

# Poll: Voters Care More About Ending Endless Wars Than Confronting Enemies

Interestingly, the top ‘foreign policy’ priorities are ones that affect people domestically, including jobs and immigration.

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Global Research, June 08, 2021

[Responsible Statecraft](#) 3 June 2021

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence, US NATO War Agenda](#)

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*New [survey data](#) released Wednesday shows that Americans prioritize getting out of Middle Eastern wars over confronting Middle Eastern adversaries.*

The Center for American Progress, a left-leaning think tank, surveyed two thousand registered voters in late March on a range of issues. The poll showed that issues like jobs, immigration and climate change dominated voters’ foreign policy thinking, while establishment concerns like confronting enemies and spreading democracy were a low priority.

Asked what their top three priorities for foreign policy are, the largest number of respondents overall — 47 percent — chose “protecting jobs for American workers,” followed by 42 percent of respondents who chose “reducing illegal immigration,” 28 percent who chose “combating global climate change,” and 28 percent who said “improving relationships with allies” was a top priority.

Respondents were split along party lines on a variety of issues. The top priority for Republican respondents was reducing illegal immigration, while the top priority for Democratic respondents was combatting global climate change.

But voters appear to be united on the need to stop intervening in Middle Eastern wars. A quarter of respondents — including a similar proportion of Democrats, Republicans, independents — chose “ending U.S. involvement in wars in the Middle East” as one of their top priorities.

Meanwhile, less than a quarter of respondents prioritized “protecting against terrorist threats from groups like ISIS or al-Qaeda,” “taking on China’s military and economic aggression,” “dealing with nuclear threats in Iran and North Korea” or “stopping Russian interference in U.S. government and politics.”

More Republicans than Democrats or independents prioritized confronting each of these enemies, except for Russia. In that case, the partisan split was reversed, with nearly a third of Democratic respondents, but only 11 percent of Republican respondents, choosing the fight against Russian interference as a top priority.

The result was consistent with a [Pew poll](#) released several months ago, which found that protecting American jobs was the single most popular foreign policy priority for Americans, while less than half of Americans prioritized limiting the influence of China, Russia, North Korea or Iran.

“The most striking finding on this measure is the decline of terrorism as a top foreign policy concern,” the authors of the Center for American Progress survey wrote, noting that terrorist threats had been the top concern of voters during a [similar 2019 survey](#).

The least popular option with all groups of voters was “promoting democratic rights and freedoms abroad.” Only 9 percent of respondents — including 11 percent of Democrats and 7 percent of Republicans and independents — chose it.

Other surveys over the [past few decades](#) have found that the American public overall puts a low priority on promoting democracy, even though it continues to be a staple of foreign policy discussions by elites.

More than a quarter of Democratic respondents chose “fighting global poverty and promoting human rights” as one of their top priorities, but it was an unpopular option with Republicans and independents.

Respondents cared about events in other countries but did not necessarily want U.S. involvement in those countries’ domestic affairs.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents agreed that “[t]hings that happen in other parts of the world have a big impact on America’s economy, and we should do more to make sure our domestic and foreign policies work together to create more U.S. jobs and protect U.S. interests.”

However, 55 percent agreed that “America is stronger when we focus on our own problems instead of inserting ourselves into other countries’ problems,” as opposed to only 41 percent who wanted the United States to “take a leading role in the world to protect our national interests and advance common goals with other countries.”

The foreign policy results mirrored the domestic policy results. Respondents’ top domestic priorities were controlling the coronavirus pandemic, creating jobs, and raising wages.

“Americans are overwhelmingly united in their desire for government to pay more attention to the needs of voters and less attention to campaign donors, corporations, and the wealthiest few,” the authors wrote.

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