



**TO: INTERESTED PARTIES**

**FR: BILL MCINTURFF/ELIZABETH HARRINGTON/GEOFF GARIN**

**DT: OCTOBER 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015**

**RE: BETTER WORLD CAMPAIGN – INDEX OF PUBLIC OPINION ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

National research conducted from October 11-14, 2015 by Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates, on behalf of the Better World Campaign, shows:

- Voters believe it is better for the United States to work with allies and through international organizations (82%) than to act mainly on our own (15%).
- The United Nations favorable image is the highest it has been since 2009. More than six in ten voters say they have a favorable opinion of the United Nations (63% favorable/9% neutral/26% unfavorable). Overall, the United Nations has the most favorable image of the organizations and institutions we tested in this survey.
- Overwhelmingly, voters continue to believe it is important for the United States to maintain an active role within the United Nations (89% important/11% not important), with a substantial majority (66%) saying it is “very important” the United States do so.
  - Voters believe the United Nations supports America’s goals and objectives around the world (65% supportive/29% not supportive).
  - Nearly all voters believe the UN serves an important role for both U.S. diplomacy and as a forum for peaceful conflict resolution of global challenges. The two roles we tested were:
    - The UN serving as a place where all countries come together to address global challenges and share responsibilities so the U.S. is not the sole supplier of resources, finances, military forces, or diplomacy for peace in the world (94% important)
    - The UN serving as a forum where countries can come together to resolve their differences and conflicts peacefully (92% important)

- When asked about specific global issues, significant majorities of Americans believe the following are important functions the UN serves:
  - Expanding access to vaccines in poor, developing countries to help decrease vaccine-preventable childhood deaths and give children a shot at a healthy life (94% important)
  - Confronting terrorist threats posed by groups like the Islamic State (90%)
  - Fighting malaria in Africa by delivering and training people how to use life-saving bed-nets to avoid mosquito bites in order to help prevent transmission of the disease (90%)
  - Helping refugees fleeing conflict in war torn countries by providing them with food, clothing, shelter, and medical care (90%)
  - Helping eradicate extreme poverty and hunger around the world (89%)
  - Working to better the lives of children fleeing war torn countries by making sure they have access to quality education (89%)
  - Improving the health situation in poor, developing countries (88%)
  - Promoting gender equality, women's rights, and the advancement of girls and women around the world (87%)
  - Promoting clean energy to address climate change (77%)
  - Taking the lead in efforts to address climate change (69%)
  
- Although awareness of the UN Global Goals is relatively low at 22%, nearly seven in ten voters have a favorable opinion (69%) of the new 2030 Global Goals as they are described in the survey.
  - Eighty-three percent (83%) of voters believe the United States should be “very” or “somewhat” involved in a worldwide effort to accomplish Global Goals by 2030.
  - And there is a majority of support (55%) for United States making the Global Goals an “absolute top” or “high” priority to accomplish these new global goals by 2030 in the U.S.
  
- Two-thirds of voters support the United States paying our dues to the United Nations on time and in full (67% favor/30% oppose). And more than seven out of ten voters support the United States paying our peacekeeping dues to the United Nations on time and in full (73% favor/24% oppose).
  - Majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats support the U.S. paying our UN general and peacekeeping dues on time and in full.
  
- Syria, ISIS/ISIL, and the Iran nuclear agreement were the top three topics dominating the international news environment in this survey track.

**DETAILED FINDINGS:**

1. Voters believe it is better for the United States to work with allies and through international organizations (82%) than to act mainly on our own (15%).
  - We asked the following question: *“Now, thinking about the United States foreign policy in general...To achieve our foreign policy goals, do you think it is better for the United States to work with allies and through international organizations or act mainly on our own?”*

	<b><u>Work with major allies/through international organizations</u></b>	<b><u>Act mainly on own</u></b>
October 2012	78%	18%
October 2013	78%	18%
October 2014	79%	16%
October 2015	82%	15%

- Republicans (75% allies-international orgs/22% on own), Independents (82%/14%), and Democrats (90%/8%) agree with this point of view about U.S. foreign policy.

2. The United Nations favorable image is the highest it has been since 2009. More than six in ten voters say they have a favorable opinion of the United Nations.

	<i>United Nations Image</i>	
	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>	<b><u>Unfavorable</u></b>
June 2009	54%	35%
October 2009	50%	36%
April 2010	60%	30%
October 2010	59%	29%
May 2011	59%	28%
October 2011	56%	30%
April 2012	58%	30%
October 2012	50%	32%
January 2013	57%	28%
October 2013	60%	28%
April 2014	59%	28%
October 2014	58%	28%
October 2015	63%	26%

The United Nations has the most favorable image of the organizations and institutions we tested today.

	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>	<b><u>Unfavorable</u></b>
United Nations	63%	26%
WHO	61%	14%
UNICEF	59%	11%
NATO	57%	18%
United Nations Security Council	40%	29%
World Bank	24%	36%
U.S. Congress	23%	68%

3. Voters overwhelmingly believe it is important the United States maintain an active role within the United Nations.
- We asked the following question: *“How important do you think it is for the United States to maintain an active role within the United Nations? Would you say...it is very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?”* Eighty-nine percent (89%) of voters say it is important that the United States maintain an active role within the United Nations, with a substantial majority (66%) saying it is very important the United States do so.

	<u>Total Important</u>	<u>Total Not Important</u>
June 2009	85%	15%
May 2011	85%	15%
October 2011	86%	13%
April 2012	83%	17%
January 2013	86%	13%
October 2013	88%	12%
April 2014	86%	13%
October 2014	87%	11%
October 2015	89%	11%

Significant majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats agree with this point of view.

	<u>Total Important</u>	<u>Total Not Important</u>
Republicans	81%	19%
Independents	84%	15%
Democrats	98%	2%

4. Voters believe the United Nations supports America’s goals and objectives around the world (65% supportive/29% not supportive).
- We asked the following question: *“Thinking about the UN’s support for America’s objectives around the world, would you say the UN has been very supportive, somewhat supportive, not too supportive, or not at all supportive of America’s goals and objectives around the world?”*

Republicans are divided on this question, while majorities of Independents and Democrats agree.

	<u>Total Supportive</u>	<u>Total Not Supportive</u>
Republicans	47%	48%
Independents	66%	28%
Democrats	81%	14%

5. Nearly all voters believe the UN serves an important role for both U.S. diplomacy and as a forum for peaceful conflict resolution of global issues. There is also overwhelmingly agreement on the importance of the UN serving these diplomatic roles among Republicans, Independents and Democrats.
- We tested various functions/roles the UN could serve and asked respondents: “How important it is to you that this be a role or function the United Nations serves.”

Summary of Diplomatic UN Functions/Roles Tested	Very Important	Total Important
Serving as a place where all countries come together to address global challenges and share responsibilities so the U.S. is not the sole supplier of resources, finances, military forces, or diplomacy for peace in the world	<b>77%</b> (GOP – 67%, IND – 82%, DEM – 84%)	<b>94%</b> (GOP – 89%, IND – 91%, DEM – 99%)
Serving as a forum where countries can come together to resolve their differences and conflicts peacefully	<b>71%</b> (GOP – 58%, IND – 63%, DEM – 87%)	<b>92%</b> (GOP – 86%, IND – 90%, DEM – 100%)

Significant majorities of Americans also think the UN has an important role in addressing global issues from confronting terrorist threats to expanding access to vaccines to eradicating poverty and more.

Summary of Global Issues - UN Functions/Roles Tested Ranked by % Very Important	Very Important	Total Important
Confronting terrorist threats posed by groups like the Islamic State.	72%	90%
Expanding access to vaccines in poor, developing countries to help decrease vaccine-preventable childhood deaths and give children a shot at a healthy life.	70%	94%
Helping to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger around the world.	64%	89%
Promoting gender equality, women's rights, and the advancement of girls and women around the world.	62%	87%
Working to better the lives of children fleeing war torn countries by making sure they have access to quality education.	61%	89%
Fighting malaria in Africa by delivering and training people how to use life-saving bed-nets to avoid mosquito bites in order to help prevent transmission of the disease.	60%	90%
Helping refugees fleeing conflict in war torn countries by providing them with food, clothing, shelter, and medical care.	60%	90%
Improving the health situation in poor, developing countries.	56%	88%
Promoting clean energy to address climate change.	53%	77%
Taking the lead in efforts to address climate change.	41%	69%

6. Nearly seven in ten voters have a favorable opinion of the new 2030 Global Goals once they hear about them.

- When read the following information about the global goals, only 22% of voters report having seen, read or heard “a lot” or “some” about the goals. *“Working through the United Nations, American and world leaders established a set of seventeen global goals to end extreme poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development plan. These goals set specific targets for all countries to achieve over the next 15 years by the year 2030, regardless of their current level of development. Before this survey, how much have you seen, read, or heard about these new global goals?”*
- We then read respondents a brief description of the global goals and asked what their impression was of the goals. *“The new global goals cover a broad range of issues that includes: Ending extreme poverty and hunger, Improving global health, Ensuring access to safe drinking water, Improving education, gender equality and empowering women, Increasing energy efficiency, Combating climate change, and Promoting economic growth. Based on this information, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, neither favorable nor unfavorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable impression of these new global goals?”*

**69% TOTAL FAVORABLE**  
**17% TOTAL UNFAVORABLE**  
36% Very Favorable  
33% Somewhat Favorable  
13% Neither Favorable Nor Unfavorable  
9% Somewhat Unfavorable  
8% Very Unfavorable

- More than eight in ten voters believe the United States should be “very” or “somewhat” involved in a worldwide effort to accomplish Global Goals by 2030.

*“How involved do you think the United States should be in a worldwide effort to accomplish these new global goals by 2030?”*

**83% TOTAL INVOLVED**  
**16% TOTAL NOT INVOLVED**  
40% Very Involved  
43% Somewhat Involved  
9% Not Too Involved  
7% Not At All Involved

- There is a majority of support for United States making the Global Goals an “absolute top” or “high” priority to accomplish the goals in the U.S. by 2030.

*“As mentioned earlier, these new global goals are for ALL countries around the world to achieve by 2030. This means they would apply to the United States as well as the developing world. Overall how high of a priority do you think it should be for the United States to accomplish these new global goals by 2030? Should it...”*

<b>55%</b>	<b>TOTAL ABSOLUTE TOP/HIGH PRIORITY</b>
<b>18%</b>	<b>TOTAL LOW/NOT A PRIORITY</b>
16%	Be an absolute top priority
39%	Be a high but not top priority
26%	Be a medium priority
10%	Be a lower priority
8%	Not be a priority at all

7. Voter support for UN funding remains strong and consistent with past tracks.
- Respondents were read the following information and asked the following question: *“Each member-nation of the United Nations pays a portion of the UN regular budget in the form of dues. These dues are based on a member-nation's capacity to pay for its share of world income. The United States represents approximately twenty-six percent of the world's income, and currently pays twenty-two percent of the UN’s budget. Knowing this, do you...favor...or...oppose...the United States paying our dues to the UN on time and in full?”*

**Pay UN General Dues On Time/In Full**

	<b><u>Favor</u></b>	<b><u>Oppose</u></b>
October 2010	63%	31%
May 2011	60%	34%
October 2011	64%	31%
April 2012	64%	32%
January 2013	67%	28%
October 2013	63%	31%
April 2014	65%	31%
October 2014	66%	27%
October 2015	67%	30%

- Majorities of Republicans, Independents and Democrats favor paying our general UN dues on time and in full.

**Pay UN General Dues On Time/In Full – By Party**

	<b><u>Favor</u></b>	<b><u>Oppose</u></b>
Republicans	55%	42%
Independents	58%	38%
Democrats	83%	14%

8. More than seven out of ten voters support the United States paying our peacekeeping dues to the United Nations on time and in full.
- Respondents were read the following information and asked the following question: *“As you may know, the United Nations organizes peacekeeping operations around the world. Each member-nation of the United Nations pays for a portion of the United Nations peacekeeping missions in the form of dues. The United States represents approximately twenty-six percent of the world’s income, and currently pays twenty-eight percent of the UN’s peacekeeping budget. Do you favor or oppose the United States paying our peacekeeping dues to the UN on time and in full?”*

***Pay UN Peacekeeping Dues On Time/In Full***

	<b><u>Favor</u></b>	<b><u>Oppose</u></b>
April 2012	68%	30%
January 2013	67%	29%
October 2013	71%	27%
April 2014	66%	31%
October 2014	72%	24%
October 2015	73%	24%

- Majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats support the U.S. paying our UN peacekeeping dues on time and in full.

***Pay UN Peacekeeping Dues On Time/In Full – By Party***

	<b><u>Favor</u></b>	<b><u>Oppose</u></b>
Republicans	61%	36%
Independents	63%	32%
Democrats	86%	11%

9. Syria, ISIS/ISIL, and the Iran nuclear agreement were the top three topics dominating the international news environment in this survey track.
- We asked respondents the following open-ended question and coded responses into common topic areas. *“Thinking about different international news stories happening outside of the United States in the past two to three months... What one or two international news stories happening outside of the United States do you remember seeing, reading or hearing about in the past two to three months? (Multiple responses were accepted)*

Listed below are the topic areas/news stories with greater than 5% mentions.

<b>39%</b>	<b>TOTAL SYRIA</b>
24%	Syria - Russian involvement/bombing/attack
21%	Syria (General Mention)
19%	Syria - Refugees
25%	ISIS/ISIL (General Mentions)
<b>13%</b>	<b>TOTAL IRAN</b>
13%	Iran - Nuclear deal
1%	Iran - Reporter being held
8%	Israeli-Palestinian conflict
7%	Russia-Ukraine conflict

#### **METHODOLOGY:**

Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates conducted a national telephone survey of 800 registered voters (520 landline; 280 cell phone), from October 11-14, 2015 on behalf of the Better World Campaign. The purpose of the survey was to measure American attitudes toward international issues and the United Nations. The margin of error on a sample of 800 interviews is  $\pm 3.46\%$ .