



PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Americans on NATO

Survey on Collective Security and Mutual Defense

Fielded by: Nielsen Scarborough **Fielding Dates:** January 16 – February 11, 2019
Total Sample: 2,416 registered voters; **Sample size:** Sample A: 1,209; Sample B: 1207
Margin of Error: Full Sample: +/- 2.0%; Sample A/B: +/- 2.8%

Notes: For the survey, the sample was drawn and divided into two half-samples.

Text in [brackets] was not presented to respondents.

[FULL SAMPLE]

As you may know, after World War II, the United States together with other countries set up a number of international agreements and institutions with most of the major countries in the world. The aim was to enable countries to cooperate in an effort to preserve peace, promote international trade, lessen poverty through economic development, reduce hunger, respond to disasters, help refugees, promote health, and further human rights and democracy.

The most prominent institution has been the United Nations and its related global agencies, such as the World Food Program and, more recently, the World Trade Organization. But such agreements and institutions also include regional alliances like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or NATO and regional trade agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA.

Many people think that these agreements and institutions are still valuable and important, have served the U.S. well, and should be maintained even if they require some cost. But, other people think they are no longer useful and the U.S. should disengage from them so that the U.S. is freer to pursue its interests independently.

In this survey, we will give you some background on some of the guiding principles of these agreements and institutions, and have you evaluate arguments for the U.S. maintaining or disengaging from them.

****Questions 1 through 5 held for future release.***

[Alliances—Mutual Defense Treaties]

Closely related to the idea of collective security is the idea of mutual defense treaties or alliances. When nations enter into an alliance, they promise that if any one of them is attacked, all of the other members of the alliance will band together and defend that nation. While collective security is a general principle, a mutual defense treaty is a firm commitment to help defend another country or group of countries in the event that they come under attack. An attack on one is considered an attack on all.

We will now evaluate some of America's alliances. Some people believe that these alliances continue to serve U.S. interests and values, while others think that they have grown obsolete.

[NATO]

America's most significant alliance is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or NATO. This includes 27 European nations, and Canada as well as the U.S. It was formed after World War II with 15 members in response to the concern that Europe might be attacked by the Soviet Union. Later, additional countries were added that were in Eastern Europe and had originally been part of an alliance with the Soviet Union, including Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and others.

The NATO charter includes a key section, called Article 5, which says that NATO members regard an attack on any member as an attack on all and that all members will defend any member that is attacked.

While a key focus is the potential for an attack by Russia, NATO has addressed other issues as well. Right now, there are several NATO countries participating in the operation in Afghanistan, in addition to the U.S.

The military forces of the NATO countries are closely linked, have joint command structures, and do military exercises together to ensure that they will be able to work together effectively if it is necessary to defend any of the members.

The U.S. keeps about 65,000 troops stationed in Europe to help defend Europe if necessary and to send a signal of its commitment to help defend Europe. The European members have 1.7 million troops stationed in Europe. Currently, there is some debate about whether the U.S. should continue to be part of NATO.

Here is an argument in favor of continuing to be part of NATO:

Q6. While Russia is not as powerful as it was during the Cold War years, it still poses a major threat to the U.S., to its allies in Europe, and to other areas of the world as well. Russian president Vladimir Putin openly expresses regret that the Soviet Union ended and clearly has ambitions to expand Russian power. Russia has a major nuclear arsenal of over 6,000 weapons as well as major conventional military forces. Russia has used its military forces in eastern Ukraine and Georgia and annexed Crimea. It is simply unacceptable for Russia to come to dominate Europe as it seems to want to do or to expand its power in other areas of the world as well. European countries have 1.7 million troops stationed in Europe and it's very much in the U.S. interest to have those troops committed to the shared goal of containing Russia.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	50.3%	34.8%	85.1%	11.0%	2.9%	13.9%	1.1%
GOP	39.8%	42.3%	82.1%	13.4%	3.3%	16.7%	1.2%
Dem.	62.6%	26.5%	89.1%	7.7%	2.1%	9.8%	1.0%
Indep.	38.2%	41.4%	79.6%	15.3%	4.1%	19.4%	1.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	43.6%	35.0%	78.6%	16.8%	3.0%	19.8%	1.6%
Red	48.3%	36.9%	85.2%	11.5%	2.8%	14.3%	0.5%
Lean red	47.2%	37.7%	84.9%	12.2%	1.4%	13.6%	1.6%
Lean blue	58.4%	28.4%	86.8%	8.7%	4.1%	12.8%	0.5%
Blue	45.9%	40.7%	86.6%	8.7%	3.4%	12.1%	1.2%
Very blue	60.2%	29.6%	89.8%	6.5%	2.9%	9.4%	0.9%

Here is a counter argument:

Q7. Why exactly does the U.S. have to make this expensive commitment to defend Europe? The only real possible threat is from Russia and the idea that Russia might invade Europe is far-fetched and simply out of date. Furthermore, Europe is far wealthier than Russia and already spends more than twice as much on its military than Russia. Why exactly do they need us? Remember, we are promising to be ready to go to war with Russia--which could well end up escalating to an all-out nuclear war--if any NATO member gets into conflict with Russia. We can't be sure that some country might be unnecessarily provocative, especially if they are so confident that we will simply back them up. Would we be ready to go to war over some little NATO country like Lithuania? If not, then we have no business being in this outdated alliance.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	10.4%	29.4%	39.8%	31.1%	28.6%	59.7%	0.5%
GOP	15.1%	36.2%	51.3%	33.0%	15.3%	48.3%	0.3%
Dem.	5.9%	22.5%	28.4%	30.0%	40.7%	70.7%	0.8%
Indep.	12.1%	32.9%	45.0%	29.3%	25.6%	54.9%	0.1%

Cook's PVI (D-R)

Very red	11.5%	32.3%	43.8%	31.4%	24.6%	56.0%	0.2%
Red	9.6%	31.0%	40.6%	33.3%	25.8%	59.1%	0.4%
Lean red	10.3%	33.5%	43.8%	30.2%	25.7%	55.9%	0.3%
Lean blue	12.6%	23.9%	36.5%	32.3%	30.5%	62.8%	0.7%
Blue	9.3%	27.6%	36.9%	34.7%	27.3%	62.0%	1.1%
Very blue	9.4%	27.6%	37.0%	23.7%	38.9%	62.6%	0.4%

Here is another argument in favor of the U.S. continuing to be part of NATO:

Q8. Having U.S. and European countries tied closely together in a common bond is critical and NATO is an important means to that end. They are our primary partners in upholding principles of freedom and democracy in the world. We have a shared interest in maintaining an open trading system in the world as well as the one trillion dollars-worth of trade with Europe. Besides protecting Europe, NATO members participate in other military efforts that are important to the U.S., such as the operation in Afghanistan. Having our militaries highly integrated through the NATO structure makes such joint action more feasible and effective. NATO is not a burden on the U.S.--rather it is a partnership that allows us to share the effort to keep the world safe and prosperous.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	44.8%	37.2%	82.0%	11.3%	3.2%	14.5%	3.5%
GOP	29.5%	45.3%	74.8%	16.6%	5.1%	21.7%	3.5%
Dem.	60.0%	28.8%	88.8%	6.3%	1.7%	8.0%	3.2%
Indep.	37.0%	42.7%	79.7%	12.8%	2.6%	15.4%	5.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	39.4%	39.3%	78.7%	15.3%	2.2%	17.5%	3.7%
Red	44.1%	36.0%	80.1%	12.1%	4.0%	16.1%	3.8%
Lean red	45.3%	39.7%	85.0%	10.3%	1.5%	11.8%	3.2%
Lean blue	46.5%	37.7%	84.2%	9.8%	3.1%	12.9%	2.9%
Blue	44.7%	38.2%	82.9%	8.3%	4.6%	12.9%	4.1%
Very blue	50.1%	31.3%	81.4%	11.0%	4.0%	15.0%	3.5%

Here is a counter argument:

Q9. The ties between Europe and the U.S. are strong and multifaceted due to our shared values and interests. We can pursue those values and interests in many ways. We do not need to have a military alliance for that purpose. Having a military alliance that is clearly targeted at Russia is provocative. The fact that NATO keeps expanding by bringing in more and more countries that used to be allied with Russia, drawing closer to the Russian border, is destabilizing. Russia perceives it as a threat and as violating the understanding between the U.S. and Russia that occurred at the end of the Cold War. This sense of threat is a key reason that Putin and his aggressive stance have been elevated in Russia. If we were to phase out NATO, relations with Russia would likely improve and whatever threat is there would diminish.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	9.7%	25.6%	35.3%	34.1%	28.0%	62.1%	2.7%
GOP	11.4%	30.4%	41.8%	38.1%	17.8%	55.9%	2.3%
Dem.	7.3%	20.7%	28.0%	30.5%	38.9%	69.4%	2.7%
Indep.	13.2%	28.1%	41.3%	34.7%	20.1%	54.8%	3.9%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	10.6%	28.8%	39.4%	30.7%	26.9%	57.6%	3.0%
Red	6.4%	29.2%	35.6%	35.2%	26.3%	61.5%	2.9%
Lean red	9.3%	27.3%	36.6%	34.1%	27.7%	61.8%	1.5%
Lean blue	12.4%	24.4%	36.8%	31.2%	29.8%	61.0%	2.2%

Blue	8.7%	23.6%	32.3%	41.3%	23.3%	64.6%	3.1%
Very blue	10.8%	20.1%	30.9%	31.2%	34.9%	66.1%	3.0%

Q10. So, in conclusion, do you think the U.S. should or should not continue to be part of the NATO military alliance?

	Should	Should Not	Ref/DK
National	82.8%	16.3%	0.9%
GOP	76.5%	21.9%	1.5%
Dem.	89.5%	10.4%	0.1%
Indep.	78.0%	20.1%	1.8%
Cook's PVI (D-R)			
Very red	77.5%	21.8%	0.7%
Red	81.3%	17.4%	1.3%
Lean red	82.4%	16.7%	0.9%
Lean blue	83.1%	15.6%	1.3%
Blue	86.9%	12.5%	0.7%
Very blue	85.7%	13.6%	0.7%

[NATO and National Spending Levels on Defense]

For some years now there has been a dispute between the U.S. and other members of NATO about their level of defense spending. The U.S. has complained that it spends about 4-5% of the U.S. economy on its military, while European nations generally spend about 2% or less, some as low as 1%.

Europeans point out that the amount that the U.S. spends is not only in Europe but also in Asia and in the U.S. homeland, and that Europe already spends twice as much as Russia, which is NATO's primary focus.

Nonetheless, in 2014, the European NATO partners agreed to set a goal to increase their defense spending to at least 2% of their budget. There have been some increases, but only 4 of the 26 European countries have met this goal, though several more are expected to reach this level within the year. One of the largest countries, Germany, is unlikely to reach it at any point in the near future.

There is some debate about what the U.S. should do about this situation. Three possible approaches have been proposed.

One view is that the U.S. should:

- Press European countries to spend more on their military and say that if they do not the U.S. will disengage from Europe militarily and possibly withdraw from NATO

Here is an argument in favor of this idea:

Q11. It is really time for the Europeans to stop taking advantage of the U.S. We already made a big effort freeing them from Hitler. And then we defended them through the Cold War. They are certainly wealthy enough to do their share. If they do not step up and do their share, we should be ready to start disengaging militarily from Europe and to tell the Europeans that we are ready to withdraw from NATO. If they do not respond accordingly, we need to follow through and start disengaging. We need to remember that we no longer face the Soviet Union; Russia is much weaker militarily and there is little evidence that it has any goal to conquer Europe. So, NATO is really pretty obsolete. If the Europeans are not ready to do their part, we need to be ready to gradually disengage and let them fend for themselves.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	18.2%	37.3%	55.5%	26.3%	17.2%	43.5%	1.1%
GOP	29.7%	46.7%	76.4%	18.2%	4.5%	22.7%	0.9%
Dem.	9.4%	29.3%	38.7%	32.8%	27.5%	60.3%	1.0%
Indep.	14.5%	37.2%	51.7%	27.5%	18.9%	46.4%	1.9%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	20.0%	40.9%	60.9%	22.3%	14.9%	37.2%	2.0%
Red	17.2%	42.2%	59.4%	23.7%	16.2%	39.9%	0.8%
Lean red	20.2%	40.4%	60.6%	25.6%	13.9%	39.5%	0.0%
Lean blue	17.8%	34.8%	52.6%	27.8%	19.5%	47.3%	0.0%
Blue	15.6%	39.8%	55.4%	26.8%	15.3%	42.1%	2.4%
Very blue	18.2%	24.8%	43.0%	31.1%	24.8%	55.9%	1.3%

Another idea is that the U.S. should:

- Press European countries to spend more on their military, but NOT threaten to disengage from Europe or withdraw from NATO.

Here is an argument in favor of this idea:

Q12. The U.S. should not make threats that it is not ready to follow through on. And it is out of the question for the U.S. to actually withdraw from Europe. NATO has been a bulwark of our security and ties us together with Europe in many other important ways as well. Russia these days, under Putin, has shown expansionist aspirations, like his annexing of Crimea. We should urge the Europeans to do more but suggesting that NATO is obsolete or suggesting that we might disengage from Europe is a dangerous approach that can backfire in a big way. Russia will be emboldened and some European countries might start pulling closer to Russia as we have already seen with some Eastern European countries. We can afford the military that we have and the investment we make in NATO. It is better for us to stand together with our European allies than to stand alone. The benefits far outweigh the costs.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	36.5%	43.4%	79.9%	14.5%	3.6%	18.1%	1.9%
GOP	26.2%	45.9%	72.1%	21.7%	4.7%	26.4%	1.5%
Dem.	47.2%	39.8%	87.0%	8.6%	2.4%	11.0%	2.1%
Indep.	29.9%	48.7%	78.6%	14.1%	4.3%	18.4%	3.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	30.4%	42.0%	72.4%	22.5%	2.2%	24.7%	3.0%
Red	36.4%	46.6%	83.0%	11.8%	4.5%	16.3%	0.8%
Lean red	35.1%	44.4%	79.5%	13.5%	6.0%	19.5%	1.1%
Lean blue	39.3%	45.0%	84.3%	12.2%	2.7%	14.9%	0.9%
Blue	37.3%	43.2%	80.5%	15.1%	2.5%	17.6%	1.9%
Very blue	41.5%	40.5%	82.0%	10.5%	3.6%	14.1%	3.8%

The third idea is that the U.S. should:

- Remain part of NATO but reduce U.S. military investments in Europe to bring them more in line with the level that the Europeans make.

Here is an argument in favor of this idea:

Q13. European members of NATO already spend \$203 billion on their military. That is already quite a lot--far more than the \$75 billion that Russia spends. European countries have 1.7 million troops under arms. It is understandable that

Europeans are reluctant to spend a lot more since it is very unlikely that Russia will attack Europe, especially given existing European military capabilities. In any case, Europeans seem content with their current level of defense preparation. So, the U.S. should maintain its commitment to participate in the defense of Europe but go ahead and reduce its military investment to be more in line with the level of commitments the Europeans make. Maybe this will prompt Europe to step up and do more, but if not, that is a risk they are choosing to take. NATO will still have far more military capacity than Russia.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	27.5%	46.6%	74.1%	17.7%	5.8%	23.5%	2.3%
GOP	30.2%	46.4%	76.6%	16.7%	4.5%	21.2%	2.2%
Dem.	25.9%	46.3%	72.2%	18.7%	7.0%	25.7%	2.1%
Indep.	25.3%	48.1%	73.4%	17.3%	5.6%	22.9%	3.7%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	30.5%	44.6%	75.1%	18.8%	4.7%	23.5%	1.3%
Red	25.8%	51.2%	77.0%	15.2%	5.3%	20.5%	2.5%
Lean red	28.9%	45.0%	73.9%	18.7%	5.1%	23.8%	2.4%
Lean blue	26.2%	43.4%	69.6%	21.6%	7.0%	28.6%	1.8%
Blue	25.7%	52.0%	77.7%	14.0%	5.5%	19.5%	2.8%
Very blue	28.3%	42.8%	71.1%	18.1%	8.0%	26.1%	2.8%

Q14. So, in conclusion, of these three options, which do you think that the U.S. should do in relation to NATO:

1. Press European countries to spend more on their military and say that if they do not the U.S. will disengage from Europe militarily and possibly withdraw from NATO
2. Press European countries to spend more on their military, but do NOT threaten to disengage from Europe or withdraw from NATO.
3. Remain part of NATO but reduce U.S. military investments to bring them more in line with the level that the Europeans make.

	Press European countries to spend more on their military and say that if they do not the U.S. will disengage from Europe militarily and possibly withdraw from NATO	Press European countries to spend more on their military, but do NOT threaten to disengage from Europe or withdraw from NATO	Remain part of NATO but reduce U.S. military investments to bring them more in line with the level that the Europeans make	Ref/DK
National	11.6%	34.5%	50.0%	4.0%
GOP	20.8%	28.9%	46.9%	3.4%
Dem.	4.3%	41.2%	50.1%	4.4%
Indep.	9.8%	27.2%	58.7%	4.3%
Cook's PVI (D-R)				
Very red	11.9%	31.0%	52.0%	5.1%
Red	12.8%	33.8%	47.8%	5.5%
Lean red	14.6%	35.8%	46.3%	3.2%
Lean blue	10.8%	38.7%	48.8%	1.7%
Blue	10.0%	29.8%	56.5%	3.8%
Very blue	9.0%	38.3%	48.2%	4.5%

***Questions 15 through 26 held for future release.**