



# PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES

turning questions into answers



**TO: INTERESTED PARTIES**  
**FR: ELIZABETH HARRINGTON/GEOFF GARIN**  
**DT: SEPTEMBER 15, 2022**  
**RE: BETTER WORLD CAMPAIGN – INDEX OF PUBLIC OPINION ON THE UNITED NATIONS AND U.S./UN RELATIONS**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

A national telephone survey conducted from September 1-8, 2022, by Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates, on behalf of the Better World Campaign, shows:

- Voters' opinion of the United Nations has improved over the course of the past year with now more than six in ten voters saying they have a favorable opinion of the United Nations (9/2022: 27% very favorable/62% total favorable, 9/2021: 20% very favorable/56% total favorable).
- A majority of voters (52%) believe the United Nations is playing an important role in Ukraine.
- Voters view the actions that the UN is taking or has taken in Ukraine as important. From the actions provided, voters say the two most important actions the UN has taken or is taking in Ukraine:
  - Establishing humanitarian safe zones for civilians and delivery of humanitarian aid (47% of voters selected this as their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important UN action in Ukraine)
  - Providing food and shelter for Ukrainian refugees and displaced people (42% of voters selected this as their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important UN action in Ukraine).

These top two most important UN actions for voters overall are also the top two most important for Republicans, Democrats, and Independents.

While a majority of voters already see the United Nations as playing an important role in Ukraine (as noted above), the share of voters who see the UN's role in Ukraine as important rises even further to 63% after hearing about the actions the United Nations has taken.

Consistent with our September 2021 track, the September 2022 poll shows significant majorities of voters:

- Believe it is important that the United States maintain an active role within the UN (57% very important, 82% total important).
- View the United Nations as a relevant organization that is needed in the world today (69%).
- Believe the UN supports America's goals and objectives around the world (62%).
- Support the U.S. paying our dues to the UN on time and in full (pay regular budget dues – 67% favor, peacekeeping dues – 65% favor).
- Believe it is better for the United States to work with allies and through international organizations (74%) than to act mainly on our own (21%).

**DETAILED FINDINGS:**

- 1. Voters favorable views of the United Nations have improved over the course of the past year with now more than six in ten voters (62%) saying they have a favorable opinion of the United Nations.**

<b><i>United Nations Image</i></b>	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>	<b><u>Neither</u></b>	<b><u>Unfavorable</u></b>
June 2009	54%	10%	35%
October 2009	50%	12%	36%
April 2010	60%	8%	30%
October 2010	59%	8%	29%
May 2011	59%	12%	28%
October 2011	56%	11%	30%
April 2012	58%	10%	30%
October 2012	50%	14%	32%
January 2013	57%	12%	28%
October 2013	60%	9%	28%
April 2014	59%	10%	28%
October 2014	58%	12%	28%
October 2015	63%	9%	26%
December 2016	61%	11%	26%
October 2017	65%	6%	28%
June 2019	68%	8%	23%
September 2020	64%	7%	27%
September 2021	56%	15%	26%
September 2022	62%	6%	29%

As we have witnessed in our years of tracking, partisanship impacts voters' perception of the United Nations. Democrats have very favorable impressions (88% favorable/5% unfavorable) and Republicans have a slight net unfavorable image (43% favorable/47% unfavorable) of the UN.

NATO's favorable image has improved by double digits since last year (9/2022: 65% favorable, 9/2021: 51% favorable). NATO now tops the organizations we tested with the most favorable image.

<b>Image</b>	<b>% Total Favorable</b>	<b>% Total Unfavorable</b>
NATO	<b>65%</b>	<b>20%</b>
The United Nations	<b>62%</b>	<b>29%</b>
WHO	<b>51%</b>	<b>38%</b>
The United States Congress	<b>37%</b>	<b>54%</b>

**2. A majority of voters (52%) believe the United Nations is playing an important role in Ukraine, and this opinion increases significantly with more information.**

- We asked the following question: *“Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement:”*

*The United Nations is playing an important role in Ukraine.*

	<u>% Agree</u>	<u>% Disagree</u>	<u>% Not Sure</u>
<b>ALL VOTERS</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Republicans	43%	47%	9%
Independents	40%	46%	14%
Democrats	67%	22%	9%

Voters view the actions the UN is taking or has taken in Ukraine as important. When given a list of actions the UN has taken in Ukraine, the two most frequently mentioned by voters as being most important are: Establishing humanitarian safe zones for civilians and delivery of humanitarian aid (47% of voters selected this as their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important UN action in Ukraine) and Providing food and shelter for Ukrainian refugees and displaced people (42% of voters selected this as their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important UN action in Ukraine).

- These top two most important UN actions overall are also the top two most important for Republicans, Democrats, and Independents.
- We asked the following question: *“From the following list of functions that the United Nations has done during the war in Ukraine, which ONE do you think is most important? (If First Choice, Ask) And which is the next most important?”*

<u>1<sup>st</sup></u>	<u>Comb</u>	
29%	47%	Establishing humanitarian safe zones for civilians and delivery of humanitarian aid
23%	42%	Providing food and shelter for Ukrainian refugees and displaced people
14%	25%	Monitoring Ukraine’s nuclear facilities
8%	18%	Negotiating grain shipments to address the hunger crisis
6%	20%	Providing emergency health care to Ukrainians
3%	10%	Assisting Ukrainian farmers with crops
3%	6%	Raising money to help Ukrainians
6%	7%	All of The Above <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
5%	6%	Don’t know <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>
3%	4%	Refused <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>

While a majority of voters already see the United Nations as playing an important role in Ukraine, the share of voters who see the UN’s role as important rises even further to 63% after hearing about the actions the United Nations has taken or is taking in Ukraine. Hearing about the UN’s actions in the Ukraine result in majorities of Republicans and Independents now agreeing that the UN is playing an important role in Ukraine, with an especially large increase among Independents.

	<u>% Agree Initially</u> (Sample A – N=399)	<u>% Agree After Hearing UN Actions</u> (Sample B – N=401)
<b>ALL VOTERS</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>63%</b>
Republicans	43%	54%
Independents	40%	59%
Democrats	67%	77%

**3. More than eight in ten voters (82%) say that it is “very important” or “somewhat important” for the U.S. to maintain an active role in the UN, with a majority (57%) saying it is “very important” for the United States to do so. Very comfortable majorities of Republicans (73%), Independents (74%), and Democrats (98%) believe it is “very important” or “somewhat important.”**

- 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?”*

	<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%
December 2016	88%	11%
October 2017	88%	12%
June 2019	83%	16%
September 2020	85%	14%
September 2021	84%	15%
September 2022	82%	16%

**4. Roughly seven in ten voters (69%) say the United Nations is an organization that is still needed today.**

- We asked the following question: *“Thinking about the United Nations overall as an organization... do you think...it is an organization that is still needed today...or...it is an organization that has outlived its usefulness?”*

	<u>Still Needed Today</u>	<u>Outlived Usefulness</u>
June 2009	69%	27%
October 2009	67%	26%
April 2010	67%	26%
October 2010	68%	24%
May 2011	67%	28%
October 2011	68%	24%
April 2012	70%	25%
January 2013	72%	22%
October 2013	71%	23%
April 2014	67%	24%
October 2014	74%	22%
October 2015	69%	26%
December 2016	73%	23%
October 2017	79%	20%
June 2019	72%	22%
September 2020	73%	22%
September 2021	69%	25%
September 2022	69%	24%

Majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats agree the UN is an organization that is still needed today.

	<u>Still Needed Today</u>	<u>Outlived Usefulness</u>
Republicans	56%	37%
Independents	65%	29%
Democrats	87%	8%

**5. Majorities of voters believe the United Nations is supportive of America’s goals and objectives around the world (62% UN supportive of U.S. goals/28% UN not supportive of U.S. goals).**

- 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?”*

This is especially true among Democrats and with a majority of Independents agreeing. Republicans are split essentially even on this measure.

	<u>Total Supportive</u>	<u>Total Not Supportive</u>
Republicans	46%	45%
Independents	59%	30%
Democrats	80%	9%

6. **Roughly three in four voters believe it is better for the U.S. to work with allies and through international organizations (74%) than to act mainly on our own (21%) when it comes to achieving our foreign policy goals. This viewpoint holds true across partisan lines (Republicans – 61%, Independents – 66%, Democrats – 92% better for the U.S. to work with allies and through international organizations).**

- 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?”*

	<u>Work with major allies/through international organizations</u>	<u>Act mainly on own</u>
October 2012	78%	18%
October 2013	78%	18%
October 2014	79%	16%
October 2015	82%	15%
December 2016	81%	14%
October 2017	83%	15%
June 2019	80%	16%
September 2020	71%	26%
September 2021	75%	19%
September 2022	74%	21%

**7. Majorities of voters continue to support the U.S. paying our dues for the UN regular budget (67% favor) and for UN peacekeeping (65% favor) on time and in full. This is consistent with last year’s track within the margin of error.**

- 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 or its share of world income. The United States represents approximately twenty-five percent of the world’s income, and is assessed to pay 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 (9/2022 - SAMPLE A – N=399)**

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
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%
December 2016	67%	28%
October 2017*	71%	27%
June 2019*	72%	25%
September 2020*	68%	27%
September 2021*	63%	33%
September 2022*	67%	26%

*\*Note: Compared to question language in surveys before October 2017, U.S. income as a percentage of the world’s income was changed from 26% to 25%, and “is assessed to pay” was changed from “currently pays.”*

- 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-five percent of the world’s income, and is assessed to pay 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 (9/2022 - SAMPLE B – N=401)**

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
April 2012	68%	30%
January 2013	67%	29%
October 2013	71%	27%
April 2014	66%	31%
October 2014	72%	24%
October 2015	73%	24%
December 2016	70%	25%



October 2017*	73%	23%
June 2019*	67%	28%
September 2020*	69%	27%
September 2021*	68%	27%
September 2022*	65%	30%

*\*Note: Compared to question language in surveys before October 2017, U.S. income as a percentage of the world’s income was changed from 26% to 25%, and “is assessed to pay” was changed from “currently pays.”*

Majorities of Independents and Democrats favor paying both our general and peacekeeping UN dues on time and in full, while Republicans are more divided in their views.

***Pay UN General Dues On Time/In Full – By Sub-groups***

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Republicans	49%	44%
Independents	64%	30%
Democrats	86%	6%

***Pay UN Peacekeeping Dues On Time/In Full – By Sub-groups***

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Republicans	49%	46%
Independents	61%	36%
Democrats	87%	9%

**METHODOLOGY:**

Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates conducted a national telephone survey of 800 registered voters (76% cell phones, 24% land lines), from September 1-8, 2022, on behalf of the Better World Campaign. The purpose of the survey was to measure American attitudes toward the United Nations and U.S.-UN relations. The margin of error on a sample of 800 interviews is  $\pm 3.46\%$  and the margin of error on the half samples (samples A/B) in this survey is  $\pm 4.9\%$ .