# Neg

## 1NC – Elections – Warming

#### Biden wins now despite low approval rating – its close

Bowman 06/28 [Bridget Bowman is the deputy editor of the NBC News political unit, “The ‘lesser of two evils’ voters who could decide 2024”, 06/28/2023, NBC News, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2024-election/lesser-two-evils-voters-decide-2024-rcna91077>] TDI

Voters who “somewhat disapprove” of President Joe Biden’s performance are uncomfortable with his two main potential GOP rivals in the general election. President Joe Biden’s path to victory in 2024 runs through voters who think he’s been a disappointment in the White House — but say Donald Trump or another Republican would be even worse. Biden’s approval rating stands at 43% in the latest NBC News national poll, not enough support to translate to a re-election win. But another 10% of registered voters say they only “somewhat disapprove” of Biden’s performance. And in a hypothetical rematch with Trump, half of those voters say they would support Biden, while 39% say they would back Trump. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis fares better with those voters, but he only fights Biden to a draw. The poll’s margin of error for this subsample of voters is a wide plus-or-minus 10 points — yet even within that gaping range, the result highlights deeply unusual behavior of a voter group that typically breaks hard against the president’s party in elections, according to national exit polls. But in the recent 2022 midterms, when voters who “somewhat disapprove” of Biden made up about 10% of the electorate, according to NBC News exit polling, they supported Democrats by a 4-point margin. That helped Democrats limit their House losses and even expand their Senate majority in Biden's first midterm. The data show how concerns about Republican candidates and the GOP broadly kept Democrats competitive in the last election and are keeping Biden competitive in the next one, even though voters harbor their own concerns about him. That’s backed up by poll respondents’ own words when they were asked to describe why they would choose Biden over Trump or DeSantis. “Donald Trump is nuts,” said a self-described white, female, moderate respondent from Pennsylvania, who said she’d choose Biden despite somewhat disapproving of his performance. A Black male voter from New Mexico who is an independent said: “Donald Trump lacks moral compass. Joe Biden somewhat has a moral compass. That was it.” A female Hispanic liberal from Florida said about choosing Biden over DeSantis, “I would rather vote for a dead shark than the devil himself, I suppose.” Other voters described DeSantis as “extreme” or “far right,” especially on LGBTQ issues. Democratic pollster Jeff Horwitt of Hart Research has nicknamed the group “BOWA” Biden voters: “It’s really thinking about these voters as the ‘best of what’s around’ Biden voters,” he said. “And that’s how they see Biden compared to Trump — he is, in fact, the best of what’s around,” said Horwitt, who conducted the NBC News poll with GOP pollster Bill McInturff of Public Opinion Strategies. This group of voters tends to be younger, and they are slightly more likely to be people of color, according to the poll. They also lean slightly Republican, with 37% identifying with the GOP and 33% identifying with the Democratic Party. Almost a quarter of them — 23% — say they are independents, nearly double the share of independents in the overall polling sample. Voters who say they “somewhat disapprove” of Biden say they supported Biden by 8 points over Trump in 2020. And they have intensely negative views of Trump — 48% have negative views of Biden personally, but a whopping 72% have negative feelings about Trump. That showed through in respondents’ more detailed descriptions of their thinking. Many relayed disappointment with Biden — but disgust with Trump. A man from California who is a self-described “very liberal” voter likened the matchup to “choosing the lesser of two evils.” Another white woman from Texas said: “I somewhat disapprove of Biden, but I wholly disapprove of Trump. Even though I lean Republican, you could not pay me to vote for Donald Trump. I think Donald Trump is the worst thing to happen to this country in 50 years.” The voters who “somewhat disapprove” of Biden appear more open to supporting DeSantis if he is the Republican nominee. In a hypothetical matchup, Biden leads that group by just 1 percentage point, with 46% backing Biden and 45% backing DeSantis — though again, the sample size remains small. Still, that movement helps explain why Biden leads DeSantis by just 1 point among all voters in a hypothetical matchup, while he leads Trump by 4 points in their matchup. Even though that group is a small share of the electorate, their choice in 2024 is set to be crucial. “That’s the difference between winning and losing an election,” Horwitt said.

#### Popularity in favor of maintaining or increasing troops

Smeltz & Kafura 20 – [Dina Smeltz, Craig Kafura. Dina Smeltz, a polling expert, has more than 25 years of experience designing and fielding international social and political surveys. Prior to joining the Council to lead its annual survey of American attitudes on US foreign policy, she served in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the US State Department's Office of Research from 1992 to 2008. Craig Kafura is the assistant director for public opinion and foreign policy at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, a Security Fellow with the Truman National Security Project, and a Pacific Forum Young Leader. At the Council, he coordinates work on public opinion and foreign policy and is a regular contributor to the public opinion and foreign policy blog Running Numbers. “American Public Support for US Troops in Middle East Has Grown”. February 10, 2020] TDI

A majority of Americans say the US military presence in the Middle East should be maintained (45%) or increased (29%). Just 24 percent think it should be decreased. A majority support long-term military bases in Iraq (55%, up from 41% in 2014) and Kuwait (57%, up from 47% in 2014). Nearly half favor keeping bases in Afghanistan (48%, up from 43% in 2014). A combined majority (54%) say alliances in the Middle East benefit both Middle East partners and the United States or mostly benefit the United States.

Majorities Say US Military Presence in Mideast Should Be Maintained or Increased. In addition to seeing the Middle East as the most important region for US security interests, a majority of Americans say the US military presence in the Middle East should be either maintained (45%) or increased (29%). Just 24 percent think it should be decreased, similar to Chicago Council surveys dating back to 2015. Moreover, a majority believe the United States should have long-term military bases in Iraq (55%), the highest level since 2008 (when 57% agreed). A majority also favor long-term basing in Kuwait (57%), up ten percentage points from 2014. The public is evenly divided on whether the United States should have long-term bases in Afghanistan (48% should, 49% should not), though this is the highest level of support for basing in that country since 2010.

The United States has had some controversial disagreements with allies in the Middle East over the past year. In October, the United States announced it was withdrawing troops from northern Syria. Soon after Turkish President Recep Erdogan launched a military campaign against the Kurds, despite Kurdish assistance in fighting the Islamic State. US-Saudi ties have been strained following the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October 2018. And amid escalating tensions between the United States and Iran following the killing of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, the Iraqi Parliament voted in early January 2020 to expel American troops from the country.

Undoubtedly these moves have raised questions about the benefits of US alliances in the region. For their part, Americans tend to say the US alliances in the Middle East mostly benefit both the United States and its allies (39%) or mostly the United States (15%). Adding them together, slightly fewer now (54%) than in 2019 (59%) see a positive benefit for the United States, though this level is still higher than the combined percentage in 2017 (48%).

Bipartisan Agreement on Troop Presence. Majorities of Republicans (67%), Democrats (64%), and Independents (55%) see the Middle East as the most important region for US security. There is also general bipartisan support for maintaining or increasing the US military presence in the Middle East, though Republicans (39%) are more likely than Democrats (29%) or Independents (22%) to favor increasing the US presence in the region. Republicans are far more supportive of long-term US military bases in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan than are Democrats or Independents. In the case of Afghanistan, majorities of Democrats (53%) and Independents (53%) oppose the United States maintaining bases, while six in ten Republicans (61%) support them. Republicans are also more likely to see the wars in Iraq (51%) and Afghanistan (50%) as having been worth fighting, while large majorities of Democrats and Independents say they have not been worth fighting.

#### Trump’s win will cause an extreme rise in populism

**Mounk 21** [Yascha Mounk, Yascha Mounk is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. He is also a professor of the practice of international affairs at Johns Hopkins University, a contributing editor at the Atlantic, and the founder of Persuasion. Known for his work on the rise of populism and the crisis of liberal democracy, Mounk published in 2022 The Great Experiment: Why Diverse Democracies Fall Apart and How They Can Endure, an optimistic case for the future of ethnically and religiously diverse democracies. “After Trump, Is American Democracy Doomed by Populism?” https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/after-trump-american-democracy-doomed-populism]/LL

What do the riots at the U.S. Capitol and their aftermath say about the extent of populism in the United States? President Donald J. **Trump is an authoritarian populist**. And one of the key characteristics of populism lies in a leader’s belief that they, and they alone, truly represent the people. That explains why Trump has kept **clashing with democratic institutions** over the course of his presidency. Whenever he ran up against the limits of his constitutional authority, he balked at the idea that somebody else—a judge, a bureaucrat, or a member of Congress—could tell him what to do. In his mind, only he had the right to speak for the country. This helps to make sense of the storming of the Capitol. On one hand, it was a terrible surprise. Before January 6, nobody had expected that a mob of insurrectionists could so easily enter “the People’s House.” But on the other hand, it was a fitting end point for Trump’s presidency: the **mob was incited by the populist president** of the United States—and that president incited it to action because somebody who believes that he, and only he, represents the people could not possibly accept the legitimacy of an election he lost. The fact that Trump has been able to convince so many Americans of his lies about the election, and mobilize tens of thousands of them to protest against the certification of the vote, shows that a significant share of the population is now open to this kind of populist appeal. Faced with a choice between their president and the Constitution, they chose Trump. But it is also important not to cast the insurrectionists who stormed the Capitol as the true face of the United States. A great majority of the population is horrified by these events. How would you compare the Republican Party to political parties abroad that have turned illiberal? The **Republican Party now has significant commonalities with** **the parties of populist leaders** across the world. Like Fidesz in Hungary or Law and Justice in Poland, for example, congressional Republicans have mostly stood by their leader as he attacked democratic norms and institutions over the past four years. There is, however, an important distinction that stems from differences in the nature of American political parties. In most developed democracies, party leaders have significant resources at their disposal and are formally or informally able to select parliamentary candidates. This makes it very hard for dissenters in the party to sustain themselves if they fall out with their leader. In the United States, however, parties have traditionally been very weak. Candidates for office are now chosen in primaries that are open to a wide variety of challengers. (This is, of course, how Trump came to lead the Republican Party in the first place). As a result, Republican lawmakers have at some key moments proven more willing to stand up to their leader than have populist lawmakers in other countries. For example, it is striking that a great majority of Republican senators ultimately voted to certify President-Elect Joe Biden’s victory. What’s more, populists such as Hungarian President Viktor Orban remained in control of their political parties even after they lost elections. The Republican Party, by contrast, now effectively enters a period without a real leader. We won’t really know whether it will remain under Trump’s control, instead of moving away from his authoritarian tendencies, until the next presidential primaries in 2024. Do the decisions by Twitter and other major social media platforms to suspend Trump’s accounts effectively impede extremist messaging? It is too early to tell how effective the suspension of Trump’s accounts on Twitter, Facebook, and other platforms will be. It has certainly impeded his ability to speak directly to his followers over the coming weeks. But over the course of the next four years, he could adopt new ways of communicating with them. At the same time, these decisions have also raised a number of risks. It is now imaginable that the internet will slowly break into two pieces—or a whole chaotic array of shards. On Twitter and Facebook, Americans with different political beliefs sorted themselves into their own echo chambers but at least shared the same platform. In the future, parts of the populist right will attempt to build platforms of their own. This could end up accelerating rather than slowing their radicalization. The moves are also likely to empower dictators abroad. As opposition leaders such as Russia’s Alexey Navalny have warned, the suspensions provide a perfect excuse for oppressive governments to censor democratic challengers. If major political figures in the United States are banned from using social media platforms, the country will find it more difficult to condemn similar bans abroad even when they are pursued for much more cynical reasons. Twitter and Facebook long ago became a kind of public square. Although speech rights are not absolute in any context, and incitement to violence should be illegal anywhere, it is concerning that a few powerful people in Silicon Valley can now effectively decide who gets to speak their mind in the public square. Handing the CEOs of Twitter and Facebook the ability to determine without any accountability which politicians do, and don’t, retain the ability to speak to their followers is hardly a good precedent for American democracy. What tools can the incoming Biden administration use to ease tensions and address Trump supporters’ grievances? As I describe in my book The People vs. Democracy, the rise of populism is owed to a number of structural reasons, including the stagnation of living standards for ordinary people, rapid cultural and demographic changes, and the rise of social media. The Biden administration should enact policies that, for example, help to stimulate wage growth for working- and middle-class Americans. But with Democrats’ small majority in the House and smallest possible majority in the Senate, the administration’s ability to push through ambitious reforms will, at least for the next two years, be limited. Just as important, then, is that Biden continues on the path that won him the Democratic primaries and allowed him to beat Trump. He needs to be clear and forthright in his condemnations of Trump’s antidemocratic extremism. But he also needs to demonstrate that he seeks to be the president of all Americans—inviting those who voted for Trump to abandon their allegiance to a dangerous demagogue without portraying them as irredeemable deplorables.

#### Right wing populism kills attempts at solving climate change -- obstruction, denialism and misinformation

Calland 20 (Richard, February 12) {Associate Professor in Public Law, University of Cape Town}, “Countering climate denialism requires taking on right-wing populism. Here’s how”, theconversation.com<https://theconversation.com/countering-climate-denialism-requires-taking-on-right-wing-populism-heres-how-131693> //AA

My own contribution to the Our Future on Earth report focuses on the impact of the global rise in right-wing populism on climate action. This breed of politics exploits peoples’ fears during times of economic decline and growing inequality, and focuses on nationalist tendencies. Right-wing populism and denialism In a complex world facing complex problems, it is seductive for politicians to identify a single culprit (like immigrants) or an evil force (like universal healthcare) to blame for the erosion of society, the economy, and the welfare of the masses. This is hardly ever true, but it is compelling. Take the bewilderingly complicated set of relationships between food, energy, urban infrastructure, and exponential demographic growth and change (at least in the developing world). Climate change and its effects are perhaps the epitome of a complex issue of interlinked social, political, and physical forces. That makes it an easy target for this sort of denialism. So, populism ends up denying not just the science of climate change but also the complexity of the entire issue – which is critical for both diagnosing the problem and determining the prognosis and the prescription. Populism strips issues of nuance, and thereby obstructs progress. A 2019 study mapping the climate agendas of right-wing populist parties in Europe contains some revealing evidence: two thirds of right-wing populist members of the European Parliament **“**regularly vote against climate and energy policy measures**”**. Half of all votes against resolutions on climate and energy in the European Parliament come from right-wing populist party members. Of the 21 right-wing populist parties analysed, seven were found to deny climate change, its anthropogenic causes, and negative consequences. According to estimates based on the World Resources Institute’s global greenhouse-gas emissions data, about 30% of global emissions come from countries with populist leaders. At the very moment when global cooperation is essential if climate action is to be effective, many of the leaders of these right-wing populist forces are trying to dismantle or weaken multilateral organisations such as the United Nations or the European Union. These political groups threaten to derail progress on the global response to climate change, and on new thinking about how to rewire the economy in pursuit of a more sustainable world. More hopefully, as grassroots organisations emerge as a potentially strong, countervailing force, the trick will be to effectively connect these movements to matters of global social justice. They should also be given enough coherence to be effective. Thus, again, shifting the lens for the climate crisis away from an environmental preoccupation towards human development and social justice. For example, how can Thunberg and the student strike movement in the global north connect with the 1.6 million children that are displaced in Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique from cyclones? Such connections need to be made to turn these nascent movements into powerful advocates for climate justice. Tipping the scale Regardless of whether the political will needed take transformational action to drastically reduce carbon emission and adapt economies and societies, especially in the global South, will be summoned by 2030, it is clear that by the end of this century life on earth will be very different to how it is now. It will certainly be more difficult and dangerous. This applies to everyone, but especially the poorest and most vulnerable members of a human society that is set to peak at around 9,8 billion by 2050 (up from the current 7,8bn). This is the human development challenge for sub-Saharan Africa. It’s not all doom and gloom. There are huge opportunities amid the grave threats. A first step to responding appropriately – individually and collectively – is understanding that the challenge is multi-dimensional. Only then can a multi-dimensional strategy be executed, across sectors and across national boundaries. But it is likely that the greatest impediment to taking action will not be technological know-how or even raising the money required. Instead it will be the lack of enough political will, given the obstructionism of right-wing populists in power around the globe. Hence, a political struggle will need to be won. And the fight for climate justice in the face of right-wing populist climate denialism is a titanic one.

#### Trump 2 causes warming -- extinction

Johnson ’22 [(Jake Johnson, staff writer for Common Dreams.) “UN Climate Chief Warns Trump Win in 2024 Would Spell Disaster for Planet” Common Dreams, 06/14/2022. <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2022/06/14/un-climate-chief-warns-trump-win-2024-would-spell-disaster-planet>] pfox TDI

The outgoing United Nations climate chief warned Monday that a victory by Donald Trump--or any other Republican ally of the fossil fuel industry--in the 2024 U.S. presidential election would represent a fatal setback for efforts to limit global warming to 1.5degC by the end of the century.

"Well, yes," Patricia Espinosa, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), told Politico when asked whether Trump or another Republican president similarly hostile to climate action would spell doom for the Paris Agreement's lower-end warming target.

"Leadership was not there" on climate during Trump's four years in office, Espinosa said in an interview on the sidelines of the ongoing climate conference in Bonn, Germany.

"We didn't manage to get the same level of traction in the process," she added.

The prospect of a Republican win 2024 is highly unnerving for climate advocates, given the party's fealty to the fossil fuel industry and opposition to even the most basic emissions-reduction policies. It's not clear how other potential Republican presidential contenders--from Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.)--would substantively differ from Trump on climate.

"The climate's always been changing," Trump said in a Fox News interview in March, pushing several denialist talking points.

During his four years in the White House, Trump formally withdrew the U.S. from the legally binding Paris accord, opened up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other pristine lands and waters to drilling, and went on a sprawling deregulatory frenzy that rewarded the fossil fuel industry at the expense of the environment and public health.

The former president also packed his cabinet and other key posts with close friends of the fossil fuel industry.

Given his disastrous climate record, it's no surprise that the planetary consequences of another Trump term were a major topic ahead of the 2020 presidential election. Michael Mann, a leading climate scientist, warned months ahead of the contest that "a second Trump term is game over for the climate."

"If we are going to avert ever more catastrophic climate change impacts, we need to limit warming below a degree and a half Celsius, a little less than three degrees Fahrenheit," Mann said. "Another four years of what we've seen under Trump, which is to outsource environmental and energy policy to the polluters and dismantle protections put in place by the previous administration... would make that essentially impossible."

President Joe Biden ultimately defeated Trump in 2020 and--within hours of being sworn in--moved to return the U.S. to the Paris Agreement. Scientists have been sounding the alarm for years that a breach of the treaty's 1.5degC threshold would mean even more devastating extreme weather, flooding, displacement, a mass coral reef die-off, and other harmful impacts.

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Majorities Say US Military Presence in Mideast Should Be Maintained or Increased. In addition to seeing the Middle East as the most important region for US security interests, a majority of Americans say the US military presence in the Middle East should be either maintained (45%) or increased (29%). Just 24 percent think it should be decreased, similar to Chicago Council surveys dating back to 2015. Moreover, a majority believe the United States should have long-term military bases in Iraq (55%), the highest level since 2008 (when 57% agreed). A majority also favor long-term basing in Kuwait (57%), up ten percentage points from 2014. The public is evenly divided on whether the United States should have long-term bases in Afghanistan (48% should, 49% should not), though this is the highest level of support for basing in that country since 2010.

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#### The 2024 presidential elections will decide the fate of American democracy

Bennett and Cowan ‘21 (Matt Bennet and Jon Cowan, May 23, 2021 Cowan has co-founded and run three high-impact national advocacy organizations, served as Chief of Staff of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and worked as a Democratic press secretary and legislative aide in Congress. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2021/05/23/republicans-could-kill-democracy-if-democrats-lose-house-majority/5191699001/>)

You can write it down: Jan. 6, 2025**,** will be a hinge date in history. On that day, American democracy either will live or die. And if we do not take aggressive steps to ensure that Democrats control the House of Representatives when we get there, the prognosis for our republic is grim. It is rare to have advance notice of a monumental moment. Before Pearl Harbor, no one suspected that Dec. 7 would “live in infamy.” We could not predict years beforehand that we would celebrate our nation’s birth on the Fourth of July or mark 9/11 as a monument to national tragedy and heroism. Yet it is now clear that the Sixth of January 2025 will join those historic dates. A joint session of the new 120th Congress will meet that day to count the electoral votes from the 2024 election. The House of Representatives should perform its largely symbolic function and certify the will of the voters, naming the winner of 270 or more electoral votes as the president. That is how it should go. But there is a real chance that it will not. House Republicans are now firmly in the grip of a deeply anti-democratic right-wing populism. Almost all have now essentially pledged to "[support and defend](https://history.house.gov/Institution/Origins-Development/Oath-of-Office/)" Donald Trump and Trumpism rather than the Constitution of the United States. They no longer are constrained by once inviolate norms or even by observable facts. If these radicals control the House on 1/6/25, and if a Democrat has won the Electoral College vote, it now seems completely possible that Republicans will instead confirm their own choice as president of the United States. If that happens, the world’s greatest democracy will come to an end. The mechanism would be the same as the one they tried after the 2020 election: invalidating the Electoral College votes of certain states that went for the Democrat, thereby throwing the election to a vote of the House. This gambit failed because Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the majority Democrats blocked it. We will not have that protection in 2025 if the Speaker is Kevin McCarthy. He voted with the insurrectionists last January. But wasn’t that just a protest vote? If they have power next time, would House Republicans actually do something so catastrophic? Well, consider their recent behavior. Almost all have helped spread Trump’s Big Lie about the 2020 election being stolen. Two-thirds of them took that seditionist "protest" vote just hours after a violent mob stormed the Capitol, maimed police officers, erected a noose, and desecrated our democracy’s most sacred spaces. Only 10 of them voted to impeach Trump for inciting the insurrection. They ejected from their leadership Rep. Liz Cheney for her failure to tell the Big Lie. They replaced her with a Trump toady who has supported the ludicrous Arizona recount that involves hunting for “Chinese bamboo” in the ballots. And they have even begun trying to erase from communal memory the horror, chaos, death and destruction of the insurrection, claiming it resembled “a normal tourist visit to the Capitol.” So yes, it’s easy to predict that a House GOP caucus that remains deeply committed to Trump and his seditionist lies would steal the presidential election if they could. That means that the House elections in 2022 and 2024 are not just battles over normal political questions, like the future of the Biden agenda or the Trump tax cuts. Rather, our democracy itself will be on the ballot. But with gerrymandering and voter suppression laws sweeping the GOP-held states, winning these races will be tougher than ever. Small-d democrats of all political stripes must be galvanized to much greater action than normal. We need nothing less than a Committee to Save the Republic: a coalition of Democrats and democracy-affirming Republicans. And the wealthy must dig deep, providing a huge well of resources to take on three essential tasks: First, we must protect at-risk House Democrats from the torrent of GOP lies that cut down so many of their colleagues in 2020. Second, we must help Republicans of good will to weaken the GOP House candidates from behind their own lines, with ads aimed at their voters and third-party challengers to spoil the bids of insurrectionist Republicans. Finally, we must install pro-democracy decisionmakers in the states, by electing secretaries of state and attorneys general to help ensure that Republicans cannot steal the presidential race before it reaches the House. A pillar of the American experiment has been the rock-solid stability of our political system. Despite often deep and angry divisions, nothing has threatened to alter the very nature of our democracy since the Battle of Gettysburg. But the republic now faces an existential threat, and we know the date on which the plotters will attempt a coup. The only question is whether we will do enough to stop them.

#### Republicans unlikely to accept defeat in elections

Levitsky and Way ’22 (January 20, 2022 – Levitsky is a professor of government at Harvard and Way is who is a professor of political science at the University of Toronto. America’s Coming Age of Instability - https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/trump-americas-coming-age-instability?)

When Joe Biden was sworn in as president a year ago today, many Americans breathed a heavy sigh of relief. President Donald Trump had tried to steal the election, but he had failed. The violent insurrection he incited on January 6, 2021, had shaken the United States’ democratic system to its core, but left it standing in the end. One year into Biden’s presidency, however, the threat to American democracy has not receded. Although U.S. democratic institutions survived the Trump presidency, they were badly weakened. The Republican Party, moreover, has radicalized into an extremist, antidemocratic force that imperils the U.S. constitutional order. The United States isn’t headed toward Russian- or Hungarian-style autocracy, as some analysts have warned, but something else: a period of protracted regime instability, marked by repeated constitutional crises, heightened political violence, and possibly, periods of authoritarian rule. In 2017, we warned in Foreign Affairs that Trump posed a threat to U.S. democratic institutions. Skeptics viewed our concern for the fate of American democracy as alarmist. After all, the U.S. constitutional system had been stable for 150 years, and reams of social science research suggested that democracy was likely to endure. No democracy even remotely as rich—or as old—as the [United States’](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/regions/united-states) had ever broken down. But [Trump](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/topics/trump-administration) proved to be as autocratic as advertised. Following the playbook of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, and Viktor Orban in Hungary, he worked to corrupt key state agencies and subvert them for personal, partisan, and even undemocratic ends. Public officials responsible for law enforcement, intelligence, foreign policy, national defense, homeland security, election administration, and even public health were pressured to deploy the machinery of government against the president’s rivals. Trump did more than politicize state institutions, however. He also tried to steal an election. The only president in U.S. history to refuse to accept defeat, Trump spent late 2020 and early 2021 pressuring Justice Department officials, governors, state legislators, state and local election officials, and, finally, Vice President Mike Pence, to illegally overturn the election results. When these efforts failed, he incited a mob of his supporters to march on the U.S. Capitol and try to prevent Congress from certifying [Biden](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-01-23/why-america-must-lead-again)’s win. This two-month campaign to illegally remain in power deserves to be called by its name: a coup attempt. As we feared, the Republican Party failed to constrain Trump. In a context of extreme political polarization, we predicted, congressional Republicans were “unlikely to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors who reined in Nixon.” Partisan loyalty and fear of primary challenges by Trump supporters outweighed constitutional commitments, undermining the effectiveness of the system’s most powerful check on presidential abuse: impeachment. Trump’s abuses exceeded Nixon’s by orders of magnitude. But only ten of 211 Republicans in the House voted to impeach Trump in the wake of the failed coup, and only seven of 50 Republicans in the Senate voted to convict him. Trump proved to be as autocratic as advertised. American democracy survived Trump—but barely. Trump’s autocratic behavior was blunted in part by public officials who refused to cooperate with his abuses, such as Georgia’s secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, or who refused to remain silent about them, such as Alexander Vindman, a specialist on the National Security Council. Many judges, including some appointed by Trump himself, blocked his efforts to overturn the election. Contingent events also played a role in defeating Trump. The [COVID-19 pandemic](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-06-08/coronavirus-strategy-forever-virus) was his “Katrina moment.” Just as President George W. Bush’s mishandling of the aftermath of the 2005 hurricane eroded his popularity, Trump’s disastrous response to the pandemic may have been decisive in preventing his reelection. Even so, Trump very nearly won. A tiny shift in the vote in Georgia, Arizona, and Pennsylvania would have secured his reelection, seriously imperiling democracy. Although American democracy survived Trump’s presidency, it was badly wounded by it. In light of Trump’s egregious abuse of power, his attempt to steal the 2020 election and block a peaceful transition, and ongoing state-level efforts to restrict access to the ballot, global democracy indexes have substantially downgraded the United States since 2016. Today, the United States’ score on Freedom House’s Global Freedom Index is on a par with Panama and Romania, and below Argentina, Lithuania, and Mongolia. Trump’s defeat in the 2020 election did not end the threat to American democracy. The Republican Party has evolved into an extremist and antidemocratic party, more like Hungary’s Fidesz than traditional center-right parties in Europe and Canada. The transformation began before Trump. During [Barack Obama’s](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/topics/obama-administration) presidency, leading Republicans cast Obama and the Democrats as an existential threat and abandoned norms of restraint in favor of constitutional hardball—the use of the letter of the law to subvert the spirit of the law. Republicans pushed through a wave of state-level measures aimed at restricting access to the ballot box and, most extraordinarily, they refused to allow Obama to fill the vacancy on the Supreme Court created by Associate Justice Antonin Scalia’s death in 2016. Republican radicalization accelerated under Trump, to the point where the party abandoned its commitment to democratic rules of the game. Parties that are committed to democracy must, at minimum, do two things: accept defeat and reject violence. Beginning in November 2020, the Republican Party did neither. Most Republican leaders refused to unambiguously recognize Biden’s victory, either openly embracing Trump’s “Big Lie” or enabling it through their silence. More than two-thirds of Republican members of the House of Representatives backed a lawsuit filed with the Supreme Court seeking to overturn the 2020 election, and on the evening of the January 6 insurrection, 139 of them voted against certifying the election. Leading Republicans also refused to unambiguously reject violence. Not only did Trump embrace extremist militias and incite the January 6 insurrection, but congressional Republicans later blocked efforts to create an independent commission to investigate the insurrection. Although Trump catalyzed this authoritarian turn, Republican extremism was fueled by powerful pressure from below. The party’s core constituents are white and Christian, and live in exurbs, small towns, and rural areas. Not only are white Christians in decline as a percentage of the electorate but growing diversity and progress toward racial equality have also undermined their relative social status. According to a 2018 survey, nearly 60 percent of Republicans say they “feel like a stranger in their own country.” Many Republican voters think the country of their childhood is being taken away from them. This perceived relative loss of status has had a radicalizing effect: a 2021 survey sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute found that a stunning 56 percent of Republicans agreed that the “traditional American way of life is disappearing so fast that we may have to use force to stop it.” The threats to American democracy are mounting. The Republican turn toward authoritarianism has accelerated since Trump’s departure from the White House. From top to bottom, the party embraced the lie that the 2020 election was stolen, to the point that Republican voters now overwhelmingly believe it is true. In much of the country, Republican politicians who openly rejected this lie or supported an independent investigation into the January 6 insurrection have put their political careers at risk. The newly transformed Republican Party has launched a major assault on democratic [institutions](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2019-06-11/its-institutions-stupid) at the state level, increasing the likelihood of a stolen election in the future. On the heels of Trump’s “stop the steal” campaign, his supporters have launched a campaign to replace state and local election officials who certified the 2020 election—from secretaries of state down to neighborhood precinct officers—with Trump loyalists who appear more willing to overturn a Democratic victory. Republican state legislatures across the country have also adopted measures to restrict access to the ballot box and empower statewide officials to intervene in local electoral processes—purging local voter rolls, permitting voter intimidation by thuggish observer groups, moving or reducing the number of polling sites, and potentially throwing out ballots or altering results. It is now possible that Republican legislatures in multiple battleground states will, under a loose interpretation of the 1887 Electoral Count Act, use unsubstantiated fraud claims to declare failed elections in their states and send alternate slates of Republican electors to the Electoral College, thereby contravening the popular vote. Such constitutional hardball could result in a stolen election. The U.S. business community, historically a core Republican constituency, has done little to resist the party’s authoritarian turn. Although the U.S. Chamber of Commerce initially pledged to oppose Republicans who denied the legitimacy of the 2020 election, it later reversed course. According to [The New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/06/us/politics/congress-corporate-donations-2020-election-overturn.html), the Chamber of Commerce, along with major corporations such as Boeing, Pfizer, General Motors, Ford Motor, AT&T, and United Parcel Service, now funds lawmakers who voted to overturn the election. The threats to American democracy are mounting. If Trump or a like-minded Republican wins the presidency in 2024 (with or without fraud), the new administration will almost certainly politicize the federal bureaucracy and deploy the machinery of government against its rivals. Having largely purged the party leadership of politicians committed to democratic norms, the next Republican administration could easily cross the line into what we have called competitive authoritarianism—a system in which competitive elections exist but incumbent abuse of state power tilts the playing field against the opposition. Although the threat of democratic breakdown in the United States is real, the likelihood of a descent into stable autocracy, as has occurred, for example, in Hungary and Russia, remains low. The United States possesses several obstacles to stable [authoritarianism](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/tags/authoritarianism) that are not found in other backsliding cases. Take Hungary under Orban. After winning election in 2010 on an ethnonationalist platform, Orban and his party, Fidesz, packed the courts and the electoral bodies, suppressed independent media, and used gerrymandering, new campaign regulations, and other legal shenanigans to gain advantage over the opposition. Some observers have [warned](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/9/13/17823488/hungary-democracy-authoritarianism-trump) that Orban’s path to authoritarianism could be replicated in the United States. But Orban was able to consolidate power because the opposition was weak, unpopular, and divided between far-right and socialist parties. Moreover, with the country having only recently emerged from totalitarian rule, Hungary’s private sector and independent media were far weaker than their American counterparts. Orban’s ability to quickly gain control of 90 percent of Hungarian media—including the largest independent daily and every regional newspaper—remains unthinkable in the United States. The path to autocracy was even smoother in [Russia](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-09-27/kremlins-strange-victory), where media and opposition forces were weaker than in Hungary. Rather than autocracy, the United States appears headed toward endemic regime instability. By contrast, an effort to consolidate autocracy in the United States would face several daunting obstacles. The first is a powerful opposition. Unlike other backslid0ing countries, including Hungary, India, Russia, Turkey, and Venezuela, the United States has a unified opposition in the Democratic Party. It is well-organized, well-financed, and electorally viable (it won the popular vote in seven of the last eight presidential elections). Moreover, due to deep partisan divisions and the relatively limited appeal of white nationalism in the United States, a Republican autocrat would not enjoy the level of public support that has helped sustain elected autocrats elsewhere. To the contrary, such an autocrat would face a level of societal contestation unseen in other democratic backsliders. As Robert Kagan has [argued](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/09/23/robert-kagan-constitutional-crisis/), Republicans may seek to rig or overturn a close election in 2024, but such an effort would likely trigger enormous—and probably violent—protests across the country. An authoritarian Republican government would also face a much stronger and more independent media, private sector, and civil society. Even the most committed American autocrat would not be able to gain control of major newspapers and television networks and effectively limit independent sources of information, as Orban and Russian President [Vladimir Putin](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2020-06-09/pinning-down-putin) have done in their countries. Finally, an aspiring Republican autocrat would face institutional constraints. Although it is increasingly politicized, the U.S. judiciary remains far more independent and powerful than its counterparts in other emerging autocracies. In addition, U.S. federalism and a highly decentralized system of elections administration provide a bulwark against centralized authoritarianism. Decentralized power creates opportunities for electoral malfeasance in red—and some purple—states, but it makes it more difficult to undermine the democratic process in blue states. Thus, even if the Republicans manage to steal the 2024 election, their ability to monopolize power over an extended period of time will likely be limited. America may no longer be safe for democracy, but it remains inhospitable to autocracy. Rather than autocracy, the United States appears headed toward endemic regime instability. Such a scenario would be marked by frequent constitutional crises, including contested or stolen elections and severe conflict between presidents and Congress (such as impeachments and executive efforts to bypass Congress), the judiciary (such as efforts to purge or pack the courts), and state governments (such as intense battles over voting rights and the administration of elections). The United States would likely shift back and forth between periods of dysfunctional [democracy](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-07-18/standing-democracy) and periods of competitive authoritarian rule during which incumbents abuse state power, tolerate or encourage violent extremism, and tilt the electoral playing field against their rivals. In this sense, American [politics](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-09-29/biden-trump-age-america-first) may come to resemble not Russia but its neighbor Ukraine, which has oscillated for decades between democracy and competitive authoritarianism, depending on which partisan forces controlled the executive. For the foreseeable future, U.S. presidential elections will involve not simply a choice between competing sets of policies but rather a more fundamental choice over whether the country will be democratic or authoritarian. Finally, American politics will likely be marked by heightened political violence. Extreme [polarization](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2019-09-25/how-americans-were-driven-extremes) and intense partisan competition often generate violence, and indeed, the United States experienced a dramatic spike in far-right violence during Trump’s presidency. Although the United States probably isn’t headed for a second civil war, it could well experience a rise in assassinations, bombings, and other terrorist attacks; armed uprisings; mob attacks; and violent street confrontations—often tolerated and even incited by politicians. Such violence might resemble that which afflicted Spain in the early 1930s, Northern Ireland during the Troubles, or the American South during and after Reconstruction. American democracy remains at risk. Although the United States probably won’t follow the path of [Putin’s](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/tags/vladimir-putin) Russia or even Orban’s Hungary, enduring conflict between powerful authoritarian and democratic forces could bring debilitating—and violent—regime instability for years to come.

#### Extinction.

Dr. Andrew Leigh 21, PhD from Harvard, Member of the Australian House of Representatives, former Professor in the Economics Program of the Research School of Social Sciences at Australian National University, “What's the Worst That Could Happen: Existential Risk and Extreme Politics”, MIT University Press, ebook

How likely is it that humanity could end? Experts working on catastrophic risk have estimated the chances of disaster for a wide range of the hazards that our species faces. Adding up the threats, philosopher Toby Ord estimates the odds that humanity could become extinct over the next century at one in six, with an out-of-control superintelligence, bioterrorism, and totalitarianism among the largest risks. He argues that most of the risks have arisen because technology has advanced more rapidly than safeguards to keep it in check. To encapsulate the situation facing humanity, Ord titled his book The Precipice.

A one in six chance of going the way of dodos and dinosaurs effectively means we are playing a game of Russian roulette with humanity’s future. Six chambers. One bullet. Even the most foolhardy soldier usually finds an excuse not to play Russian roulette. And that’s when just their own life is at stake. In considering extinction risk, we’re contemplating not one fatality but the death of billions or possibly trillions of people—not to mention countless animals.

It can seem impossible to imagine our species becoming extinct due to a catastrophe such as nuclear war, asteroids, or a pandemic. But in reality, the danger surpasses plenty of perils we already worry about. One way to put catastrophic risk into perspective is to compare it with more familiar risks. If extinction risk poses a one in six risk to our species over the next century, then it means that it is far more hazardous than many everyday risks. Specifically, it suggests that the typical US resident is fifteen times more likely to die from a catastrophic risk—such as nuclear war or bioterrorism—than in car crash.2

Extinction risk outstrips other dangers too. Ask people about their greatest fears, and you’ll get answers like “street violence,” “snakes,” “heights,” and “terrorism."4 But in reality, these are much less hazardous than catastrophic risks. People in the United States are 31 times more likely to die from a catastrophic risk than from homicide. Catastrophic risk is 3,519 times likelier to kill than falls from a height, and 6,194 times more likely to kill than venomous plants and animals. If you have ever worried about any of these threats, you should be more fearful about cata- strophic risk. Extinction risks aren’t just more dangerous than any of them; they are more hazardous than all of them put together. Catastrophic risk poses a greater danger to the life of the typical US resident than car accidents, murder, drowning, high falls, electrocution, and rattlesnakes put together.

A one in six risk is just the danger in a single century. Suppose that the risk of extinction remains at one in six for each century. That means there’s a five in six chance humanity makes it to the end of the twenty-first century, but less than an even chance we survive to the end of the twenty-fourth century. The odds that we survive all the way to the year 3000 are just one in six. In other words, if we continue playing Russian roulette once a century, it’s probable that we blow our brains out before the millennium is halfway through, and there’s only a small chance that we make it to the end of the millennium.

Part of the reason humans undervalue the future is that it’s hard to get our heads around the idea that our genetic code could live on for millions of years. At present, the best estimates are that our species, Homo sapiens, evolved around three hundred thousand years ago.1 That means we have existed for about ten thousand generations. But we have another one billion years before the increasing heat of our sun brings most plant life to an end.1 That’s plenty of time to figure out how to become an interstellar species and move to a more suitable solar system. Humans could live to enjoy another thirty million generations on earth.

Thinking about the mind-boggling scale of these numbers, I’m reminded of the Total Perspective Vortex machine, created by Douglas Adams in The Restaurant at the End of the Universe. Anyone brave enough to enter sees a scale model of the entire universe, with an arrow indicating their current position. As a result, their brain explodes. As Adams reflects, the machine proves that “if life is going to exist in a universe of this size, then the one thing it cannot afford to have is a sense of proportion.”

Still, let’s try. Imagine your ancestors a hundred generations ago. They are your great-great-great-great-great-great-great- great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great- great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great- great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great- great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great- great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great- great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great- great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great- great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great- great-great-great-grandparents. These people lived around 1000 BCE, at the start of the Iron Age. They might have been part of Homeric Greece, ancient Egypt, Vedic age India, the preclassic Maya, or Zhou Dynasty China.

Contemplate for a moment about what the hundred genera- tions between our Iron Age ancestors and today have achieved. They built the Taj Mahal and Sistine Chapel, the Angkor Wat and Empire State Building. Thanks to them, we can relish the poetry of Maya Angelou, novels of Leo Tolstoy, and music of Ludwig van Beethoven. An abundance of inventions has delivered us deli- cious food, homes that are comfortable year-round, and technol- ogy that provides online access to a bottomless well of entertain- ment. If time machines existed, we might pop in to visit our great100 grandparents, but few would volunteer to stay in the Iron Age.

Yet humanity is really just getting started. If things go well, it’s ten thousand generations down, thirty million to go. Imagine what those future generations could do, and how much time they have to enjoy. Here’s one way to think about what it means to have thirty million generations ahead. Suppose humanity’s potential time on the planet was shrunk down to a single eighty- year life span. In that event, we would now be a newborn baby— just nine days old. Homo sapiens is a mere 0.03 percent through all we could experience on earth.

We won’t meet most of those who follow us on the planet, but we should cherish future generations all the same. If you value humanity’s past achievements—the Aztec and Roman civiliza- tions, art of the Renaissance, and breakthroughs of the Industrial Revolution—then the generations to come are just as worthy. This is what political philosopher Edmund Burke meant when he described society as “a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.’- To appreciate the past is akin to admiring the achievements of distant places. Like geography, his- tory helps us better understand the way of the world.

Politicians like me like to speak fondly about looking after "our children and our grandchildren.” But it usually stops after a generation or two. Policy pays little heed to the many generations that will follow. For my own part, it took a coronavirus-induced shutdown to have the time to spend reflecting deeply about the long term. This book had been rattling around in my head for years, but it was only when all my meetings, events, and travel were canceled that I had the time to write it. Pandemics are one of the threats to humanity that I’ll discuss in this book, but in this instance, it provided a chance to reflect on the long term. It’s tempting to ignore the distant future. It’s easier to love the grandchildren whom we hug than the great-great-great-grand- children whom we’ll never get to smile on. But that doesn’t make those far-flung generations any less important. Via my wife, our children can trace their lineage to Benjamin Franklin, but I’m more excited about the potential achievements of the generations yet to be born.

For companies and governments, a major impediment to long- term thinking is the idea of discounting the future. When investing money, this is a reasonable approach. A dollar in a decade’s time is less valuable than a dollar today for the simple reason that a dollar today could be invested and earn a real return. Share markets have good and bad years, but based on returns from the past 120 years, someone who put $1,000 into the US stock market for an average year could expect it to be worth $1,065 after twelve months (accounting for dividends and inflation).2 Approximating these returns, when governments contemplate making investments, they often apply a discount rate of around 5 percent, while companies use rates that are higher still.2

When it comes to growing your greenbacks, this makes perfect sense. If Kanesha offered you $ 1,000 today, and Jane offered you $ 1,000 in a year’s time, most of us would think that Kanesha was making the more generous offer. Kanesha’s cash can be put to productive use and would be worth more than Jane’s when the year is out.

But what if we’re talking about Kanesha and Jane themselves? Suppose Kanesha is alive today, and Jane is yet to be born. When discounting is applied to lives, it suggests that Kanesha’s life to- day is worth twice as much as Jane’s life in fifteen years’ time. It implies that Kanesha today is worth 132 times as much as Jane in a century’s time. So if we’re spending money to keep them safe, a 5 percent discount rate indicates that we should spend more than a hundred times as much to protect Kanesha today than to pro- tect Jane in a century’s time.

The further we stretch the time period, the more ridiculous the results become. Discounting at a rate of 5 percent implies that Christopher Columbus is worth more than all eight billion people on the planet today.— Naturally, it also implies that your life is worth more than eight billion lives in five hundred years’ time. Even if you value the hug of a loved one over the unseen successes of next century’s generations, is it fair to ruthlessly dis- miss the distant future? Discounting is the enemy of the long term.

As philosopher Will MacAskill points out, there is something morally repugnant about concluding that the happiness of those who will be alive in the 2100s is inconsequential simply because they live in the future. MacAskill coined the term “presentism” to refer to prejudice against people who are yet unborn.” Just like racism, sexism, or other forms of bigotry, he argues that mis- treating those who live a long way in the future is unfair. To dis- criminate in favor of Kanesha against unborn Jane is a form of presentism. If you traveled back in time to the 1500s and met someone who claimed that they were worth more than everyone alive in the 2000s, you’d rightly regard them as an egomaniac. Isn’t it equally narcissistic to ignore the happiness of people in the 2500s?

Some have contended that we should favor the living over the unborn for the same reason that philanthropy favors the down- trodden over the wealthy. If incomes rise over time, the argument goes, then asking today’s citizens to help those in the future is like taking from the poor to give to the rich.— But this reasoning ignores the fact that we are talking about the survival of future generations. Theoretical riches won’t do them any good if they are practically dead—or if planetary apocalypse snuffs out their chance to be born. Similarly, it misses the possibility that future pandemics, wars, or climate disasters could make coming genera- tions significantly poorer.—

Insights from behavioral science help explain why humans aren’t good at understanding extinction risk.— Our thinking about dangers is skewed by an “availability bias”: a tendency to focus on familiar risks. Like the traders who failed to forecast the collapse of the securitized housing debt market, we are lousy at judging the probability of rare but catastrophic events. Most important, our instincts fail us as the magnitudes grow larger. In research titled "The More Who Die, the Less We Care,” psychologists Paul Slovic and Daniel Vastfjall argue that we become numb to suffering as the body count grows.— Humans’ compassionate instincts are aroused by stories, not statistics. Indeed, one study found that people were more likely to donate to help a single victim than they were to assist eight victims. This may help explain why the international community has been so slow to respond to genocide, including recent incidents in Rwanda, Darfur, and Myanmar. As artificial intelligence researcher Eliezer Yudkowsky notes, human neurotransmitters are unable to feel sorrow that is thousands of times stronger than a single funeral.— The problem is starker still when it comes to extinction risk. Our emotional brains cannot multiply by billions.

Add to this a media cycle that has become a media cyclone, in which stories explode in a matter of minutes, and “outrage porn” seems to drive the news choices of many outlets. In the 2016 US election, researchers found that for every piece of professional news shared on Twitter, there was one piece of “junk news.’’— Conflict fueled by social media keeps us in a primal state of rage and retaliation. And this isn’t the only force that makes politics myopic. Campaign contributions tend to come from donors who have an immediate interest in a “today” issue rather than from people aiming to solve long-term problems. This kind of “instant noodle” politics prioritizes quick results and sidelines fundamental challenges.

In this environment, a special style of politics has thrived: populism. The term “populist" gets thrown around a lot—typically as an insult—so it’s worth taking a moment to define it precisely.— Populists see politics as a conflict between crooked elites and the pure mass of people. Many candidates trying to defeat an incumbent will criticize “insiders,” but populists make a stronger attack on elites, claiming that they are dishonest or corrupt. Populists then claim that they—and only they—represent the “real people.” Populists combine a fierce critique of elites and personal appeal to the “silent majority.”

The political strategy of populists involves critiquing intellectuals, institutions, and internationalism. The political style of populists tends to be fierce. They do not strive for unity and calm consensus. Populists share with revolutionaries a desire for sudden and dramatic change. They have little respect for experts and the systems of government. Populists’ priorities tend to be immediate issues such as crime, migration, jobs, and taxes. Consequently, the electoral success of populists has served to sideline work on long-term dangers such as climate change and nuclear war.

Donald Trump may have lost his presidential reelection bid, but he has transformed the Republican Party, which has jettisoned its longstanding commitment to free trade, immigration, and global alliances. Many moderate Republicans, who might have served comfortably under Ronald Reagan or George H. W. Bush, have quit the party or been defeated by Trump-supporting populists. The Republican Party, which holds nearly half the seats in Congress and controls a majority of state legislatures, has embraced populism to a degree that was unimaginable when it was led by George W. Bush, John McCain, or Mitt Romney. After four years under President Trump, the Republican Party is now more cynical and isolationist, focused on immediate grievances rather than long-term challenges.

Yet while the strength of populism threatened to sideline issues of catastrophic risk, coronavirus did the opposite. The worst pandemic in a century led to the most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression. Churches and concert halls fell silent. International travel collapsed. The Summer Olympics were postponed. Stocks plunged, and for a brief moment, the price of a barrel of oil went negative. Globally, millions lost their jobs, and millions more faced famine.

COVID-19 never threatened to extinguish humanity, but it highlighted our vulnerability to infectious diseases. More than at any time in living memory, people focused on the dangers of pandemics. The popularity of Geraldine Brooks’s Year of Wonders, Stephen King’s The Stand, Emily St. John Mandel’s Station Eleven, and Albert Camus’s The Plague vividly illustrates the way in which fear of pandemics has become more acute.

We know that disasters can remake society. The black death helped usher in the Renaissance.— The Great Depression made a generation of investors more risk averse.— World War II spawned the United Nations and formed the modern welfare state. In autocracies, droughts and floods can topple dictators.—

Coronavirus is reshaping the world in numerous ways.— Handwashing is in. Cheek kissing is out. The rise of big cities is slowing as people consider the downsides of density. Firms that automated their production systems to deal with physical dis- tancing requirements and stay-at-home orders are discovering that they can get by permanently with fewer staff. More tele- working and less business travel is leading to a drop in demand for receptionists, bus drivers, office cleaners, and security guards. When it comes to our use of technology, coronavirus suddenly accelerated the world to 2030. When it comes to globalization, the pandemic took us back to 2010.

But it’s still an open question as to how COVID-19 will affect humanity’s ability to think about the long term. Most of the examples I’ve listed are instances in which crises affected societies organically: the shock came, and it changed our behavior. But accentuating the long term requires taking risk more seriously and placing greater emphasis on saving our species. Linebackers are swift to respond when an offensive player suddenly takes a step to the right. But it takes longer to recognize that a team’s offensive plays are skewed to the right and modify the defensive formation accordingly.

Like a football team that adapts its tactics, this book argues that we should lengthen our thinking. At minimal cost, society can massively reduce the odds of catastrophe. By ensuring that the big threats get the attention and resources they need, we can safeguard the future of our species. As insurance policies go, this one is a bargain.

In the chapters that follow, I’ll outline the biggest risks facing humanity. I’ll begin in chapter 2 with pandemics, such as the possibility that the next virus might combine the infectiousness of COVID-19 with the deadliness of Ebola. What can we do to shut down exotic animal markets, speed up vaccine develop- ment, and create surge capacity in hospitals? I’ll then delve into bioterrorism, and the danger of extremists developing their own versions of smallpox or the bubonic plague. How difficult is it for them to create these devilish diseases, and what can we do to prevent it?

In chapter 3, I’ll then explore climate change—perhaps the in- tergenerational issue that has received the most public attention in recent years. While much of the modeling looks at how global warming could be bad, my focus is on the chances that it’s catastrophic. This isn’t about climate change shortening the ski season; it’s about the possibility of temperatures rising by 18°F (10°C), rendering large sections of the planet uninhabitable. What does the risk of cataclysmic climate change mean for energy policy?

Next, I’ll turn to nukes. As a child in the 1980s, I vividly re- member watching The Day After. My classmates and I agreed that a nuclear war was inevitable. When the Cold War ended, the world seemed safer, but in the three decades since, the threat from new nuclear powers has made the problem less predictable. As I discuss in chapter 4, what we used to call an arms race now looks more like a bar fight, with hazards coming from unexpected directions, including terrorist groups. Yet just as there are practical ways to avoid pub brawls (don’t drink past midnight, avoid the stairs, look out for the glass), so too are there sensible strategies that can reduce the odds of nuclear catastrophe (adopt a “no first use" policy, reduce the stockpiles, control loose nukes).

A superintelligence has been dubbed the “last invention” we’ll ever make. An artificial intelligence machine whose abilities exceed our own could turbocharge productivity and living stan- dards. But it could also spell disaster. If we program our artificial intelligence to maximize human happiness, it could fulfill our wishes literally by immobilizing everyone and attaching electrodes to the pleasure centers of our brains. As chapter 5 notes, what makes artificial intelligence different from every other risky technology is its runaway potential. Once a superintelligence can improve itself, it is unstoppable. So we need to build the guardrails before the highway.

What are the odds? In chapter 6,1 complete the discussion of catastrophic danger by examining less risky risks, including asteroids and supervolcanoes. I also consider the prospect of “unknown unknowns.” For example, prior to the first atomic bomb test, some scientists thought there was a chance it could set the atmosphere on fire, destroying the planet. When the Large Hadron Collider was being built, critics warned that the particle collisions inside it could create micro black holes. Although neither situation eventuated, they raise the question of what other doomsday scenarios could be lurking around the corner. How should the prospect of these unexpected risks change our approach to cutting-edge science? Drawing together these dangers with the major hazards, I report the likely probability of each, benchmarking existential risks such as nuclear war and pandemics against individual risks such as being struck by lightning or dying on the battlefield.

Ultimately, tackling existential risks is a political problem. Private citizens can achieve many things, but preventing nuclear war, averting bioterrorism, and curbing greenhouse emissions are fundamentally problems of government. Governments control the military, levy taxes, and provide public goods. So the values of those who run the country will determine how much of a priority the nation places on averting catastrophe.

That’s why the rise of populists is crucial to humanity’s long- term survival. In chapter 7,1 discuss the factors that have led to the electoral success of populists during recent decades, and why populists tend to be uninterested in dealing with long-term threats. Populists’ focus on the short term means that—like a driver distracted by a back seat squabble—we’re in danger of missing the threats that could kill us. I’ll explore why populists around the world struggled to respond to COVID-19, and what this says about the dangers that populism poses to our species. Most critics of populism have concentrated on the present day. They’re missing the bigger picture. Populists are primarily endangering the unborn.

Bad politics doesn’t just exacerbate other dangers; it represents a risk factor in itself through the possibility of a totalitarian turn —in which democracy is replaced by an enduring autocracy. The road to democracy is not a one-way street. Over the centuries, dozens of countries have backslid from democracy into autocracy —abandoning the institutions of fair elections, protection for minorities, and free expression. Such an outcome could be deadly for dissenters and miserable for the multitudes. Chapter 8 explores why democracy dies and identifies the signs that institutions are being undermined. Chapter 9 suggests how we might strengthen democracies to allow citizens to have a greater say, and lower the chances of the few taking over from the many. Chapter 10 concludes the book.

When COVID-19 hit, many rushed out to buy life insurance.— In our personal lives, we know that spending a small amount on insurance can guard against financial ruin. Societies can take a similar approach: implementing modest measures today to safe- guard the immense future of our species. For each of the existential risks we face, there are sensible approaches that could curtail the dangers. For all the risks we face, a better politics will lead to a safer world.

Because of its focus on the urgent over the important, populist politics should perhaps bear the label, “Warning: populism can harm your children." But what is the alternative? In the conclusion, I argue that the answer lies in the ancient philosophy of stoicism. A stoic approach to politics isn’t about favoring one side of the ideological fence over another. Instead, it’s about the temperament of good political leadership. Stoicism emphasizes that character matters and holds that virtue is the only good. Decisions are based on empirical evidence, not emotion. Anger has no place in effective leadership. Strength comes from civility, courage, and endurance. Stoics make a sharp distinction between the things they can change and those they cannot.

## 1NC – Elections – Foreign Policy

#### Biden wins now despite low approval rating – its close

Bowman 06/28 [Bridget Bowman is the deputy editor of the NBC News political unit, “The ‘lesser of two evils’ voters who could decide 2024”, 06/28/2023, NBC News, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2024-election/lesser-two-evils-voters-decide-2024-rcna91077>] TDI

Voters who “somewhat disapprove” of President Joe Biden’s performance are uncomfortable with his two main potential GOP rivals in the general election. President Joe Biden’s path to victory in 2024 runs through voters who think he’s been a disappointment in the White House — but say Donald Trump or another Republican would be even worse. Biden’s approval rating stands at 43% in the latest NBC News national poll, not enough support to translate to a re-election win. But another 10% of registered voters say they only “somewhat disapprove” of Biden’s performance. And in a hypothetical rematch with Trump, half of those voters say they would support Biden, while 39% say they would back Trump. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis fares better with those voters, but he only fights Biden to a draw. The poll’s margin of error for this subsample of voters is a wide plus-or-minus 10 points — yet even within that gaping range, the result highlights deeply unusual behavior of a voter group that typically breaks hard against the president’s party in elections, according to national exit polls. But in the recent 2022 midterms, when voters who “somewhat disapprove” of Biden made up about 10% of the electorate, according to NBC News exit polling, they supported Democrats by a 4-point margin. That helped Democrats limit their House losses and even expand their Senate majority in Biden's first midterm. The data show how concerns about Republican candidates and the GOP broadly kept Democrats competitive in the last election and are keeping Biden competitive in the next one, even though voters harbor their own concerns about him. That’s backed up by poll respondents’ own words when they were asked to describe why they would choose Biden over Trump or DeSantis. “Donald Trump is nuts,” said a self-described white, female, moderate respondent from Pennsylvania, who said she’d choose Biden despite somewhat disapproving of his performance. A Black male voter from New Mexico who is an independent said: “Donald Trump lacks moral compass. Joe Biden somewhat has a moral compass. That was it.” A female Hispanic liberal from Florida said about choosing Biden over DeSantis, “I would rather vote for a dead shark than the devil himself, I suppose.” Other voters described DeSantis as “extreme” or “far right,” especially on LGBTQ issues. Democratic pollster Jeff Horwitt of Hart Research has nicknamed the group “BOWA” Biden voters: “It’s really thinking about these voters as the ‘best of what’s around’ Biden voters,” he said. “And that’s how they see Biden compared to Trump — he is, in fact, the best of what’s around,” said Horwitt, who conducted the NBC News poll with GOP pollster Bill McInturff of Public Opinion Strategies. This group of voters tends to be younger, and they are slightly more likely to be people of color, according to the poll. They also lean slightly Republican, with 37% identifying with the GOP and 33% identifying with the Democratic Party. Almost a quarter of them — 23% — say they are independents, nearly double the share of independents in the overall polling sample. Voters who say they “somewhat disapprove” of Biden say they supported Biden by 8 points over Trump in 2020. And they have intensely negative views of Trump — 48% have negative views of Biden personally, but a whopping 72% have negative feelings about Trump. That showed through in respondents’ more detailed descriptions of their thinking. Many relayed disappointment with Biden — but disgust with Trump. A man from California who is a self-described “very liberal” voter likened the matchup to “choosing the lesser of two evils.” Another white woman from Texas said: “I somewhat disapprove of Biden, but I wholly disapprove of Trump. Even though I lean Republican, you could not pay me to vote for Donald Trump. I think Donald Trump is the worst thing to happen to this country in 50 years.” The voters who “somewhat disapprove” of Biden appear more open to supporting DeSantis if he is the Republican nominee. In a hypothetical matchup, Biden leads that group by just 1 percentage point, with 46% backing Biden and 45% backing DeSantis — though again, the sample size remains small. Still, that movement helps explain why Biden leads DeSantis by just 1 point among all voters in a hypothetical matchup, while he leads Trump by 4 points in their matchup. Even though that group is a small share of the electorate, their choice in 2024 is set to be crucial. “That’s the difference between winning and losing an election,” Horwitt said.

#### Popularity in favor of maintaining or increasing troops

Smeltz & Kafura 20 – [Dina Smeltz, Craig Kafura. Dina Smeltz, a polling expert, has more than 25 years of experience designing and fielding international social and political surveys. Prior to joining the Council to lead its annual survey of American attitudes on US foreign policy, she served in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the US State Department's Office of Research from 1992 to 2008. Craig Kafura is the assistant director for public opinion and foreign policy at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, a Security Fellow with the Truman National Security Project, and a Pacific Forum Young Leader. At the Council, he coordinates work on public opinion and foreign policy and is a regular contributor to the public opinion and foreign policy blog Running Numbers. “American Public Support for US Troops in Middle East Has Grown”. February 10, 2020] TDI

A majority of Americans say the US military presence in the Middle East should be maintained (45%) or increased (29%). Just 24 percent think it should be decreased. A majority support long-term military bases in Iraq (55%, up from 41% in 2014) and Kuwait (57%, up from 47% in 2014). Nearly half favor keeping bases in Afghanistan (48%, up from 43% in 2014). A combined majority (54%) say alliances in the Middle East benefit both Middle East partners and the United States or mostly benefit the United States.

Majorities Say US Military Presence in Mideast Should Be Maintained or Increased. In addition to seeing the Middle East as the most important region for US security interests, a majority of Americans say the US military presence in the Middle East should be either maintained (45%) or increased (29%). Just 24 percent think it should be decreased, similar to Chicago Council surveys dating back to 2015. Moreover, a majority believe the United States should have long-term military bases in Iraq (55%), the highest level since 2008 (when 57% agreed). A majority also favor long-term basing in Kuwait (57%), up ten percentage points from 2014. The public is evenly divided on whether the United States should have long-term bases in Afghanistan (48% should, 49% should not), though this is the highest level of support for basing in that country since 2010.

The United States has had some controversial disagreements with allies in the Middle East over the past year. In October, the United States announced it was withdrawing troops from northern Syria. Soon after Turkish President Recep Erdogan launched a military campaign against the Kurds, despite Kurdish assistance in fighting the Islamic State. US-Saudi ties have been strained following the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October 2018. And amid escalating tensions between the United States and Iran following the killing of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, the Iraqi Parliament voted in early January 2020 to expel American troops from the country.

Undoubtedly these moves have raised questions about the benefits of US alliances in the region. For their part, Americans tend to say the US alliances in the Middle East mostly benefit both the United States and its allies (39%) or mostly the United States (15%). Adding them together, slightly fewer now (54%) than in 2019 (59%) see a positive benefit for the United States, though this level is still higher than the combined percentage in 2017 (48%).

Bipartisan Agreement on Troop Presence. Majorities of Republicans (67%), Democrats (64%), and Independents (55%) see the Middle East as the most important region for US security. There is also general bipartisan support for maintaining or increasing the US military presence in the Middle East, though Republicans (39%) are more likely than Democrats (29%) or Independents (22%) to favor increasing the US presence in the region. Republicans are far more supportive of long-term US military bases in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan than are Democrats or Independents. In the case of Afghanistan, majorities of Democrats (53%) and Independents (53%) oppose the United States maintaining bases, while six in ten Republicans (61%) support them. Republicans are also more likely to see the wars in Iraq (51%) and Afghanistan (50%) as having been worth fighting, while large majorities of Democrats and Independents say they have not been worth fighting.

#### Trump 2 causes global nuclear war.

Beres 3/3 [(Louis Renè Beres, Emeritus Professor of International Law at Purdue.) “If Trump Returns as President: An Existential Threat to the United States”, Modern Diplomacy, 03/03/2023. <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/03/03/if-trump-returns-as-president-an-existential-threat-to-the-united-states/>] pfox TDI

There are many reasons to fear Donald J. Trump’s return to the White House, but one remains especially worrisome. It stems from the former president’s conspicuous ignorance of international law and US foreign policy. Among assorted particulars of this debility, a previously failed Trump posture – “America First” – would likely prove more injurious the second-time around.

Prima facie, its restoration, thoughtless in the most literal sense, would dignify a numbingly vacant US president’s indifference to science, logic, history and law.

Could it get any worse?

Could anything be more absurd?

Here is a basic answer: Following escalating aggressions by Russia in Ukraine and potentially destabilizing aggressions by China and North Korea in Asia, America needs a leader who can read and think meaningfully. The American White House is not a proper place for foreign policy pretenders, especially a former president who already displayed a pernicious fusion of historical indifference and intellectual incompetence.

There are also relevant specifics. Any future presidential retrogressions to “America First” would stem from misapplied US cultural underpinnings. These backward steps, absurd steps, would reflect variously intersecting declensions of “mass-man.”[4] Though Donald Trump remains a celebrated leader of the American “mass,” not just a member, he has never actually risen above the capacities of his chorus. Rather, amid the constant rancor and noisy defilement, he has remained one of mass man’s most fervid exponents.

From time immemorial, international relations have been rooted in Realpolitik or power politics. Though such traditional patterns of thinking are normally accepted as “realistic,” they actually undermine world law and global order. It follows that any sitting US president should finally acknowledge the lethal limitations of our planet’s global threat system, and recognize, as inevitable corollary, that US power ought never be founded upon delusions of national primacy.

“America First” has a pleasing resonance with the Many, with those who like to chant in crowds. But this narrow political resonance does not extend to the Few, to those who would prefer to think as conscious individuals. About the “Few,” German-Swiss philosopher Thomas Mann attributes the downfall of civilizations to gradual absorptions of the educated classes by the Mass, to the “simplification of all functions of political, social, economic and spiritual life.” If nothing else, America’s Trump era was a humiliating period of deliberate and falsifying simplifications. Is it anything less than preposterous to actually seek its return?

Americans require intellect-based answers, not an endless barrage of silly clichés and partisan rancor. In turn, such answers will call for dialectical (mind challenging) thinking. Analytically, in these calculations, the United States should always be considered as one significant part of the larger world system, the world system configuration created by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

Though more or less ignored by global leaders, the “Westphalian” system of international law (a system of institutionalized global anarchy) is destined to fail. Moreover, together with the accelerating spread of nuclear weapons technologies and infrastructures, any such failure would prove remorseless, unprecedented (sui generis would say the logicians) and irremediable. At another level, it would signal the potentially insufferable triumph of anti-reason.

There are also relevant nuances. Grievous world system failure could take place in hard to fathom increments, or with great suddenness, as an unanticipated nuclear “bolt from the blue.” On such bewilderingly unpredictable matters, any US policy resurrection of Donald Trump’s “America First” would prove starkly injurious.

Conceptually, it’s not complicated. In these indispensable calculations, history deserves a much more manifest pride of place. False bravado and belligerent nationalism have never succeeded in any decipherable ways or for longer than brief intervals. Indeed, from an historical standpoint, no observation could be more obvious.

Plausibly, in a Trump-resurrected future, unsteady expressions of national security policy would be exacerbated by multiple system failures. At times, these failures could be mutually reinforcing or “synergistic.” At other times, they could involve “force-multiplying” weapons of mass destruction. In any case, they could be brought about by the defiling restoration of an absurd presidency.

Rejecting the banalities of “America First” and its derivative foreign policy deformations, a capable US president should think along clarifying lines of subject-matter interrelatedness. It is preposterous to deny that “America First” would fail US national security obligations. Moreover, any such failure, even one that did not produce catastrophic war or terror, would be degrading to United States.

“The visionary,” teases Italian film director Federico Fellini, “is the only realist.” But there can be nothing “visionary” about “America First.” Whether in its previous Trump-defined iteration or in a future modified version, this stitched together amalgam of a former president’s clichés would be absurd. Should such a lack of vision find its way back into the American White House in 2024, its multiple and recycled harms could fatally undermine whatever might still remain of American Reason.

At some point, especially if strengthened and expanded by manipulative resurrections of “America First,” world system failures could become both tangibly dire and irreversible. In the final analysis, it will not help the United States or any other country to tinker “thoughtlessly” at the ragged edges of our “Westphalian” world legal order. At that decisive turning point, any US presidential reaffirmations of “America First” could significantly hasten the onset of a regional or worldwide nuclear war.

It’s not complicated. “America First” is just mass-defined shorthand for “America Last.” In the longer term, the only sort of foreign policy realism that could make any sense for the United States is a posture that pointed toward much “higher” awareness of global “oneness.” Whether or not we like the sound of such “intellectual” cosmopolitanism, world system interdependence is not a matter of policy volition. It is an incontrovertible fact.

In its fully optimized expression, such an indispensable awareness – the literal opposite of former US President Donald Trump’s “America First” – would resemble what the ancients called the “city of man.” For the moment, the insightful prophets of any more consciously collaborative world civilization will remain few and far between. But this lamentable absence, one unimproved even by active intellectual interventions by our “great universities,” does not owe to any witting analytic forfeiture. Above all, it reflects an imperiled species’ stubborn unwillingness to take itself seriously. This means an unwillingness to recognize that the only sort of patriotic loyalty still able to rescue a self-destroying planet is one finally willing to embrace humankind as a whole.

Any such embrace would represent a new and re-directed focus of patriotic loyalty. Almost by definition, therefore, it would not be discoverable by American mass.

There is more. Intellectually and historically, “America First” remains misconceived and irrational. Now, more desperately than ever before, we require a logic-based universalization and centralization of international relations. Though challenging, this complex requirement need not express a bewildering or incomprehensible rationale. But there will still be demanding intellectual prerequisites. In the United States especially, such expectations will almost certainly be unrealizable.

Nonetheless, it is hardly a medical or biological secret that core factors and behaviors common to all human beings greatly outnumber those that differentiate one person from another. Unless the leaders of all major states on Planet Earth can finally understand that the survival of any one state must be contingent upon the survival of all, true national security will continue to elude everyone. This includes the “most powerful” states and individuals, even if their explicit policy mantras call foolishly for the subject to be “first.”

What cannot benefit the entire “hive,” warns Marcus Aurelius in his Meditations, can never help the individual “bee.”

The most immediate security tasks in our Westphalian condition of global anarchy remain narrowly self-centered. Simultaneously, national leaders must finally learn to understand that our planet represents a recognizably organic whole, a fragile but intersecting “unity” that exhibits diminishing options for genocide avoidance and war avoidance. This is the indispensable unity of human “oneness.”

It’s finally time for candor. Though clichéd, America is “running out of time.” Quickly, to seize rapidly disappearing opportunities for longer-term survival, our leaders must learn to build upon the critical foundational insights of Francis Bacon, Galileo and Isaac Newton, and on the more contemporarily summarizing observation of philosopher Lewis Mumford: “Civilization is the never ending process of creating one world and one humanity.”

Whenever we speak of civilization we must also speak of law. Jurisprudentially, no particular national leadership can claim any special or primary obligation in this regard. Nor could any such leadership cadre ever afford to build comprehensive security policies upon the vaguely distant hopes of mass. But the United States remains a key part of the community of nations and must do whatever it can to detach an already collapsing “state of nations” from our time-dishonored “state of nature.”

There is more. Any such willful detachment should be expressed as part of a wider vision for a more durable and justice-centered world politics. Over the longer term, an American president will have to do his or her part to safeguard the global system as a whole. Then, “America Together,” not “America First,” would express a markedly more rational and intellect-based security mantra.

However impractical or fanciful this may all sound, nothing could be more perilous than continuing on a long-discredited “Westphalian” course. “What is the good of passing from one untenable position to another,” inquires Samuel Beckett in Endgame, “of seeking justification always on the same plane?” It’s a critical question, one that should now be asked of any sitting or aspiring US president, especially an aspirant who has already demonstrated his consummate unfitness.

For the moment, there is no need for detailing any further analytic or intellectual particulars. There are, of course, bound to be many. Always, these will need to be held together by coherent and comprehensive (science-based) theory.

In The Plague, Albert Camus instructs: “At the beginning of the pestilence and when it ends, there’s always a propensity for rhetoric…It is in the thick of a calamity that one gets hardened to the truth – in other words – to silence.” As long as the nation-states in world politics continue to operate as glib archeologists of ruins-in-the-making – that is, as “political prisoners” of a vastly-corrupted philosophic thought – they will be unable to stop the next series of catastrophic wars.

Credo quia absurdum, said the ancient philosopher Tertullian. “I believe because it is absurd.”

Until now, certain traditional expectations of balance-of-power world politics may have been more-or-less defensible. Nevertheless, soon, from the essential standpoint of longer-term options and global security survival prospects, an American president should open up this nation’s latent security imagination to more visionary and intellect-based forms of foreign policy understanding. Resurrecting the “everyone for himself” extremity of former president Donald J. Trump’s “America First” would represent a US policy move in the wrong direction. No move could conceivably be more wrong.

It could never make sense for the United States to construct security justifications along the incessantly brittle lines of belligerent nationalism.

“America First” remains a self-defiling national mantra, nothing more. Recently championed by an American president who was proudly detached from historical or analytic understanding, it ought never be allowed to reappear in United States foreign policy. To be sure, there is nothing inherently wrong with any sensible manifestations of American patriotism, but these primacy-oriented (zero-sum) manifestations could never be reconciled with any dignified human survival.

## 1NC – Link Core

### Saudi Arabia

#### **Voters support sending troops and missile defenses to Saudi Arabia**

Greenwood ’19 (Max Greenwood, September 26th 2019, Poll: Most Americans Support sending troops, missile defenses to Saudi Arabia - https://thehill.com/homenews/news/463253-poll-most-americans-support-sending-troops-missile-defenses-to-saudi-arabia/)

A majority of voters support sending at least some U.S. troops and missile and air defenses to Saudi Arabia after airstrikes on Saudi oil fields this month that the U.S., European and Arab nations have blamed on Iran, according to a new Harvard CAPS/Harris poll. Fifty-eight percent of respondents in the poll released Thursday said they would back sending such military support to Saudi Arabia, while 42 percent said they would oppose such a move. A larger majority of respondents, 72 percent, said they support sanctions that the Trump administration has placed on Iran in the wake of the oil field attacks, according to the survey. Nearly as many respondents, 71 percent, also said the U.S. should to ramp up diplomatic and economic pressure on Tehran instead of launching a military strike on the country.{mosads} Sending U.S. troops and air defenses to Saudi Arabia would almost certainly escalate tensions with Iran and raise the potential of a new U.S.-involved conflict in the Middle East. Asked whether they would support or oppose another U.S.-led military engagement in the Middle East, nearly two-thirds of respondents — 64 percent — said they would object to such a move, while 34 percent said they would back that effort. “**The public does not want to take direct military action against Iran unless they attack American interests, but they fully support sending more troops and missile defenses to help protect Saudi Arabia,”** [**Mark Penn,**](https://thehill.com/people/mark-penn/) **the co-director of the Harvard CAPS/Harris poll, said. “Iran is seen as the No. 1 enemy of the U.S. in the world today and yet Americans want more diplomacy first.” In fact, the only scenario in which a majority of Americans — 73 percent — said they would support a U.S.-led strike on Iran is if the Islamic republic were to launch an attack on U.S. military assets or personnel. The U.S. sent roughly 500 troops to Saudi Arabia this summer,** the first time Washington has deployed troops to the country since a 2003 withdrawal following the invasion of Iraq. **The U.S. is now preparing to deploy more troops to the kingdom after airstrikes on two oil fields that Washington has blamed on Iran. The Pentagon has said that deployment will involve a moderate number of troops and would be defensive rather than offensive. The Harvard CAPS/Harris poll surveyed 2,009 registered U.S. voters from Sept. 22-24**. The poll is a collaboration of the Center for American Political Studies at Harvard University and The Harris Poll. The Hill will be working with Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll throughout 2019. Full poll results will be posted online later this week. The Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll survey is an online sample drawn from the Harris Panel and weighted to reflect known demographics. As a representative online sample, it does not report a probability confidence interval.

### Israel

#### Americans are consistently Pro-Israel

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Americans continue to express greater sympathy for the Israelis than the Palestinians in the Middle East conflict, as they have throughout Gallup's trend -- 55% now sympathize more with the Israelis and, 26% with the Palestinians. Line graph. Annual trend from 2001 to 2022 in Americans' preference for the Palestinians versus the Israelis when asked where their sympathies lie in the Middle East situation. The 55% sympathizing more with the Israelis in 2022 is down from 58% in 2021 and is the lowest since 2005, when it was 52%. The 26% now sympathizing more with the Palestinians is just one point higher than in 2021 but is the highest in the trend, and up from the low point of 12% in 2013. While still wide, Israel's advantage on this question has narrowed over the past decade (since 2013) as sympathy for the Palestinians has edged higher. At the same time, sympathy for Israel has diminished slightly. The percentage of adults with no preference -- favoring both countries, favoring neither, or who are not sure -- is now 18%, but was higher before 2017. The latest findings are based on Gallup's annual World Affairs survey for 2022, conducted Feb. 1-17. Democrats Nearly Split in Sympathy for Israelis vs. Palestinians The latest poll documents sharp differences by party in Americans' positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. More than three-quarters of Republicans sympathize more with the Israelis (77%) than with the Palestinians (13%) -- a 64-percentage-point difference. That gap narrows to 28 points among independents, with 54% siding with the Israelis and 26% the Palestinians. By contrast, Democrats are statistically divided, with 40% favoring the Israelis and 38% the Palestinians. The current divide among Democrats on the Middle East question is the latest in a decadelong decline in that party group's net sympathy for Israel, from 35 points in 2013 to two points today. The sympathy gap for Israel has also narrowed substantially among independents, falling from 52 points in 2013 and about 40 points between 2014 and 2016 to 28 points today. Over the same period, the preference gap for Israel has closed by nine points among Republicans, from 73 points in 2013 to the latest 64 points. The decline among Republicans was interrupted by surges in pro-Israel sentiment during the Donald Trump presidency, including in 2018 as the Trump administration prepared to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in a strong show of support for Israel. Line graph. Annual trend from 2001 to 2022 in net sympathy for Israel by party ID. Net sympathy is defined as the percentage more sympathetic toward Israel minus the percentage more sympathetic toward the Palestinians. Republicans have consistently had higher net sympathy for Israel than have Democrats. Independents have usually been between Republicans and Democrats, although averaging closer to Democrats. Over the past two decades, net sympathy for Israel has decreased among Democrats from a high of +35 to just +2 in 2022. It rose among Republicans between 2001 and 2010, reaching +79, but is +64 today. Net sympathy for Israel among independents has varied between +19 and +52 and is +28 today. Support for Israel Also Varies by Age Aside from the differences by party, Gallup also finds substantial differences in sympathy for Israel by age. Whereas the majority of adults 55 and older (64%) and aged 35 to 54 (57%) are more sympathetic toward Israel, this drops to 40% among those under 35. In fact, nearly as many younger adults are more sympathetic toward the Palestinians (37%), resulting in a roughly even split in their preferences. Subgroup differences on this question are also stark by political ideology, while there are minimal differences by gender or education level. Notably, ideology magnifies the differences seen by party, so that conservative Republicans are more strongly pro-Israel than moderate/liberal Republicans. Likewise, conservative/moderate Democrats are decidedly pro-Israeli, while liberal Democrats now lean just as strongly in the Palestinians' favor. Liberal Democrats' 24-point margin in favor of the Palestinians this year is up from 15 points a year ago. Israel Maintains High Favorable Rating Separately, the poll finds Americans maintaining a much more favorable view of Israel than of the Palestinian Authority when the countries are rated separately. Seventy-one percent of U.S. adults say they have a favorable opinion of Israel, and 27% have a favorable opinion of the Palestinian Authority. The 71% viewing Israel favorably today matches the average since 2013, while the 27% favorable to the Palestinian Authority exceeds the 22% in that period and continues the upward trend seen in this sentiment over the past decade. Sympathy for Israel hit its all-time high in Gallup's trend in February 1991 after Iraqi Scud missiles struck Israel during the Gulf War. Line graph. Americans' favorable ratings of Israel from 1989 to 2022 and of the Palestinian Authority from 2000 to 2022. Favorable views of Israel have ranged from a high of 79% in late January 1991 to a low of 47% in November 1991 and are 71% today. Favorable views of the Palestinian Authority have ranged from a 11% in 2006 to 30% in 2021 and are 27% today. Majority of Democrats, Most Republicans View Israel Favorably While Democrats have become less partial to Israel over time, they have maintained a largely favorable view of that country. After improving slightly between 2001 and 2008, Israel's image has wavered very little among all three political-party groups, with roughly eight in 10 Republicans, seven in 10 independents and just under two-thirds of Democrats viewing it favorably. Line graph. Annual trend from 2001 to 2022 in favorable views of Israel by party ID. Favorability has consistently been highest among Republicans, while generally 10 to 20 percentage points lower among independents and Democrats. Views among the three political party groups have changed little over the past two decades. Currently, 81% of Republicans, 71% of independents and 63% of Democrats view Israel favorably. Palestinian Authority Has Low Favorability Across Parties Relatively few adults in any of the three major party groups view the Palestinian Authority favorably. However, its rating has improved among Democrats and independents, about doubling since 2013 to 38% and 28%, respectively. It has been steadier at a much lower level among Republicans, among whom 14% now view the Palestinian Authority favorably. Bottom Line A majority of Americans continue to be in Israel's corner, saying they sympathize more with the Israelis than the Palestinians in the Middle East situation. Far more also feel favorably toward Israel than toward the Palestinian Authority. The overall strength of Israel's sympathy advantage has declined in recent years as Democrats have become more divided on the question. In fact, the party itself is divided along ideological lines, with liberal Democrats siding with the Palestinians and moderate or conservative Democrats siding with the Israelis. But among both ideological subgroups, Democrats' increased sympathy for the Palestinians appears to stem from an assessment of the political situation, not from growing animosity toward Israel per se. Democrats are just as favorable toward Israel as they have been for at least two decades. Meanwhile, Republicans continue to side with Israel by a strong margin at the same time that most view the country favorably.

**U.S. Withdrawal from Israel unpopular according to polls**

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More than half of Americans (55%) have favorable views of Israel, while 41% say they have unfavorable views of the country. Notably, this is slightly more than the share who reported favorable views of the Israeli *government* (48%) and lower **than the share who said they had favorable views of the Israeli** *people* **(67%)** on a [separate survey in March](https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/05/26/modest-warming-in-u-s-views-on-israel-and-palestinians/). Overall, U.S. public attitudes about Israel, the country, are more closely related to views of the Israeli government (correlation of +0.62) than to views of the Israeli people (+0.56), though both are positively associated. This is consistent with other Pew Research Center work on views of [China](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/03/04/in-their-own-words-what-americans-think-about-china/) (for more, see *“*When Americans think about Israel, what do they have in mind?*”*).[4](https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2022/07/11/american-views-of-israel/#fn-51283-4) [5](https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2022/07/11/american-views-of-israel/#fn-51283-5)

Views of Israel vary markedly across age groups of Americans. **While a majority of those ages 65 and older (69%) and ages 50 to 64 (60%) have positive views of the country**, only about half of those ages 30 to 49 (49%) and around four-in-ten of those under 30 (41%) feel the same. Around a quarter of the oldest age group also feel *very* favorable toward Israel, while the youngest age group is more likely to say they feel *very unfavorable* (17%) than very favorable (10%).

Republicans and Democrats also diverge in their views of Israel, with **a majority of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (71%) saying they have a favorable view**, compared with a minority of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (44**%). Views of Israel are particularly positive among conservative Republicans (75%) relative to more moderate or liberal Republicans (62%).** Conservative and moderate Democrats (50%) are also more favorable toward Israel than liberal Democrats (36%).

Differences between men and women are relatively muted and related to women being less likely to offer a response. There are few differences based on people’s education levels, though those who have a college degree or more advanced degree (58%) are slightly more positive toward Israel than those who have less than a bachelor’s degree (53%).

Protestants (63%) and Catholics (58%) also have more favorable views of Israel than do the religiously unaffiliated (42%). Among Protestants, however, differences are stark: White evangelical Protestants (80%) have much more positive views of Israel than do White non-evangelicals (61%) or Black Protestants (43%). The survey was conducted among Americans of all religious backgrounds, including Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus, but it did not obtain enough respondents from non-Christian religious groups to report separately on their responses.

### Persian Gulf

#### Americans want war w iran

Mehta and Sach 19 [Dhrumil Mehta is a database journalist at FiveThirtyEight and Maddie Sach is a politics intern, “Why Americans Might Be Convinced To Support A War With Iran”, FiveThirtyEight, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/few-americans-want-u-s-forces-to-defend-saudi-arabia/>] TDI

Poll of the week After an attack on a Saudi oil facility last Saturday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo swiftly pointed the finger at Iran, and on Sunday Trump tweeted that the U.S. was “locked and loaded.” Although administration officials denied that Trump’s tweet referred to an impending U.S. military strike against Iran, the rhetoric from the White House has nevertheless made the possibility of an armed conflict between the U.S. and Iran — which about half of Americans expect “within the next few years,” according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted in May — seem more likely than before. And a SurveyMonkey poll by Business Insider conducted earlier this week found that only 13 percent of Americans support a U.S. military response to the attack on Saudi oil facilities. The poll, which didn’t mention Iran specifically, also found that about half of Americans felt the U.S. should either remove itself entirely from the situation or limit its response to condemning the attack and possibly sanctioning the perpetrators. But while the SurveyMonkey poll suggests there’s little public appetite for U.S. involvement in Saudi Arabia’s response to the attack, a survey conducted in June found that the use of military force in Iran may be one military intervention that the U.S. public could get behind, especially if Americans perceive Iran’s nuclear capabilities as a threat. In that survey, which was released earlier this month by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 70 percent of respondents, including 82 percent of Republicans and 66 percent of Democrats, supported using U.S. troops to stop Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. And as you can see in the chart below, there’s a lot more support for sending troops to Iran than to other parts of the world, including Iraq, Syria and China. [Chart Omitted]

#### Americans fear Iran, deterrence nessecary

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(CN) – Across political party lines, most voters are growing increasingly alarmed at the prospect of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons technology, according to a poll released Monday. After President Donald Trump walked away last year from the landmark 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, world leaders have sought to replace the pact with a new agreement. The U.S. has also levied heavy sanctions on Iran over its lack of cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. A Hill-HarrisX poll released Monday found 84% of voters in the U.S. are concerned that the political tension could push Iran to accelerate production of nuclear weapons. The figure eclipses the percentage of voters who expressed concern over other U.S. foreign policy issues, including Trump’s trade war with China, U.S. election security, and Turkey’s military operation in Syria this month. Overall, 79% of voters said they are concerned about North Korea’s use of ballistic missiles and its development of a nuclear weapons program. Among Democratic voters, 89% said they are either “very or somewhat concerned” about Iran obtaining nuclear weapons, while 85% of Republican voters and 79% of independents said the same. Iran shot down a U.S. military drone this past summer, prompting U.S. officials to deploy troops and aircraft to the region. The Trump administration has also accused Iran of orchestrating attacks on oil tankers. Iranian officials have said the country’s nuclear program – which includes development of uranium enrichment devices – is not part of an operation to construct a weapon. The poll, conducted Oct. 21-22, surveyed 1,001 registered voters and has a margin of error of 3.1 percentage points.

#### Americans show strong support for US troops in Middle East

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February 2020 “As we defend American lives, we are working to end America’s wars in the Middle East,” President Donald Trump declared at State of the Union on February 4. Democratic presidential candidates, too, have made halting so-called “endless wars” a key talking point, ranging from cutting back troop levels to withdrawing the US military presence in the Middle East. A Chicago Council survey completed January 10–12 shows that as tensions with Iran have risen, Am**ericans see an increased need to keep watch over the Middle East by maintaining a troop presence there.** Key Findings • A majority of Americans say the US military presence in the Middle East should be maintained (45%) or increased (29%). Just 24 percent think it should be decreased. • A majority support long-term military bases in Iraq (55%, up from 41% in 2014) and Kuwait (57%, up from 47% in 2014). Nearly half favor keeping bases in Afghanistan (48%, up from 43% in 2014). • A combined majority (54%) say alliances in the Middle East benefit both Middle East partners and the United States or mostly benefit the United States. Americans Question Value of Wars; Mideast Still Most Important to US Security During the January 14 Democratic presidential primary debate in Des Moines, moderators pressed the candidates for their positions on troop levels in the Middle East. Joe Biden said he would “leave troops in the Middle East in terms of patrolling the [Persian] Gulf” and keep a “small number” to confront the Islamic State. Amy Klobuchar said she would keep some troops in the region but “not in the level that Donald Trump is taking us right now.” Elizabeth Warren argued, “We should stop asking our military to solve problems that cannot be solved militarily,” adding that “we need to get our combat troops out. Bernie Sanders invoked the refrain of avoiding “endless wars” and, at the opening of the debate, referred to the Iraq War as “the worst foreign policy blunder in the modern history of this country.” Americans seem to agree that the war in Iraq has not been a success. Two-thirds of Americans now say it was not worth fighting (67%), up from 27% in 2003 at the outset of the war. One-third think it was worth fighting (30%), down from 70%. Views of the war in Iraq have been consistently negative since 2005 (see Appendix). Public evaluations of the war in Afghanistan are similarly negative, with two-thirds saying that the war was not worth fighting and one-third saying it was. An October 2019 University of Maryland survey found that more Americans tended to say US military involvement in Afghanistan had been unsuccessful (33%) than successful (19%), but a plurality said it had been neither (38%). Despite these views, **Americans still see the Middle East as the region most important** to US security interests (61%), even more so than when last asked in 2018 (when 50% named the Middle East). No other region comes close, with just 15 percent of Americans saying Europe is the most important, 12 percent naming Asia, and just 7 percent responding with Latin America. Public concern about the Middle East is likely related to American perceptions of top security threats, which include the possibility of a violent Islamic extremist group carrying out a terrorist attack in the United States (64%) and Iran’s nuclear program (61%). **Majorities Say US Military Presence in Mideast Should Be Maintained or Increased** In addition to seeing the Middle East as the most important region for US security interests, a majority of Americans say the US military presence in the Middle East should be either maintained (45%) or increased (29%). Just 24 percent think it should be decreased, similar to Chicago Council surveys dating back to 2015. Moreover, a majority believe the United States should have long-term military bases in Iraq (55%), the highest level since 2008 (when 57% agreed). A majority also favor long-term basing in Kuwait (57%), up ten percentage points from 2014. The public is evenly divided on whether the United States should have long-term bases in Afghanistan (48% should, 49% should not), though this is the highest level of support for basing in that country since 2010. United States has had some controversial disagreements with allies in the Middle East over the past year. In October, the United States announced it was withdrawing troops from northern Syria. Soon after Turkish President Recep Erdogan launched a military campaign against the Kurds, despite Kurdish assistance in fighting the Islamic State. US-Saudi ties have been strained following the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October 2018. And amid escalating tensions between the United States and Iran following the killing of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, the Iraqi Parliament voted in early January 2020 to expel American troops from the country. Undoubtedly these moves have raised questions about the benefits of US alliances in the region. For their part, Americans tend to say the US alliances in the Middle East mostly benefit both the United States and its allies (39%) or mostly the United States (15%). Adding them together, slightly fewer now (54%) than in 2019 (59%) see a positive benefit for the United States, though this level is still higher than the combined percentage in 2017 (48%). Bipartisan Agreement on Troop Presence **Majorities of Republicans (67%), Democrats (64%), and Independents (55%) see the Middle East as the most important region for US security.** There is also general bipartisan support for maintaining or increasing the US military presence in the Middle East, though Republicans (39%) are more likely than Democrats (29%) or Independents (22%) to favor increasing the US presence in the region. Republicans are far more supportive of long-term US military bases in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan than are Democrats or Independents. In the case of Afghanistan, majorities of Democrats (53%) and Independents (53%) oppose the United States maintaining bases, while six in ten Republicans (61%) support them. Republicans are also more likely to see the wars in Iraq (51%) and Afghanistan (50%) as having been worth fighting, while large majorities of Democrats and Independents say they have not been worth fighting (see Appendix). Methodology The analysis in this report is based on data from a 2020 Chicago Council survey of the American public on foreign policy, a project of the Lester Crown Center on US Foreign Policy. This omnibus survey was conducted January 10 to 12, 2020, by Ipsos using its large-scale online research panel, KnowledgePanel, among a weighted national sample of 1,019 adults 18 or older living in all 50 US states and the District of Columbia. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is ±3. The margin of error is higher for partisan subgroups. About the Chicago Council on Global Affairs The Chicago Council on Global Affairs is an independent, nonpartisan membership organization that provides insight—and influences the public discourse—on critical global issues. We convene leading global voices, conduct independent research, and engage the public to explore ideas that will shape our global future. The Council is committed to bringing clarity and offering solutions to issues that transcend borders and transform how people, business, and governments engage the world. Learn more at thechicagocouncil.org and follow @ChicagoCouncil.

## 2NR – T/C – Persian Gulf Aff

### Rightsizing

#### Trump election causes global retrenchment – Including SCS

WRIGHT 20 --- THOMAS WRIGHT is Director of the Center on the United States and Europe and a Senior Fellow in the Project on International Order and Strategy at the Brookings Institution, “The Folly of Retrenchment”, Foreign Affairs, April 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2020-02-10/folly-retrenchment> (BJN)

President Donald Trump has questioned the utility of the United States’ alliances and its forward military presence in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. He has displayed little regard for a shared community of free societies and is drawn to authoritarian leaders. So far, Trump’s views are not shared by the vast majority of leading Republicans. Almost all leading Democrats, for their part, are committed to the United States’ traditional role in Europe and Asia, if not in the Middle East. Trump has struggled to convert his worldview into policy, and in many respects, his administration has increased U.S. military commitments. But if Trump wins reelection, that could change quickly, as he would feel more empowered and Washington would need to adjust to the reality that Americans had reconfirmed their support for a more inward-looking approach to world affairs. At a private speech in November, according to press reports, John Bolton, Trump’s former national security adviser, even predicted that Trump could pull out of NATO in a second term. The receptiveness of the American people to Trump’s “America first” rhetoric has revealed that there is a market for a foreign policy in which the United States plays a smaller role in the world.

Amid the shifting political winds, a growing chorus of voices in the policy community, from the left and the right, is calling for a strategy of global retrenchment, whereby the United States would withdraw its forces from around the world and reduce its security commitments. Leading scholars and policy experts, such as Barry Posen and Ian Bremmer, have called on the United States to significantly reduce its role in Europe and Asia, including withdrawing from NATO. In 2019, a new think tank, the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, set up shop, with funding from the conservative Charles Koch Foundation and the liberal philanthropist George Soros. Its mission, in its own words, is to advocate “a new foreign policy centered on diplomatic engagement and military restraint.”

Global retrenchment is fast emerging as the most coherent and ready-made alternative to the United States’ postwar strategy. Yet pursuing it would be a grave mistake. By dissolving U.S. alliances and ending the forward presence of U.S. forces, this strategy would destabilize the regional security orders in Europe and Asia. It would also increase the risk of nuclear proliferation, empower right-wing nationalists in Europe, and aggravate the threat of major-power conflict.

This is not to say that U.S. strategy should never change. The United States has regularly increased and decreased its presence around the world as threats have risen and ebbed. Even though Washington followed a strategy of containment throughout the Cold War, that took various forms, which meant the difference between war and peace in Vietnam, between an arms race and arms control, and between détente and an all-out attempt to defeat the Soviets. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States changed course again, expanding its alliances to include many countries that had previously been part of the Warsaw Pact.

Likewise, the United States will now have to do less in some areas and more in others as it shifts its focus from counterterrorism and reform in the Middle East toward great-power competition with China and Russia. But advocates of global retrenchment are not so much proposing changes within a strategy as they are calling for the wholesale replacement of one that has been in place since World War II. What the United States needs now is a careful pruning of its overseas commitments—not the indiscriminate abandonment of a strategy that has served it well for decades.

RETRENCHMENT REDUX

Support for retrenchment stems from the view that the United States has overextended itself in countries that have little bearing on its national interest. According to this perspective, which is closely associated with the realist school of international relations, the United States is fundamentally secure thanks to its geography, nuclear arsenal, and military advantage. Yet the country has nonetheless chosen to pursue a strategy of “liberal hegemony,” using force in an unwise attempt to perpetuate a liberal international order (one that, as evidenced by U.S. support for authoritarian regimes, is not so liberal, after all). Washington, the argument goes, has distracted itself with costly overseas commitments and interventions that breed resentment and encourage free-riding abroad.

Critics of the status quo argue that the United States must take two steps to change its ways. The first is retrenchment itself: the action of withdrawing from many of the United States’ existing commitments, such as the ongoing military interventions in the Middle East and one-sided alliances in Europe and Asia. The second is restraint: the strategy of defining U.S. interests narrowly, refusing to launch wars unless vital interests are directly threatened and Congress authorizes such action, compelling other nations to take care of their own security, and relying more on diplomatic, economic, and political tools.

In practice, this approach means ending U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, withdrawing U.S. forces from the Middle East, relying on an over-the-horizon force that can uphold U.S. national interests, and no longer taking on responsibility for the security of other states. As for alliances, Posen has argued that the United States should abandon the mutual-defense provision of NATO, replace the organization “with a new, more limited security cooperation agreement,” and reduce U.S. commitments to Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. On the question of China, realists have split in recent years. Some, such as the scholar John Mearsheimer, contend that even as the United States retrenches elsewhere, in Asia, it must contain the threat of China, whereas others, such as Posen, argue that nations in the region are perfectly capable of doing the job themselves.

Since Trump’s election, some progressive foreign policy thinkers have joined the retrenchment camp. They diverge from other progressives, who advocate maintaining the United States’ current role. Like the realists, progressive retrenchers hold the view that the United States is safe because of its geography and the size of its military. Where these progressives break from the realists, however, is on the question of what will happen if the United States pulls back. While the realists favoring retrenchment have few illusions about the sort of regional competition that will break out in the absence of U.S. dominance, the progressives expect that the world will become more peaceful and cooperative, because Washington can still manage tensions through diplomatic, economic, and political tools. The immediate focus of the progressives is the so-called forever wars—U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and the broader war on terrorism—as well as the defense budget and overseas bases.

Although the progressives have a less developed vision of how to implement retrenchment than the realists, they do provide some guideposts. Stephen Wertheim, a co-founder of the Quincy Institute, has called for bringing home many of the U.S. soldiers serving abroad, “leaving small forces to protect commercial sea lanes,” as part of an effort to “deprive presidents of the temptation to answer every problem with a violent solution.” He argues that U.S. allies may believe that the United States has been inflating regional threats and thus conclude that they do not need to increase their conventional or nuclear forces. Another progressive thinker, Peter Beinart, has argued that the United States should accept Chinese and Russian spheres of influence, a strategy that would include abandoning Taiwan.

IS LESS REALLY MORE?

The realists and the progressives arguing for retrenchment differ in their assumptions, logic, and intentions. The realists tend to be more pessimistic about the prospects for peace and frame their arguments in hardheaded terms, whereas the progressives downplay the consequences of American withdrawal and make a moral case against the current grand strategy. But they share a common claim: that the United States would be better off if it dramatically reduced its global military footprint and security commitments.

This is a false promise, for a number of reasons. First, retrenchment would worsen regional security competition in Europe and Asia. The realists recognize that the U.S. military presence in Europe and Asia does dampen security competition, but they claim that it does so at too high a price—and one that, at any rate, should be paid by U.S. allies in the regions themselves. Although pulling back would invite regional security competition, realist retrenchers admit, the United States could be safer in a more dangerous world because regional rivals would check one another. This is a perilous gambit, however, because regional conflicts often end up implicating U.S. interests. They might thus end up drawing the United States back in after it has left—resulting in a much more dangerous venture than heading off the conflict in the first place by staying. Realist retrenchment reveals a hubris that the United States can control consequences and prevent crises from erupting into war.

A U.S. pullback from Europe or Asia is more likely to embolden regional powers.

The progressives’ view of regional security is similarly flawed. These retrenchers reject the idea that regional security competition will intensify if the United States leaves. In fact, they argue, U.S. alliances often promote competition, as in the Middle East, where U.S. support for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates has emboldened those countries in their cold war with Iran. But this logic does not apply to Europe or Asia, where U.S. allies have behaved responsibly. A U.S. pullback from those places is more likely to embolden the regional powers. Since 2008, Russia has invaded two of its neighbors that are not members of NATO, and if the Baltic states were no longer protected by a U.S. security guarantee, it is conceivable that Russia would test the boundaries with gray-zone warfare. In East Asia, a U.S. withdrawal would force Japan to increase its defense capabilities and change its constitution to enable it to compete with China on its own, straining relations with South Korea.

The second problem with retrenchment involves nuclear proliferation. If the United States pulled out of NATO or ended its alliance with Japan, as many realist advocates of retrenchment recommend, some of its allies, no longer protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella, would be tempted to acquire nuclear weapons of their own. Unlike the progressives for retrenchment, the realists are comfortable with that result, since they see deterrence as a stabilizing force. Most Americans are not so sanguine, and rightly so. There are good reasons to worry about nuclear proliferation: nuclear materials could end up in the hands of terrorists, states with less experience might be more prone to nuclear accidents, and nuclear powers in close proximity have shorter response times and thus conflicts among them have a greater chance of spiraling into escalation.

Third, retrenchment would heighten nationalism and xenophobia. In Europe, a U.S. withdrawal would send the message that every country must fend for itself. It would therefore empower the far-right groups already making this claim—such as the Alternative for Germany, the League in Italy, and the National Front in France—while undermining the centrist democratic leaders there who told their populations that they could rely on the United States and NATO. As a result, Washington would lose leverage over the domestic politics of individual allies, particularly younger and more fragile democracies such as Poland. And since these nationalist populist groups are almost always protectionist, retrenchment would damage U.S. economic interests, as well. Even more alarming, many of the right-wing nationalists that retrenchment would empower have called for greater accommodation of China and Russia.

A fourth problem concerns regional stability after global retrenchment. The most likely end state is a spheres-of-influence system, whereby China and Russia dominate their neighbors, but such an order is inherently unstable. The lines of demarcation for such spheres tend to be unclear, and there is no guarantee that China and Russia will not seek to move them outward over time. Moreover, the United States cannot simply grant other major powers a sphere of influence—the countries that would fall into those realms have agency, too. If the United States ceded Taiwan to China, for example, the Taiwanese people could say no. The current U.S. policy toward the country is working and may be sustainable. Withdrawing support from Taiwan against its will would plunge cross-strait relations into chaos. The entire idea of letting regional powers have their own spheres of influence has an imperial air that is at odds with modern principles of sovereignty and international law.

### Regional Stability

#### Trump re-election causes US-Iran war

Harel 18 (Amos, writer for Haaretz, 8/17/18, “Analysis Why Iran Thinks It Has an ‘Insurance Policy’ Against an Israeli or U.S. Strike,” <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/.premium-why-iran-thinks-it-has-an-insurance-policy-against-an-israeli-or-u-s-1.6387189>)

The cease-fire agreement in Gaza, assuming it holds, will allow the IDF to refocus its attention to the northern arena, and especially to the ongoing military and intelligence battle with Iran. Through conversations with a number of Israeli and American officials over the past weeks, Haaretz has learned of a joint view, shared by both Jerusalem and Washington, of the current strategic situation regarding Iran.

According to that view, the regime in Tehran is currently trying to “wait out” President Donald Trump. The Iranians hope that Trump will turn out to be a one-term president, and their strategy until his departure from the White House is to clench their teeth, dig in their heels and wait. The most important component in this Iranian strategy, according to the sources who spoke with Haaretz, is to keep the Iran nuclear deal in place, even if the renewed American sanctions cancel out almost all of the financial benefits that Iran had gained from that agreement.

The American sanctions had already caused an exodus of European companies out of Iran, and the Trump administration will soon shift its pressure to Chinese, Indian and Japanese companies. But even if the agreement, down the line, won’t create even a single dollar of revenue for Iran, the Iranian calculation is that it is still vitally important, and worth keeping alive, even “on paper.”

The Iranians think the agreement can serve as an “insurance policy” against any attempt by Trump to devise even harsher sanctions with cooperation from the international community, and also against an American or Israeli military strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities. The Iranians believe that politically, it will be impossible for Trump to create international support, and even internal American consensus, for a strike on Iran, as long as the 2015 agreement stands.

Israeli officials believe Trump’s comment two weeks ago, when he expressed his willingness to meet Iran’s leaders without preconditions, was not planned by the administration and does not represent a new strategy on behalf of the White House. The Iranian president Hassan Rohani would very much like to have a meeting like that, or even to send his foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, for a meeting with a senior American official, according to the sources who spoke with Haaretz. The Iranian president knows that once the existence of such a meeting is leaked to the press, the value of the Iranian rial will rise, and the frustrated Iranian public will sense some hope for improvement. Yet Rohani will find it difficult to take such action as long as the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and their leader, Qasem Soleimani, object to any return to negotiations. Officials in Israel describe the Iranian dilemma as “national pride versus money.”

The Israeli view is that the main difference between the Trump administration’s current policy and that of the Obama administration ahead of the 2015 nuclear agreement, is that Trump is perceived by the Iranians as someone who could actually choose a military strike, given the right conditions. The Iranians view the American president as a madman and an avid supporter of Israel, who would let it take action on its own if it decided to. People around Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hope this combined-threat perception will bring Iran back to the negotiating table. But Iran views the 12 conditions for a new agreement, which were laid out by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo two months ago, as an attempt to change the entire nature of its regime.

Mark Dubowitz, an expert on Iran policy at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told Haaretz that former officials from the Obama administration have encouraged the Iranians to “wait out” Trump, until a new president comes into power and returns to the nuclear deal. “Their message to the Iranians has been – don’t give Trump any excuse to escalate things militarily. Just wait him out.” Dubowitz, however, thinks Iran will find this strategy increasingly more difficult to implement, as the pressure of the American sanctions increases.

“The sanctions that came back last week are the easier ones, relatively, and Iran is already under immense pressure, with international companies leaving. The next set of sanctions, in November, will target the energy sector and financial institutions, and there will be new sanctions on top of that. It’s easy to say ‘let’s take a bet and wait for two years,’ but it’s hard to actually do that when the economy is collapsing and angry people are in the streets.”

Dubowitz thinks Iran might try another strategy at some point, which is to “trap” the Trump administration in negotiations. The Iranian calculation, he says, is that negotiations will help loosen some of the pressure on the economy, thus making it easier to waste time until the end of Trump’s first term. Dubowitz thinks the administration can cancel out that strategy by conditioning negotiations with Iran on a European decision to join America’s sanctions on Iran’s financial sector. “Don’t take down the pressure during the negotiations – increase it,” he says. This, according to Dubowitz, will send a clear message to Iran that “the only way to relieve the pressure is through an agreement, not through dragging out time. And an agreement requires concessions.”

Ariane Tabatabai, a policy analyst at the Rand Corporation who recently published a book on Iran’s relations with China and Russia, told Haaretz that the Trump administration’s messaging on the Iranian issue is seen as contradictory by many Iranians. “One signal they are sending is this talk of negotiations without preconditions. The other signal is this talk of regime change. People who are close to Trump participate in events of the MEK (an Iranian opposition group that wants to topple the Islamic Republic and was previously designated in Washington as a terror organization). The regime change message is the one being heard more clearly in Tehran right now.”

The Iranian leadership, she adds, is indeed closely following political developments in the United States. “If they see signs that Trump is likely to be a one-term president, that will increase the likelihood of keeping the nuclear deal in place, and waiting for the next president. If it looks like Trump is likely to have a second term, their calculation will have to change, and a new plan will have to be constructed.”

This plan could go either in the direction of negotiating a new agreement, or escalating the situation by dropping out of the nuclear deal and pushing ahead with the nuclear program. “There is internal pressure on Rohani to withdraw from the nuclear deal, there are personal attacks on Rohani and other government officials, but so far he is sticking to his position that Iran is better with it than without it.”

## 2NR – AT: Thumpers

#### He’s still ahead despite thumpers – no turns

Samuels 23 [Alex Samuels is a politics reporter at FiveThirtyEight an election predicting publication, “Biden Is Running For Reelection. What Are His Chances For 2024?”, 04/25/2023, FiveThirtyEight, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/biden-reelection-2024-chances/>] TDI

The announcement comes after months of teasing from the Biden administration — first it was supposed to happen somewhere around Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Then “not long after” February’s State of the Union. Then in the beginning of April. But in the end, today’s announcement was mostly unsurprising because most presidents seek reelection, and they often win when they go for it. That said, in polls fielded throughout Biden’s first few years in office, many Democratic voters said they’re ready to move on from him, a sentiment almost certainly spurred by concerns about Biden’s age (he’s 80 now, and he’d be almost 82 on Election Day) and his low approval ratings. The problem, of course, is that an obvious alternative to Biden hasn’t surfaced. And in some ways, it will be easy for him to make the case that he’s been a successful president who deserves another four years in office. But the worries that made his own base ambivalent about a second Biden term are likely to haunt his candidacy, too. So let’s walk through Biden’s first two(ish) years in the White House — the good, the bad and the ugly — and take a look at his odds in both the primary and the general election. Perhaps no measure better captures the good, the bad and the ugly of Biden’s presidency than his approval rating. Americans were relatively high on Biden when he was elected, but that didn’t last long. He came into office with a 53 percent approval rating and 36 percent disapproval rating, according to FiveThirtyEight’s presidential approval tracker, and it wasn’t hard to understand why: Americans were largely unhappy with former President Donald Trump. Just a few months after his inauguration, Biden signed into law the widely popular American Rescue Plan, a sweeping aid package that included help to states to help combat the coronavirus pandemic and $1,400 direct payments to certain Americans. But goodwill is fragile in an increasingly polarized political environment, and Americans started to sour on Biden after only a few months. Starting in August 2021, his approval rating dropped precipitously and his disapproval rating rose sharply. It was a kind of presidential perfect storm: the delta variant of the coronavirus was surging, the economic fallout from the pandemic was starting to come into focus and the administration’s bungled response to withdrawing American troops from Afghanistan was making headlines. Later that winter, it also became more clear that major parts of Biden’s election platform — like passing bills to protect voting rights and to reform policing — were doomed, and Biden’s omnibus Build Back Better Act suffered a setback after West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin refused to back an early version with a multi-trillion dollar price tag, citing concerns about how it would affect inflation. As the chart above shows,1 Biden never quite recovered. In fact, since that first summer of his presidency, Biden’s approval has consistently remained underwater. But there’s not necessarily one policy failure that explains this trend, William Howell, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago, told me. In fact, one feature of American politics is that presidential approval ratings almost always drop over time. “I think that we tend to over-interpret the significance of individual events or perceived gaffes,” Howell said. “But when the euphoria of a campaign or the fresh gloss of a new candidate wears off and you get into the drudgery of actually governing, approval ratings routinely decline. And that’s what we’ve seen here.” One challenge for Biden is that his presidency has arguably been quite successful — his wins just haven’t been enough to save his approval rating. Despite only barely having majority support in the U.S. Senate for all of his time in office so far, the post-honeymoon phase of Biden’s presidency was surprisingly productive: He was able to pass the Inflation Reduction Act, a bipartisan infrastructure bill and another bipartisan gun-safety bill. In addition, almost half of Americans gave the Biden administration decently high marks for its initial handling of Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine. The president also received praise after he announced a popular plan to forgive up to $20,000 in student loan debt (though that’s currently tangled up with the Supreme Court). But none of those victories really helped Biden in the court of public opinion. Even Democrats’ strong performance in last year’s midterm races failed to move the needle for him, and now that Republicans control the U.S. House, it’s unlikely that Biden will be able to usher through meaty legislative priorities. Compared to past presidents, though, Biden actually starts his reelection bid as somewhat of an underdog. In fact, as of April 24, only 42.5 percent of Americans approved of his job as president. That’s actually not far off from Trump (41.3 percent) and former President Barack Obama’s (45.1 percent) approval numbers on April 24 the year before they sought reelection. But, perhaps worryingly for Biden, he’s still on lower end compared to recent presidents. Of course, having an underwater approval rating doesn’t mean Biden’s reelection campaign is doomed. Given the polarized nature of our current politics, all future presidents — not just Biden — will likely suffer lower approval ratings “absent a really good economy,” said Karlyn Bowman, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. Without that, Bowman told me, “it’s hard to foresee a president moving their ratings up significantly.” What’s working against Biden, though, is that the economy has never been an area of immense strength for him: According to an the Associated Press/NORC Center for Public Affairs Research survey from mid-March, just 31 percent of adults overall said that they approve of Biden’s stewardship of the national economy, which is consistent with past surveys. Yet even with lackluster marks on the economy, there was no reason to expect Biden would throw in the towel after just one term. As I mentioned before, both Biden — and his wife, Jill — have long teased today’s announcement (which probably helped keep any notable primary challengers at bay — sorry Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Marianne Williamson)! But even though Biden may be Democrats’ most viable option at this point, that doesn’t mean his party’s voters are over the moon about today’s announcement. That ennui might be unavoidable for Biden, because a number of polls and reports suggest that Democrats’ biggest issue with Biden isn’t his performance in office — it’s his age. Biden was the oldest living president the day he was sworn into office, and according to a USA Today/Suffolk Poll from mid-April, a plurality of 2020 Biden voters (42 percent) said that his age makes them less likely to support him. What might work in Biden’s favor, though, at least in a primary, is that 55 percent of his voters said his age didn’t make a difference to them. Meanwhile, a second survey from CNN/SSRS conducted in March found that two-thirds of adults felt as though Biden doesn’t have the stamina and sharpness to serve effectively. And there are also real concerns that he’s not a particularly motivating figure, even if Democrats probably prefer him to a Republican alternative. That CNN/SSRS survey found that a majority of respondents thought that Biden does not inspire confidence (65 percent) and does not care about people like them (54 percent). These numbers, of course, could present an opening for someone on Biden’s left flank to announce a challenge to his candidacy, but surveys show that some of the potential Democratic candidates polling best against Biden currently are in his administration: Vice President Kamala Harris and Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg. So barring a major collapse in Biden’s standing, a serious primary challenger at this point appears very unlikely. Plus, in a February Yahoo News/YouGov survey, almost half (47 percent) of registered Democrats or Democratic-leaning independent voters said they’d renominate Biden for president versus “someone else” (34 percent). And, fact is, elected presidents rarely face serious opposition for renomination. More importantly, Biden has a solid standing on a number of policy issues — at least among his base. That USA Today survey found that 70 percent of Biden voters (including 73 percent of self-identified liberals, 78 percent of moderates and 65 percent of conservatives) are largely in favor of the president’s positions and policies. Moreover, a second poll from The Economist/YouGov fielded in late March found Democratic adults overwhelmingly approved of Biden’s handling of the economy (72 percent), foreign policy (72 percent), immigration (64 percent), crime (60 percent) and inflation (59 percent). So while voters may not be jumping for joy about another four years under Biden, the poll seems to suggest that most also don’t mind how he’s currently governing. “Elections operate like Wall Street: fear and greed. And while Biden’s age may tamper the greed, the prospects of a Donald Trump winning the presidency again is enough to raise the fear levels,” said Allan Lichtman, the author of “Predicting the Next President: The Keys to the White House,” which is now in seven editions, and a history professor at American University. “There’s no way Democrats are not going to coalesce around Joe Biden, even if Ron DeSantis is the nominee.” All that’s to say that despite their misgivings about his age, Democrats will still likely vote for Biden in a primary. But what about his odds in a general election? Voters currently say that they don’t want a redux of the 2020 election — but they might get one anyway. Biden and Trump, who is currently leading the Republican primary field, are currently favored to win their respective party’s nominations. And according to Lichtman, Biden’s run for a second term already gives Democrats an edge in 2024 since they avoid both an internal party battle and have the power of incumbency on their side.

#### Biden is Ahead in 2024 Presidential Election

**Walter 23 [**Amy Walter, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of the Cook Political Report, where she provides analysis of the issues, trends and events that shape the political environment.A contributor to the PBS NewsHour, she provides weekly political analysis for the popular “Politics Monday” segment and is a featured contributor for their Election and Convention special coverage events. Amy was an inaugural fellow at the Institute of Politics at the University of Chicago, where she now serves on the Board of Advisors. She graduated summa cum laude from Colby College, earned an honorary degree as a Doctor of Letters, and serves as a Trustee to the Board. “Can Biden Win Over the 'Meh' Voters Again in 2024?” https://www.cookpolitical.com/analysis/national/national-politics/can-biden-win-over-meh-voters-again-2024] \LL

For the first time in memory, low approval ratings of a sitting president didn't cause a disaster for his party in a midterm election. Many Democratic candidates in 2022 succeeded in winning over voters who "somewhat" disapproved of Biden — a group I dubbed last fall as the "meh" voters. Presidents Donald Trump and Joe Biden both came into their first midterm election with similar job approval ratings (44% approve to 55% disapprove). But, according to exit polls, among those who "somewhat" disapproved of Biden, 49% voted for the Democrat and 45% voted for the Republican. In 2018, those "somewhat" disapprovers of Trump voted overwhelmingly for the Democratic candidate (63% to 34%). Today, Biden's job approval ratings aren't any stronger than they were in 2022. That leads us to wonder if these 'meh' voters will again be critical to Democrats' success in 2024. And, if so, is a president's job approval rating — once considered a critical metric in assessing his reelection chances — no longer pertinent? Since at least 1980, a president's job approval rating has been one of the most consistent (and accurate) predictors of electoral performance. Voters who think the president is doing a good job vote to reelect the president. Voters who think the president is doing a lousy job are almost certain to vote for his opponent, even among those who only "somewhat" disapprove of the president's performance. For example, in 2020, according to exit polls, 97% of those who strongly disapproved of Trump voted for Biden. Among those who "somewhat" disapproved of Trump, a solid 89% voted for Biden and just 7% pulled the lever for Trump. As such, for the last 40 years, the final Gallup job approval ratings for an incumbent president seeking reelection were within one to four points of that president's final vote margin. In 1980, for example, President Jimmy Carter entered the final week of the election with a 37% approval rating. He ended up taking just 41% of the popular vote in his loss to former California Gov. Ronald Reagan. If that trend were to hold in 2024, Biden's current job approval rating of 43% would suggest that at best, he could hit 47% of the national popular vote in 2024. Given that key swing states like Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Georgia, according to the Cook PVI, voted two to three points more Republican than the national average, 47% of the national popular vote would not be enough to win the Electoral College. Yet, at this point, the share of voters who say they would vote for Biden over Trump is significantly higher than his job approval rating. For example, a March 29 Quinnipiac poll found Biden's job approval rating at a dismal 37%, with 57% disapproving. Even so, in a head-to-head matchup against Donald Trump, Biden took 48% to 46% for Trump. Biden's vote share was a whopping 11 points higher than his job approval rating. A Wall Street Journal poll from mid-April found similar results. Biden's overall job approval rating was 42%, yet he **led Trump by two points**, taking 48% of the vote — a six-point improvement over his approval rating. Why? Well, as we saw in 2022, those who "somewhat" disapprove of the job Biden is doing overwhelmingly back him for reelection. According to the Quinnipiac survey, the 13% of **voters** who "somewhat" disapprove of Biden say they'll **vote for him by an 11-point margin (48% to 37%) over Trump**. The Wall Street Journal poll showed similar results. **The 8% of respondents who "somewhat" disapprove of Biden on job approval pick Biden over Trump in a head-to-head matchup, 66% to 19%.** Trump, meanwhile, does not get support from the "somewhat" disapprovers. According to data from the Wall Street Journal, those who "somewhat" disapprove of Trump picked Biden over Trump, 56% to 18%. Even up against DeSantis — who is not as well known as Trump — Biden still wins over most of the "somewhat" disapprovers. In the Quinnipiac survey, "somewhat" disapprovers supported Biden over DeSantis by 19 points (54% to 35%). In the Wall Street Journal survey, those who "somewhat" disapprove of Biden picked him over DeSantis, 50% to 32%. In other words, Biden's disapproval ratings are not telling the full story of his electoral chances. In fact, writes former AFL-CIO political director Michael Podhorzer, "if media polls want to better serve the public, they would scrap the approval question, as well as the trial heat, and instead, for example, ask respondents to rate the possibility that they will vote for Biden and for Trump (two separate questions). This is one strategy that actual campaigns, as well as others with resources and high stakes in the outcome, use to get better insight into the race." Podhorzer has a good point. Our deep partisan polarization means few voters are willing to give the benefit of the doubt to the opposite party. Or, even when frustrated with their own party, are willing to vote for a candidate from the other party. Even so, the fact that those who "somewhat" disapprove of Biden are still committed to supporting him, while those who "somewhat" disapprove of Trump and DeSantis are not planning to vote for either of those men, is worth exploring further. Who are they? What matters to them? Who did they support in the previous election? Did they vote in 2020? And, most importantly, how likely are they to show up and vote come Election Day? The "somewhat" disapprovers of Biden are unhappy with the president for some reason, but they also dislike the GOP alternative. Is the fear of that Republican winning enough to motivate them to show up and vote? Or, will they express their 'meh’-ness about Biden and the alternatives to him by simply staying at home? Moreover, current polling shows that if DeSantis is the nominee, just winning over "somewhat" disapprovers may not be enough for Biden to win. In the Quinnipiac poll, for example, DeSantis beats Biden among independent voters by 19 points (compared to Trump, who wins them by just nine points). Polling done by the GOP firm Public Opinion Strategies (April 11-13), of 500 voters in each of six battleground states (Arizona, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Nevada, Michigan and Wisconsin), finds DeSantis leading Biden in every state, while Trump trails Biden in all six. Moreover, DeSantis, their surveys find, outperforms Trump among Biden “somewhat” disapprovers by anywhere from 8 to 36 points. However, DeSantis also remains relatively undefined, with 24% unable to assess the Florida governor in the Quinnipiac poll, 18% in the Wall Street Journal poll and about 27% in the POS survey. Should DeSantis start to get some traction in the GOP primary, look for Democrats to increase their efforts to tie DeSantis as closely as possible to the MAGA movement. But, argues POS pollster Robert Blizzard, Democrats “are already coalesced behind Biden against any GOP candidate. The difference is likely the energy level of Democrats against Trump versus [the energy level against] DeSantis.” Bottom line: it's time for us to take the "somewhat" disapprovers today as seriously as we took "Trump to Biden" voters in 2020. And, hey, if anyone has money to do focus groups with these voters, I'd be happy to tag along.

#### Biden is likely to secure a second term

**Cohen 23** [Michael A. Cohen, a columnist for MSNBC and a fellow with the Eurasia Group Foundation, writes the political newsletter Truth and Consequences. He has been a columnist at The Boston Globe, The Guardian and Foreign Policy, and he is the author of three books, the most recent being “Clear and Present Safety: The World Has Never Been Better and Why That Matters to Americans.” “The tell-tale sign Biden is likely to secure a second term” https://www.msnbc.com/opinion/msnbc-opinion/biden-election-2024-odds-republicans-rcna95415]/LL

It happens every four years, as inevitable as death and taxes: the “silly season” of presidential politics. With 16 months until voters pick the next president and six months until the first Republican caucus, political reporters are grasping at stories that tell us little about what might happen in 2024 — and ignoring one of the best indicators about the current mood of the electorate. First, there was the Robert F. Kennedy Jr. boomlet, pushed along by polls that showed the political neophyte winning up to 20% of the Democratic primary vote. What followed was a series of splashy profiles and a feeding frenzy so intense that political reporters were turned away from accompanying him to campaign events. If political reporters want to give their audience a sense of what the electorate is thinking, they should point to this week’s special election in Wisconsin. A month later, the bottom has fallen out. A recent poll of New Hampshire Democrats shows Kennedy with a favorability rate of 9% and unfavorability rate of 69%. Those are “Vladimir Putin in Ukraine” numbers. Odd as it might seem, a candidate who praises Donald Trump, promotes insane conspiracy theories and takes positions more popular with Republicans is not faring well among rank-and-file Democratic voters. Next came the usual Democratic hand-wringing over the incumbent president’s prospects for re-election. Why aren’t Biden’s polling numbers better? Why isn’t he getting credit for the strong economic recovery? According to a recent CNN report, “conversations keep happening — quiet whispers on the sidelines of events, texts, emails, furtive phone calls” with prospective Democratic candidates in case President Biden decides not to run for re-election. The problems were “clear,” said CNN: Biden’s re-election effort lacks energy. In particular, “multiple big donors aren’t locking in” and “grassroots emails are sometimes bringing in just a few thousand dollars.” Days later, the Biden team reported that the president had raised $72 million for the second quarter of 2023 — with $77 million in cash on hand. That total was more than double former President Trump’s fundraising haul for the same period. And, whatever you want to say about Biden, a new internet ad featuring an unexpected endorsement of his legislative accomplishments from House Republican Marjorie Taylor Greene suggests that his trolling/social media/political advertising game remains formidable. Then came the quadrennial fantasy about a third-party presidential candidate. The latest incarnation comes courtesy of No Labels, a group of centrists who have convinced themselves that a third-party bid could upend the two-party system and seriously compete in a national election. Never mind that third-party candidates consistently underperform the closer it gets to Election Day or that this deeply polarized political era, where partisan identity is the greatest predictor of voting, is perhaps the worst time to run as a third-party candidate. Nonetheless, some Democrats have gotten themselves in a lather about the possibility that a No Labels candidate could take votes away from Biden and elect Trump. **Democratic strength** in special elections has become a **consistent trend** this year. Of course, as the old saw goes, you can’t beat something with nothing. No Labels seems to be pegging their hopes to West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, who, aside from being deeply unpopular in his home state, is also one of the most disliked senators nationally. The chances that the attention-starved Manchin will run or have a serious impact on the outcome next November are close to nil, but in a political vacuum, it makes for a great story. However, if political reporters want to give their audience a sense of what the electorate is thinking, they should point to this week’s special election in Wisconsin’s 24th Assembly District, where Republican Paul Melotik defeated Democrat Bob Tatterson. That might sound like good news for the GOP, but Melotik won by only 7 points in a district that Donald Trump won by 17 points in 2020. Tatterson even outperformed Democratic Gov. Tony Evers, who lost the district by 13 points on his way to re-election in 2022. Democratic strength in special elections has become a consistent trend this year. According to the folks at Daily Kos Elections, who have put together a handy spreadsheet of special election results so far in 2023, Democrats are running **7 points ahead** of 2020 presidential results and 11 points better than 2016. In 15 out of 21 special elections held this year, Democrats have **outperformed Biden’s 2020 numbers.** These numbers do not even take into account the results of a May Supreme Court election in Wisconsin, in which the Democratic candidate running on an unambiguously abortion-rights platform trounced her Republican opponent by 11 points in the same state that Biden won by less than a point. Why does this matter? Because **special elections** are one of the **single best predictors** of future political outcomes. In 2017, Democrats overperformed by double digits in special elections, presaging their 40-seat victory in the House of Representatives in 2018. Last year, strong Democratic results in special elections in New York, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota and Alaska suggested that Democrats would do better than expected in November’s midterm elections. That is precisely what ended up happening. In short, the best indicator of the current mood of the electorate may not be found in Biden’s poll numbers, the chatter of Democratic donors or perennial discontent among Democratic voters but rather in small, little-covered special elections in which Republicans continue to underperform. The fact is, **Biden has no serious primary competitor and is likely to begin 2024 with an enormous war chest.** Trump continues to lead in Republican primary polling, and even the prospect of another federal indictment is unlikely to dim his star among Republican voters. Unfortunately for the GOP, **Trump** is **deeply unpopular outside his own party** and is the politician best able to mobilize Democratic voters. **Democratic candidates continue to overperform in special elections,** as the party did before their strong election performance in 2018 and 2022. Barring an unforeseen development (and this is not a prediction**) Biden is well-positioned to win re-election.** That might make for a boring story, but it’s also the most likely one.

## 2NR – I/L – Warming

#### Trump win pushes us past climate tipping points --- Extinction --- defense is wrong

Dembicki 20 --- Geoff Dembicki, Vancouver-based journalist and climate reporter, “Here's Exactly How a Trump 2020 Win Would Spark a Nightmare Climate Scenario”, Vice Feb 12th 2020, <https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/bvg7yz/heres-exactly-how-a-trump-2020-win-would-spark-a-nightmare-climate-scenario?utm_source=vicefbus&fbclid=IwAR2N0M7MzQBTZRwadZ8FETVRA-Q_0BbHKKqa9sZyNL_GO2IJW__G8Zmmg9Q> (BJN)

Let’s say Donald Trump wins the election in 2020. There’s no doubt some climate advocates will try to put an optimistic spin on it—just like they did when he first won in 2016. Renewable energy is getting cheaper all the time, they’ll argue. Investors are moving rapidly away from fossil fuels. The European Union and China are stepping up to solve the emergency. And so are U.S. states and cities. Young people are becoming a political force to be reckoned with. All of this was true four years ago, and will continue to be accurate if Trump begins a second term. But none of it will change a horrifying reality: a re-elected and emboldened Trump would likely destroy the world’s best-case outcome on climate change, and potentially send us hurtling towards a worst-case scenario. His second term could result in global temperatures roaring past 1.5 degrees Celsius, the danger line identified in the devastating United Nations climate report from 2018, beyond which forests, croplands, freshwater sources and other natural systems that support human life could be irreversibly transformed. We would also likely surpass 2 degrees, the target the world’s nations agreed to in 2015 at Paris, raising the odds of catastrophic tipping points like the melting of all Arctic sea ice.Trump's reelection dramatically increases these risks not only because of the massive additional emissions his fossil fuel-boosting policies could cause—potentially as much as 3.1 gigatons by 2035, which is over four times the entire annual carbon footprint of Canada. A second Trump term could also mean that one by one, countries drop out of the Paris agreement, possibly causing it to unravel completely. In this scenario, keeping temperature rise below 2 degrees would be extremely difficult. “I would say it would make [achieving] it impossible,” said Noah Sachs, a University of Richmond environmental law professor who described in a paper last year what Paris self-destructing could look like. “If Paris fell apart, we would blow right by that target.” That would mean that virtually all the planet’s coral reefs will bleach a sickly white. The world will lose more than 155,000 square miles of coastal wetlands and drylands. The number of people unable to access reliable drinking water could double. Hundreds of millions won’t have enough nutritious food to eat. And Trump, who turns 74 this June, likely won’t even be around to see it happen. The world is on the cusp of climate disaster Global temperature rise above 2 degrees wouldn't mean the imminent collapse of civilization. Nor would it mean the world should give up on cutting emissions. We’re already facing monumental disasters like the Australian bushfires, and the impacts of climate change will get exponentially more destructive and harder to survive with each increase in global temperature. This will make it worth fighting for carbon reductions, no matter how warm the planet gets. But above the 2 degrees goal that countries signed up for in the Paris agreement, damage could come at a scale that’s hard to fathom. In a 1.5 degrees scenario the probability of an ice-free Arctic summer is 3 percent in a given year. At 2 degrees that rises to 16 percent. And at 3 degrees it’s 63 percent. Sea-level rise at that scale means cities such as Miami, Osaka, Alexandria and Shanghai could effectively cease to exist. Meanwhile, there could be disasters like 97 percent of wildfire-sensitive regions in Mediterranean Europe burning every single summer. The chance of the American West going up in flames could increase by 400 percent. The Rhodium Group, a New York-based research firm, calculated in December that for humankind to keep warming below 2 degrees, we need to reduce emissions a colossal one-third from current levels by 2030. They identified five crucial things that could get us globally on track toward closing that gap: the European Union adopting a Green New Deal, Brazil halting its destruction of the Amazon Rainforest, China’s economic growth and the emissions it produces slowing to a more sustainable rate, and demand for electricity in India growing only moderately and being met mainly by renewables. The fifth one is Trump losing in 2020. Trump has already done a significant amount of damage A re-elected Trump would keep dismantling environmental rules—he's slashed 95 in total so far—that limit fossil fuel companies or other polluters of the atmosphere. And he would make the damage much harder to reverse by continuing to stack the courts with conservative judges who tend to rule on the side of greenhouse gas-spewing corporations. There already aren’t many years left to reduce emissions on the scale necessary to avoid further devastation. Trump's second term would at the very least be more wasted time. If the U.S. is to have any hope of meeting the 1.5 degrees goal, its emissions need to be reduced 40 or 50 percent from 2005 levels by 2030. But the Trump administration has wiped out Barack Obama–era emissions standards for cars and trucks, allowed oil and gas producers to release all the methane they want and engaged in many other acts of climate destruction. This would leave only six years to close a massive gap after the end of a second Trump term, after which U.S. emissions cuts might only hit 12 to 19 percent, according to the Rhodium group. And that estimate is based only on existing Trump rollbacks. “If he were elected for an additional four years, it’s very likely that the administration would do more to further erode the progress that the Obama administration made,” said Kate Larsen, a director with Rhodium who leads the group’s international climate and energy research. The increase in U.S. emissions would be a major global setback, given how rapidly the world’s carbon footprint needs to shrink over the next decade. So would the lack of leadership needed to help other countries meet their national goals. “If the Trump administration continues its current policies, the multi-gigaton emissions gap that the world will have to close will be much harder,” Larsen said of keeping global temperature rise below 2 degrees. “Without the U.S. there, it’s hard to see how that would happen.”

## 2NR – I/L – Democracy

#### Trump creates an existential risk to democracy through populist ideals of victimization which was evident in his raid of the Capitol Building.

Gaudefroy 21 – [Jérôme Viala-Gaudefroy. I completed my PhD in American studies at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle and graduated on November 28 2016. I am a lecturer at Sciences Po, St Germain-en-Laye, France. My research focuses on presidential discourse and more specifically on the construction of the national identity through conceptual metaphors. “How Donald Trump’s populist narrative led directly to the assault on the US Capitol”. February 18, 2021] TDI

The January 6 assault on the Capitol may have been a fitting end to Trump’s presidency. It was the embodiment of his trademark violation of norms and desacralization of institutions. It was also the logical culmination of four years of violently partisan rhetoric. Donald Trump is of course less the cause but rather the natural expression of a populism run amok, and one for which Ross Perot, Pat Buchanan, Sarah Palin and the Tea Party movement were the harbingers. Still, he is an impressive – and appalling – expression of American populism. As the only representative elected by all Americans, the US president has both institutional and rhetorical power given his unique media exposure. The “commander-in-chief” is also the “storyteller-in-chief.” His January 6 “Save America” speech is a perfect illustration of the way a populist narrative can sway the masses. It is essential to understand its mechanism and to recognize its characteristics if we want to prevent a repeat. Populism is a complex and contested political concept. It is nevertheless identifiable by certain characteristics. First, of course, it often involves some form of demagoguery, a rhetorical device that Donald Trump masters perfectly, as rhetoric professor Jennifer Mercieca has shown. “You’re stronger, you’re smarter. You’ve got more going than anybody,” he told his audience on January 6. He also praised the crowd’s pride and supposed patriotism, calling out “a deep and enduring love for America in our hearts […] an overwhelming pride in this great country.” But flattery in itself does not define populism. As political scientist Jan-Werner Müller has demonstrated, what characterizes populism is above all a very restrictive and exclusive definition of “the people.” In his inaugural speech, President Trump contrasted the “forgotten people” with a corrupt elite. When he addressed his supporters on January 6, he said: “You are the real people” which he defined as “the people that built this nation”, and contrary to “the people that tore down our nation”. Trump’s “American people” are also the people who “do not believe the corrupt fake news anymore”. As used by Trump, “the people” is both a rhetorical construction and an embodied metaphor found in phrasing like “the incredible patriots here today” and “the magnitude of the crowd” stretching “all the way to the monument in Washington.” For the president, size is a sign of moral virtue: “As this enormous crowd shows,” he says, “we have truth and justice on our side.” As many observers have noted, Trump is obsessed with crowd size. One of the very first lies from his spokesperson regarded the size of the 2016 inauguration crowd, how it was bigger than Obama’s in 2009, despite clear evidence to the contrary. This was the first of thousands of “alternative facts” that came to define Trump’s presidency. Another characteristic of Trump’s “people” is their victim status. They are the victims of a corrupt system and the “fake news media”. He also makes a link between “the country that has had enough” and a we who will “not take it any longer” because “that’s what this is all about.” Trump’s people identify with him through this victimization. Hence the use of the subject pronoun we. “It’s incredible what we have to go through” he laments, building a cognitive bias that favors adherence to his numerous falsehoods.

Victimization is an essential element of the populist discourse. It emphasizes the innocence and the purity of the people (and their leader). It makes any future action, even illegal, morally justifiable. “When you catch someone in the act of fraud,” said the president, “you’re allowed to follow very different rules.” In other words, it gives a blank check for illegal actions that will happen next. This rhetoric of victimization is also illustrated by the construction of the figure of an enemy who is no longer a foreign outsider but fellow Americans, as I have analyzed thoroughly elsewhere. In Trump’s “Save America” speech, this enemy is primarily the news media. They “suppress speech,” and even “thought”. They are the “enemy of the people” and “the biggest problem we have in this country”. The expression “enemy of the people” is not new: it has its origins in the Roman Republic and was used during the French Revolution. But there is a certain irony in Trump using a term made particularly popular by the Soviet Union while comparing the suppression by the media to “what happens in a communist country.”

For Donald Trump, Republican representative Liz Cheney was an enemy long before she voted to impeach him on January 13, 2021. This view of the “enemy press” echoes that of Richard Nixon, as outlined in a recent article by RonNell Andersen Jones and Lisa Grow Sun. But Trump is much more vehement in his public attacks. And the enemies he mentioned are not limited to the press: he also attacked the “big tech” who “rigged the election,” the Democrats and the “radical left” that will “destroy our country,” the Republicans such as Mitch McConnell, Bill Barr, and Liz Cheney who refused to back his false claims, or the Supreme Court that “hurts our country”. The populist discourse also requires the construction of a permanent crisis. The enumeration of numerous enemies leads to an implacable logic: “Our country has been under siege.” This type of war lexicon is all the more effective that the emotional charge is reinforced with the evocation of children: “They also want to indoctrinate your children at school by teaching them things that aren’t so. They want to indoctrinate your children. It’s all part of the comprehensive assault on our democracy.” This threat of “indoctrination of children” validates the policy in favor of private schools put in place by the Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. It may also echo QAnon’s conspiracy theories that portray Donald Trump as the hero of a struggle against the “deep state” and a supposed cabal of Democratic politicians and celebrities baselessly accused of abusing children. But, more generally, what is at stake is the very existence of the nation: “If you don’t fight like hell,” the president warned, “you won’t have a country anymore.” So now, said the president, “the American people [are] finally standing up and saying, "No”.

By standing up and fighting, Trump’s “people” can become heroic. It is common for US presidents to rely on the trope of the hero, a figure whose strength is always kept in check by virtue. Donald Trump presents a very different narrative where heroism is exclusively defined by unchecked strength, to the point that strength is a virtue in and of itself, as I developed previously in my research. “You have to show strength, and you have to be strong,” he repeated, and members of Congress who promised to oppose the certification of votes became “warriors.” The claim that “We will not be intimidated into accepting the hoaxes and the lies” is also a way to refuse to be weak. After repeating the term “weak Republicans” several times, Trump clearly showed he enjoyed this expression, insisting he was going to use the term from then on. This binary view of strength vs. weakness echoes a very conservative and gendered narrative that appeals to Donald Trump’s base, especially evangelicals: Trump’s hypermasculinity is contrasted to the Democrats’ enlightened masculinity, portrayed as weak and feminine. An extreme incarnation of this hypermasculinity can be found in the neo-fascist organization Proud Boys present among his supporters. At the end of his speech, when Trump encouraged his supporters to take action by going to Capitol Hill, he asked the crowd to “give our Republicans – the weak ones, because the strong ones don’t need any of our help […] – the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country”. As the speech reached its crescendo, Trump emphasized his supporters’ strong emotional bond with him, and his with them. “We’re going to walk down, and I’ll be there with you”, he promised, as if they would be protected by a Christ-like presence that did not even have to materialize – and it didn’t. Instead, as what was now a mob moved toward the Capitol, Trump was driven back to the White House, where he watched the assault unfold on live television. The tragic events of January 6 and their aftermath are now well known. Five people died, including police officer Brian Sicknick. Despite the violent attack, Congress was able to reconvene and formally recognize the victory of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice-president-elect Kamala Harris. But the risk was grave and the wounds deep. All of this was made possible by Donald Trump ability and willingness to heighten and take advantage of his supporters’ sense of exclusion (economic, social or otherwise), fear of cultural and identity dispossession, and distrust toward US institutions. Trump’s populist narrative and coded language gave them a feeling of empowerment and encouraged them to imagine that a violent attack on Congress would be a patriotic, heroic act. After the violence on Capitol Hill, Trump’s approval rating has fallen sharply, yet remains at 38% (though a new Pew Research poll puts him at 29%). By comparison, Richard Nixon’s was 24% when he resigned in 1974. If Trump’s popularity among those who voted for him has also declined, it is still close to 80%, and about one in five Republicans (22% according to Reuters-Ipsos, or nearly 15 million Americans) claims to support the rioters’ actions. Most importantly, a significant majority of them continue to believe Trump’s endlessly repeated false claims that the election was “rigged” and that it was he who won, not Joe Biden. With the beginning of a second impeachment trial against Donald Trump and the threat of further attacks by his supporters on American institutions and elected officials in Washington and across the nation, as well as a worsening pandemic, the coming weeks and months could prove crucial for American democracy.

# Aff

## 1AR – Uniqueness Thumpers

#### Either Afghanistan thumps or prove short memories true – no red wave

Abramson 21 [Alana Abramson is a reporter at CNN, Time, and ABC; “Joe Biden Mishandled the Afghanistan Withdrawal. Do voters care?”, 08/18/2021, Time, <https://time.com/6091310/biden-afghanistan-voters-polls/>] TDI

The news received scant attention, overshadowed by searing images of Afghans clinging to U.S. planes in a desperate attempt to leave the country. Instead of focusing his plan to alleviate food insecurity, Biden had to hurry back from Camp David to the White House on August 16 to defend the way he withdrew from the nation’s longest war. As the U.S. looks ahead to the 2022 midterm elections, and even the 2024 presidential election, these two simultaneous events illustrate the dueling narratives voters will be fed. Biden’s allies will point to his achievements in helping the nation recover from a once in a century pandemic that spawned an economic crisis, hoping that voters will care more about that than a controversial move abroad. Republicans will seize on the Taliban’s takeover after Biden’s messy retreat from Afghanistan to cast doubt on Biden’s portrayal of himself as an experienced statesman with deep foreign policy credentials who would bring competence back to the White House. Data so far shows the latter narrative is prevailing, with Biden’s approval rating hitting the lowest point in his presidency this week at less than 50 percent. Still, there are two ways this could go. The withdrawal could become an indelible stain on Biden’s legacy, and remain the most pressing issue for voters in the midterm elections next year. Or it could fade from voters’ minds in the coming months and years as they focus more on the COVID-19 pandemic and economic issues. Pollsters and experts say it is too early to tell. But what is clear, they say, is that after early months of success on vaccinations and legislation, Biden has reached the most difficult moment of his presidency so far. “I don’t think they were counting on coronavirus getting worse, so that was already one kind of front in the battlefield that they were having to deal with,” says Lydia Saad, Director of U.S. Social Research at Gallup. “And now suddenly they’ve got [Afghanistan]… It’s a challenging environment.” Since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan, Biden’s approval rating has dropped by 7 points, to 46%, according to an August 16 Reuters/Ipsos poll—the lowest since he took office. His polling averages from two other trackers, 538 and Real Clear Politics, have also dropped below 50% for the first time in his term. There even seems to be waning support for withdrawal itself, which has long been supported by the majority of Americans. In April, a Morning Consult/Politico survey found that 69% of voters supported Biden’s self-imposed September 11 deadline to leave Afghanistan. A Morning Consult poll released August 16 found that number had dropped 20 points, to 49%. Privately, some of Biden’s allies concede these numbers are grim, even as the President, his officials and supporters publicly continue to defend the execution of the withdrawal. And these numbers have delighted Republicans, who have already begun touting them as a harbinger of victory in congressional races in 2022. “Democrats’ House majority is doomed and the smart members will retire to save face,” a spokesman for the National Republican Congressional Committee boasted in an August 18 email to reporters after citing Biden’s drop in polling averages. Republican pollster Frank Luntz argues that if Americans are left behind in Afghanistan, the situation could be as catastrophic for Biden as the Iranian hostage crisis was for Jimmy Carter in 1979, which many believe cost him reelection. “The American image and reputation abroad is taking a hit every single day,” Luntz says. But Luntz also says that domestically, the political impact for Biden likely hinges on how the Taliban governs Afghanistan going forward. “If Americans don’t start dying again because of terrorism, [voters] may forget. If women aren’t aren’t thrown back to the Stone Age, [voters] may forget,” he says. “It’s really up to what the Taliban decides to do. But based on past history, I’m not optimistic about the future.” The other key question is whether voters will forgive the execution of the withdrawal to reward the larger goal of ending a 20-year war. “We’re getting out of an unpopular war abroad,” says Larry Sabato, founder and director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia. “We’re getting out of it in a messy fashion, but we’re getting out of it.” “I’m not saying Biden will be boosted by it,” Sabato says, “but I am saying, if he is hurt by it, it will be temporary and this will be replaced by other issues that go to the heart of American life, like the pandemic [and] the economy.”

#### Afghanistan thumps

Sprunt 21 – [Barbara Sprunt is a producer on NPR's Washington desk, where she reports and produces breaking news and feature political content. She formerly produced the NPR Politics Podcast and got her start in radio at as an intern on NPR's Weekend All Things Considered and Tell Me More with Michel Martin. She is an alumnus of the Paul Miller Reporting Fellowship at the National Press Foundation. She is a graduate of American University in Washington, D.C., and a Pennsylvania native. “There's A Bipartisan Backlash To How Biden Handled The Withdrawal From Afghanistan”. August 17, 2021] TDI

Congressional outcry over the Biden's administration's handling of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban's takeover of the country has been swift. Criticism of the administration was bipartisan: Republicans were scathing about the White House's actions, and Democrats, while acknowledging that President Biden was carrying out the policies of his predecessor, criticized the haphazard manner of the U.S. withdrawal. Biden addressed the increasing criticism Monday afternoon and defended his position in his first public remarks since the Taliban moved into Kabul, Afghanistan's capital. A bipartisan group of senators, led by Democratic Sens. Bob Menendez of New Jersey, who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Edward Markey of Massachusetts and Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, have called on the Biden administration to take swift action to protect endangered Afghan women.

"We strongly urge you to create a humanitarian parole category specifically for women leaders, activists, human rights defenders, judges, parliamentarians, journalists, and members of the Female Tactical Platoon of the Afghan Special Security Forces and to streamline the paperwork process to facilitate referrals to allow for fast, humane, and efficient relocation to the United States," the 47 senators said in a letter sent to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas. Democratic Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, who serves as Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, has pledged the committee will, "at the appropriate time", hold hearings into "what went wrong in Afghanistan and lessons learned to avoid repeating those mistakes."

Carper, a member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and an ally of the president's, said in a statement that the withdrawal of U.S. troops "should have been carefully planned to prevent violence and instability." "We must act swiftly to protect Americans and our Afghan allies and partners on the ground," he said. "We cannot abandon those who fought by our side who now face mortal danger from the Taliban's takeover. We have a moral obligation to act immediately to protect their lives and a national security imperative to ensure that Afghan soil does not again become a source of terrorist attacks on our allies and our homeland."Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire is a member of the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations committees. Shaheen, a member of the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations committees, said in a statement the images of Afghan civilians at the airport pleading to be evacuated are "seared into our minds." "Dire conditions on the ground persist today and without swift, decisive action from the administration, Afghan civilians will suffer or die at the hands of the Taliban," she continued. She called for an immediate expansion of the refugee program for Afghan women seeking asylum."A failure to act now will seal their fate, and the generation of girls who grew up with freedoms, education and dreams of building their country's future will die with them."Rep. Seth Moulton, D-Mass. Rep. Seth Moulton, seen here at a July event in Washington, D.C., calls the events unfolding in Afghanistan a "disaster" that was avoidable. Moulton, a former Marine who served in Iraq, said the "time to debate whether we stay in Afghanistan has passed" but says the "disaster" of the withdrawal could have been avoided. "For months, I have been calling on the Administration to evacuate our allies immediately — not to wait for paperwork, for shaky agreements with third countries, or for time to make it look more 'orderly,' " he said in a statement on Sunday. He added that the "tragedy" happening abroad was "set in motion" by the Trump administration. “Successive leaders of both parties have failed to hold the votes for re-authorizing this conflict for the last two decades since we invaded to find Osama bin Laden. For that, all of us in Congress should be ashamed." After Biden's speech, Moulton tweeted there's "a long time to debate" whether the withdrawal decision was correct, but the administration has to "step up" to save innocent lives. McConnell, shown here last week, calls the exit from Afghanistan a "shameful failure of American leadership." The Senate minority leader has called the Biden administration's exit from Afghanistan a "shameful failure of American leadership."

"The rapid advance of the Taliban was expected after the U.S. abandonment of Afghan security forces. The plight of innocent Afghans was predicted, and the challenges of safely evacuating U.S. personnel and innocent Afghans have been magnified by our inexplicable withdrawal from Bagram Air Base. And the likelihood that Al Qaeda will return to plot attacks from Afghanistan is growing," he said in a statement Sunday.

## 1AR – Nonunique

### Generic

#### Trump wins now

Lempinen 23 [(Edward Lempinen is a writer and media relations specialist with the UC Berkeley Office of Communications and Public Affairs. He has extensive experience in science and science policy communication, including support for global high-level science diplomacy initiatives.) “Even after new indictment, Trump has a path to the White House, analyst says” 6/14/23] pickles BS

Two indictments in the past three months have done little to damage former President Donald Trump’s standing among Republican voters, and he still has a clear path to the party’s 2024 nomination and perhaps to the White House, according to a UC Berkeley political analyst.

Last week’s criminal indictment for mishandling top secret information and obstructing the federal investigation has given Trump a political boost, says Dan Schnur, a lecturer at the UC Berkeley Institute for Governmental Studies. But if Trump wins the nomination again, Schnur adds, the indictment is “going to cause real problems” for him in the general election.

Even so, he says, Trump could win in 2024.

Schnur is a veteran of high-level Republican politics. He held key positions in four presidential campaigns and three gubernatorial campaigns; he served under former California Gov. Pete Wilson and later as director of communications for the 2000 presidential campaign of U.S. Sen. John McCain. He currently is registered as “no party preference.”

The U.S. Department of Justice last Friday indicted Trump on 37 counts, charging that he improperly took hundreds of secret documents — some of them related to U.S. nuclear weapons operations and defense vulnerabilities — and kept them in unsecured bathrooms and storage areas at his Florida home. If found guilty, he could face a lengthy prison sentence.

The case is seen as an unprecedented risk to U.S. national security. But Trump, throughout his political career, has largely been able to avoid damage from scandals that would have severely damaged other politicians, Schnur says. Still, he cautions, because the nation is in uncharted waters, predictions about 2024 are especially difficult.

The following Berkeley News interview with Schnur has been edited lightly for length and clarity.

Berkeley News: In the wake of the last week’s indictment, there’s a central question: What impact will this have on Donald Trump’s chances to win the Republican nomination and then reelection as president?

Dan Schnur: Well, the honest answer is that we don’t know how this is going to play out because we’ve never had a president or a presidential campaign front-runner indicted on federal charges before. So, trying to predict what’s going to happen is a little bit reckless.

That said, the early polling shows pretty much what we might have expected, given the dynamic that followed the New York state indictment earlier this spring. It appears that Republicans, to a large degree, are consolidating behind Trump. But this is the type of challenge that’s going to cause real problems for him should he make it to the general election.

We don’t know if that will change, either if Trump is convicted or if additional indictments are leveled.

Let’s unpack that: The conventional wisdom is that almost nothing hurts Trump — he can turn the worst developments to his advantage. But if he’s indicted in the space of a few months for paying hush funds to a porn star, mishandling top-secret documents, and then possibly for trying to manipulate Georgia’s 2020 election outcome — you don’t think all of that will hurt him with Republican voters?

Trump himself several years ago said, famously or infamously, that he could shoot someone on the streets of New York and his most loyal supporters would stay with him. That appears to have been a correct assessment.

If the 2024 presidential contest is a repeat of the Joe Biden-Donald Trump match of four years ago, the outcome may hinge on white working class voters in Rust Belt states, said UC Berkeley political analyst Dan Schnur. (Photo by Gage Skidmore, Wikimedia Commons)

That said, the real question here is not whether some of his most loyal backers will stay with him, but rather how big that base is. Conventional wisdom, which holds some validity, suggests that in the Republican Party, about one-third of primary voters will stick with him no matter what. Another third have supported him in the past, but have some misgivings about his candidacy going forward. And then a third are motivated very strongly against him.

So, for the other Republican candidates, the challenge is: How do they convince that middle one-third of the Republican primary electorate? How does a Ron DeSantis or a Nikki Haley or a Mike Pence or a Tim Scott or any of the others peel those voters away from Trump?

We don’t know the answer to that yet.

You suggested that this indictment might help Trump in the short term, but harm him long term. Can you talk a little bit more about that?

Since his election in 2016, Trump and his allies have been on the losing end of three consecutive elections, both in the midterms of 2018 and 2022, and of course, his own campaign against Joe Biden in 2020, where it became clear that he did not have the sufficient base of supporters willing to overlook his various transgressions.

Now, Trump supporters will point out with some validity that the two midterm elections did not feature Trump himself on the ballot. If you take that argument at face value, Trump has won one campaign, and he’s lost one. Both were close, which means there’s a sizable number of Americans who not only are going to vote for him under any circumstances, but will choose him in a contested race.

So the challenge for Biden or someone else who becomes the Democratic nominee — how do they keep the swing voters that Biden won in 2020 from going back to Trump? There are a lot of voters in that category who voted for Trump in 2016 and for Biden in 2020. The most visible cohort of that group are white working-class voters in Rust Belt states who defected from Trump after four years.

What we don’t know is whether they left Trump because he didn’t provide them what they had hoped he would when elected president. Or is it simply because they found Biden to be a more acceptable alternative? That’s going to be the ground on which this fight is waged next year.

There’s a new CBS News poll that shows Republican voters are largely not troubled by this latest indictment, and they’re inclined to stick with the former president. The same poll shows that just 7% of GOP voters have a less favorable view of Trump after the new indictment. That’s a really small number — but is that an important number?

It’s an important number because it shows that most of those Republicans who were going to give up on Trump have already done so. And it’s a relatively small percentage who stuck with him through all the controversies over the years, but for whom this new indictment represents something fundamentally different.

But we don’t know if those numbers would grow in case of a conviction.

#### Trump wins re-match – 5 key warrants

Eric **Levitz** 20**23**

[Levitz – A writer and journalist for Intelengiencer and NY Magazines. He covers politics and economy][Trump could definitely beat Biden]April 28th, 2023. Gh

https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/04/trump-could-definitely-beat-biden.html

The **former** **president** boasts more than twice as much support as Ron **DeSantis**, leading the Florida governor by a 51-to-24 percent margin in [FiveThirtyEight’s average of GOP primary polls](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/president-primary-r/2024/national/). No other candidate is polling above 6 percent. And the gap between Trump and DeSantis has been growing steadily wider for weeks. Indeed, the [Viktor Orbán of the Sunshine State](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2022/4/28/23037788/ron-desantis-florida-viktor-orban-hungary-right-authoritarian) appears to be [wilting](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-04-19/trump-desantis-shifting-popularity-makes-big-money-donors-uneasy) beneath the heat of the national spotlight. DeSantis presents better on paper than on television. He did manage to push a thoroughly Trumpist agenda and then win a landslide reelection in a purple state. And he also served as the national standard-bearer of conservative COVID doves throughout the pandemic. But the small-bore acts of constituent service that earned DeSantis bipartisan approval in Florida — such as wetlands [restoration](https://www.orlandoweekly.com/news/florida-gov-ron-desantis-vetoes-everglades-restoration-bill-over-concerns-about-wetlands-destruction-31777380) and raises for public-school teachers — don’t really translate to the national stage. And they certainly aren’t winning cards in a Republican primary. Meanwhile, the salience of DeSantis’s opposition to vaccine and mask mandates declines with each passing day.

Put aside all the reasons DeSantis is *theoretically* an appealing candidate and you’re left with all the reasons he isn’t one in reality. The man is [charmless.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/03/14/desantis-charisma-presidency/) He does [not like people](https://www.politico.com/news/2023/04/21/i-dont-think-he-cares-about-people-desantis-struggles-with-former-hill-colleagues-00093281), and it shows. His antipathy to schmoozing and glad-handing is so powerful that he can’t be bothered to reliably [return calls from billionaire GOP megadonors](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/campaigns/john%20catsimatidis-not-backing-ron-desantis-2024-white-house). He [eats pudding with his fingers.](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/04/trumps-desantis-pudding-fingers-ad-is-disgustingly-good.html) Trump, an inveterate bully, has no trouble [identifying his rival’s pain points](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/04/trumps-desantis-pudding-fingers-ad-is-disgustingly-good.html) and [squeezing them mercilessly.](https://people.com/politics/donald-trump-says-ron-desantis-needs-emergency-personality-transplant/) This week, the Republican front-runner suggested DeSantis may soon be forced to seek “an emergency personality transplant.” We are still more than a year away from the Republican convention. And in the interim, Trump is liable to [face multiple criminal indictments](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/04/what-are-the-legal-cases-against-donald-trump.html) in addition to a civil trial in which [he stands accused of rape](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/04/donald-trump-rape-trial-jury.html). So it is entirely possible DeSantis, or one of the party’s current long shots, will ultimately prevail. But it seems overwhelmingly likely Trump will resume his place at the top of the GOP ticket. With [President Biden officially announcing his reelection](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/25/us/politics/biden-running-2024-president.html) bid this week, we’re on track for a rematch of the 2020 election. This has led some Republican operatives to resign themselves to Biden’s reelection. As [Jonathan Martin reports for Politico](https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2023/04/27/gop-donald-trump-presidential-race-2024-00094061), Trump’s intraparty skeptics are already trying to find silver linings in his inevitable defeat: It took Democrats three consecutive losses in the 1980s for the Democratic Leadership Council to finally gain traction and elevate one of their own in 1992. Republicans would only have to suffer two White House defeats to finally move on from Trump and, in the meantime, there’s that Supreme Court majority he helped deliver as the political backstop. As a shrewd Republican strategist, and no NeverTrumper, put it to me recently: “We’re just going to have to go into the basement, ride out the tornado and come back up when it’s over to rebuild the neighborhood.” This Republican, as with a number of his like, has been hoping for a strong Trump alternative to emerge but has grown more pessimistic, DeSantis’ early stumbles confirming his doubts about the Florida governor. Moreover, there’s the matter of *Roe* being overturned and the political vise the party is caught in between its unyielding anti-abortion activists and a broader electorate that supports legal abortion. “We’re the dog that caught the car on Trump and abortion.”I wish this strategist’s fatalism were well founded. But I really don’t think it is. Without question, Trump is an exceptionally weak general-election candidate. To no small extent, his personal odiousness does much of the Democratic Party’s persuasion-and-mobilization work for it. For a significant number of swing-state suburbanites, Trump’s presence on the GOP ticket is sufficient cause for supporting the Democratic one. This reality is reflected not only in 2020 voting patterns but also in the [underperformance of Trump-y candidates](https://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/meetthepressblog/numbers-trump-backed-candidates-fared-midterms-rcna61524) in swing states last year. Meanwhile, Trump did more in [2018](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/11/19/18103110/2018-midterm-elections-turnout) and [2020](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/01/28/turnout-soared-in-2020-as-nearly-two-thirds-of-eligible-u-s-voters-cast-ballots-for-president/) to increase turnout among the Democratic base than countless get-out-the-vote initiatives ever did. His nomination will make reassembling the Biden coalition considerably easier than the ascent of Nikki Haley or Tim Scott would.

But that doesn’t mean Trump’s coronation would ensure Biden’s reelection. To the contrary, there is reason to believe Trump’s odds of victory in 2024 would be at least as good as his odds in 2020, when he came within [45,000 well-placed votes of winning.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/03/14/desantis-charisma-presidency/) It is easy to miss just how narrowly Trump lost his matchup against Biden. The Democrat won the popular vote by 4.5 percentage points and secured 36 more Electoral College votes than the 270 necessary. But his margins in the pivotal swing states were tiny. In the tipping-point state of Wisconsin, just 20,682 votes separated Biden from Trump. If Biden had won the popular vote by “only” 4 points, Trump likely would have won reelection.

It’s possible the Electoral College is [less biased](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/25/upshot/polls-biden-trump-2024.html) against Democrats today than it was in 2020. The overturning of *Roe* v. *Wade* seems to have reminded some secular white voters in the Midwest why they used to oppose the party of Bible thumpers. In 2022, Democrats did better in key Michigan and Pennsylvania races than they did nationally. But, as a general rule, the most recent presidential election is a better guide to the geographic distribution of party support than the most recent midterm. Thus, a reasonable default assumption is that if Biden wins the popular vote by only 3 points next year, he will lose reelection.

And Biden is much less popular now than he was on Election Day in 2020. His approval rating currently [sits around 43 percent.](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/biden-approval-rating/) As political scientistRuy Texiera [notes](https://www.liberalpatriot.com/p/five-reasons-why-biden-might-lose), the previous three incumbent presidents received only one to 2 percent more support in the popular vote than they did in approval polls. Currently, in surveys of a hypothetical 2020 election rematch, Biden leads Trump by an average of just 1.4 percentage points. In 2016, a 2-point popular-vote win was not enough to secure Hillary Clinton an Electoral College majority.

What’s more, there is reason to fear that Biden’s economic record will get worse before it gets better. He has presided over the highest inflation in half a century, and votersbroadly [disapprove of his](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/other/president_biden_job_approval_economy-7321.html) economic [management](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/other/president_biden_job_approval_economy-7321.html). For a long time, the bullish case for Biden was that prices would stabilize by 2024 and he would finally enjoy the political benefits of full employment. But as the Fed’s interest-rate hikes ripple through the economy, the odds of an election-year economic downturn have steadily risen. Judging by the spread between the three-month and ten-year U.S. Treasury rates, markets believe there is a nearly 58 percent chance of the U.S. entering a recession by March 2024. Thursday’s lower-than-expected GDP numbers lend credence to that forecast. It is possible a mild recession would kill inflation, thereby eliminating what has been Biden’s greatest economic liability. But even if the pace of inflation were to slow down, the level of many salient prices would remain noticeably higher than they were under Trump. Combine discontent about higher grocery bills with rising unemployment and Biden’s odds of enjoying the same election-year rebound that many past incumbent presidents did go down.

Biden’s other liability — his extraordinarily advanced age — is of course going to get only more pronounced between now and November 2024. Biden’s status as an 80-year-old is less of a liability against a 76-year-old Trump than it is against a 44-year-old DeSantis. But the president does come across as distinctly older than his makeup-and-tanner-drenched rival.

Finally, even though Trump has myriad demerits as a general-election candidate, he isn’t devoid of peculiar strengths. The mogul is far less wedded to the conservative movement’s ideological project than many of his rivals. [Unlike DeSantis](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/03/ron-desantis-cut-social-security-medicare-trump-campaign-republican.html), Trump has never endorsed the privatization of Social Security. And, to this point, he has been less acquiescent to the anti-abortion movement’s maximalist demands [than the Florida governor has.](https://apnews.com/article/florida-abortion-ban-approved-c9c53311a0b2426adc4b8d0b463edad1) Last week, the Trump campaign [leaked word](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/apr/19/donald-trump-federal-abortion-ban-stance) that the candidate considers a national abortion ban a vote loser and would be unlikely to support one. The less competitive DeSantis becomes, the more likely it is Trump will be able to avoid moving any further right on abortion policy.

In sum, Biden is lucky the Republican Party probably can’t help renominating a proven loser. But he isn’t *that* lucky.

#### Biden has no advantage compared to 2020.

BU Today **Staff** 20**23** [BU today cited multiple college school professors, journalists, and politicians for this article.][Age, Inflation, Abortion, Culture Wars, and More: Issues That Will Define President Biden’s Reelection Campaign] April 23rd 2023 gh

https://www.bu.edu/articles/2023/president-biden-runs-for-reelection/

He would be 82 years old at the start of a second term, the oldest president in history. Democratic voters are not excited by him, polls show, and many Democrat politicians say privately they wish there was an alternative candidate for their party to push in 2024. But on Tuesday, President Joe Biden announced in a video he would indeed seek reelection, and now the only question is who his opponent will be. Will it be a 2020 rematch of 2020 with former President Donald Trump (who would be 78 in 2024)? Will Florida Governor Ron DeSantis run? Will another GOP candidate rise?

What Biden makes clear in his video announcement is that he plans to will run on his political accomplishments, his work to lower the temperature of the country after Trump’s presidency, and his determination to, in his words, “finish the job” that he started. “The question we are facing is whether in the years ahead we have more freedom or less freedom, more rights or fewer,” Biden says in the video. “I know what I want the answer to be. This is not a time to be complacent.”

Ronna McDaniel, the chair of the Republican National Committee, wasted no time in responding to Biden’s news in a statement: “Biden is so out-of-touch that after creating crisis after crisis, he thinks he deserves another four years. If voters let Biden ‘finish the job,’ inflation will continue to skyrocket, crime rates will rise, more fentanyl will cross our open borders, children will continue to be left behind, and American families will be worse off.”

So, what are the issues that will define Biden’s reelection campaign? BU Today reached out to faculty experts across the University and asked them to share their insights.

Trump, DeSantis, GOP opponents

Thomas Whalen, associate professor of social sciences, College of General Studies

Treat Donald Trump as yesterday’s news. Biden has to stand on his own merits here. He doesn’t even have to mention Donald Trump. He wants Donald Trump because Trump is the proverbial bull in the china shop. Trump’s making reckless charges, acting increasingly irrational at his rallies. He’s becoming more and more extreme, but the American electorate, for the most part, is in the middle. The vast majority of voters are independents and they don’t cotton well to that kind of extremism. It works for the GOP base, which is largely white, evangelical, conservative, and authoritarian, but it won’t work outside of the GOP primaries. The vast bulk of independent voters—especially women—are not going to be willing to go down that kind of road. They’ll look for a more middle-of-the-road candidate which, in this case, will be Joe Biden.

Additionally, demographics show that people under 50 years of age—millennials and Gen Z—are far more policy-driven and they’re less inclined to agree with the extremist baby boom ideology that Trump is espousing. That’s a major problem for the Republican party. And there’s a larger problem for the GOP—the party is not attractive to younger voters. Their base is literally dying and if you don’t replace them with younger voters, you’re setting yourself up for long-term irrelevance, politically speaking.

Biden needs to focus on issues that matter to younger voters: student loan forgiveness, reproductive rights, affordable housing and healthcare, the Green New Deal, and gun control.

On top of everything, it seems like the justice system will do Joe Biden’s job for him regarding Trump, painting him as an unfit candidate for office. We’ve never had a major candidate since Eugene Debs running for office under this cloud of illegality and perhaps even treason. Trump faces federal, state, local, and even civil charges in multiple cases that paint him as a common criminal who considers himself above the law. Unless our society has changed to the point where it no longer matters, we’re not in the habit of electing convicted felons or criminals to the highest office in the land.

If Trump is indicted and convicted for his role in the January 6 insurrection, under the terms of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution, he would be barred from holding federal office. All together, this spells doom for Trump’s bid for a second term as president.

Regarding DeSantis, he has already jumped the shark. He’s tried to out-Trump Donald Trump to win the GOP nomination with his increasingly shrill and extremist views and policies: case in point, his war against Mickey Mouse and Disney. It’s become a national joke. It might work in Florida, but it won’t hold sway with independent voters. DeSantis is coming across as a tribute band to Donald Trump, and a rather weak one at that. Biden’s goal here should be to embrace the center and hold onto his liberal base—but his liberal base here really has nowhere to go. Liberals have grown up, thanks to Donald Trump. They may not get exactly what they want from Joe Biden, but they’ve come to recognize they’ll get enough from him.

The electorate

Lauren Mattioli, assistant professor of political science, College of Arts & Sciences

I respectfully disagree that “Democrats” aren’t thrilled Biden is running again. Are there some Democrats that would have preferred a different candidate? Sure. But the party leadership sees Biden as the party’s best shot to beat Trump in 2024 and Biden’s approval rating among Democrats is 80 percent (according to Gallup)—not a perfect indicator of broader support, but suggestive that he hasn’t been abandoned by copartisans. I don’t know whether Biden has to “energize” the electorate—270 unenthusiastic electoral votes spend the same as 270 excited ones, after all—but he does have to get voters to cast ballots. To that end, he could be well served by the lesson of 2020: when voting is easier, people are more likely to do it.  Voter turnout was higher in 2020 than any presidential election in the past 100 years—a fact partially attributable to the availability of vote by mail. Even though the federal government has very little control over how states run their elections, Biden could directly and indirectly pressure state governments to maintain (or even expand) the availability of mail-in ballots.

There might be something Biden could do to win over Trump supporters, but it shouldn’t be a centerpiece of his campaign strategy. Voting patterns are tightly linked to age, race, and educational attainment, and the national trends on all three of these factors are favorable for Democratic candidates. Even within “swing states” in the Electoral College, demographics are shifting in Democrats’ favor. It would be irrational for Biden to divert attention from mobilizing the faithful to converting his skeptics. His campaign should focus on voter registration and turnout.

The economy

Mark T. Williams, master lecturer in finance, Questrom School of Business; member, candidate Biden’s 2020 Economic Advisory Council; president, Boston Economic Club

Given that polling shows economic concerns are top on the minds of voters, the state of the economy heading into the election cycle matters. The ongoing strength of the US economy, including historically low unemployment, respectable GDP growth, and an uptick in consumer spending are positive economic messaging that the Biden administration will stress in their reelection campaign. There are other economic indicators that the Republicans will undoubtedly use to tar the Biden administration as failing the average voter, including stubbornly high inflation, lofty housing costs, and soaring prices of basic goods, including groceries. The Republicans will also try to stress that interest rates are too high and a tax on the average voter. The state of the economy will be front and center for this coming election cycle.

[Jay Zagorsky](https://www.bu.edu/questrom/profile/jay-zagorsky/), clinical associate professor of markets, public policy, and law, Questrom School of Business

Future US economic conditions are a key problem facing President Joe Biden’s reelection campaign. Swing votes are often swayed by economic issues, which impact voters’ pocketbooks. The misery index, which adds together the unemployment and inflation rate, is a good indicator of whether swing voters will stick with a president or switch. Currently, the unemployment rate is 3.5 percent and the inflation rate is 5 percent.  President Biden’s 8.5 percent index is right in the middle of the range compared to past presidents. This number suggests Biden has a high likelihood of reelection. However, if a recession occurs and unemployment surges or inflation stays stubbornly high, then the Biden campaign might face its own reelection misery.

Immigration

[Sarah Sherman Stokes](https://www.bu.edu/law/profile/sarah-r-sherman-stokes/), clinical associate professor of law, School of Law;, associate director, Immigrants’ Rights and Human Trafficking Clinic

As President Biden announces his intent to run for re-election, a collective groan could be heard from immigration advocates. President Biden’s record so far on immigration has been, in a word, disappointing. It’s not that we never had hope for this Administration’s immigration policy—it’s that we did. Biden’s immigration platform was bold, progressive, and a welcome response to years of President Trump’s relentless attacks on noncitizens, and asylum seekers in particular. But President Biden has seemed a long way from candidate Biden—a then presidential hopeful who spoke with great promise and passion about reestablishing asylum protections, ending unlawful border restrictions and “restor[ing] our moral standing in the world and our historic role as a safe haven for refugees and asylum seekers.”

Yes, this Administration has expanded humanitarian parole for certain groups of Venezuelans, Cubans, Nicaraguans and Haitians, but ongoing restrictions at the border and a failure to end Title 42 have meant that the border has been shut to so many more, among them some of the most vulnerable. In addition, this Administration drastically expanded the surveillance of noncitizens through ankle monitors and smartphone applications, and failed to provide long term security for Dreamers, or a pathway for new DACA applicants to receive protection. It is likely with reluctance that immigration advocates will embrace this re-election campaign. Hopefully, rather than hue toward the center politically, President Biden will embrace a compassionate, common sense and lawful approach to immigration policy that deemphasizes enforcement and delivers on his promises from his previous campaign.

The environment

Culture wars

Phillipe Copeland, clinical associate professor, School of Social Work, whose research and work focuses on antiracist education and social change

I watched the video announcing Biden’s reelection campaign and found a few things noteworthy. First was evoking the specter of the January 6 insurrection. There have been efforts among some to downplay its significance or even deny that it happened. The insurrection was nothing less than a 9/11-level attack on the peaceful transfer of power and should remain seared in public memory. While not explicitly mentioning fascism, Biden frames the election as having higher stakes than simply whether a Republican or Democrat occupies the White House. It is helpful to remind voters that this is not a “politics-as-usual” moment we are living through. It was good to see connections made between things like reproductive rights, book bans, and voter suppression as part of a broader assault on freedom. The overall message echoes rhetoric we have heard from the Biden administration over the past few years on these issues. But people can’t eat rhetoric, and fascism will not be defeated by political messaging.

I am reminded of this observation by Frederick Douglass in 1866: “…no republic is safe that tolerates a privileged class, or denies to any of its citizens equal rights and equal means to maintain them.”

The past few years have been a reminder that freedom is fragile and democracy is vulnerable. This will remain the case without addressing an economic and political system that primarily serves the wealthy, fails to consistently uphold basic human rights, and withholds the means for many to prosper and fully participate in political life.

LGBTQIA+ rights

[Carl G. Streed, Jr.](https://www.bumc.bu.edu/busm/profile/carl-streed/), assistant professor of medicine, Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine; research lead at the [Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery](https://www.bmc.org/center-transgender-medicine-and-surgery) at Boston Medical Center, a BU teaching hospital

The ongoing Republican attack on Americans is alarming. Republicans have made stripping rights from anyone who is transgender a central part of their party identity. While their efforts are seen as focused on a minority, there is no mistake that they are setting up an infrastructure to eliminate anyone who does not fit their narrow view of who is American. In contrast, the Biden administration has achieved much to safeguard LGBTQ Americans with a particular focus on transgender Americans. Though some would argue these issues “distract” from larger economic concerns facing the nation, attacks on any Americans by Republican-led local and state governments, such as Florida, Missouri, and Nebraska, strike at the very core of our national values. As Biden prepares for the 2024 election, he and his team must not deflect questions about LGBTQ rights and, in fact, should be prepared to lead any debate on these issues. Biden and his team can win more hearts and minds by standing their ground and protecting Americans of all genders and sexual orientations and highlighting how un-American the current Republican Party has become.

Age

[Andrew Budson](https://profiles.bu.edu/Andrew.Budson), professor of neurology, Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine; chief of cognitive and behavioral neurology and associate chief of staff for education, VA Boston Healthcare System; associate director and education core leader, Boston University Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center

I am not worried about Biden’s chronological age. There is increasing evidence that biological age, not chronological age, is what is associated with age-related diseases, including cognitive impairment. Although Biden is 80 years old, his actions and behavior lead me to believe that his biological age is significantly younger than 80.

The cognitive skills relevant to being president are myriad. Executive function—the ability to manage complex data and use it to plan for the future—is particularly important for a president. Episodic memory—the ability to remember events and information—is also important. I’ll also mention that no one person could possibly be able to manage all of the data and remember all of the events and information that a president needs to function effectively; it will also require a team to get the job done.

[Thomas Perls](https://www.bumc.bu.edu/busm/profile/thomas-perls/), professor of medicine, Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine; director, New England Centenarian Study

Joe Biden is only four years older than Donald Trump. According to a [medical summary](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Health-Summary-2.16.pdf) by his physician, his medical issues are: atrial fibrillation, for which he takes a blood thinner, apixaban, which is very effective at preventing strokes; hyperlipidemia, for which he takes Crestor, result[ing] in a normal lipid profile; acid reflux, for which he takes Pepcid; and stiffened gait due to moderate to severe spondylosis and osteoarthritis of his spine. Of note, his blood pressure is normal (128/76) without meds.

Many Americans in their 80s and 90s are in very good physical and cognitive health. For that matter, most centenarians who are at least 20 years older than Biden on average experience significant (impacts their function) medical and/or cognitive problems after their mid-90s. I see no indication that Biden is not among the 80 percent of people in their 80s who do not show evidence of dementia. Furthermore, he has none of the risk factors that make cognitive impairment more likely, such as diabetes, obesity, smoking, high blood pressure, or elevated LDL or low HDL cholesterol; he’s in excellent health, especially for his age—all of which makes him much less likely to have cognitive issues down the road.

I have read that there are some people saying that presidents who are at an older age should undergo detailed neuropsychological testing to determine they are cognitively in good shape. As a geriatrician, we do not perform such tests unless a person is demonstrating increasing and persistent or worsening difficulty with tasks or activities that require concentration or planning. People should not be concerned about losing their keys or forgetting someone’s name; that may happen if we haven’t had a good night’s sleep. It’s when these issues are persistent and worsening that we become concerned.

Misinformation, disinformation

[Arunima Krishna](https://www.bu.edu/com/profile/arunima-krishna/), assistant professor of mass communication, advertising, and public relations, College of Communication

I think misinformation will most certainly be central to the 2024 election in a variety of ways. For starters, it will be very interesting to see who takes over Tucker Carlson’s mantle over at Fox News, and therefore, the mantle of monetizing misinformation and fear under the guise of journalism. I suspect it will get ugly with different Fox News personalities trying to outdo each other to cater to that vast market that made Carlson one of the most successful personalities on cable. Carlson’s own future and what he might bring to different campaigns, either as an official campaign member or as a surrogate, in terms of weaponizing disinformation and outrage, will also play a role, I believe. Misinformation in the MAGAsphere and beyond will remain alive and well and play a role in the outcome of the election—and the Biden campaign needs to be ready with much more effective messaging and counters to it. The Republicans already have a roadmap of successfully deflecting from what should be legislative priorities to using misinformation to create fester[ing] culture wars and creating lightning rods out of what may be considered nonissues, like banning drag shows and books from classrooms. I suspect that deflection will continue throughout the 2024 campaign and the Biden campaign needs to be ready.

Russia, Ukraine

[Kaija Schilde](https://www.bu.edu/pardeeschool/profile/kaija-schilde/), the Jean Monnet Chair in European Security and Defense, associate professor of international relations and director of the Center for the Study of Europe, Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies

I don’t know how much the actual outcome of the [Russia-Ukraine] war or any US support for Ukraine—which is not direct support, but in the form of military and civilian aid—will actually affect the election. But I do know it is a major source of disinformation that is targeted to the US electorate. So, I don’t have a prediction for the outcome, but I would warn everyone to be on the watch for misinformation during the election season that will dial up significantly.

Abortion

[Linda C. McClain](https://www.bu.edu/law/profile/linda-c-mcclain/), Robert Kent Professor of Law and codirector of the Program on Reproductive Justice, School of Law

The midterms sent a message that voters are motivated when abortion is on the ballot in some way. After so many years of politicians treating abortion as a political hot potato, we see that abortion is politically popular, even in some conservative states, where voters aren’t willing to be as extreme as politicians there may want them to be.

Having a Democrat on the ticket is going to invoke messaging about protecting reproductive healthcare at every level of government, and presidential elections historically bring strong voter turnout, so we’ll continue to see this be a major issue, I think.

A lot of this is being fought out at the state level, but at the same time, who’s in the White House is highly important. One of the reasons that a [federal judge](https://www.bu.edu/articles/2023/supreme-court-upholds-fda-approval-of-mifepristone-whats-next/) [enjoined mifepristone](https://www.bu.edu/articles/2023/judge-ruling-abortion-pill-impact-fda-approved-drugs/) across the entire country is because he was a Trump appointee. Now, Biden has had some success in getting his appointees on federal benches. If you elect a Republican [president], you interrupt that momentum, whereas if Biden is reelected, you have more opportunities to put judges on the courts. This is not to mention what could happen on the Supreme Court—if a justice retires or leaves the bench, whoever is in the White House has control over their replacement.

More recently, we’ve seen the [Food and Drug Administration] roll back some of its more restrictive policies about medication abortion, but a new administration could change the head of the agency and push policies through that would reverse that direction, so the [abortion fight at the] national level does matter.

Now, people have been urging Biden to do more with abortion—including [saying the word “abortion”](https://didbidensayabortionyet.org/)—but the White House has taken steps to protect reproductive rights. We don’t know yet what’s going to happen in this lawsuit against the FDA. If there’s anything more that the Biden administration can do to fortify the FDA’s support of medication abortion, and fortify access to those drugs, that would be important in the upcoming months.

There are some Democratic senators, like [Ed Markey and Elizabeth Warren](https://www.markey.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senator-markey-joins-senator-warren-in-urging-biden-administration-to-take-new-steps-to-protect-reproductive-freedom) [both of Massachusetts], who have urged Biden to do more to strengthen HIPAA, to make clear what kind of resources people have who seek abortions outside their home states—there’s a whole laundry list of things that Democratic lawmakers think Biden could do to strengthen abortion access right now.

There’s a mantra that’s important because it’s true: abortion is healthcare. I hope we see this administration embrace that and talk about the bigger picture of reproductive health moving forward

### AT: indictments

#### Trump can still win despite indictments—studies prove

Robertson 23 [(Nick Robertson is a breaking news reporter at The Hill. He also worked as a reporter and editor for SU’s independent student newspaper, The Daily Orange.) “Americans’ opinion of Trump remains relatively stable despite legal woes: Pew study” 7/21/23] pickles BS

Most Americans’ view on former President Trump hasn’t changed much in the last year, according to a newly released study from the Pew Research Center.

About 63 percent of respondents had an unfavorable view of Trump and 35 percent a favorable one, nearly identical results from a poll taken in March of this year. It is also only a slight deviation from July 2022, where a previous survey found that 60 percent of people held unfavorable views and 38 percent favorable.

The results show the former president as broadly unpopular, but with a resilient reputation amid two federal indictments and multiple other federal and state investigations which could result in criminal charges.

Opinion among Democrats is identical to last year’s poll, but Trump’s favorability dropped slightly with Republican respondents, according to the survey. Two-thirds of Republican respondents currently have a favorable view of Trump, compared to three quarters last year. Similarly, unfavorable views have risen from 24 percent to 32 percent in the last year.

Trump in April pleaded not guilty to 34 felony counts in connection to a six-figure payment his former fixer, Michael Cohen paid to an adult film actress. He was also indicted in June for 37 counts related to the mishandling of records at Mar-a-Lago as well as his efforts to block the government from recovering the documents.

This week, Trump was served a target letter in a federal investigation into his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election and his actions surrounding the Jan. 6, 2021 riot on the Capitol.

He also faces an investigation in Georgia into his attempts to overturn the election in that state. That probe has empaneled a grand jury and is expected to decide on whether Trump will be charged with any crime by Sept. 1.

Despite the small slip, Trump remains far ahead in GOP presidential primary polling. He carries a 31 point lead over chief rival Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in national polling averages.

The Pew survey polled 8,480 people over a week in mid-July. The data has a margin of error of 1.5 points.

### AT: Desantis wins

#### Trump has 100% control over the republican party

David **Jackson** 20**23** [Jackson – covers the White House and the Trump administration since 2016 for USA today. A National political Correspondent][For Trump, the 2024 election looks like 2016 with who is running for president]July 10th 2023 gh

https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2023/07/10/who-will-win-2024-election-odds/70383288007/

For some, Donald **Trump's** **campaign** for the Republican presidential **nomination** in **2024** is **looking** a lot like his victorious run in 2016 – and at the same time is totally unprecedented in the history of American politics.

As in the 2016 campaign cycle, Trump faces a flock of primary challengers who could split the opposition vote and enable the former businessman and television celebrity to win primaries – and delegates – with as little as 30% of the vote.

Meanwhile, the Trump of 2024 is not the Trump of 2016: He's a former president who **virtually controls the Republican Party**; he also faces two criminal trials that could generate embarrassing details of his conduct and two other investigations are still pending.

"He's the favorite," said Republican pollster Whit Ayres. "But there are a whole lot of events that will occur between now and the nomination."

Many of those events, he added, "are unprecedented, which means they are impossible to predict."

As in 2016, Trump is the Republican front–runner being chased by a long list of challengers.

This time around, Trump's opponents include Ron DeSantis, Nikki Haley, Mike Pence, Tim Scott, Chris Christie, Doug Burgum, Vivek Ramaswamy, Asa Hutchinson, Larry Elder and Will Hurd.

The RealClearPolitics website average of recent polls puts Trump at 53% among Republican voters, well ahead of DeSantis at just under 21% and Pence at just more than 6%.

"I think Trump is stronger this year than he was in 2016," said Chris Jackson, a pollster and senior vice president with the firm Ipsos. He noted that DeSantis, the governor of Florida, is running on policies very similar to Trump, a reflection of the fact that the anti-Trump vote among Republicans is smaller now than it was then.

Also like in 2016, Trump is still running as an outsider fighting the "establishment," never mind that he is a former president who runs much of the Republican Party and has acolytes in key positions in GOP organizations across the land.

In this election, Trump is running against a "deep state" that he claims, without evidence, is trying to derail his campaign "by using law enforcement" and indictments.

"They want to take away my freedom because I will never let them take away your freedom," Trump told supporters Friday in Iowa.

Trump has a 32-point lead in the GOP field, according to the RealClearPolitics average of polls.

Here's how the candidates are polling:

◾ Trump: 53%

◾ DeSantis: 20.9%

◾ Pence: 6.1%

◾ Haley: 3.6%

◾ Scott: 3.3%

◾ Christie: 2.5%

◾ Ramaswamy: 2.4%

◾ Hutchinson: 0.9%

◾ Elder: 0.7%

◾ Burgum: 0.1%

A USA TODAY/Suffolk University poll in June showed Trump with a 25-point lead, with 48% support to DeSantis' 23%. All other candidates were in the low single digits in that poll.

Some of his opponents see a key difference from 2016: Trump has become his own establishment, with a record that challengers will try to exploit in order to flip the script from that previous election.

Pence, who served as Trump's vice president but is now running against him, said during an Iowa stop last week that turning things around requires "new leadership in the Republican Party," as well as the nation at large.

Pence is looking to break through in Iowa, which opens the nominating process next year with caucuses, in part, by using his record on foreign policy.

A political action committee aligned with Pence put up an ad bashing Trump for being "an apologist for thugs and dictators," references to the former president's praise for Russia's Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un.

The top challenger, DeSantis, is planning a series of policy speeches designed to highlight differences with Trump on issues such as law enforcement and the economy. Last week, DeSantis challenged Trump's record on border security.

Christie, the former governor of New Jersey, is focusing his campaign on New Hampshire, the site of the first Republican primary. He is also the biggest GOP critic of Trump's legal problems, particularly his indictment over his handling of classified information.

## 1AR – Link Thumpers

#### It’s not nearly the most important issue – they will forget

Vakil 23 [Caroline Vakil is a staff writer at the Hill, “Seven issues that will define the 2024 election”, 02/12/23, The Hill, <https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/3853380-seven-issues-that-will-define-the-2024-election/>] TDI

A handful of issues are emerging as possible flashpoints in the 2024 election as Republicans and Democrats look to finetune their messaging ahead of a consequential presidential election.

President Biden sparred with conservatives over Social Security and Medicare during his annual State of the Union address, engaging in a spirited back and forth with Republicans over the issue. And if Democrats’ messaging on key 2023 races like the Wisconsin Supreme Court are any indication, the party is also likely to lean on the issue of abortion as well.

Meanwhile, prospective Republican presidential hopefuls are already wading into issues like immigration, education and culture wars, particularly those targeting the LGBTQ community.

Here’s a look at seven issues that will define the 2024 election:

Social Security and Medicare

Biden speaks about his administration’s plans to protect Social Security and Medicare and lower healthcare costs, Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023, at the University of Tampa in Tampa, Fla. (AP Photo/Patrick Semansky)

Biden enjoyed the limelight during this week’s State of the Union address, particularly after he called out Republicans over previous proposals to sunset or reform eligibility requirements for Social Security and Medicare programs. In the backdrop of Biden’s speech is the ongoing fight over the nation’s debt limit and Republicans’ insistence on spending cuts.

“Some Republicans want Social Security and Medicare to sunset,” Biden said, before he was interrupted by jeers, including from Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) who called him a “liar.”

One of the Republicans that Biden was alluding to was Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.), who released a multi-point plan last year proposing that “all federal legislation sunsets in 5 years” and that “if a law is worth keeping, Congress can pass it again” — legislation that would impact both programs.

Scott defended his position in a statement following Biden’s address, saying “this is clearly and obviously an idea aimed at dealing with all the crazy new laws our Congress has been passing of late” and suggested that “to suggest that this means I want to cut Social Security or Medicare is a lie, & is a dishonest move.”

The president ran with that messaging during a visit on Wednesday to the battleground state of Wisconsin, where he spoke to residents about the merits of his economic plan.

“A lot of Republicans, their dream is to cut Social Security and Medicare,” Biden said in the Badger State. “Well, let me just say this. It’s your dream, but I’m going to — with my veto pen — make it a nightmare.”

Education

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis listens to others during a news conference where he spoke of new law enforcement legislation that will be introduced during the upcoming session, Jan. 26, 2023, in Miami. (AP Photo/Marta Lavandier, File)

Prospective 2024 Republican hopefuls are also addressing the issue of education, including targeting educational curriculum and parents’ rights to decisions made by schools.

That was most recently on display last month when Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis’s (R) administration rejected an Advanced Placement course on African American studies. The Florida Department of Education argued that “the content of this course is inexplicably contrary to Florida law and significantly lacks educational value,” and the College Board later revised some of the material included in the course.

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R), who has been floated as a possible 2024 presidential contender, made the issue of education a key component of his platform, including rallying against critical race theory (CRT) and for deeper parental engagement in school curriculum. Critical race theory, which DeSantis and other conservatives have also attacked, is an academic framework taught at the graduate level that argues that racism is systemic in U.S. institutions and government. It has become a catch-all buzzword for any teaching about race in schools, however.

During the midterms, other Republican candidates like Nevada Gov. Joe Lombardo (R) also sought to home in on the issue of education, suggesting members of the party see that as a key winning issue.

Abortion

Supporters for and against abortion argue during the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., on Friday, January 20, 2023. This is the first march since the Supreme Court overturned Roe vs. Wade. (Annabelle Gordon)

Democrats widely credit the issue of abortion as a major reason they performed better than expected during November’s midterm elections, gaining a real majority in the Senate and losing the House by a narrow margin.

Even in key races this year, Democrats are seeking to put the issue of abortion front and center once again, including in the race for the open seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which could determine the high court’s partisan tilt.

The state Supreme Court is likely to hear about Wisconsin’s contested 1849 abortion law, which offers no exceptions for patients except when the life of the mother is at risk. Prominent groups on both sides of the issue have said they’ll be funneling money and resources into the race.

Foreign Policy

A high altitude balloon floats over Billings, Mont., on Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2023. (Larry Mayer/The Billings Gazette via AP)

Revelations that a Chinese spy balloon was flying over multiple states across the U.S., which press secretary Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder told reporters this week was “part of a larger Chinese surveillance balloon program […] that’s been operated for several years,” drew angry remarks from Democrats and Republicans alike about the country’s delayed response to shoot it down.

Some Republicans in particular, such as Greene, latched onto the issue. Ahead of the State of the Union, she walked around the halls of Congress with a white balloon meant to reference the Chinese spy balloon. She told The Hill this week following a classified briefing for House members that she “tore” Biden administration officials “to pieces.”

The U.S. confirmed on Friday a separate object flying over Alaskan airspace was shot down by the military.

Expect Ukraine to be another flashpoint among foreign policy issues discussed. Some Republicans have expressed reservations in past months over how much more security assistance the U.S. should provide to the former Soviet Union nation amid the Russian invasion.

Immigration

Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), Chairman of the Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government, is seen during its’ first hearing on Thursday, February 9, 2023 to discuss politicization of the federal government and attacks on civil liberties. (Greg Nash)

Although immigration and the southern border are not necessarily new issues Republicans have pursued on the campaign trail, it doesn’t mean the issue won’t feature prominently in different campaigns and on the debate stage.

The first hearing that the House Judiciary Committee, which is chaired by Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), launched this year was titled “The Biden Border Crisis — Part One.” The hearing came as the U.S. reported over 250,000 encounters on the southern border in December, per data from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection — the highest number of encounters at the southern border that the Biden administration has contended with since the president took office.

Title 42, a policy first introduced in 2020 by the Trump administration and continued under the Biden administration, has also dogged Biden officials. The policy allows border officials to quickly expel migrants seeking asylum. While the Biden administration sought to lift the policy last year, they have also at times expanded its use.

LGBTQ-related issues

With the U.S. Capitol in the background, a person waves a rainbow flag as they participant in a rally in support of the LGBTQIA+ community at Freedom Plaza, Saturday, June 12, 2021, in Washington. (AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana, File)

Republicans also have not been shy in using legislation to target gender-affirming care, transgender girls and women competing in high school and college sports, and the classification of drag shows.

Florida made headlines last March when DeSantis signed what opponents have dubbed as “Don’t Say Gay” legislation into law, which bars gender identity and sexual orientation topics in classroom instruction by primary school teachers. Subjects that aren’t “age appropriate or developmentally appropriate” cannot be taught by educators regardless of grade level.

And South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem (R), another widely floated 2024 GOP contender, is likely to sign into law legislation that would bar health providers from offering transgender youth gender-affirming care.

Crime

(Getty Images)

Jill Biden heads to France to mark US rejoining UNESCO, honor WWII troopsRFK Jr. says media criticizes him more than Trump

The issue of crime may also not be new, but it’s one that some Republicans believed worked well during the November midterms — arguing that other issues like abortion and the economy sidetracked crime from delivering as well as hoped. Others say that it helped key races stay competitive.

“To be honest with you, yes, Dr. [Mehmet] Oz lost that race in Pennsylvania, but where he started at and where he ended [was] a much closer race than it was over the summer. That was purely because of crime,” one GOP official told The Hill in December.

The issue of crime was credited for helping several New York Republicans notch key House districts, helping deliver the GOP’s House majority.

## 1AR – Link Turn

### General

#### Americans Believe US should pay less attention to overseas affairs

**POUSHTER 23’** [Jacob Poushter, Jacob Poushter is an associate director at Pew Research Center. He is an expert in international survey research and writes about international public opinion on a variety of topics. Poushter received a master’s degree in international affairs from American University and a bachelor’s degree in history from Williams College. He is also an author of studies on global attitudes of cultural change, views of the American-German relationship, and contrasting opinions among elites and the American public. “Americans Hold Positive Feelings Toward NATO and Ukraine, See Russia as an Enemy” https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2023/05/10/americans-hold-positive-feelings-toward-nato-and-ukraine-see-russia-as-an-enemy/#:~:text=A%20majority%20(55%25)%20of,percentage%20points%20from%20May%202022.]/LL

Growing share of Republicans say U.S. should pay less attention to problems overseas and focus on concerns at home In the midst of a major international conflict in Ukraine and an expansion of NATO in Europe, Americans have distinct opinions on the key players in the war. Majorities of U.S. adults have favorable views of Ukraine itself, as well as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and have confidence in Ukraine’s leader, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. At the same time, few have positive opinions of Russia or confidence in its ruler, President Vladimir Putin. And a 64% majority view Russia as an enemy to the United States, rather than as a competitor or partner. A chart showing Americans see NATO and Ukraine positively, but view Russia negatively and see it as an enemy of the U.S. Americans express mixed confidence in two of NATO’s most important leaders: French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. In fact, 35% of Americans have never heard of Scholz, with 24% saying the same about Macron. Over the past few years, there have also been shifts in how Americans view their place in the world. A majority (55%) says that the U.S. should pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on problems at home, compared with 43% who say it’s best for the future of the country to be active in world affairs. This represents a shift in opinion since 2021, before Russia invaded Ukraine, when 50% of Americans wanted to focus on domestic troubles and 49% wanted to be active in world affairs. A chart showing Americans, and especially Republicans, increasingly say the U.S. should focus on issues at home, while Democrats say it’s best for U.S. to be active in world affairs Similarly, 39% of Americans say that the country should follow its own interests, even if allies disagree, while 59% say the U.S. should consider the interests of other countries, even if it means making compromises. In March 2020, 32% said the U.S. should go it alone, while 66% said the U.S. should work more with other countries. All of the current data was collected before the leak of classified intelligence information on Discord and its subsequent diplomatic fallout. As is typical of American public opinion, there are partisan divides on many of the international issues surveyed. Democrats and independents who lean toward the Democratic Party are on balance more favorable toward Ukraine, NATO and key European leaders. Republicans and independents who lean toward the Republican Party are more likely to want to pay attention to domestic issues, rather than be active in foreign affairs, and are more inclined to say the U.S. should follow its own interests. There are also slight partisan differences on attitudes toward Putin, with Republicans marginally less negative than Democrats toward Russia’s leader. And Republicans are almost equally divided in their views toward NATO, Ukraine and Zelenskyy (also spelled Zelensky). These are among the findings of a Pew Research Center survey conducted on the Center’s nationally representative American Trends Panel, among 3,576 adults from March 20 to 26, 2023. Other key findings include: Democrats, those with more education and people who say the U.S. should consider the interests of other countries all give more support to the NATO alliance. About half (49%) of Republicans have a positive view of NATO, down from 55% in the weeks following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Support for Ukraine follows a similar pattern, with older Americans, Democrats (especially liberal Democrats) and those who think that it’s best for the U.S. to be active in world affairs having more positive views of the country. Attitudes toward Russia remain very negative. Majorities of Americans have very unfavorable opinions of Russia (62%), say Russia is an enemy (64%) and have no confidence at all in Putin (71%). Zelenskyy gets higher praise from older Americans, those with more education and Democrats. And about nine-in-ten Americans have heard of the Ukrainian leader. Those that say the U.S. should be active in world affairs are more positively inclined toward Macron, Scholz and Zelenskyy. The share of Republicans saying the U.S. should focus on problems at home rather than paying attention to issues overseas has increased 6 percentage points since last year (71% now, 65% then). And the share saying this is now 17 points higher than it was in September 2019, during the Trump administration. Democrats are 8 percentage points more likely since 2020 to say the U.S. should follow its own interests in international affairs, even if allies disagree. Americans positive on NATO; partisan differences endure A chart showing Democrats and adults with more education more favorable toward NATO Most Americans have a favorable view of NATO: 62% express a positive opinion, while 35% have a negative opinion of the organization. NATO, which recently welcomed Finland as a member, is consistently viewed in a favorable light by Americans. In 2022, shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, 67% held a favorable view of NATO, the highest percentage measured since Pew Research Center transitioned to online surveys in the U.S. Since last year, positive opinions of NATO have faded slightly, with favorable views dropping 5 percentage points. U.S. adults with a bachelor’s or postgraduate degree are more likely than those with some college or less education to have positive views of NATO. For example, three-quarters of Americans with a postgraduate degree express a favorable view of NATO, compared with 56% of those with a high school education or less. Willingness to work with other countries is also associated with assessments of the alliance. Those who say the U.S. should take other countries’ interests into account are more likely to express favorability in NATO (73%) than those who believe the U.S. should follow its own interests (47%). Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents are consistently more likely than Republicans and GOP leaners to hold a positive opinion of NATO. About three-quarters of Democrats (76%) have a favorable view of NATO, in contrast to 49% of Republicans. Among Republicans, moderates and liberals are more likely to have a favorable opinion of the alliance than conservatives. And liberal Democrats are more positive toward NATO than conservative and moderate supporters of the party. A chart showing Fewer Republicans now have positive views of NATO than immediately after the Russian invasion of Ukraine The partisan divide on the issue of NATO is well established in past research. In 2022, Republicans grew more favorable toward NATO in the wake of Russia’s invasion. However, since then, Republicans have become less positive, with favorable ratings of the alliance declining 6 points. Democratic views of NATO have remained relatively steady since 2021. About two-thirds in the U.S. have a positive view of Ukraine amid ongoing war A chart showing Democrats more positive on Ukraine than Republicans Most Americans have a favorable opinion of Ukraine. About two-thirds (64%) have a positive view of the country, while 34% have a negative view. About seven-in-ten Americans ages 65 and older express a favorable view of Ukraine – more than any other age group. Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents are much more likely than their Republican counterparts to have a positive view of Ukraine, and ratings are especially positive among liberal Democrats. Views of international engagement also correlate with attitudes of Ukraine. Those who believe it is best for the future of the U.S. to be active in world affairs are much more likely to have a positive view of Ukraine than those who say it is best for the U.S. to pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on issues at home. Americans continue to view Russia unfavorably A chart showing Older Americans more unfavorable on Russia than younger Americans As Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine enters its second year, Americans remain very negative toward Russia: 91% have an unfavorable view of the country, including 62% who say their views are very unfavorable. Just 7% in the U.S. have a favorable view of Russia. This is a similar level of negativity compared with last year’s survey, when 92% of Americans were negative toward Russia. Prior to the 2020 transition to an online survey in the U.S., Pew Research Center measured views of Russia over the phone dating back to 2007. U.S. views of the country between 2007 and 2014 were mixed, but grew much more unfavorable after Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea. Older adults (those ages 65 and older) are more likely to have avery unfavorable view of Russia than any other age group and are 28 percentage points more likely to have a deeply negative opinion of Russia than adults ages 18 to 29. Americans with more education, such as a postgraduate degree or a bachelor’s degree, are more likely to have a very negative view of Russia than those with some college or a high school education or less. In general, Republicans and Democrats are aligned on negative views of Russia. But Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents are 5 points more likely than Republicans and Republican leaners to say they are very unfavorable toward Russia, and this view is especially common among liberal Democrats. A chart showing Small decline in negative sentiment toward Russia among partisans Both Democrats and Republicans have also grown somewhat less negative on Russia over the past year, even after negative views of Russia increased markedly between 2020 and 2022. Two-thirds of Republicans and 72% of Democrats had very unfavorable views of Russia in 2022. This year, deeply unfavorable sentiment declined 6 points among each partisan group – a statistically significant drop. Other Pew Research Center surveys have found that Republicans especially are less likely to see the war between Russia and Ukraine as a major threat to U.S. interests than they were in the early months of the conflict, and an increasing share says the U.S. provides too much support to Ukraine. Majority of Americans continue to view Russia as an enemy rather than competitor A chart showing Nearly two-thirds of Americans see Russia as an enemy Over six-in-ten Americans view Russia as an enemy of the U.S. (64%), as opposed to a competitor (30%) or a partner (3%). The number of Americans who view Russia as an enemy is down slightly from last year (70%), after increasing dramatically following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This drop contrasts with views of China: The share of Americans who see China as an enemy has increased over the past year. Majorities among both Republicans and Democrats view Russia as an enemy of the U.S., though these shares have also decreased slightly since last year. Liberal Democrats are the most likely to consider Russia an enemy, with nearly three-quarters (73%) expressing this view. Meanwhile, nearly four-in-ten moderate and liberal Republicans (38%) view Russia as a competitor. Older Americans are more likely to view Russia as an enemy of the U.S., with 76% of those ages 65 and older saying this, compared with 54% of adults under age 30 who say the same. Americans with at least a bachelor’s degree (72%) are also more likely to consider Russia an enemy than those without a college degree (61%). Views also vary by beliefs regarding the United States’ role in global affairs. Those who believe that the U.S. should be active in world affairs are significantly more likely to view Russia as an enemy than those who believe that the U.S. should concentrate on domestic issues (74% vs. 57%, respectively). Americans show much greater support for Zelenskyy than Putin, are less familiar with Macron and Scholz A chart showing Roughly seven-in-ten Americans express no confidence in Putin, but a majority have confidence in Zelenskyy; mixed reviews of other European leaders A majority of Americans say they have confidence in Zelenskyy to do the right thing regarding world affairs. However, opinions vary across demographic groups: Those with a college degree or higher are more confident in Zelenskyy than those without a college degree, and older Americans tend hold more confidence than younger Americans. Democrats are much more likely to have confidence in Zelenskyy than Republicans: 71% of Democrats have confidence in the Ukrainian president, compared with 44% of Republicans. Liberal Democrats are the most likely partisans to have at least some confidence in Zelenskyy. Even so, moderate and conservative Democrats are still more likely than both moderate and liberal Republicans and conservative Republicans to say the same. Conservative Republicans are also the most likely to explicitly say they have no confidence in Zelenskyy at all, with just under three-in-ten (27%) holding this view. A chart showing Americans who prioritize global engagement are much more likely to express confidence in Zelenskyy Americans who say it is better for the U.S. to be active in world affairs tend to express greater confidence in Zelenskyy, Macron and Scholz. In stark contrast to views of the other three leaders, nine-in-ten Americans say they do not have confidence in Putin to do the right thing regarding world affairs, with 71% of those expressing no confidence at all. Americans’ negative assessments of Putin are relatively consistent across genders, age groups and levels of education. Despite the growing partisan divide regarding U.S. support for Ukraine, Democrats and Republicans hold similarly low shares of confidence in Putin (92% vs. 89%). Within parties, Americans are also relatively united in these assessments: Across all ideological stripes of both Republicans and Democrats, nearly seven-in-ten or more express no confidence at all in Putin. Around four-in-ten Americans (37%) have at least some confidence in Macron, while the same share says they do not. Just over half of Democrats express confidence in Macron, while about a quarter of Republicans say the same. Conservative Republicans are the least likely to express confidence. Americans are about as confident in Scholz as they are in Macron. Democrats are nearly 17 percentage points more likely to express at least some confidence in Scholz than Republicans (44% vs. 27%). Liberal Democrats are the most likely to have confidence in Scholz, while conservative Republicans are the least likely. Overall, those who are more likely to say the U.S. should be active in global affairs are more likely to hold a positive opinion of the two European leaders. Macron is more recognized by the American public than Scholz. Yet, around a quarter or more say they have never heard of either leader, with 35% saying this about Scholz – the highest share unfamiliar across the four leaders in this analysis. A majority of Americans ages 18 to 29 say they have never heard of the German leader and around four-in-ten women and those without a college degree say the same. Women are also twice as likely to say they have never heard of Macron than men. A majority of Americans say the U.S. should pay less attention to problems overseas and focus more on domestic concerns, but Republicans and Democrats differ A chart showing Republicans overwhelmingly say the U.S. should focus on domestic issues, while Democrats think it is best for U.S. to be active in world affairs A majority (55%) of Americans believe that the U.S. should pay less attention to problems overseas and instead concentrate on problems at home – up 4 percentage points from May 2022. This increase reflects a rise in the share of those who believe the U.S. should take a more isolationist approach to dealing with major international issues over the past several years. There has long been a wide partisan divide on this question, with Republicans being much more likely to express a domestically focused view. Roughly seven-in-ten Republicans now say that the U.S. should pay less attention to issues abroad and instead concentrate on problems at home, 32 points higher than the share of Democrats who say the same. Among Democrats, liberal Democrats are less likely than their conservative or moderate counterparts to take a more isolationist stance. While the share of Democrats who say that the U.S. should concentrate on problems at home is unchanged since last year, the share of Republicans who say this has increased by 6 points. The share of Republicans who say the U.S. should concentrate on problems at home has increased by 17 points since September 2019, the last time the question was asked during the Trump administration. Younger Americans are also more likely to say that the U.S. should focus domestically rather than globally, with about six-in-ten saying this, compared with roughly four-in-ten Americans ages 65 and older who agree. A similar share (63%) of those with a high school education or less also express that the U.S. should focus on issues at home rather than global affairs, a difference of 22 percentage points from the Americans with a postgraduate education who say the same. Views also vary by race and ethnicity. While majorities among Black and Hispanic Americans (60% each) believe that the U.S. should focus its attention on domestic issues, only about half of White and English-speaking Asian Americans agree. Americans who negatively rate the economic situation and indicate dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in the U.S. are more likely to believe the country should concentrate on issues at home. Americans with lower incomes are also more likely than their middle- or upper-income counterparts to say that the U.S. should focus on domestic issues. Most Americans think the U.S. should consider the interests of other countries when dealing with major international issues A chart showing Democrats and younger Americans more likely to say the U.S. should prioritize compromise with other countries A majority of Americans say the U.S. should take into account the interests of other countries even if it means making compromises with them when dealing with major international issues, as opposed to following its own interests even when other countries disagree. The share saying the U.S. should account for other countries’ interests has decreased 7 percentage points since March 2020, while those saying the U.S. should follow its own interests is up 7 points. Americans under age 30 are more likely to say the U.S. should take into account the interests of other countries, with nearly seven-in-ten saying this, in comparison with the 53% of those ages 65 and older who hold this view. Democrats (76%) are also more likely to hold this view than their Republican counterparts (43%). Liberal Democrats are especially likely to say that the U.S. should prioritize compromise with other countries, with over eight-in-ten saying this. In comparison, only 36% of conservative Republicans agree. Among those who positively rate the economic situation and feel satisfied with the way democracy is working in the U.S., around seven-in-ten believe the U.S. should prioritize compromise with other countries when dealing with international issues. Among Americans who say the economy is not doing well and are dissatisfied with the state of democracy, only 55% say the U.S. should consider other nations’ interests.

### Persian Gulf

#### Voters support a decrease in military commitments abroad and instead support economic involvement

**Kamarck and Muchnick ’23** (Elaine Kamarck, Jordan Muchnick Feburary 23, 2023 - Elaine C. Kamarck is a Senior Fellow in the Governance Studies program as well as the Director of the Center for Effective Public Management at the Brookings Institution. She is an expert on American electoral politics and government innovation and reform in the United States, OECD nations, and developing countries. Kamarck is also a Lecturer in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Kamarck conducts research on 21st century government, the role of the Internet in political campaigns, homeland defense, intelligence reorganization, and governmental reform and innovation. Jordan Muchnick is a Research Assistant in the Center for Effective Public Management and the Managing Editor of the FixGov blog. “One year into the Ukraine war — What does the public think about American involvement in the world?” https://www.brookings.edu/articles/one-year-into-the-ukraine-war-what-does-the-public-think-about-american-involvement-in-the-world/)

Unlike many of the other countries in the world, the United States is lucky to be surrounded by two vast oceans and two friendly neighbors. Thus, a sizeable portion of the American public has always had isolationist tendencies. We stayed out of the Second World War for over two years despite images of Nazi control over much of Europe and Japanese conquests in China. Only when the country was attacked on December 7, 1941, did the U.S. finally enter the conflict. Since then, we’ve fought in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan and innumerable undeclared military interventions on the theory that the U.S. must intervene abroad to prevent threats at home. And each one of these conflicts re-awakened isolationist tendencies that had lain dormant since our victory in World War II — sometimes referred to as the last “good war.” In recent decades, America’s two major political parties have shifted their stances. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, and indeed through the George W. Bush presidency, it was the Republicans who typically favored foreign intervention. But under Donald Trump’s leadership, the Republican Party experienced a definitive shift in their foreign policy objectives. In his first UN address, Trump announced to the world, “The United States … can no longer be taken advantage of or enter into a one-sided deal where the United States gets nothing in return. As long as I hold this office, I will defend America’s interests above all else.” Trump has had a big impact on Republican voters Clearly Trump has changed the Republican mindset on foreign policy. According to a 2017 Pew report, Republicans supporting less global involvement increased from 40% to 54% from 2004 to 2017. Interestingly, among Democrats, the number who wanted the United States to be active increased from 37% to 56%. In these highly polarized times, Trump’s position on global involvement probably caused Democratic voters to take the opposite position. But in 2020, Trump lost, Biden became president and recommitted to the U.S.’s allies. Then Russia invaded Ukraine. Since then, the U.S. has supplied the Ukrainians and NATO has been strengthened. So how do Americans feel about this? One year into the conflict where are Americans when it comes to the big questions of intervention in the world? A plurality of Americans favor isolationism Tracking American views on foreign policy is difficult since these issues tend to be of low salience to most voters. For instance, when Gallup asks voters the open-ended question: “What do you think is the most important problem facing the country today?”, practically no one mentions a foreign policy or national security question. In addition to the low saliency of foreign policy issues, terms like isolationism, multilateralism, etc. are probably unfamiliar to many Americans. Thus, polling on these issues is subject to the production of “non-attitudes” — where voters pick a position in order to sound informed but without having any firm convictions about it. In an attempt to get around these problems, the polling group Morning Consult has created an index composed of questions about soft power and foreign aid, overseas military engagement and trade and investment. They then use questions about these topics to construct an index that measures attitudes towards international isolationism and engagement. According to Morning Consult’s U.S. Foreign Policy Tracker Index from January of 2023, nearly 40% of voters favor isolationism, while 30% want stability, and 17% want engagement. Among Democrats, 33% favor isolationism, 33% want stability, and 20% want engagement. Among Republicans, 45% favor isolationism, 28% want stability, and 15% want engagement. While these findings do indicate a divide between the parties on the issue, in both cases isolationism was the top answer or tied for the top answer. Neither side wants to be the world’s police. Large numbers oppose a unilateral approach On the question of multilateralism or stability versus unilateralism in U.S. foreign policy, almost 70% favor multilateralism or stability. Very few, only 17% want a unilateral approach. Apparently, Republicans’ support for multilateral dispute resolution has stabilized. Only 22% favor a unilateral approach. It’s clear Americans don’t feel they are ready to go at it fully alone. They still value the countries allies. Americans want to remain involved in international organizations Thirty-four percent of voters favor increasing involvement in international organizations like the United Nations. Thirty-three percent favor neither an increase nor decrease, and 21% want to decrease involvement. These findings seem to indicate that isolationism is not a coherently held view. Many want the U.S. to be isolationist, but they don’t want to be isolated from their allies or international organizations. Americans are reluctant to increase the deployment of American troops overseas Only 16% of voters favor increasing U.S. troop deployments overseas, as opposed to 32% who want neither an increase or a decrease, and 40% who want to decrease deployments. It is possible that those who want neither an increase nor a decrease are examples of a “non-attitude” as opposed to support for the status quo. With the withdrawal from Afghanistan still in the minds of many, it is unsurprising that Americans are currently reluctant to place American service men and women in harm’s way. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is not a top concern of American voters When voters were asked to name the top five most important foreign policy issues facing the United States, terrorism was first with 49% mentioning the issue, immigration second with 45%, cyberattacks with 41%, drug trafficking at 41%, and climate change at 39%. It is noteworthy that these issues may be international, but they have strong implications for domestic policy as well. U.S./China relations was mentioned 27% of the time, and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine was mentioned 24% of the time. Upholding democracy globally was mentioned only 14% of the time. Americans appear to be more concerned about potential issues at home, versus wide ranging geopolitical events with not yet clear ramifications. Americans still support aiding Ukraine When it comes to Ukraine, according to Gallup, one year into the war, 39% of Americans say the U.S. is doing the right amount to aid Ukraine, 30% say not enough, and 28% say the U.S. is doing too much. Additionally, nearly three-quarters of Americans support continuing economic (71%) and military (72%) aid to Ukraine, and 58% are willing to continue to support the country “as long as it takes,” even if U.S. households will have to pay higher prices for gas and food. Europe and the NATO alliance are seen as increasingly important According to a 2022 poll of American public opinion on U.S. foreign policy by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 81% of Americans say the United States should maintain or increase its commitment to NATO, “the highest level of support recorded since Chicago Council Surveys began in 1974.” They also found Americans’ support for U.S. military bases in Europe to be their highest levels in nearly 50 years of polling by the Council. The Chicago Council notes that this represents a notable shift from past surveys when their security concerns focused squarely on the Middle East. Further polling found Americans across the political spectrum agree Europe is now the most important region for U.S. security (50%), up from 15% two years ago. Americans prefer to wage economic warfare Forty-eight percent of Republicans favor increasing tariffs, versus 34% of Democrats. So much for the party of free trade. This is clearly a reaction to the economic rise of China. Gallup polling indicates that as of 2022, nearly 80% of Americans have an unfavorable view of China, a drastic increase from 2018 when it was 45%. U.S. hegemony derives much of its power from the country’s economic dominance. The rise of China as an economic competitor and possible adversary has convinced many that steps are needed to counter the threat. But do Americans feel this means we must now prepare for war with China the way the country was for so long with the Soviet Union? When Gallup asked whether the U.S. was spending too little, the right amount, or too much on national defense and military in 1981, 51% of respondents answered too little, 22% about right, and only 15% too much. In 2022, 32% said too little, 34% about right, and 31% too much. This seems to indicate Americans may be more willing to use economic competition to achieve their goals rather than military force. Conclusion Foreign policy has never been a front and center issue for the American public unless the country was involved in a major war. Thus, it is not surprising that American attitudes on foreign policy are hard to pin down. In some instances, pollsters may simply be measuring non-attitudes. In other scenarios, Americans may have a complex set of opinions; favoring, for instance, a general isolationist approach but valuing at the same time our alliances and our participation in international organizations or favoring our position in Ukraine but preferring economic warfare to troop deployments. This poses a challenge for policy makers but also illustrates the importance of clear leadership and messaging when it comes to foreign policy.

#### Post 9/11 lack of support for Iraq troops proves

Doherty & Kiley 23 – [Carroll Doherty, Jocelyn Kiley. Carroll Doherty is director of political research at Pew Research Center. He plays a leading role in developing the Center’s research agenda and overseeing editorial content about long-term trends in political values, U.S. views on policy issues and priorities, and political knowledge and news interest. Doherty regularly provides analysis of public opinion and politics for domestic and international news outlets, including NPR, CNBC and the BBC. Jocelyn Kiley is associate director of research at Pew Research Center, where she primarily works on U.S. public opinion about politics. She is involved in all stages of the research process at the Center, and is a principal investigator on the Center’s work on political polarization in the American public, as well as its regular election polling. “A Look Back at How Fear and False Beliefs Bolstered U.S. Public Support for War in Iraq”. March 14, 2023] TDI

Twenty years ago this month, the United States launched a major military invasion of Iraq, marking the second time it fought a war in that country in a little more than a decade. It was the start of an eight-year conflict that resulted in the deaths of more than 4,000 U.S. servicemembers and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. The war began March 19, 2003, with an overwhelming show of American military might, described by the unforgettable phrase “shock and awe.” Within weeks, the United States achieved the primary objective of Operation Iraqi Freedom, as the military operation was called, ousting the regime of dictator Saddam Hussein. Yet the military campaign that began so auspiciously ended up deeply dividing Americans and alienating key U.S. allies. As Americans looked back on the war four years ago, 62% said it was not worth fighting. Majorities of military veterans, including those who served in Iraq or Afghanistan, came to the same conclusion. The bleak retrospective judgments on the war obscure the breadth of public support for U.S. military action at the start of the conflict and, perhaps more importantly, in the months leading up to it. Throughout 2002 and early 2003, President George W. Bush and his administration marshaled wide backing for the use of military force in Iraq among both the public and Congress. The administration’s success in these efforts was the result of several factors, not least of which was the climate of public opinion at the time. Still reeling from the horrors of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Americans were extraordinarily accepting of the possible use of military force as part of what Bush called the “global war on terror.” By early 2002, with U.S. troops already fighting in Afghanistan, large majorities of Americans favored the use of military force in Iraq to oust Hussein from power and to destroy terrorist groups in Somalia and Sudan. These attitudes represented “a strong endorsement of the prospective use of force compared with other military missions in the post-Cold War era,” Pew Research Center noted at the time. Bush and senior members of his administration then spent more than a year outlining the dangers that they claimed Iraq posed to the United States and its allies. Two of the administration’s arguments proved especially powerful, given the public’s mood: first, that Hussein’s regime possessed “weapons of mass destruction” (WMD), a shorthand for nuclear, biological or chemical weapons; and second, that it supported terrorism and had close ties to terrorist groups, including al-Qaida, which had attacked the U.S. on 9/11. As numerous investigations by independent and governmental commissions subsequently found, there was no factual basis for either of these assertions. Two decades later, debate continues about whether the administration was the victim of flawed intelligence, or whether Bush and his senior advisers deliberately misled the public about its WMD capabilities, in particular.In the months leading up to the war, sizable majorities of Americans believed that Iraq either possessed WMD or was close to obtaining them, that Iraq was closely tied to terrorism – and even that Hussein himself had a role in the 9/11 attacks. Two decades after the war began, a review of Pew Research Center surveys on the war in Iraq shows that support for U.S. military action was built, at least in part, on a foundation of falsehoods.

After the war began, administration officials were confident that the United States would quickly prevail. For a time, it appeared they would be right: U.S. and allied forces easily overwhelmed the Iraqi army.By April 9, U.S. forces and Iraqi civilians brought down a statue of Saddam Hussein in a Baghdad square. And on May 1, Bush stood on the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln – in front of a banner proclaiming “Mission Accomplished” – and declared that major combat operations had ended. Yet the war continued for another eight years. Public support for the use of U.S. military force in Iraq, which rose to 74% during the month that Bush gave what became known as his “Mission Accomplished” speech, never again reached that level. As U.S. forces faced a mounting Iraqi insurgency, a growing share of Americans – especially Democrats – expressed doubts about the war. The share of Americans saying the U.S. military effort in Iraq was going well, which surpassed 90% in the war’s early weeks, fell to about 60% in late summer 2003.

As Iraq War continued, fewer Americans endorsed the initial decision to use force. There had been partisan differences in attitudes related to Iraq since Bush began raising the prospect of war in 2002. But as the war continued, these differences intensified: In October 2003, a 56% majority of Democrats said that U.S. forces should be brought home from Iraq as soon as possible, a 12-point increase from just a month earlier. By contrast, fewer than half of independents (40%) and just 20% of Republicans favored withdrawing U.S. troops. Support for U.S. military action declined further the next year as two incidents brought the horrors of war home to Americans. In March 2004, four American private security contractors were killed and their bodies desecrated in a spate of anti-American violence. Then, the first pictures emerged of abuse of prisoners by U.S. troops at Abu Ghraib, an Iraqi prison. In a survey that May, the share of Americans who said the use of military force was going at least “fairly well” fell below 50% for the first time.

Bush’s reelection as president in November underscored the extent to which the war in Iraq had divided the nation. Among the narrow majority of voters (51%) who then approved of the decision to go to war, 85% voted for Bush; among the smaller share (45%) who disapproved, 87% voted for his Democratic opponent, John Kerry, according to national exit polls. Public support for the war declined further during Bush’s second term. By January 2007, with the situation on the ground deteriorating, Bush defied growing calls from Democrats to withdraw U.S. forces from Iraq and instead announced that he was sending more troops to the country. What Bush called “a new way forward” in Iraq – which became more widely known as the troop surge, or surge – was a risky gambit to alter the trajectory of the war.

The new strategy, in which more than 20,000 additional U.S. forces were deployed to Iraq, was broadly unpopular with a public that had grown weary of war. By roughly two-to-one (61% to 31%), Americans opposed Bush’s plan to send additional forces to Iraq. Bush’s new strategy “triggered increased partisan polarization on the debate over what to do in Iraq,” the Center noted in its report on the January 2007 survey. Still, while the overall impact of the surge on Iraq was intensely debated, it was widely credited with helping to reduce the level of violence in the country, both among U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians. While Americans acknowledged the improvement in the situation in Iraq, they remained deeply skeptical of the decision to go to war. In November 2007, nearly half of Americans (48%) said the war was going very or fairly well, an 18 percentage point increase from February of that year. Yet support for withdrawing U.S. forces from Iraq was undiminished; by 54% to 41%, more Americans favored bringing troops home from Iraq as soon as possible rather than keeping troops there until the situation had stabilized. Those attitudes were virtually unchanged from earlier in 2007.With the 2008 presidential campaign approaching – and roughly 100,000 U.S. troops still in Iraq – it seemed likely that the war would again be a major issue. During the Democratic primaries, Barack Obama repeatedly contrasted his early opposition to the war with Hillary Clinton’s 2002 Senate vote in support of the war authorization. However, after Obama defeated Clinton for the Democratic nomination and faced John McCain in the general election, the Iraq War was increasingly overshadowed by turmoil in financial markets, which triggered a worldwide economic crisis. In national exit polls conducted after Obama’s victory over McCain, 63% of voters cited the economy as the most important issue facing the country; just 10% mentioned the war in Iraq. During the 2008 campaign, Obama vowed to end the war in Iraq, adding that the United States “would be as careful getting out of Iraq as we were careless getting in.” Three years later, the U.S. withdrew all but a handful of its troops; in a ceremony on Dec. 15, 2011, the United States lowered the flag of command that had flown over Baghdad. President Obama’s decision drew overwhelming public support. A month before the ceremony, 75% of Americans – including nearly half of Republicans – approved of his decision to withdraw all combat troops from Iraq.

#### Americans prefer economic and diplomatic methods instead of using the military.

Mohamed **Younis** 20**19**[Younis – Manages the direction of analysis and research featured on Gallup's digital news page. As editor in chief, Mohamed leads the direction of content on news.gallup.com. From presidential approval to global wellbeing, Gallup tracks and reports on the most pressing issues facing humankind.For over a decade, Mohamed has led some of Gallup's largest global and regional studies on social, political and economic issues. His research at Gallup has focused on geopolitics and the shifting global order, U.S. foreign policy, state stability, and relations between Muslim communities and Western societies. Mohamed provides briefings to world leaders and institutions on Gallup's research and provides expert insights to television, radio and print media worldwide][Do Americans Want War With Iran?]August 20th, 2019 gh el <https://news.gallup.com/poll/265640/americans-war-iran.aspx> ]

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- As tensions have escalated once again between Washington and Tehran, most Americans tell Gallup they want to see their country rely more on economic and diplomatic efforts to stop Iran's nuclear program, rather than take military action. There is broad consensus in these views among supporters of both major political parties. These data are from a survey conducted July 15-31, starting less than two weeks after the United Kingdom seized an Iranian tanker carrying Iranian fuel products allegedly headed to Syria in violation of EU sanctions against that country. Five days into polling, Iran delivered on its threats of retaliation and seized a British-flagged tanker, the Stena Impero, in the Strait of Hormuz.

Americans' opinions of how best to deal with Iran are similar to what they were in 2007, when the George W. Bush administration imposed sanctions targeting Iran's oil production. At that time, 18% favored taking military action against Iran and 73% preferred a reliance on economic and diplomatic sanctions.

Although most Americans choose nonmilitary efforts to shut down Iran's nuclear program as their first preference, Americans who support a diplomatic approach to Iran express less unity by party when asked what the United States should do if such measures fail to stop Iran's nuclear program.

Unlike responses to the initial question of what the U.S. should do, there is a notable partisan difference in the preferred action should nonmilitary efforts fail. Six in 10 Republicans would support military action against Iran in that scenario, whereas 68% of Democrats would remain opposed to it.

The 42% of those who favor military action if nonmilitary efforts fail translates to 35% of all U.S. adults. Combining that group with the 18% who favor military action outright means a slim majority of Americans, 53%, would support military action against Iran if diplomatic and economic efforts are unsuccessful.

Most Americans (65%), including most Democrats (85%), express some level of concern that the United States will be too quick to use military force to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. In contrast, the majority of Republicans say they are either not too concerned (35%) or not concerned at all (21%) about this possibility.

Americans' concern about being too quick to use military force is down from what Gallup measured in 2007, when 76% were concerned about this possibility.

At the same time that 65% of Americans are concerned about the U.S. taking too aggressive an approach with Iran, a similar percentage, 63%, say they are very or somewhat concerned about the U.S. not doing enough to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. This percentage is also lower than it was when Gallup last asked the question, in 2007 (73%).

While only 9% of Americans consider Iran to be the United States' greatest enemy, most consider Iran an enemy or unfriendly nation. When it comes to trying to stop Iran's nuclear program, more than three out of four Americans think the United States should rely mainly on economic and diplomatic efforts to get Iran to shut it down. If such efforts fail, Republicans are inclined to back military action, while Democrats would not. Overall, a total of 53% of Americans would support military action either as an initial response or as a response if nonmilitary efforts fail.

### Saudi Arabia

#### Saudi Arabia is deeply unpopular with US citizens

**Yglesias 20’** [Matthew Yglesias co-founded Vox.com with Ezra Klein and Melissa Bell back in the spring of 2014. He's currently a senior correspondent focused on politics and economic policy, and co-hosts The Weeds podcast twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays. Before launching Vox, he was the author of the Moneybag column for Slate and before that he wrote and blogged for Think Progress, The Atlantic, TPM, and The American Prospect. Yglesias is the author of two books, most recently "The Rent Is Too Damn High" about the policy origins of the middle class housing affordability crisis in America. “The US-Saudi alliance is deeply unpopular with the American people” https://www.vox.com/2020/1/6/21050019/saudi-arabia-poll-unpopular]/LL

Everything that happens in the US-Iran relationship is profoundly structured by America’s longtime alliance with Saudi Arabia, a major regional rival of Iran. That US-Saudi alliance has long been an unquestioned priority of the Washington foreign policy community, though in recent years elite support for Saudi Arabia has come under strain because of the humanitarian disaster in Yemen and the Saudis’ murder of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, whose children are American citizens. But even by the standards of American presidents, Donald Trump has clung unusually tightly to the Saudis while sharing nothing with the public about his financial relationship with the Saudi government. It’s also worth noting that while a strong alliance with Saudi Arabia has long been a mainstream position for American foreign policy elites, it’s very unpopular with the American public. And that, in turn, helps explain why hawkish discourse on Iran tends to be so dishonest. The case that US hostility to Iran is good for our key regional ally is strong, as is the case that efforts to create a US-Iran rapprochement are bad for Saudi Arabia. But for most Americans, the Saudi alliance is not a good reason for the United States to incur costs fighting Iran because the Saudi alliance itself is not good. Polls show Americans don’t like Saudi Arabia Gallup’s most recent poll, from February 2019, showed that just 4 percent of Americans have a “very favorable” view of Saudi Arabia and 25 percent with a “somewhat favorable” view. Those numbers are worse than Venezuela or Cuba. A YouGov poll taken in the fall of 2018 showed that more Americans see Saudi Arabia as an enemy than as an ally, and only a minority even see the country as friendly to us at all. A Business Insider poll conducted in September 2019 asked a more stark ally-or-not question and found that 22 percent of the public considers Saudi Arabia to be an ally. This is, obviously, not how the American government sees it. And it’s certainly not how the Trump administration, in particular, or Iran hawks in general see it. But in a democracy, it’s hard to tell people you are doing things for the sake of an alliance that the public doesn’t believe in. AD So it’s useful to make stuff up instead. A false portrait of Iran mobilizes the public While the public is skeptical of Saudi Arabia, that doesn’t mean they’re blasé about Iran. Back in June 2019, polls showed strong majority support for military action if that was necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. War with Iran shouldn’t be necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, because the Obama administration struck a diplomatic deal which prevented that from happening. The deal was, from the standpoint of nuclear weapons experts, a really great deal that did a really good job of addressing the potential of Iranian nuclear weapons capability. That’s something the Obama administration cared a lot about, and it’s something the American public also cared about. But the deal was not so good at helping the Saudis gain the upper hand vis-a-vis Iran in regional power competition. Since the deal helped the Iranian economy, it was arguably bad for helping the Saudis. And the Saudis certainly saw it that way. This is the main reason the deal was so controversial in American national security circles. And it’s why Trump scuttled the deal, initiating the current downward spiral of relations. The problem for hawks is you can’t say you’re scuttling a deal that accomplished something voters care about in order to bolster an alliance they don’t care about. So Trump likes to claim the Iranians were breaking the deal, which if it were true, would be a good reason for the US to pull out of the deal. But it isn’t true. On Friday, Vice President Mike Pence suggested on Twitter that the Iranian Quds Force had something to do with 9/11, which, again, would be a good reason to be hostile to Iran if it were true. But it isn’t true! And Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that assassinating Qassem Soleimani disrupted imminent threats to Americans and saved lives, which would be a pretty good reason if it were true. But subsequent reporting has made it clear that this isn’t true either.

#### Saudi humiliated Biden negotiating oil prices – American politicians are demanding action

**Bazzi ’22** (October 13th, 2022 - Mohamad Bazzi is director of the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies and a journalism professor at New York University. He is also a non-resident fellow at Democracy for the Arab World Now “Saudi Arabia has screwed over the US – and the world – yet again. Enough is enough” https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/oct/13/saudi-arabia-us-oil-prices-opec)

In July, Joe Biden traveled to Saudi Arabia and shared a fist bump with the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman. As a presidential candidate, Biden had promised to make Saudi Arabia a “pariah” for its human rights abuses and its seven-year war against Yemen. But a devastating global pandemic and Russia’s unprovoked invasion of Ukraine forced him to set these concerns aside in favor of realpolitik. Biden needed the Saudis to increase oil production in order to lower gasoline prices for American consumers, so he swallowed his pride and treated the crown prince as the world leader he aspires to be. Unfortunately for Biden, that cringe-inducing fist bump photo op has backfired in spectacular fashion. Earlier this month, the Saudi-led Opec+ energy cartel agreed to cut oil production by 2m barrels a day, which will mean higher fuel prices this fall and winter. In the days leading up to the vote, the Biden administration invested significant political capital in its efforts to dissuade Saudi Arabia and its allies from cutting production. In the end, Biden’s wooing of Prince Mohammed yielded nothing but a 2% reduction of the world’s oil supply. In fact, the prince has inflicted political damage on the Biden administration a month before the US midterm elections. After soaring to $5 a gallon in June, US gasoline prices fell for more than three months. Now they are rising once again, increasing by an average of 12 cents a gallon over the past week, to $3.92. Rising prices threaten the Democrats’ hopes of maintaining control over both houses of Congress after the November elections. The prince and his Gulf allies clearly preferred dealing with Donald Trump, whose freewheeling Republican administration gave Prince Mohammed a blank check in exchange for stable oil prices and multibillion-dollar arms sales. The Saudis also sided with the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, who needs higher oil prices to help fund his war against Ukraine. As part of their economic sanctions against Moscow, the US and EU are trying to [impose a cap](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/11/g7-leaders-dodge-decision-on-imposing-price-cap-on-russian-oil) on the price paid to Russia for its oil exports. But that effort could now collapse as global oil prices rise and Europe heads into a winter season when heating costs are expected to soar thanks to the Ukraine war. While Prince Mohammed may believe he outmaneuvered Biden and demonstrated his influence over the global oil market, his power play has upset the foreign policy establishment in Washington. Even so-called foreign policy “realists”, who for years ignored progressive criticisms of the US-Saudi partnership, must confront an uncomfortable question: if Washington can’t count on a steady supply of oil, what does it get in return for its decades of unwavering support for the House of Saud? Technically, the US and Saudi Arabia are not allies – they’ve never signed a mutual defense agreement or a formal treaty. For decades, the US-Saudi relationship has been largely transactional: the kingdom used its leverage within Opec (and later the larger Opec+ cartel) to keep oil production and prices at levels that satisfy Washington. The US used to import significant amounts of oil from Saudi Arabia, but now that Washington is the world’s [largest oil producer](https://www.visualcapitalist.com/visualizing-the-worlds-largest-oil-producers/), it no longer relies as heavily on Saudi imports. In return for guaranteeing a steady global supply of oil, successive US administrations supported the House of Saud politically, sold it billions of dollars in advanced US weapons, and provided military assistance whenever aggressive neighbors threatened the kingdom. In 1990, after Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invaded neighboring Kuwait, Washington sent half a million troops to Saudi Arabia, which feared it would be Hussein’s next target. The US still deploys hundreds of troops and advisers to train the Saudi military and help it operate American weapons, including advanced warplanes, helicopters, and Patriot antimissile systems, which the kingdom has used to intercept drone and missile attacks by Yemen’s Houthi rebels. This oil-for-security arrangement has lasted through Democratic and Republican administrations, including multiple crises like the Arab-led oil embargo and Opec price increases in the 1970s and the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, where 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi nationals recruited by Al-Qaida. Yet Prince Mohammed has now upended the decades-old understanding. Worse, he’s timed that decision so as to maximize Biden’s humiliation: a month before pivotal congressional elections, and as Washington and its allies are trying to maintain a united front against Russian aggression. If Biden doesn’t respond forcefully, he may embolden the crown prince to take more risks. So far, Biden has promised unspecified “consequences” in response to the Saudi maneuvering. But a growing number of Democrats in Congress, including centrists who hesitated to abandon the partnership despite the kingdom’s atrocious human rights record, are now demanding action. On 10 October, Senator Bob Menendez, a Democrat who chairs the powerful Foreign Relations Committee, called for an immediate freeze on “all aspects of our cooperation with Saudi Arabia”, and promised to block future US weapons sales. Senator Dick Durbin, another centrist and the second-ranking Democrat in the Senate, was even harsher, writing on Twitter that the House of Saud “has never been a trustworthy ally of our nation. It’s time for our foreign policy to imagine a world without their alliance”. Even before the ill-fated fist bump, Biden signaled to Prince Mohammed that he would carry out a business-as-usual relationship with the kingdom. In February 2021, weeks after taking office, Biden did follow through on a campaign promise to release a summary report of the US intelligence community’s findings on the murder of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi. The report concluded that Prince Mohammed had approved the assassination at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October 2018. But Biden, worried about harming the US-Saudi partnership, decided not to impose sanctions on the crown prince. By abandoning his promise to hold Khashoggi’s killers accountable, Biden convinced Prince Mohammed that he was too powerful to punish. At the time, Biden aides argued that banning the prince from visiting the US or targeting his personal wealth would accomplish little. But the lack of even symbolic US sanctions or response likely emboldened the prince to overturn the basic premise of the US-Saudi relationship. Since Prince Mohammed rose to power with his father’s ascension to the Saudi throne in 2015, he has presided over a series of destructive policies, including the Saudi-led invasion of Yemen and the kingdom’s campaign to blockade its smaller neighbor, Qatar. But the crown prince keeps failing upward, consolidating more control over Saudi Arabia. And he continues to be wooed by foreign leaders and business titans, thanks to the world’s sustained dependence on oil and Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. Prince Mohammed had clearly concluded that he can get away with keeping oil prices high and undermining the US and EU campaign to isolate Russia – and still secure US protection and military assistance because Biden can’t get past the decades-old policy of American support for the House of Saud. This is no longer a case of Biden choosing realpolitik over the stated, but rarely enforced, US ideals of supporting human rights and democracy over autocracy. It’s time for Biden to acknowledge that his supposed realist approach toward Saudi Arabia has failed – and tear up the oil-for-security deal.

### Israel

#### **Public opinions are shifting in favor of Palestine instead of Israel**

Telhami ’23 (Shibley Telhami, April 25, 2023, Shibley Telhami is a nonresident senior fellow with the Center for Middle East Policy, in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings. He is the Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland. In the past, Telhami served as a senior advisor to the U.S. Department of State, advisor to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, advisor to Congressman Lee Hamilton, and as a member of the Iraq Study Group, “Is Israel a Democracy? Here’s what Americans think”, Brookings, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/is-israel-a-democracy-heres-what-americans-think/>) TDI

The unprecedented and sustained Israeli protests against the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s proposed judicial overhaul that threatened to substantially weaken the judiciary have captured news headlines worldwide. They have also coincided with a spike in violence in the occupied Palestinian territories. Although the protests have largely ignored Israel’s military rule over millions of Palestinians, they drew attention to threats to democracy even within Israel’s pre-1967 borders. It is hard to know if these protests have had any impact on the way Americans perceive Israel, and if they did, in what direction. While these protests may have drawn attention to the right-wing government’s autocratic ambitions, they may have also highlighted the existence of a free environment, at least for hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens, to protest freely and reject the government’s plans. Do Americans see Israel as a vibrant democracy or as something far less? To find out, we fielded a few questions in our University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with Ipsos, which I direct with my colleague Stella Rouse. The poll was conducted March 27-April 5, 2023, among 1,203 respondents by Ipsos probabilistic KnowledgePanel (margin of error 3.2%). We asked: “You may have been following recent developments in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. In your opinion which of the following is closer to describing the way Israel looks to you.” We provided the following four options: a vibrant democracy; a flawed democracy; a state with restricted minority rights; a state with segregation similar to apartheid. The results were surprising on many levels. [graph omitted] First, the number of respondents who said they didn’t know was very high for this kind of question: more than half of respondents overall and nearly two-thirds of Republicans. This number of people saying they didn’t know is usually reserved for questions about which one would expect a lack of familiarity (questions about the Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions movement (BDS), for example). Typically, on matters of opinion, respondents often answer even when they don’t fully know the issue. All this suggests that there is a level of discomfort among respondents in answering this question. This is also born out in the fact that the percentage of those who said they didn’t know was very high even among those with a college education and above; among Republicans, most of those with college degrees and higher said: “I don’t know.” [graph omitted] Second, in this case, one may expect far more public exposure to the issue. Israel has been an important topic in the American discourse for decades, especially among Republicans in recent years. It is typical to hear Israel referred to as the “only democracy in the Middle East” or with reference to its “shared values” with the United States. Yet, even among all those who responded, the highest percentage, 31%, was equally shared by those who described Israel as “a flawed democracy” and those who described it as “a state with segregation similar to apartheid.” Among Republicans, a 41% plurality said it is “a vibrant democracy” while 20% said it is “a state with segregation similar to apartheid.” Among Democrats, the story was strikingly different: A plurality of those expressing an opinion, 44%, said it is “a state with segregation similar to apartheid,” followed by 34% who said it’s a “flawed democracy.” This is remarkable because the use of the term “apartheid,” in the American mainstream discourse, while increasingly heard, is still highly uncommon and even taboo in many circles. Do these results reflect the impact of recent events in Israel/Palestine and the rise of the far-right government in Israel? It is difficult to tell, as this is the first time that we have asked this question in our polling. It is notable, however, that in one of our tracking questions about U.S. policy toward Israel/Palestine, we found little change in attitudes from our October poll. In probing whether respondents want the United States to lean toward Israel, toward the Palestinians, or toward neither side, we found only a small decrease in the number who want the United States to lean toward Israel, mostly within the margin of error. [graph omitted] Finally, we asked respondents about their view of the BDS movement. In this case, we added the choice “unfamiliar” in addition to the choice “don’t know” to try to further understand the meaning of the responses. Not surprisingly, a large number, 39%, said they were unfamiliar, while 26% said they “don’t know” — which is still a high percentage, possibly indicating they had some discomfort expressing an opinion on this issue as well. [graph omitted] When examining the results among those who offered an opinion, there was an unsurprisingly large difference between Democrats and Republicans. Among Republicans, 65% said they opposed BDS. Among Democrats, the picture was different: a plurality of those who expressed an opinion, 41%, said they supported it, while only 20% said they opposed it. [graph omitted] It is clear that public attitudes about Israel are shifting. The term “apartheid” appears to have become a common term among many Americans, especially Democrats, and even the BDS movement, which has faced considerable obstacles in the American mainstream, seems to have sizable support among Democrats who expressed their opinion. A recent Gallup poll found that, for the first time in their years of polling on Israeli-Palestinian issues, more Democrats sympathize with the Palestinians than with Israelis by a margin of 11 percentage points. And while about half of Republicans continue to say they want the United States to lean toward Israel, that support is diminishing among young Republicans — 32% in the current poll — and, as other research has shown, support for Israel is declining even among young evangelical Christians.

#### The trump stance on Israel is unpopular- the public supports reducing militarization

Beilin, 2018 (Yossi, served in various positions in the Knesset and in Israeli government posts, the last of which was justice and religious affairs minister; “US, Israeli, Palestinian leaders more hawkish than their peoples,” Al-Monitor, December 9, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/12/israel-palestine-gaza-west-bank-east-jerusalem-peace-survey.html)

A survey conducted a few weeks ago by the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion at Beit Sahour, among Palestinians from the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, which has been since quoted in a publication of the Washington Institute, shows that the positions of the Palestinian public are significantly more moderate than those of its leaders; this is the case in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip, the Fatah-led West Bank and East Jerusalem. The survey focused on three main topics: the attitude of those surveyed to the realization of the right of return of 1948 Palestinian refugees to sovereign Israel, their attitude about the definition of Israel as a Jewish state and their position on the Israeli demand that an agreement between the sides be officially determined to be “the end of the conflict.” On most of these topics the position of the East Jerusalemites proved most dovish; generally in the middle were residents of the Gaza Strip, while residents of the West Bank were generally more hawkish than their brethren. But on all questions, it turned out, the Palestinian public is far from insisting on the positions of its leaders, and would back an American plan that would force the two sides to make significant concessions on what have been previously presented as the Palestinians' red lines. According to the poll, two-thirds of Gaza residents would accept realization of the right of return only to the West Bank and Gaza, and not to sovereign Israel. Meanwhile, 60% of those surveyed in East Jerusalem are prepared to define Israel as a Jewish state under a peace agreement (compared with 55% in Gaza and 35% in the West Bank). As for determining the “end of the conflict,” 73% of those surveyed in East Jerusalem support it, compared with 50% in the West Bank (where 37% oppose it) and 47% backing it in the Gaza Strip (where 49% oppose it). Surveys conducted in recent years in the United States show that the majority of those surveyed accept President Bill Clinton’s 2000 parameters for the end of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (two states on the basis of the 1967 border with amendments, a symbolic solution for refugees, the evacuation of settlements east of the new border between the states and the division of East Jerusalem between Jewish and Arab neighborhoods and designation of the Palestinian capital there. In Israel this has been the situation for many years: The majority opinion has been for a two-state solution by means of the annexation of settlement blocs, territorial compensation for this annexation and concession of the Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. But the stance of the Palestinian leadership has been more extreme than that of the Palestinian public, the stance of the current Israeli leadership is more extreme than that of the Israeli public and the stance of the Trump administration is very far from the position of the public in the United States.

### AFRICOM

#### Focus on Trumpism is a counter-insurgency tactic that sanitizes racial capitalism and shuts down resistance in favor of capitulation to liberal democracy.

Van Schenck ‘20

[Reed, graduate student studying communication and rhetoric, debate coach, and activist living in Pittsburgh. They like to think about digital rhetoric, online subcultures, the far-right, and social movements. 08/19/2020. “Battle for the Soul of the Nation.” https://basedonwhat1917.blog/2020/08/19/battle-for-the-soul-of-the-nation/] pat

The anxiety-ridden plea proved effective, spurring Biden forward to easily win the nomination. In fact, the campaign strategy has proven almost too effective: According to Newsweek, 56% of Biden voters are casting their ballots not based off of any policy position but simply because Biden is not Donald Trump. That Biden’s “lesser of two evils” message is resonating across such a broad spectrum of Americans demonstrates the extent to which the Democratic Party – and, as I argue, liberal democracy as an ideology – debases itself to begging for a “return to normalcy” when crises of its own making overwhelm its recuperative institutions.

What sort of dangers does Trump uniquely foster among American political discourse? The very first words of Biden’s campaign announcement video should give us some idea: “Charlottesville, Virginia,” the home of an apparent contradiction between the political legacy of rapist-slaveowner Thomas Jefferson and the 2017 “Unite the Right” rally, a far-right protest against the removal of Confederate monuments in Charlottesville that resulted in the death of an anti-fascist counter-protester and the continued increase in mainstream attention to fascist ideas. At the time, Unite the Right was meant to be the optical crown jewel of the “Alt-Right,” a loose network of white nationalists, neo-Confederates, libertarians, and self-identified fascists that emerged in the 2010s amidst a growing far-right online community.

For Biden, the events at Charlottesville proved that the Trump administration has emboldened all sorts of reactionary ideas that run counter to the essence of American identity. In the words of his campaign ad, “America is an idea, an idea that’s stronger than any army and bigger than any ocean, more powerful than any dictator or tyrant. It gives hope to the most desperate people on Earth. It guarantees everyone is treated with dignity and gives hate no safe harbor…. That’s what’s at stake in this election.” Biden goes on to critique Trump’s reaction to the rally, in which he declared there to be “good people on both sides.” In response to this, most Democrats, including Biden, defended the anti-fascists and accosted the far-right protesters. In retrospect, this push is contrary to Biden’s current spirit as evidenced by his call to prosecute anti-fascist protesters in the wake of Black Lives Matter rallies.

Biden may be a decaying windbag, but his campaign advisors are not morons. He qualifies his chicanery by preempting the progressive critique: “We haven’t always lived up to these ideals, Jefferson himself didn’t. But we have never before walked away from them.” This claim may silence the social-democratic critique that calls for a “political revolution,” or the re-invigoration of the current liberal-democratic system through election-driven, Scandinavian-style welfare capitalism. But to a thorough Marxist critique, this soft padding only reveals the extent to which our political ideals are mutually-exclusive. He’s right that we have never abandoned the essence of America, but we should.

I do not refute that Trump’s presidency has given fascists ideological cover, but I strongly disagree that their ideas represent anything but the most lucid expression of the “soul of the nation” of our times. There will be no return to normalcy because Trump is normal, and the ideas and ideologues his campaign platforms are nothing new to the Nation. Neither Trump’s nationalism nor Biden’s anti-anti-fascist flip-flopping run counter to the ideological essence of America. Instead, they are immaculate portrayals of the two parties’ different expressions of the same rotten core: racial capitalism. By tracing how liberalism both requires and bolsters fidelity to anti-black capitalism at the core of American identity, I hope to demonstrate how Biden’s surface-level anti-fascist rhetoric not only mystifies the quotidian character of anti-black violence but also strengthens the political purchase of far-right ideas.

The Soul of the Nation

What is the soul of the nation, anyway? Is it the words on the parchment of the Constitution or the feeling of togetherness that the Pledge of Allegiance is supposed to conjure? To speak of the soul of America is to assume that there is something transcendental that stabilizes America as America, irrespective of historical contingency. What sort of ideas, identities, and practices has the collective body known as “America” never walked away from, regardless of the particular political situation that certain Americans have faced?

To answer this question, let’s return to Biden’s juxtaposition of the legacy of the Founding Fathers and the eruption of the far-right. If “America is an Idea,” as the campaign ad’s title claims, then Biden is implicitly suggesting that we find the metaphysical core of the nation within its most basic political document: the Constitution. Thus, the American idea is liberal democracy, the conception that “all men are created equal,” and the aspiration toward a society in which all humans are afforded the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, which is to say, property.

It is hardly a hot take to claim that the United States has never achieved that goal; Biden basically admits that. But where Biden and many of the liberal-left “anti-fascists” get it wrong is in their assumption that the anti-black violence emblematic of both Unite the Right and the Trump administration is external, rather than intrinsic, to capitalism and liberal democracy. At the time of the Constitution’s writing, the United States was a slave society built upon a genocide of Indigenous people. If the continued murder of Black people by the police and ongoing occupation of Indigenous land is any indication, the soul of America is still indebted to that material history, to say the least. To say the most, America is still a slave society and that genocide is ongoing.

To think about liberal democracy as an ideal in and of itself as Biden does, rather than grounding analysis in the material consequences of the ideal, is to present a backward conclusion. For the same reason that a food critic would never judge the quality of her dinner based on the recipe alone, it is disingenuous to only analyze liberalism in a vacuum of its own egalitarian promises, separated from the actual world that liberalism helped to construct. The Soul of the Nation didn’t start being the Soul of the Nation when America entered its bygone “post-racial” era; it must be held accountable to its entire legacy.

And when it comes to the aiding and abetting of far-right violence, American liberal democracy is far from innocent. From the century-and-a-half long history of the Ku Klux Klan to the well-documented role American eugenics laws played in inspiring Hitler’s racial policies, Americans have long courted racialist political lines to explicitly demarcate the implicit idea of white sovereignty that rests at the core of the nation. Following the twentieth-century British theoretician R. Palme Dutt, this should not come as a surprise: When even the white constituency realizes that liberal democracy is incapable of fulfilling its promises of prosperity to those it enfranchises, it maintains its own legitimacy by dulling class-antagonism with class-collaboration and by reinforcing the racist subjective parameters that inspire faith in liberalism to begin with. It is no wonder that Lenin’s proclamation that “Imperialism is capitalism in decay” is so often misquoted as “Fascism is capitalism in decay.” He may as well have said the latter, too.

Without looking to the class structure that liberal democracy enshrines, it is difficult to emerge with a clear idea of who falls in the purview of “all men.” For this, let’s look to a time in which America’s economic and racial structures both began to shift. During the nineteenth century amidst industrialization, white people, especially white laborers, defined themselves as white in contradistinction to Black people in order to give purchase to their political, economic, and social demands. It was on this basis that the “white worker,” the everyman to whom Trump addresses his populist message, was spawned. To be a worker, after all, requires such a paltry degree of “freedom” that could only be defined in a negative relationship to the total captivity of Black slaves. David Roediger, following DuBois, explains, “…by considering a range of comparisons with Blacks in weighing his status as a white worker, the white laboring man could articulate a self-image that, depending on his wont, emphasized either his pride in independence or his fears of growing dependency.“ The duality of pride and fear, patriotism and anxiety, continue to animate the excesses of far-right violence. These feelings add color to the infamous Unite the Right slogan: “You will not replace us!” When placed in this context, it is obvious to whom the signifiers “you” and “us” refer.

As outlined in the Three-Fifths Compromise as well as the lived reality of slavery and its so-called “abolition,” liberal democracy and racial capitalism operate(d) hand-in-hand to position Black people as the non-subjects against whom white people maintain coherence as workers, as citizens, and as Americans. But this phenomenon is not limited to America; the legacy of the Atlantic Slave Trade lives on in the basic structure of the commercial capitalist system in every place where its tendrils have extended. It may be useful, then, to dismiss with the idea that there is something exceptionally dangerous about the soul of America in favor of understanding this violence as constitutive of something much greater – following Frank Wilderson, the soul of “The World” that was built in the image of the same anti-blackness constitutive of “America.” In any case, as Biden’s raving demonstrates, there’s something seductive about the call to identify with America that makes it worthy of its own analysis, at least on a provisional basis.

Unite the Right was a spectacular performance of the seductive power of the soul of America. It was an outpouring of white racial anxiety, hoping to defend the decrepit monuments of a “dead” slave society. The subject to whom “live, liberty, and property” was promised at the expense of those excluded in the Constitution is the same subject expressed in the “Us” of “You will not replace us!”: the White man aspiring toward the bourgeois class and the nuclear family.

It is no wonder that, contra Biden, far-right movements and ideas gain rhetorical purchase by marketing themselves as defenders of the Constitution, not its detractors. From QAnon to your local III% militia to the Ku Klux Klan, the broadest bases of far-right activity calcify around the call to defend the Constitution against immigrants, insurgents, and racialized bodies, all marionettes held by the strings of the “globalist elites.” Fascists want to defend America from all enemies, foreign and domestic, and within the imagination conjured by America’s racial anxiety, those enemies are all who fall outside of the purview of liberal democratic citizenship. This has always been the case, as Georgi Dimitrov observed the same phenomenon in 1938: “In contradistinction to German fascism, which acts under anti-constitutional slogans, American fascism tries to portray itself as the custodian of the Constitution and ‘American democracy.‘” The Founding Fathers wouldn’t have had it any other way.

The Battle

In the immediate aftermath of Unite the Right, liberals and (white, revisionist) socialists alike were scandalized. “How could this happen in America?” sounded the siren call of white liberals who apparently forgot that racism exists, yet again. This is to say, Biden is not alone in his attribution of the violence to Trump. There’s a reason why this campaign ad was so successful: It compounded upon anxieties that extend far beyond the 2020 Presidential Election.

For example, then-Charlottesville mayor Michael Singer recently commented that he was dumbfounded by the President’s comments during the aftermath of Unite the Right. However, since then, he has been enlightened, learning that “Trumpism” requires the mobilization of a racist base through populist rhetoric. He claims,

Despite losing the popular vote by 3 million, Trump stoked white-nationalist grievances among enough voters susceptible to those appeals in battleground states. Every time he did something that seemed an unthinkable gaffe against ideals of inclusion, it was a feature, not a bug, of his politics. On a platform built on resentment of “others,” he won the Electoral College and the presidency.

When Joe Biden launched his presidential campaign with the word “Charlottesville” and said he’d decided to run for President because the “Unite the Right” rally showed how the “soul of the nation” is at stake in the Trump era, I applauded, writing a Washington Post op-ed celebrating Biden’s recognition that Trump’s politicization of extremism was making the country at once less safe and less democratic.

Michael Singer, “I Was Charlottesville’s Mayor During the ‘Unite the Right’ Rally. Trump’s Callous Response to a Grieving Nation Is No Surprise”

And while Biden is the man of the hour, his “left-wing” counterpart, Bernie Sanders, had nothing novel to say about the situation. He took to Twitter to critique Trump:

[@realDonaldTrump](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E897580346379829250%7Ctwgr%5E&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fbasedonwhat1917.blog%2F2020%2F08%2F19%2Fbattle-for-the-soul-of-the-nation%2F), you are embarrassing our country and the millions of Americans who fought and died to defeat Nazism.

As if racism is an embarrassment to America rather than a feature emulated by its most patriotic supporters. Palme Dutt reminds us that social democracy, the ideology that Sanders and his revisionist supporters conceal under the radical veneer of “democratic socialism,” is no enemy to fascism. In reality, social democrats have historically paved the way for fascist power-grabs in Germany, Austria, and Italy by siphoning the impetus toward class struggle at the core of socialist ideology into class-collaborationist, electoral shams. For example, the social-democratic utopia of Sweden also hosts some of Europe’s most militant neo-Nazis. Thus, we should not be surprised that Sanders, as a ruling-class politician, is drawing from the same rhetorical scraps as Biden.

Whether it’s coming from milquetoast liberals or en-vogue liberals, the exceptionalization of Trump is one of the most commonplace and dangerous misconceptions about the recent “rise” in far-right ideology and activism in the United States. The word “rise” is somewhat inaccurate here because, as our previous analysis has shown, the far-right never went anywhere as a feature of America. However, it is true that fascists have found ways to more effectively circulate their message to their “base,” which is to say, to those that liberal democracy recognizes as its own.

Without a doubt, the figure of Trump was certainly helpful for far-right activists in their facilitation of this ongoing rhetorical shift. He is, unlike most Presidents in recent history, undeniably forthright about his subversion of liberal-democratic administrative norms in favor of emulating his self-fashioned populist image. However, accepting the rhetorical role Trump played in the circulation of far-right ideas must not degenerate into scapegoating Trump at the expense of structural analysis, as it so often does. Public intellectual Henry Giroux offers a refreshingly-nuanced picture, situating the electoral conditions that gave rise to Trump within the neoliberalization of the Democratic Party, the rise to power of finance capital, and the conservative swing in the 1980’s. He, too, notices the hypocrisy at root in the Democratic Party’s self-portrayal as a bastion against fascism:

In the face of Trump’s unapologetic authoritarianism, Democratic Party members and the liberal elite are trying to place themselves in the forefront of organized resistance to such dark times. It is difficult not to see such moral outrage and resistance as hypocritical in light of the role they have played in the last 40 years of subverting democracy and throwing minorities of class and color under the bus.

Henry Giroux, “White nationalism, armed culture, and state violence in the age of Donald Trump”

While I am critical of Giroux’s presumption that any form of liberal democracy prior to the 1980s provided meaningful political avenues for anti-racist or anti-capitalist work, he offers a thorough glimpse at the past forty years that ought disprove the absurd notion that Trump was the beginning, or will be the end, of the far-right in the United States. By extension, the Democrats are no anti-fascist vanguard but rather a cowardly scheme of collaborationists.

Moreover, the real danger of exceptionalizing Trump comes less from its reliance on a whitened vision of American history than its implications for anti-fascist tactics and strategy. If we accept the premise that the rise of Trump has uniquely legitimized the far-right, then the floodgates open for myriad band-aid solutions that reinforce the racial capitalism’s stranglehold on political possibility. As Biden’s campaign ad elucidates, this brand of anti-fascism will start and end at the ballot box. Like the “anti-fascism” of the German Social Democrats, this anti-fascism renounces the need for struggle against fascism at its political and libidinal roots in favor of betting upon the presumptive stability of liberal institutions. This is a dead-end for anti-fascism; if Hitler’s seizure of power and Trump’s authoritarianism both prove anything, it is that fascist demagogues do not care about the constraints of liberal democracy. In any case, they can still rely upon the white-anxiety vote to secure their power. Therefore, these “solutions” serve as a gilding of gold over the rotting, capitalist core of the Democratic Party and of liberal democracy itself, further strengthening their power as a force of counter-insurgency.

Time and time again, anti-fascist activists have proven that on-the-ground, direct confrontation remains the most effective short-term tactic for mitigating the circulation of far-right ideas. Returning to Unite the Right, not only did anti-fascists prevent a complete takeover of Charlottesville in 2017, but their tactics subverted the planned 2018 “Unite the Right 2” rally. In Washington, D.C., twenty to thirty far-right attendees were hopelessly outnumbered by thousands of counter-protesters, even though the fascists received a sizeable police escort.

### China

#### Voters want Biden to deter China from invading Taiwan—studies prove.

Orth 23 [(Taylor Orth is a data journalist and public opinion researcher. She received a B.A. from The University of Texas at Austin in 2013 and a Ph.D. in sociology from Stanford in 2020.) “More Americans prefer taking a strong stand to protect Taiwan than would choose good China relations” 3/1/23] pickles BS

In recent months, tensions between China and Taiwan have risen, leading some to question what role the U.S. should play in the conflict. Consistent with our polling from last summer, new findings from the Economist and YouGov show that many Americans remain committed to protecting Taiwan from Chinese interference. By 51% to 24%, Americans say it is more important for the U.S. "to take a strong stand so that China does not take over Taiwan by force" than "for the U.S. to maintain good relations with China."

An even larger share of people who are paying close attention to the conflict hold this view: 70% of Americans who say they've heard a lot about relations between China and Taiwan think the U.S. should take a strong stand to prevent a Chinese takeover of Taiwan. Views on the issue are bipartisan, with roughly equal shares of Democrats (55%) and Republicans (58%) saying it's best to take a strong stand.

By 37% to 22%, Americans say that if an armed conflict were to arise between China and Taiwan, the "U.S. should help protect Taiwan with military force." A large share (41%), however, say that they don't know enough about the topic to offer an opinion. People who have heard a lot about the conflict are especially likely to support the U.S. military intervening in such a scenario: 63% say the U.S. should help protect Taiwan with military force, while just 25% say it should not. Opinions on this question are also bipartisan, with Democrats and Republicans holding similar views.

Three-quarters of Americans view China as either an enemy (40%) or unfriendly to the U.S. (35%), while Taiwan is seen by most as either an ally (24%) or a friend (37%). Over the past few months, a growing share of Americans have come to view China as an enemy. Prior to 2020, only around one in five or fewer said China is an enemy.

## 1AR – I/L

### Warming

#### Biden isn’t doing much for warming either.

BU Today **Staff** 20**23** [BU today cited multiple college school professors, journalists, and politicians for this article.][Age, Inflation, Abortion, Culture Wars, and More: Issues That Will Define President Biden’s Reelection Campaign] April 23rd 2023 gh

https://www.bu.edu/articles/2023/president-biden-runs-for-reelection/

Biden needs to show how he will make a deal with the powerful oil companies that involves them winding down their activities, and not expanding into plastics.  The curtailment of fossil fuel extraction is the key to a new, unpoisoned world and it’s not an easy one to turn, but it is the one that opens the door to a new future. Companies that are invested in the old ways of doing business are doubling down now and backing Republicans with all they have, and participating in democracy in an unethical manner, distorting the processes that should reflect the will and the needs of the people.  The will of the people is clear, that we need to act on climate change, and the science, technology and economics are clear that we can have a clean transition.  We won’t have it tomorrow, but today is when we have to get started.  Biden has to start America down that path.

### Foreign Policy

#### Biden and Trump foreign policy are the same

**Wong 22’** [Edward Wong is a diplomatic correspondent for The New York Times who covers foreign policy from Washington. In more than 24 years at The Times, he has reported from New York, Baghdad, Beijing and Washington. As Beijing bureau chief, he managed The Times’s largest overseas operation. “On U.S. Foreign Policy, the New Boss Acts a Lot Like the Old One” https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/24/us/politics/biden-trump-foreign-policy.html]/LL

More than a year and a half into the tenure of President Biden, his administration’s approach to strategic priorities is surprisingly consistent with the policies of the Trump administration, former officials and analysts say. Mr. Biden vowed on the campaign trail to break from the paths taken by the previous administration, and in some ways on foreign policy he has done that. He has repaired alliances, particularly in Western Europe, that Donald J. Trump had weakened with his “America First” proclamations and criticisms of other nations. In recent months, Mr. Biden’s efforts positioned Washington to lead a coalition imposing sanctions against Russia during the war in Ukraine. And Mr. Biden has denounced autocracies, promoted the importance of democracy and called for global cooperation on issues that include climate change and the coronavirus pandemic. But in critical areas, the Biden administration has not made substantial breaks, showing how difficult it is in Washington to chart new courses on foreign policy. That was underscored this month when Mr. Biden traveled to Israel and Saudi Arabia, a trip partly aimed at strengthening the closer ties among those states that Trump officials had promoted under the so-called Abraham Accords. In Saudi Arabia, Mr. Biden met with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman despite his earlier vow to make the nation a “pariah” for human rights violations, notably the murder of a Washington Post writer in 2018. U.S. intelligence agencies concluded that the prince ordered the brutal killing. Behind the scenes, the United States still provides important support for the Saudi military in the Yemen war despite Mr. Biden’s earlier pledge to end that aid because of Saudi airstrikes that killed civilians. “The policies are converging,” said Stephen E. Biegun, deputy secretary of state in the Trump administration and a National Security Council official under President George W. Bush. “Continuity is the norm, even between presidents as different as Trump and Biden.” Some former officials and analysts praised the consistency, arguing that the Trump administration, despite the deep flaws of the commander in chief, properly diagnosed important challenges to American interests and sought to deal with them. The Real Power of Super Shoes Could Be Supercharged Training Others are less sanguine. They say Mr. Biden’s choices have compounded problems with American foreign policy and sometimes deviated from the president’s stated principles. Senior Democratic lawmakers have criticized his meeting with Prince Mohammed and aid to the Saudi military, for instance, even though administration officials have promoted a United Nations-brokered cease-fire in Yemen. Both the Trump and Biden administrations have had to grapple with the question of how to maintain America’s global dominance at a time when it appears in decline. China has ascended as a counterweight, and Russia has become bolder. The Trump administration’s national security strategy formally reoriented foreign policy toward “great power competition” with China and Russia and away from prioritizing terrorist groups and other nonstate actors. The Biden administration has continued that drive, in part because of events like the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Biden White House has delayed the release of its own national security strategy, which had been expected early this year. Officials are rewriting it because of the Ukraine war. The final document is still expected to emphasize competition among powerful nations. Mr. Biden has said that China is the greatest competitor of the United States — an assertion that Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken reiterated in a recent speech — while Russia is the biggest threat to American security and alliances. Some scholars say the tradition of continuity between administrations is a product of the conventional ideas and groupthink arising from the bipartisan foreign policy establishment in Washington, which Ben Rhodes, a deputy national security adviser to President Barack Obama, derisively called “the Blob.” But others argue that outside circumstances — including the behavior of foreign governments, the sentiments of American voters and the influence of corporations — leave U.S. leaders with a narrow band of choices. “There’s a lot of gravitational pull that brings the policies to the same place,” Mr. Biegun said. “It’s still the same issues. It’s still the same world. We still have largely the same tools with which to influence others to get to the same outcomes, and it’s still the same America.” In committing to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump were responding to the will of most Americans, who had grown weary of two decades of war. For Mr. Biden, the move was also a chance to address unfinished business. As vice president, he had advocated bringing troops home, in line with Mr. Obama’s desire to wind down the “forever wars,” but he was opposed by U.S. generals insisting on a presence in Afghanistan. Despite the chaotic withdrawal last August as the Taliban took over the country, polls have shown most Americans supported ending U.S. military involvement there. Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden have advocated a smaller U.S. military presence in conflict regions. But both hit limits to that thinking. Mr. Biden has sent more American troops to Europe since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and to Somalia, reversing a Trump-era withdrawal. U.S. troops remain in Iraq and Syria. “There’s deep skepticism of the war on terror by senior members of the Biden administration,” said Brian Finucane, a senior adviser at International Crisis Group who worked on military issues as a lawyer at the State Department. “Nevertheless they’re not willing yet to undertake broad structural reform to dial back the war.” Mr. Finucane said reform would include repealing the 2001 war authorization that Congress gave the executive branch after the attacks of Sept. 11. “Even if the Biden administration doesn’t take affirmative steps to further stretch the scope of the 2001 A.U.M.F., as long as it remains on the books, it can be used by future administrations,” he said, referring to the authorization. “And other officials can extend the war on terror.” On the most pressing Middle East issue — Iran and its nuclear program — Mr. Biden has taken a different tack than Mr. Trump. The administration has been negotiating with Tehran a return to an Obama-era nuclear agreement that Mr. Trump dismantled, which led to Iran’s accelerating its uranium enrichment. But the talks have hit an impasse. And Mr. Biden has said he would stick with one of Mr. Trump’s major actions against the Iranian military, the designation of its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization, despite that being an obstacle to a new agreement. China policy stands out as the most vivid example of continuity between the two administrations. The State Department has kept a Trump-era genocide designation on China for its repression of Uyghur Muslims. Biden officials have continued to send U.S. naval ships through the Taiwan Strait and shape weapons sales to Taiwan to try to deter a potential invasion by China. Most controversially, Mr. Biden has kept Trump-era tariffs on China, despite the fact that some economists and several top U.S. officials, including Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen, question their purpose and impact. Mr. Biden and his political aides are keenly aware of the rising anti-free-trade sentiment in the United States that Mr. Trump capitalized on to marshal votes. That awareness has led Mr. Biden to shy away from trying to re-enter the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade agreement among 12 Pacific Rim nations that Mr. Obama helped organize to strengthen economic competition against China but that Mr. Trump and progressive Democrats rejected. Analysts say Washington needs to offer Asian nations better trade agreements and market access with the United States if it wants to counter China’s economic influence. “Neither the Trump nor Biden administrations have had a trade and economic policy that the Asian friends of the U.S. have been pleading for to help reduce their reliance on China,” said Kori Schake, the director of foreign and defense policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute. “Both Biden and Trump administrations are to some extent over-militarizing the China problem because they can’t figure out the economic piece.” It is in Europe that Mr. Biden has set himself apart from Mr. Trump. The Trump administration was at times contradictory on Europe and Russia: While Mr. Trump praised President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, criticized the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and withheld military aid to Ukraine for domestic political gain, some officials under him worked in the opposite direction. By contrast, Mr. Biden and his aides have uniformly reaffirmed the importance of trans-Atlantic alliances, which has helped them coordinate sanctions and weapons shipments to oppose Russia in Ukraine. “There’s no question in my mind that words and politics matter,” said Alina Polyakova, president of the Center for European Policy Analysis. “If allies don’t trust the U.S. will uphold Article 5 of NATO and come to an ally’s defense, it doesn’t matter how much you invest.” Ultimately the biggest contrast between the presidents, and perhaps the aspect most closely watched by America’s allies and adversaries, lies in their views on democracy. Mr. Trump complimented autocrats and broke with democratic traditions well before the insurrection in Washington on Jan. 6, 2021, that congressional investigators argue he organized. Mr. Biden has placed promotion of democracy at the ideological center of his foreign policy, and in December he welcomed officials from more than 100 countries to a “summit for democracy.” “American democracy is the magnetic soft power of the United States,” Ms. Schake said. “We are different and better than the forces we are contesting against in the international order.”

## 1AR – Impact defense

### Warming

#### Climate doesn’t cause extinction.

Kerr et al. 19 – Dr. Amber Kerr, Energy and Resources PhD at the University of California-Berkeley, known agroecologist, former coordinator of the USDA California Climate Hub. Dr. Daniel Swain, Climate Science PhD at UCLA, climate scientist, a research fellow at the National Center for Atmospheric Research. Dr. Andrew King, Earth Sciences PhD, Climate Extremes Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne. Dr. Peter Kalmus, Physics PhD at the University of Colombia, climate scientist at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Lab. Professor Richard Betts, Chair in Climate Impacts at the University of Exeter, a lead author on the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in Working Group 1. Dr. William Huiskamp, Paleoclimatology PhD at the Climate Change Research Center, climate scientist at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. [Claim that human civilization could end in 30 years is speculative, not supported with evidence, 6-4-2019, https://climatefeedback.org/evaluation/iflscience-story-on-speculative-report-provides-little-scientific-context-james-felton/]

There is no scientific basis to suggest that climate breakdown will “annihilate intelligent life” (by which I assume the report authors mean human extinction) by 2050.

However, climate breakdown does pose a grave threat to civilization as we know it, and the potential for mass suffering on a scale perhaps never before encountered by humankind. This should be enough reason for action without any need for exaggeration or misrepresentation!

A “Hothouse Earth” scenario plays out that sees Earth’s temperatures doomed to rise by a further 1°C (1.8°F) even if we stopped emissions immediately.

Peter Kalmus, Data Scientist, Jet Propulsion Laboratory:

This word choice perhaps reveals a bias on the part of the author of the article. A temperature can’t be doomed. And while I certainly do not encourage false optimism, assuming that humanity is doomed is lazy and counterproductive.

Fifty-five percent of the global population are subject to more than 20 days a year of lethal heat conditions beyond that which humans can survive

Richard Betts, Professor, Met Office Hadley Centre & University of Exeter:

This is clearly from Mora et al (2017) although the report does not include a citation of the paper as the source of that statement. The way it is written here (and in the report) is misleading because it gives the impression that everyone dies in those conditions. That is not actually how Mora et al define “deadly heat” – they merely looked for heatwaves when somebody died (not everybody) and then used that as the definition of a “deadly” heatwave.

North America suffers extreme weather events including wildfires, drought, and heatwaves. Monsoons in China fail, the great rivers of Asia virtually dry up, and rainfall in central America falls by half.

Andrew King, Research fellow, University of Melbourne:

Projections of extreme events such as these are very difficult to make and vary greatly between different climate models.

Deadly heat conditions across West Africa persist for over 100 days a year

Peter Kalmus, Data Scientist, Jet Propulsion Laboratory:

The deadly heat projections (this, and the one from the previous paragraph) come from Mora et al (2017)1.

It should be clarified that “deadly heat” here means heat and humidity beyond a two-dimension threshold where at least one person in the region subject to that heat and humidity dies (i.e., not everyone instantly dies). That said, in my opinion, the projections in Mora et al are conservative and the methods of Mora et al are sound. I did not check the claims in this report against Mora et al but I have no reason to think they are in error.

1- Mora et al (2017) Global risk of deadly heat, Nature Climate Change

The knock-on consequences affect national security, as the scale of the challenges involved, such as pandemic disease outbreaks, are overwhelming. Armed conflicts over resources may become a reality, and have the potential to escalate into nuclear war. In the worst case scenario, a scale of destruction the authors say is beyond their capacity to model, there is a ‘high likelihood of human civilization coming to an end’.

Willem Huiskamp, Postdoctoral research fellow, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research:

This is a highly questionable conclusion. The reference provided in the report is for the “Global Catastrophic Risks 2018” report from the “Global Challenges Foundation” and not peer-reviewed literature. (It is worth noting that this latter report also provides no peer-reviewed evidence to support this claim).

Furthermore, if it is apparently beyond our capability to model these impacts, how can they assign a ‘high likelihood’ to this outcome?

While it is true that warming of this magnitude would be catastrophic, making claims such as this without evidence serves only to undermine the trust the public will have in the science.

Daniel Swain, Researcher, UCLA, and Research Fellow, National Center for Atmospheric Research:

It seems that the eye-catching headline-level claims in the report stem almost entirely from these knock-on effects, which the authors themselves admit are “beyond their capacity to model.” Thus, from a scientific perspective, the purported “high likelihood of civilization coming to an end by 2050” is essentially personal speculation on the part of the report’s authors, rather than a clear conclusion drawn from rigorous assessment of the available evidence.

### Democracy

#### Democracy is resilient, but it solves nothing.

Doorenspleet 19 Renske Doorenspleet, Politics Professor at the University of Warwick. [Rethinking the Value of Democracy: A Comparative Perspective, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 239-243]

The value of democracy has been taken for granted until recently, but this assumption seems to be under threat now more than ever before. As was explained in Chapter 1, democracy’s claim to be valuable does not rest on just one particular merit, and scholars tend to distinguish three different types of values (Sen 1999). This book focused on the instrumental value of democracy (and hence not on the intrinsic and constructive value), and investigated the value of democracy for peace (Chapters 3 and 4), control of corruption (Chapter 5) and economic development (Chapter 6). This study was based on a search of an enormous academic database for certain keywords,6 then pruned the thousands of articles down to a few hundred articles (see Appendix) which statistically analysed the connection between the democracy and the four expected outcomes. The frst fiding is that a reverse wave away from democracy has not happened (see Chapter 2). Not yet, at least. Democracy is not doing worse than before, at least not in comparative perspective. While it is true that there is a dramatic decline in democracy in some countries,7 a general trend downwards cannot yet be detected. It would be better to talk about ‘stagnation’, as not many dictatorships have democratized recently, while democracies have not yet collapsed. Another fnding is that the instrumental value of democracy is very questionable. The feld has been deeply polarized between researchers who endorse a link between democracy and positive outcomes, and those who reject this optimistic idea and instead emphasize the negative effects of democracy. There has been ‘no consensus’ in the quantitative literature on whether democracy has instrumental value which leads some beneficial general outcomes. Some scholars claim there is a consensus, but they only do so by ignoring a huge amount of literature which rejects their own point of view. After undertaking a large-scale analysis of carefully selected articles published on the topic (see Appendix), this book can conclude that the connections between democracy and expected benefts are not as strong as they seem. Hence, we should not overstate the links between the phenomena. The overall evidence is weak. Take the expected impact of democracy on peace for example. As Chapter 3 showed, the study of democracy and interstate war has been a fourishing theme in political science, particularly since the 1970s. However, there are four reasons why democracy does not cause peace between countries, and why the empirical support for the popular idea of democratic peace is quite weak. Most statistical studies have not found a strong correlation between democracy and interstate war at the dyadic level. They show that there are other—more powerful—explanations for war and peace, and even that the impact of democracy is a spurious one (caveat 1). Moreover, the theoretical foundation of the democratic peace hypothesis is weak, and the causal mechanisms are unclear (caveat 2). In addition, democracies are not necessarily more peaceful in general, and the evidence for the democratic peace hypothesis at the monadic level is inconclusive (caveat 3). Finally, the process of democratization is dangerous. Living in a democratizing country means living in a less peaceful country (caveat 4). With regard to peace between countries, we cannot defend the idea that democracy has instrumental value. Can the (instrumental) value of democracy be found in the prevention of civil war? Or is the evidence for the opposite idea more convincing, and does democracy have a ‘dark side’ which makes civil war more likely? The findings are confusing, which is exacerbated by the fact that different aspects of civil war (prevalence, onset, duration and severity) are mixed up in some civil war studies. Moreover, defining civil war is a delicate, politically sensitive issue. Determining whether there is a civil war in a particular country is incredibly diffcult, while measurements suffer from many weaknesses (caveat 1). Moreover, there is no linear link: civil wars are just as unlikely in democracies as in dictatorships (caveat 2). Civil war is most likely in times of political change. Democratization is a very unpredictable, dangerous process, increasing the chance of civil war significantly. Hybrid systems are at risk as well: the chance of civil war is much higher compared to other political systems (caveat 3). More specifcally, both the strength and type of political institutions matter when explaining civil war. However, the type of political system (e.g. democracy or dictatorship) is not the decisive factor at all (caveat 4). Finally, democracy has only limited explanatory power (caveat 5). Economic factors are far more significant than political factors (such as having a democratic system) when explaining the onset, duration and severity of civil war. To prevent civil war, it would make more sense to make poorer countries richer, instead of promoting democracy. Helping countries to democratize would even be a very dangerous idea, as countries with changing levels of democracy are most vulnerable, making civil wars most likely. It is true that there is evidence that the chance of civil war decreases when the extent of democracy increases considerably. The problem however is that most countries do not go through big political changes but through small changes instead; those small steps—away or towards more democracy—are dangerous. Not only is the onset of civil war likely under such circumstances, but civil wars also tend to be longer, and the confict is more cruel leading to more victims, destruction and killings (see Chapter 4). A more encouraging story can be told around the value for democracy to control corruption in a country (see Chapter 5). Fighting corruption has been high on the agenda of international organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF. Moreover, the theme of corruption has been studied thoroughly in many different academic disciplines—mainly in economics, but also in sociology, political science and law. Democracy has often been suggested as one of the remedies when fghting against high levels of continuous corruption. So far, the statistical evidence has strongly supported this idea. As Chapter 5 showed, dozens of studies with broad quantitative, cross-national and comparative research have found statistically signifcant associations between (less) democracy and (more) corruption. However, there are vast problems around conceptualization (caveat 1) and measurement (caveat 2) of ‘corruption’. Another caveat is that democratizing countries are the poorest performers with regard to controlling corruption (caveat 3). Moreover, it is not democracy in general, but particular political institutions which have an impact on the control of corruption; and a free press also helps a lot in order to limit corruptive practices in a country (caveat 4). In addition, democracies seem to be less affected by corruption than dictatorships, but at the same time, there is clear evidence that economic factors have more explanatory power (caveat 5). In conclusion, more democracy means less corruption, but we need to be modest (as other factors matter more) and cautious (as there are many caveats). The perceived impact of democracy on development has been highly contested as well (see Chapter 6). Some scholars argue that democratic systems have a positive impact, while others argue that high levels of democracy actually reduce the levels of economic growth and development. Particularly since the 1990s, statistical studies have focused on this debate, and the empirical evidence is clear: there is no direct impact of democracy on development. Hence, both approaches cannot be supported (see caveat 1). The indirect impact via other factors is also questionable (caveat 2). Moreover, there is too much variation in levels of economic growth and development among the dictatorial systems, and there are huge regional differences (caveat 3). Adopting a one-size-ftsall approach would not be wise at all. In addition, in order to increase development, it would be better to focus on alternative factors such as improving institutional quality and good governance (caveat 4). There is not suffcient evidence to state that democracy has instrumental value, at least not with regard to economic growth. However, future research needs to include broader concepts and measurements of development in their models, as so far studies have mainly focused on explaining cross-national differences in growth of GDP (caveat 5). Overall, the instrumental value of democracy is—at best—tentative, or—if being less mild—simply non-existent. Democracy is not necessarily better than any alternative form of government. With regard to many of the expected benefts—such as less war, less corruption and more economic development—democracy does deliver, but so do nondemocratic systems. High or low levels of democracy do not make a distinctive difference. Mid-range democracy levels do matter though. Hybrid systems can be associated with many negative outcomes, while this is also the case for democratizing countries. Moreover, other explanations—typically certain favourable economic factors in a country—are much more powerful to explain the expected benefts, at least compared to the single fact that a country is a democracy or not. The impact of democracy fades away in the powerful shadows of the economic factors.8