

America: Great Again & Secure Again?

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Prepare for Possibility of President Trump

- Clinton shows narrow but clear lead in national public opinion polls--- as a result, she could win the national popular vote by clear margin.
- Conversely, Clinton is losing in polls in Missouri & Iowa--states Obama won in 2008 or 2012; Clinton's lead in Florida, Nevada, North Carolina, and Ohio is within the margin of error. These states represent 83 electoral votes---a sudden shift of 4% in these states would bring down Clinton's electoral vote to around 250 votes---and Donald Trump would win the election.

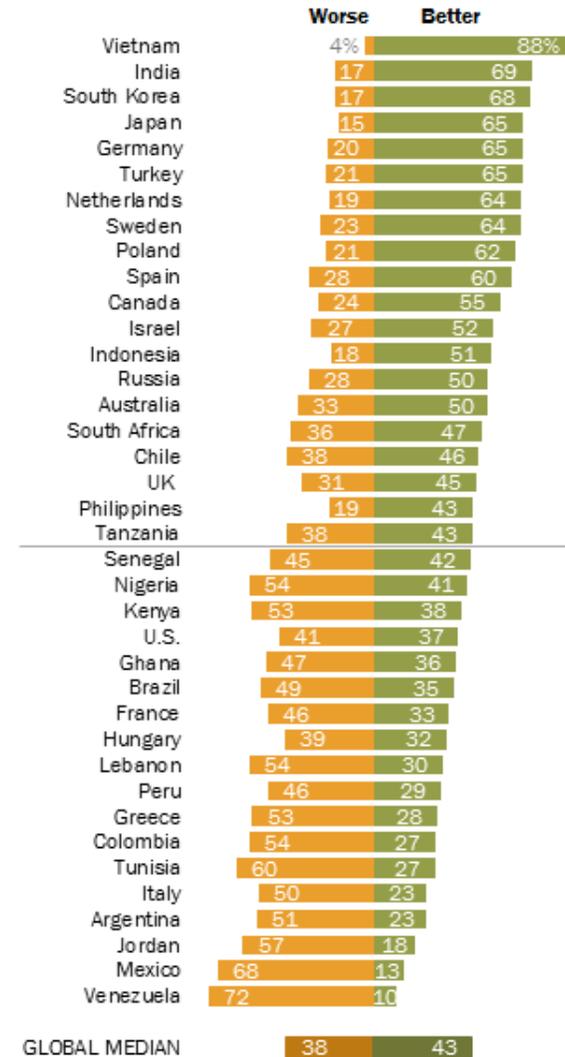
Different Views on Trump Presidency



Are Things Better or Worse than 50 Years Ago?

Globally, assessments vary on whether life is better or worse than 50 years ago

Life in our country today is ___ than it was 50 years ago for people like me



Note: "About the same" responses not shown.

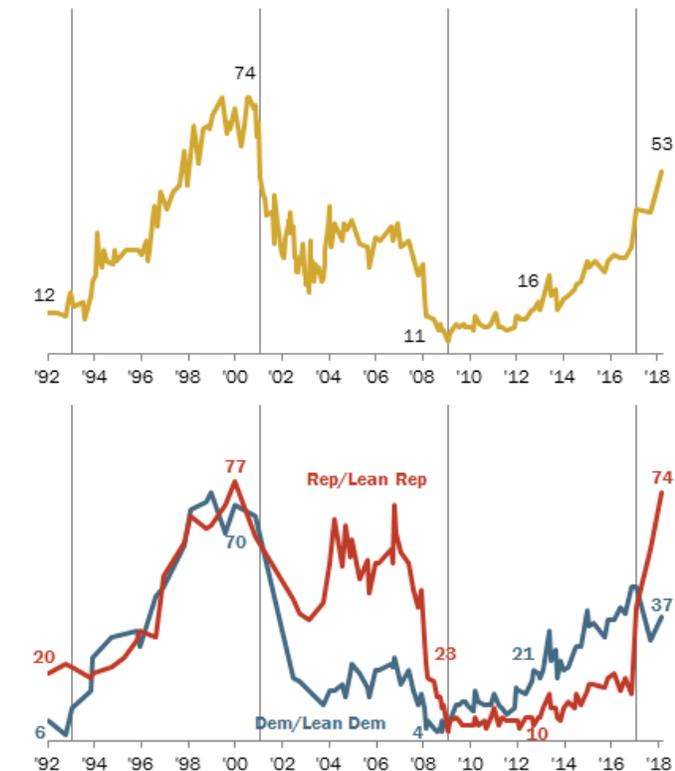
Source: Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey. Q3. U.S. survey conducted June 27-July 9, 2017.

Attitudes about Economy Improve

- Top slide shows public opinion about state of the economy in current and past years.
- Bottom slide shows attitudes about economy reported by Republicans (Red) and Democrats (Blue), and those who “lean” toward either party

Partisan gap in views of nation's economy grows much wider in Trump's presidency

% who rate national economic conditions as excellent or good



Note: Data before February 2004 from Gallup.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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Jobs Data and Economic Trends

- Unemployment March 2018 is 4.1 percent, down from 5% in March 2017, and down from the recorded recent high of 10% in October 2009.
- For most of 2018, monthly job gains were in the range of 200,000. In March 2018, the new jobs created number was less than 130,000. Whether this was a one-time slip in jobs, or the start of a trend remains unclear.

Trump Maintains Conservative Influence on Supreme Court

- 9th seat vacant for last year of Obama term.
- Trump names Neil Gorsuch, Appeals Court Judge, to fill vacancy.
- Court division of 4 conservatives, 4 liberals, and one swing vote continues.
- Kennedy (first row, 2nd from left)
- By summer, 3 judges over 80.
- Supreme Court hears final arguments of this years sessions on Wednesday.



Immigration: Some Things Tighter, Some Looser, Some Unknown

- Immigration ban from specific countries finally met court standards.
- New policy permits jailing of pregnant migrants.
- Trump gets state militia troops (the National Guard) to help border forces watch borders for illegal migrants.
- Deportations: 227,000 in 2017, down from 240,000 in '16 under Obama.
- Courts block AG attempt to block funds to states refusing to help Fed immigration force.
- Supreme Court rules deportation for “crime of violence” is too vague. Gorsuch deciding vote.
- Naturalizations up 200,000/qtr.
- Refugees down by 1/3 to 50,000/year.
- Total immigration: 1.13 million, down from 1.18.

Trump Gets Congress to Pass New Tax Law

POSITIVES

- Major tax cuts for high earners and for investors
- Incentives for firms to “repatriate” foreign money to US.
- Cuts tax rates for lowest earners

NEGATIVES

- Personal tax rate cuts temporary
- Government deficit grows dramatically; estimated to hit \$1 trillion/year in 2020.
- No clear evidence yet that corporate funds will return to US.
- US Federal debt over \$20 trillion (US bond interest rate now 3%)

Trade as a Domestic Policy Issue

- TTIP dead before Trump elected.
- TPP dead, revived, and dead again under Trump.
- Renegotiation underway of NAFTA agreement
- US-South Korea trade agreement
- Tariff hikes seen as start of trade war with China.
- US used punitive tariffs in '80s against Japanese cars and steel; result was opening of Japanese car factories in US, and some Japanese steel production in US.
- Current German car models made in USA: VW Passat & Atlas; Mercedes C, GLE, GLS; BMW X3, X4, X5, X6. All non-union workers.
- Monthly trade deficit continues to rise; farmers and others concerned Trump tariffs will hurt key Trump voting block.

Environment: Federal/State/Local Conflict

- US out of Paris climate accords on grounds that strong, growing economies treated too weakly (China & India)
- US will weaken emission and economy standards set for US cars by 2022.
- Congress against most Trump environment funding cuts plans.
- By law, California sets its own stricter environment standards. California market so dominant that many firms use its standards for all products they sell in US.
- Cities are planning vehicle license limitations to cut local vehicle emissions, just as German cities are.
- Dieselgate and Michigan water scandal prove how weak government is, even under a pro-environment president.

Long-Term Debt Worries: Congressional Budget Office

- “The amount of debt that is projected (for future years) would reduce national saving and income in the long term; increase the government’s interest costs, putting more pressure on the rest of the budget; limit lawmakers’ ability to respond to unforeseen events, and increase the likelihood of a fiscal crisis, an occurrence in which investors become unwilling to finance a government’s borrowing unless they are compensated with very high interest rates.”
- (Source: Congressional Budget Office, “The 2017 Long-Term Budget Outlook.”)

Are America and America's Friends More Secure Now?

- How are things in Afghanistan and Iraq?
- Could Barack Obama have brought North Korea to a summit?
- How are things in Syria? Will US have a role?
- What's the state of relations with Turkey? With Iran?
- Are the Baltic countries and Poland feeling safe with NATO troop rotations? (UK force took 1 week for convoy trip from Bavaria to NE Poland).
- How are things in Ukraine? Are sanctions enough? Is Crimea gone forever?
- How are things going with defense budgets in NATO countries?
- How are trade disputes and embargos affecting foreign policy?
- How many more islands will China build in Asia? What can US Navy do?

SOLID INDUSTRIAL BASE ESSENTIAL FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

The erosion of American manufacturing over the last two decades, however, . . . threatens to undermine the ability of U.S. manufacturers to meet national security requirements. Today, we rely on single domestic sources for some products and foreign supply chains for others, and we face the possibility of not being able to produce specialized components for the military at home. As America's manufacturing base has weakened, so too have critical workforce skills ranging from industrial welding, to high-technology skills for cybersecurity and aerospace. Support for a vibrant domestic manufacturing sector, a solid defense industrial base, and resilient supply chains is a national priority. "National Security Strategy," December 18, 2017.

How is the US Defense Industrial Base?

- Nuclear Power Plants: two manufacturing firms (GE and Westinghouse) are subsidiaries now of Hitachi and Toshiba, and the Toshiba nuclear operation is bankrupt.
- Steel production in US half what it was when the Kennedy Round of tariff reductions began.
- The automobile sold in the US with the highest percentage of US-made parts is the Toyota Camry.

Middle East: Realism and Reform

- “The United States has learned that neither aspirations for democratic transformation nor disengagement can insulate us from the region’s problems. We must be realistic about our expectations for the region without allowing pessimism to obscure our interests or vision for a modern Middle East.”
- National Security Strategy, 2017
- What is a “realistic” and “modern” Middle East?
- Is it enough to open cinemas and let women drive?
- What happened to the Kurds?
- Four US presidents have recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. Trump took the next step.
- Does a Syrian deal mean Assad stays?
- If you can deal with North Korea why not deal with Iran?

Qatar: What is US Policy Anyway?

- **June 9, 2017.** Trump said that Arab leaders he met in Saudi Arabia last month had urged him to challenge Qatar. . . “So we had a decision to make: do we take the easy road, or do we finally take a hard but necessary action? We have to stop the funding of terrorism,” he said. “The nation of Qatar, unfortunately, has historically been a funder of terrorism at a very high level.”
- **January 15, 2018.** The President thanked the Emir for Qatari action to counter terrorism and extremism in all forms, including being one of the few countries to move forward on a bilateral memorandum of understanding. The leaders discussed areas in which the United States and Qatar can partner to bring more stability to the region, counter malign Iranian influence, and defeat terrorism.
- **April 9, 2018.** US Dept of State approves sale of guided missile systems worth \$300 million to Qatar. On Tuesday, Qatar emir thanked President Trump for crucial role he is playing in resolving embargo against Qatar by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, and Egypt---which Trump had earlier endorsed.

Iran seeks to teach Russian at schools as strategic ties grow

<https://en.trend.az/iran/society/2890600.html>

EUROPEAN COOPERATION ESSENTIAL

European allies and partners increase our strategic reach and provide access to forward basing and overflight rights for global operations. Together we confront shared threats. European nations are contributing thousands of troops to help fight jihadist terrorists in Afghanistan, stabilize Iraq, and fight terrorist organizations across Africa and the greater Middle East.

National Security Strategy, December 17, 2018.

PAY FAIR SHARE

The NATO alliance will become stronger when all members assume greater responsibility for and pay their fair share to protect our mutual interests, sovereignty, and values.

National Security Strategy, December 17, 2018

Hitting the 2% Target: Closer, But Not Yet

- Of NATO's EU allies, only Greece, Estonia and the U.K. hit the target of spending 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defense. The U.S., meanwhile, was by far the biggest spender, investing 3.57 percent of its GDP into defense.
- Slovenia, Spain, Belgium and Luxembourg spent the least on defense within NATO last year, each investing under 1 percent of their GDP.
- Still, European allies together with Canada increased expenditures by nearly 5 percent last year, marking the third consecutive year of growth since 2014. European countries in total spent 1.46 percent of GDP in 2017, compared to 1.44 percent of GDP in 2016.
- "Most EU countries still miss NATO spending target," Politico.eu, Mar. 15, 2018.

How Are NATO Countries Doing?

- Albanian Defence Minister Olta Xhaçka has offered naval bases to the United States or NATO during a visit to Washington, DC, where she met US Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis. “A US or NATO presence in Albania is a clear demonstration that this area is not forgotten by our allies,” she said. (Jane’s Defense Weekly Internet, April 18, 2018).
- Are the rotating troops in the Baltics and Poland cost-effective? Will they work if needed?
- How is the German defense establishment doing on force readiness and spending increases?

Costs of American Military

- Cost of missile strike on April 13---over \$100 million: each US missile cost about \$1 million, plus related costs of operations for British and French forces and operations costs for US forces in the area of operations. Conversely, losing one high quality fighter plane would probably cost more than \$100 million.
- At the end of March, Congress and President Trump agreed to provide the US defense establishment with \$695 billion for fiscal year 2018. This amounts to roughly 3.5% of GDP.

Have the Democrats Changed? Not Much

Top three party leaders in the House of Representatives are all over age 70. Pelosi in top leadership since 2001. Hoyer in top leadership posts since 2002. Clyburn in top leadership posts since 2008. Democrats have lost more than sixty seats in House during their tenure.

In 2017, Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid retired at age 78. He was replaced as leader by Senator Chuck Schumer, age 67. Democratic Whip Dick Durbin is 73. Conference Chair Patty Murray is 67.

Bernie Sanders is 76. Hillary Clinton is 70. Elizabeth Warren is 68.

But, Some Changes in the Democrats

- New co-chairs of Democratic National Committee (Tom Perez, 57 and Clinton supporter; Keith Ellison, 54, and Sanders supporter) are new in their jobs.
- Few well-known Democrats are logical presidential candidates:
The old ones (Biden, Sanders, Warren----too old to run?)

Republicans in Congress

- As majority party in both Houses, Republican leaders have been unable to keep party members together. Could not overturn Obamacare.
- Republican House leader, Speaker Paul Ryan, leaving Congress after serving as speaker for only three years.
- Congress spends less and less time in session, and allows more time for members to go home to campaign, and less time to legislate or investigate.
- Congress less interested in balancing power against the president.
EXCEPTION: Russia sanctions legislation.

Mid-Term Elections

- President's party usually loses seats in Congress in mid-terms; last exception: Bill Clinton 1998.
- Senate closely divided; 9 of 35 seats in play are now Democratic. Democrats must be lucky to win enough seats to control Senate, especially since they have nearly 4 times as many seats at risk.
- Many House Republicans retiring or running for other jobs; real possibility Democrats can win control of House.
- How is the economy in October? How is inflation? How is military activity? How strongly mobilized are voters?

President Trump Job Approval

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• RCP Average	3/27 - 4/17 --		42.1	54.2	-12.1
• Economist/ YouGov	4/15 - 4/17 1274 RV	42		55	-13
• Rasmussen	4/15 - 4/17 1500 LV	50		49	+1
• Reuters/Ipsos	4/13 - 4/17 1238 RV	41		56	-15
• NPR/PBS/Marist	4/10 - 4/13 827 RV	39		54	-15
• Gallup	4/9 - 4/15 1500 A	39		55	-16
• ABC News/ Wash Post	4/8 - 4/11 865 RV 44	54		-10	
• NBC News/ Wall St. Jrnl	4/8 - 4/11 900 A	39		57	-18
• Quinnipiac	4/6 - 4/9 1181 RV	41		52	-11
• Harvard-Harris	3/27 - 3/29 1340 RV	44		56	-12

Can We Conclude Anything?

- Trump unpredictable---and there are times this could be a help.
- Defense budget increase intended to stimulate economy, and to invest in new weapons systems ignored during peak of Irak/Afghan wars.
- At moment, citizens want a less active role in foreign affairs for US.
- If interest rates rise in US, can government afford to pay off large amounts of debt payments annually?
- Are western nations powerless to stop growing strength of Russia and China? Or is it time for a global power shift?
- If interest rates do not rise, will trade surplus shrink as dollar weakens against other major trading currencies?
- Unlikely that Trump would be impeached, regardless of which party controls Congress. The bigger question is: will he run in 2020?

Some Resources to Investigate

- Congressional Research Service Reports on Defense and National Security: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/index.html>
- And reports on foreign policy and regional affairs: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/index.html>
- Ronan Farrow, *War on Peace: The End of Diplomacy and the Decline of American Influence* (W.W. Norton publishers, 2018) Very interesting brand-new book based on interviews with former Secretaries of State.
- H.R. McMaster (former National Security Advisor) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-ltg-h-r-mcmaster-munich-security-conference/>
- The White House. National Security Strategy of the United States, December 2017. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>