of a strong national defense.

Those who seek an active U.S. role on the world stage more strongly believe in preventing discrimination, protecting the environment, and promoting economic growth globally.

Percent of adults



Questions: Do you think the United States should take a more or less active role solving the world's problems, or is its current role about right?

How important should each of the following foreign policy goals be for the United States?

Source: Pearson Institute/AP-NORC poll conducted September 9-12, 2022, with 1,003 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



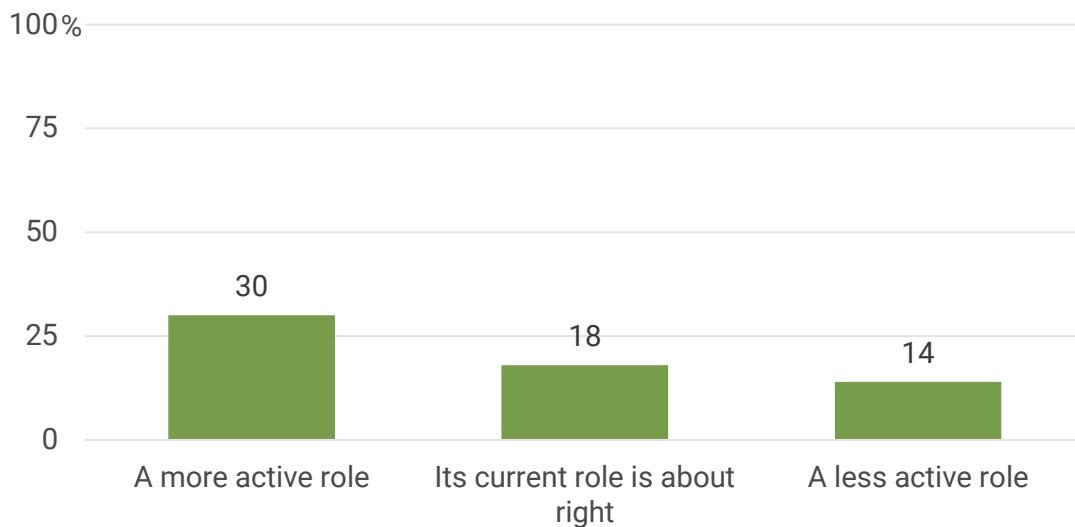
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Those who want the United States to play a less active role in world affairs are also less likely to say that the United Nations, the U.S. government, or for-profit businesses have a responsibility to protect women and minority groups abroad. However, even among this group, two-thirds (67%) say the United States has some responsibility.

Adults in favor of a more active United States in international affairs are more likely to believe that U.S. foreign aid should be available to nations that frequently infringe on the rights of women and minority groups. About a third (30%) of this more interventionist group were willing to say the United States should continue to offer this aid, compared to 14% of those who say the United States should play a less active role.

Those who believe in a more active U.S. internationally are more willing to allow nations to receive U.S. financial support even if they regularly fail to protect the rights of women & minority groups.

Percent of adults who say countries that regularly fail to protect the rights of women and minority groups should be allowed to receive financial support from the United States



Questions: Do you think the United States should take a more or less active role solving the world's problems, or is its current role about right?
Should countries that regularly fail to protect the rights of women and minority groups be allowed to... [Receive financial support from the U.S.]

Source: Pearson Institute/AP-NORC poll conducted September 9-12, 2022, with 1,003 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



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STUDY METHODOLOGY

This study was funded by the Pearson Institute and conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Staff from the Pearson Institute and The AP-NORC Center collaborated on all aspects of the study.

Data were collected using the AmeriSpeak Omnibus®, a monthly multi-client survey using NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame or a secondary national address frame, both with over 97% coverage of all U.S. addresses, and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, or field interviewers (face to face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings population.

Interviews for this survey were conducted between September 9 and September 12, 2022, with adults age 18 and older representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 1,003 completed the survey—954 via the web and 49 via telephone. Panel members were invited by email or by phone from an NORC telephone interviewer. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents were offered a small monetary incentive (\$3) for completing the survey.

The final stage completion rate is 17.1%, the weighted household panel recruitment rate is 20.8%, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 78.8%, for a cumulative response rate of 2.8%. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error and there may be other unmeasured error in this or any other survey.

Quality assurance checks were conducted to ensure data quality. In total, 53 interviews were removed for nonresponse to at least 50% of the questions asked of them, for completing the survey in less than one-third the median interview time for the full sample, or for straight-lining all grid questions asked of them. These interviews were excluded from the data file prior to weighting.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any non-coverage or under and oversampling resulting from the study specific sample design. Poststratification variables included age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity, and education. Weighting variables were obtained from the 2022 Current Population Survey. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of adults age 18 and over.

The sample is also weighted to match the average of self-identified party identification in the previous two waves of the AmeriSpeak Omnibus survey and this current survey.

For more information, visit www.apnorc.org or email info@apnorc.org.

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ABOUT THE ASSOCIATED PRESS-NORC CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH

Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

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- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest objective and nonpartisan research institutions in the world. www.norc.org

The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals. In its 10 years, The AP-NORC Center has conducted more than 250 studies exploring the critical issues facing the public, covering topics like health care, the economy, COVID-19, trust in media, and more.

Learn more at www.apnorc.org.

ABOUT THE PEARSON INSTITUTE

The Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts at the University of Chicago promotes the ongoing discussion, understanding and resolution of global conflicts, and contributes to the advancement of a global society more at peace. Established through a grant from The Thomas L. Pearson and The Pearson Family Members Foundation, and led by Institute Director James Robinson, co-author of *Why Nations Fail* and *The Narrow Corridor*, the Institute achieves this by employing an analytically rigorous, data-driven approach and global perspective to understanding violent conflict. It is global in its scope, activities, and footprint. Attracting students and scholars from around the world, its faculty is in the field studying conflicts – and approaches to conflict resolution – in Nigeria, Colombia, and Afghanistan, to name just a few.

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