

MANAGING CONFLICT IN THE POST-COLD WAR WORLD
A Public Perspective

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I. INTRODUCTION

Use of military force remains high in the public consciousness despite the end of the Cold War. In some ways, it has become even more prominent since last year when we reported on public attitudes toward military intervention and the impact of news coverage on those attitudes.² Moreover, the increased politicalization of foreign policy issues by the Republican-led Congress suggests that international affairs, with its concomitant potential of military action, will play a significant role in domestic political debate throughout the 1996 Presidential election campaign.

Over the past 12 months, American troops were dispatched to Haiti in September to restore President Aristide to office, and to the Persian Gulf in October to face an Iraqi buildup on the Kuwaiti border. President Clinton also ordered the U.S. military to help airlift humanitarian relief to victims of the savage tribal convulsions in Central Africa. More broadly, Americans have become much more attentive to the civil war in Bosnia with the downing and dramatic rescue of the U.S. F-16 pilot, Capt. Scott O'Grady, and the taking of UN peace-keepers as hostages. But as we shall see, the events did not change any minds about keeping out of that conflict.

The vigorous effort by the new Congress to control key aspects of U.S. foreign policy may have been inevitable with the end of Cold War, since Congressional activism followed the end of World Wars I and II and the Vietnam War. As in the mid-1970s, a White House official complained, "we are seeing foreign policy being used as a device by the president's opponents to define themselves politically." However, President Clinton may be uniquely vulnerable in this regard for reasons beyond his controversial lack of military service. Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), the GOP Presidential contender with most credentials in foreign policy, contends that Clinton's "serious lack of decisiveness" in this area and his belief that the public was not interested in foreign affairs, "aided and abetted the isolationist mood in the country."³

Whatever the merits of these views, the events in Haiti and Bosnia and opinion polls related to them provide new data about public attitudes toward both the use of force and toward American foreign policies, including views about the United Nations as it marks its 50th anniversary.

At the same time, analysis of a Times Mirror-coordinated poll of eight countries on both sides of the Atlantic, and a Wall Street Journal survey of the U.S., Japan and Germany on the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, offer an opportunity for a disquieting comparison of the public attitudes in the United States with other nations on foreign policy.

II. LAST YEAR'S PAPER

Last year we argued that opinion polls can offer some help to policy makers on when and why public support can be marshalled for ordering U.S. forces abroad. The foreign policy priorities the public says it wants were examined and the media coverage and opinion polls related to three cases-- the Persian Gulf War, Somalia and Bosnia -- were discussed in some depth. The public had shown three different faces toward the use of U.S. forces in those instances: full support in the Gulf war, transitory support in Somalia, and no support in Bosnia. From these examples, a dozen general principles were offered regarding the public's attitude toward the use of force, the way the news media affects that attitude, and the opportunities and obstacles faced by policy makers in trying to shape that attitude.

To recap briefly, we found that equal hard-core proportions of the American public -- about 30% each -- are for and against military intervention. The rest of the public are also evenly split -- about 20% each -- between those inclined to support use of force only for U.S. centric missions (i.e., protecting oil supplies) and those disposed only to support humanitarian missions (i.e., feeding starving people). More specifically:

1. Early in a crisis, the public expresses a basic disposition to support or reject the use of force based on two key variables: whether it concludes significant U.S. national interests are at stake and whether it concludes the U.S. has a moral responsibility to act. But even when it feels America has a responsibility, large percentages of the public (sometimes majorities) resist any action unless stimulated by Presidential leadership. An important factor in this regard is Congress. Despite the public's low regard of the body, it puts considerable value on Congressional debate prior to committing forces and tends to then endorse the result in greater proportion (as in the Gulf war).

2. There is little consensus among the public -- last year and today -- on what missions would be in the American national interest, with two exceptions: protecting energy sources and halting the spread of nuclear weapons. Some missions with clear domestic consequences have strong constituencies, however, such as stopping terrorism, drugs, illegal immigration, and international crime. And the public by and large supports intervention for humanitarian purposes. But there is little support for using U.S. forces for peace-keeping activities and even less for American forces to be peace-makers (nation builders) in distant parts of the world. Support for such use of American forces rises somewhat if they are to be part of a multilateral effort.

3. Once a Presidential decision to use force is made, the public's initial inclination to "rally round" the move is greater now than in the past. This attitude is reinforced by the extraordinary amounts of news coverage given to American forces committed to a foreign mission. In this early stage of an intervention, the nation's political and military leaders have their best opportunity to make their case for use of force and to shape the news media's agenda for coverage of the action. But sustained communication with the public about the purpose and scope of the mission is vital to maintain support as the media, with its short attention span, moves on to other, often diverting stories.

4. Televised images of the death and suffering among non-Americans create sympathy for the victims but do not affect the basic disposition of the public to support U.S. troops in peace-keeping or peace-making roles. American casualties do have a profound impact on public support when the public feels the U.S. has little national interest at stake in the mission. But there is no evidence for deciding at what level the televised images of American casualties becomes intolerable if the public has concluded that U.S. national interests or some other larger reason justified the intervention.

At this point, we see no reason to modify these conclusions. In fact, data accumulating in the interim on Bosnia and Haiti reinforce them.

III. TWO CASES

A. Haiti

In a later version of our Aspen report⁴, we examined the case of Haiti following the dispatch of American forces despite strong and consistent public opposition to using U.S. troops to restore Aristide and democracy. Congress had not been consulted (although 78% of the public wanted Clinton to do so one week before the invasion), and the public was confused and not at all convinced about the reasons for intervening. In September, just before Clinton's speech explaining the reasons for ordering forces into Haiti, 62% of Americans said U.S. vital interests were not at stake there; after his speech, 57% said the same thing (in two ABC polls⁵). Once the force was committed, the usual "rally-round" increase in support was small and 52% still said the U.S. should have stayed out. We concluded that the public may demand a "zero-casualty" mission, as it did in Somalia, for even the low level of support that existed.

Opposition to U.S. forces in Haiti remains high despite the bloodless success of that mission so far. At the end of March, on the eve of the United Nations taking over the peace-keeping role (with considerable U.S. troops among its force), only 34% of respondents approved of U.S. troops in Haiti, and fully 59% disapproved (CNN, Mar. 27). At the same time, 43% of respondents said Clinton was doing a good job handling the situation in Haiti, while 36% said it was a poor job; and 38% described his Haitian policy as a success, while 40% said it was a failure (Time, Mar. 29). Before and after the UN takeover, the public split evenly: 47% approved and 47% disapproved on Clinton's decision to send in the troops (TMC, February), and the approval level remains essentially unchanged at 48% in June, with the disapproval rate down insignificantly to 44% (TMC).

A brief comparison of Haiti and Rwanda may be instructive. In Haiti, just after the troops landed in September, a strong majority of Americans (56%) said the United States does *not* have responsibility to do something to restore democracy there, while 36% said it does; this was unchanged from the previous majority (57% no, 36% yes) (NYT polls). In Rwanda, 51% said the United States does not have responsibility (34% said it does) in June, 1994 (CBS). The view that the U.S. does have responsibility these two situations is lower than for Bosnia, where it is 67% (as described below), which is to some extent due to greater sympathy among African Americans for the plight of the largely black nations, particularly Haiti. Fully 58% of blacks said the U.S. has a responsibility toward Haiti, vs. 37% of whites; 47% of blacks vs. 31% of whites said the U.S. has a responsibility toward Rwanda (CBS).

B. Bosnia

In the first polls on the Balkan war, taken in early 1993 as U.S. airdrops of food began, two-thirds (67%) of Americans rejected the notion that the U.S. has "a responsibility to do something about the fighting," while 24% accepted it (NYT, January 1993). About that time, attentiveness to news about Bosnia reached its peak -- 23% said they followed the story "very closely" (TMC, May 1993) -- as the Clinton administration was reported considering committing U.S. forces to the conflict.

These measures fluctuated over the next two years amid extensive coverage of "ethnic cleansing," systematic rapes and other atrocities by the Serbs against the Bosnians, and considerable news media sentiment in favor of helping the Bosnians. Yet by November, 1994, public opinion against doing "something" was only marginally lower than at the start: 62% said the U.S. does not have a responsibility, 30% said it does. And attentiveness fell to its nadir in early 1995: 8% in February and 11% in March said they were paying "very close" attention to the story (TMC).

News attentiveness doubled to 22% in June (TMC) with the extensive coverage of the downing of Capt. O'Grady and the plight of the hostaged UN peace-keepers. Of many possibilities, Americans said Bosnia was the nation's most important international problem: 18% volunteered that answer, more than double the 7% of two years earlier. But public attitudes toward the war did not change. A strong majority (61%) in the June (TMC) opposed use of U.S. forces to help end the fighting, up only marginally from 55% a year earlier. In June, too, 64% said the U.S. does *not* have responsibility to do something in the Balkans vs. 30% said it does (TMC). The same month found even greater sentiment *against* U.S. responsibility (69% no, vs. 24% yes), essentially the same as two years earlier (NYT).

Rather strikingly, however, the American public looks to the United Nations in this regard: 58% said the UN *does* have a responsibility to do something to end the Balkan fighting, 35% said it does not (NYT, June). And having turned over the job to the United Nations, the public said the United States should come to the aid of UN peacekeepers when and if they encounter trouble. Fully 71% supported the use of U.S. forces to help those peacekeepers if they come under attack, and 65% support sending U.S. forces to help the peacekeepers move to safer areas in Bosnia (TMC).

IV. FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

The U.S. public appears very difficult to satisfy these days about foreign affairs. It endorses the major element of Clinton's Bosnian policy: keeping out of the war. But perhaps because other elements of that policy may be confusing and even contradictory⁶, the public on balance disapproved of his handling of Bosnia, 46% to 39% (TMC, June). CBS, also in June, got very similar results: 47% disapprove, 33% approve. Last December, 43% disapproved, 41% approved (NBC). Last July, 48% disapproved, 31% approved (CNN).

Along the same line, Americans disapproved of the way Bill Clinton is handling the nation's overall foreign policy: 52% (vs. 39% approved), up from 42% disapproval (50% approved) last October. The most recent (June) disapproval rating is about the greatest ever in his tenure, equal to the level last July (TMC polls). Remarkably, the increased disapproval rating comes more from Clinton's own supporters, including those who voted for him in 1992 and those who approve of his overall job performance in the White House. It is clear that core Democratic groups do not give the Administration as much support on foreign policy generally, and on Bosnia in particular, as they do on domestic issues.

But disapproval of Clinton's handling of Bosnia appears unrelated to how people feel about that particular conflict. Americans who are pro-interventionist and those who sympathize with the Bosnians do not judge the Administration any differently than those who favor a hands-off policy and express no favorite side in that war. In effect, unhappiness with Clinton over Bosnia seems more a consequence of Bosnia's presence on the scene rather than as a consequence of his specific actions. And attitudes toward his foreign policy generally correlate stronger with attitudes toward his policy on Bosnia than with any other specific foreign policy of his administration. In effect, unhappiness with Bill Clinton over Bosnia seems more a consequence of its prominence on the national agenda than a response to his specific courses of action there.

Regarding other administration foreign policies, the public disapproves of financial aid to Russia (54% vs. 36%) and objects even more strongly to loan guarantees to Mexico (60% vs. 21%). Of Clinton's prominent international moves recently, only the threat to double the tariffs on Japanese luxury cars won strong approval: 61% vs. 25%.

The implication is that Americans are less impressed by whether or not Clinton uses force than by whether they think U.S. interests are paramount in his decisions. A plurality of respondents (43%) in our June poll said Clinton makes the right decisions about committing military force, while the rest split on whether he is too quick or too slow to use force (23% each). But a similar plurality (42%) said Clinton does not push U.S. interests hard enough, three times more than the 12% who said he pushes too hard (39% said just about right). In short, the public's views about Bosnia (and thus about his overall foreign policy) are less an indicator of its attitudes toward Clinton's Bosnian policy (and other specific foreign policy decisions) per se than they are about whether he pushes American interests hard enough in those decisions.⁷

V. AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

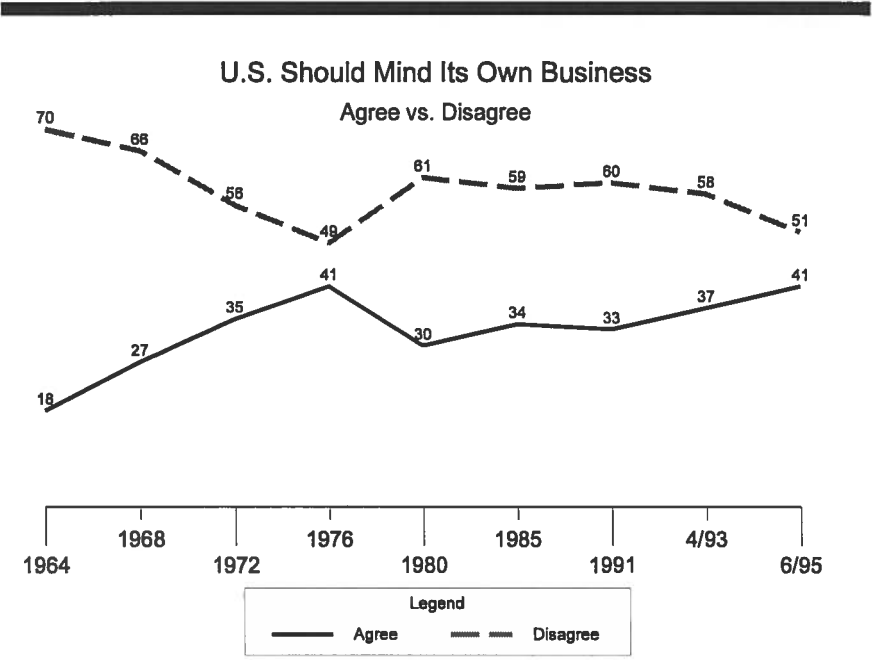
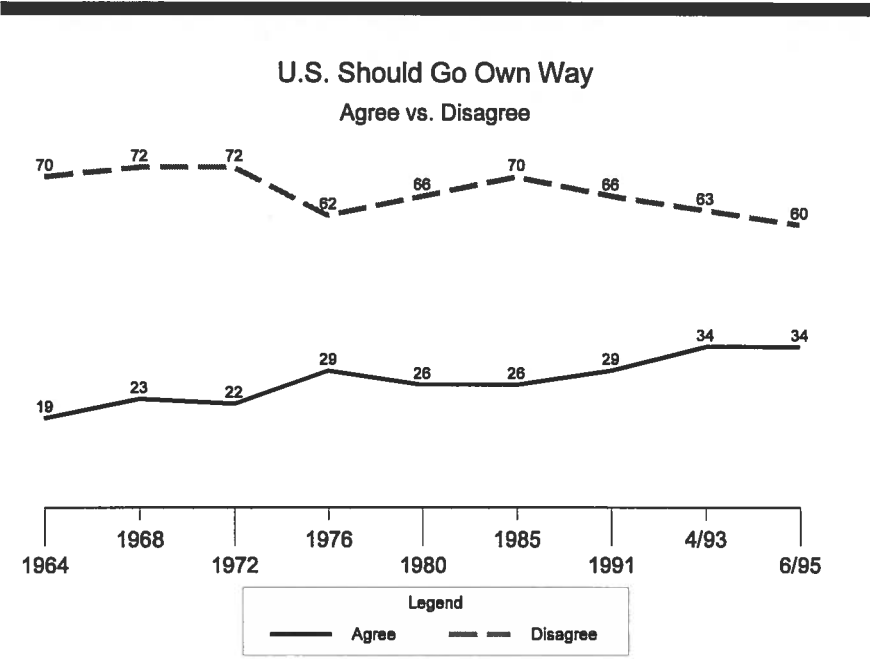
The nation appears to be experiencing a sustained cycle of pessimism in national as well as international affairs. Almost three times more respondents (73% vs. 25%) said they were dissatisfied with the way things are going in the country. This dissatisfaction level has essentially remained the same throughout the Clinton tenure, at over 70%, except for one brief moment in January, 1993, after Clinton's inauguration, when it was 50% (39% satisfied). Asked about the most important international problems facing the country, the biggest change was the rise in mentions of concern about the U.S. leadership role: 30%, compared to 12% two years ago.

As Americans said loud and clear two years ago in a comparable poll,⁸ we found this June that the public wants U.S. foreign policy to serve its domestic agenda. Its insistence on protecting U.S. jobs and strengthening the American economy has ebbed marginally, but specific foreign policy goals such as helping democracy succeed in Russia as well as broader humanistic activities such as promoting human rights around the world are viewed as low priorities. On balance, the new poll also found that Americans remain internationalist rather than isolationist, but today, increased minorities of the public -- equal to or greater than ever before -- believe the United States should mind its own business and let other countries go their own way.

The trend toward isolationism this year was more pronounced in the various measures we used, although in most of them, it should be emphasized that strong majorities of Americans remain internationalist. Specifically:

- Almost three out of four Americans (74%) agreed that the United States should take into account the views of its major allies in making foreign policy decisions. But this was a drop from 86% who agreed amid the Persian Gulf War, and virtually the same as in 1976 in the wake of Vietnam when 72% agreed.

- Three out of five (60%) disagreed that the United States should go its own way in international matters, "not worrying too much about whether other nations agree with it or not," vs. 34% who would go it alone. But this was the lowest level of disagreement in 30 years.⁹



- Barely half (51%) disagreed that the United States should mind its own business internationally and "let other countries get along the best they can on their own." Again, this was virtually the lowest level of opposition to this view in 30 years. Fully 41% agreed with that attitude, matching the highest level in this measure of isolationism (recorded in 1976).¹⁰

These public attitudes on specific questions are consistent with the public's views on two broader foreign policy measures: what it sees as the country's international *problems* and what it sees as its long-range international *goals*. Six of seven foreign policy problems received a lower priority now (i.e., fewer gave them top priority) than two years ago. The only exception was the Bosnian war (32% gave it top priority now, vs. 22% in 1993). The ranking of these problems remains essentially unchanged in two years. Regarding foreign policy goals, less change was found in their priority, but here, too, the ranking of the goals remained essentially the same.

Top priority among 10 *goals* presented to respondents was given to protecting American jobs. Second was preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Then came insuring adequate energy supplies, improving the global environment, and strengthening the United Nations. Bottom four goals were promoting human rights, protecting weaker nations against aggression, promoting democracy abroad, and helping improve the living standards in developing nations.

FOREIGN POLICY GOALS

The Public's View

<u>TOP GOALS:</u>	% Who Say Top Priority	
	<u>Sept 1993</u>	<u>June 1995</u>
Protecting the jobs of American workers	85	80
Preventing spread of weapons of mass destruction	69	68
Insuring adequate energy supplies for the U.S.	60	59
Improving the global environment	56	56
Strengthening the United Nations	41	36
Aiding the interests of U.S. business abroad	27	26
Promoting and defending human rights in other countries	22	21
Protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression	17	21
Helping improve the living standard in developing nations	19	16
Promoting democracy in other nations	22	16

Among international *problems*, top priority went to stopping drug trafficking, closely followed by reducing the threat of international terrorism, then strengthening the domestic U.S. economic in order to improve the U.S. position internationally. Bottom two problems, according to the public's priorities, were helping Mexico become more stable and insuring democracy succeeds in Russia.

FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES

The Public's View

<u>TOP PRIORITIES</u>	% Who Say Top Priority	
	<u>Sept 1993</u>	<u>June 1995</u>
Stopping international drug trafficking	82	75
Reducing the threat of international terrorism	-	71
Strengthening our domestic economy to improve the U.S. international position	71	67
Stopping illegal immigration into this country	65	61
Protecting the global environment	63	55
Better managing our trade and economic disputes with Japan	48	40
Ending the warfare in Bosnia (former Yugoslavia)	22	32
Helping Mexico become more stable politically and economically	-	16
Insuring democracy succeeds in Russia and the other former Soviet states	23	14

VI. THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

Despite signs of a growing isolationist minority, Americans as a whole continue to express strong support for the United Nations. Although the public is increasingly preoccupied with domestic concerns, it sees the United Nations as a vehicle for carrying the burdens and sharing the costs of global leadership. The world organization is prized most for providing a forum for dialogue between nations and as a mechanism for trying to tackle global problems. It is criticized most strongly for its poor record of accomplishments. Not unimportantly, the public is under the impression that the United States pays more than its fair share of UN costs. The percentage of Americans willing to spend more for various UN activities is sharply lower than it was less than a decade ago. And the public remains very wary about U.S. military forces participating in multinational peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts.

Two-thirds of respondents had a favorable attitude toward the United Nations (14% "very" favorable, 53% "mostly" favorable). This is appreciably higher than the public rated Congress (53% favorable) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (61% favorable). The Times Mirror poll also found that nearly two out of three Americans (62%) want the United States to cooperate fully with the international body.

Both of these opinion measures have fluctuated considerably over the years. Favorability has been more volatile in the short term: in February, it was 62%, while last July it was 76%. Opinion on whether to cooperate fully has been largely flat for two years, after having been as high as 77% in 1991 in the wake of the Persian Gulf War, and as low as 46% in the 1976 post-Vietnam doldrums.

Within the American populace, there appears to be a hard core of opponents to the UN, one that is growing rather than shrinking. Fully 28% said they had a unfavorable (mostly plus very) view of the UN, which is the highest level of such antagonism in four years. Similarly, 30% disagree that the U.S. should cooperate fully with the world body, by no means the highest level but considerably higher than 17% who felt that way in 1991. Americans who like the United Nations say it brings nations together, helps maintain world peace, and helps nations needing assistance. Those who dislike it complain primarily that it is ineffective and costly to the U.S.

How respondents see the U.S. role in the world is a significant indicator of how they feel about the UN. Those who feel the U.S. should play no leadership role, and those who feel the U.S. should be the single world leader, both view the UN less favorably than those who want a shared U.S. leadership role in the world.

UN Peace-Keeping and Peace-Making

The UN's poorest grades came for peace-keeping and peace-making: 63% said fair or poor for keeping the peace in world trouble spots, and 69% said fair or poor for "restoring law and order" where it has broken down. Even as a forum for peaceful resolution of conflicts, 53% gave it a fair or poor grade.

The public was also dubious about U.S. forces taking part in UN peace-keeping and peace-making missions. A strong majority of 63% approved the dispatch of "UN forces, including some U.S. military forces," for famine relief in Asia or Africa. A bare majority (52%) approved such a UN/U.S. force "to prevent slaughters" in regional conflicts. But the public split on sending such a force "to Asian or African countries to restore law and order:" 47% approved, 46% disapproved. And it was similarly divided of sending such a force "to keep the peace when two sides in a conflict have called a truce:" 46% approved, 47% disapproved.

Of the many other UN activities around the world, most support from the public went to programs to stop disease and improve health care. Fully 50% of respondents said more money should go to this mission, essentially the same level of support for this activity (53%) as in 1989 in a United Nations Association survey. But the Times Mirror poll in June found fewer Americans supporting increased spending for all other UN activities measured in the survey, and particularly for efforts "to bring peace to regional conflicts." The other activities measured included monitoring human rights violations, disaster relief, economic aid to poorer nations, protection for the environment, and slowing population growth via birth control.

VII. INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

Finally, some recent international surveys allow comparisons to be made between the American and other publics. Several conclusions can be drawn which are not very heartening, particularly for American leaders concerned with foreign affairs.

Early in 1994, the Times Mirror Center in conjunction with several foreign media organizations conducted a common survey in eight nations, five in Europe (Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain) and three in North America (Canada, Mexico and the United States).¹¹ Two highlights are of interest.

First, all the countries surveyed showed abysmally low ratings for virtually all leadership groups for their *believability and positive influence* on society. Fewer than one in three members of the public in all countries said their government officials and their congresses or parliaments were *believable*, and the chief political figures in each country fared only slightly better. The United States was in the middle of the pack in these measures. The church was believable to majorities only in Mexico, the U.S., and Italy. Almost in passing, the news media received the highest overall marks for believability in all countries except Mexico (where that top rating went to the Church); its watchdog role was highly valued in all nations even if the ways it collects and presents the news was not. Similarly, legislators and business leaders were judged lower than the press in their *influence* on the societies in these countries. Churches were rated roughly as high as the press on influence in five of the eight countries; the exceptions were France, Germany and Spain. Overall, only environmentalists scored higher than the media as being a good influence on society.

Second, the international publics were all about equally attentive to major international stories. But in a five-question current events test, Americans rated next to last in answering correctly such questions as who is Boutros Boutros Ghali. Only Spaniards rated lower on average, although even they did better than Americans in one respect: 37% of Americans failed to answer even one question correctly, vs. 32% of Spaniards. The Germans were best informed, with only 3% failing to answer at least one question correctly. In between were the Italians (18%), British (22%), French (23%) Canadians (27%), and Mexicans (28% failed all).

Despite higher levels of education in the United States, Americans know far less than people in European states about world events. Taking this data, two academicians, Michael A. Dimock and Samuel L. Popkin of the University of California, San Diego, found that the German masses are as knowledgeable as the American elite.¹² "Part of the reason Americans are less

informed than Europeans is that American TV is the least informative TV of any advanced country," they concluded; American newspapers fare well in comparison to newspapers of other countries, but nearly three in four Americans get their news first from television. Differences in media quality do not wholly explain differences in knowledge level between countries, however. Fundamental social differences in how information is valued within each society are also part of the explanation, Dimock and Popkin said.

Against this background, a survey of American, German and Japanese publics by the Wall St. Journal and financial newspapers in the other countries in March found "the military battlefield concluded in 1945 has been replaced with a fierce economic battlefield, and American attitudes are built off economic, not diplomatic relations," in the words of the U.S. pollsters, Peter Hart and Robert Teeter. Three out of four Americans (76%) see the Japanese as economic adversaries and competitors, but a majority (51%) see them as military and diplomatic allies and partners. U.S. majorities see Germans both as economic allies (56%) and military allies (63%). "Because Americans see Japan as our chief economic competitor, relations are cooler. By contrast, few see Europe or Germany as an economic competitor, and therefore relations are warmer."¹³

The foreign policy priorities found among Americans by the *Wall Street Journal* poll were somewhat different from the Times Mirror polls, particularly in rating altruistic endeavors more highly. This may be due to the distinction made between goals and problems in the Times Mirror surveys. In any case, the different publics were offered five activities in the Wall Street Journal poll: protecting the global environment, controlling nuclear proliferation, helping to reduce poverty in developing nations, improving global trade relations, and combatting terrorism. They prioritized them according to the following chart.

	<u>United States</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>Germany</u>
1.	global environment	global environment	reduce poverty
2.	nuclear proliferation	nuclear proliferation	global environment
3.	reduce poverty	global trade	nuclear proliferation
4.	global trade	reduce poverty	combatting terrorism
5.	combatting terrorism	combatting terrorism	global trade

In terms of leadership, twice as many Americans preferred their country to become less active rather than more active (34% to 17%) in world affairs, while almost twice as many Germans preferred the reverse (33% more active, 17% less active). The Japanese were almost off the scale in this respect: 72% said more active, 2% less active.

	<u>United States</u>	<u>Germany</u>	<u>Japan</u>
More active	17	33	72
Less active	34	17	2
Current level	47	46	23
Not sure	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100

Q. In your view, should the country become more active in world affairs, less active in world affairs, or continue at its current level of activity in world affairs? (WSJ)

Most Americans saw the greatest threat to peace from the Middle East (56%). A plurality of Germans (40%) saw it in Russia and the former Soviet republics. The Japanese saw it scattered, led by North Korea (27%) but also Russia (24%) and China and the Middle East (both 20%). The region of the world most important to the United States over the next twenty years was Europe, according to 23% of American respondents; for 66% of the Japanese it was China; and it was the United States and Russia for 28% and 26% of Germans, respectively.

Large majorities in all three countries said Germany and Japan should be given permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council. Asked if Japan will acquire nuclear weapons in the next ten years, Americans said yes by over two to one (67% vs. 29%) while the Japanese said no almost eight to one (86% vs. 11%).

Three conclusions seem warranted by this data:

First, a crisis of confidence in its leadership groups afflicts the United States, but not only the United States; the publics in the key West European nations are similarly disillusioned with their social and political institutions. This makes the job of elected officials in these countries far more difficult in generating public support for their policies, including their foreign policies.

Second, the task of winning support for international policies -- indeed, for even articulating them coherently to the skeptical public -- is more difficult in the United States than in the other nations surveyed because Americans know less about the world (and perhaps even less about the world than their parents did). Basic political knowledge helps an individual to process international events in a manner that allows the events to be more understandable and thus produce less anxiety and feelings of vulnerability when confronted by social and economic change. Such basic knowledge is rare in America today.

Finally, the foreign agenda of the American public is significantly less altruistic than those of Japan and Germany, and the growing isolationist minority in the United States is greater than in those two nations. Americans clearly want to put down the burden of being "leader of the Free World" and are unwilling take up the role of the single leader in reordering the post-Cold War world. Yet the degree of United States participation in world affairs will be perhaps the most important factor in defining the shape of the new world order.

ENDNOTES

1. Andrew Kohut, former president of the Gallup Organization and founder of Princeton Survey Research Associates, is director of the Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press, a public service arm of the Times Mirror Co. Robert C. Toth, a former foreign and national security correspondent of the Los Angeles Times, is senior associate at the Center. Carol J. Bowman, director of research at the Center, assembled the survey data for this article.
2. "The People, the Press and the Use of Force," By Andrew Kohut and Robert C. Toth, Prepared for the Aspen Strategy Group, Aug. 14-19, 1994. Copies are available from the Times Mirror Center for the People & the Press, 1875 I St. NW, Washington DC 20006.
3. Quoted in "Domestic Politics Intrudes on Foreign Policy," By Michael Dobbs, Washington Post, June 26, 1995, pA4.
4. "Arms and the People" in Foreign Affairs, November/December 1994, pp 47-61.
5. ABC News polls Sept. 8-12 and Sept. 15, 1994, respectively. For sake of brevity, most polls in this article will be identified by the initials of the polling organizations. In partnerships, only one organization is cited. Other abbreviations are TMC for the Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press, NBC for NBC/The Wall Street Journal, NYT for The New York Times/CBS News, and CNN for Cable News Network/USA Today.
6. See for example "America's Self-Canceling Bosnia Policy," By Michael Mandelbaum, in The New York Times, June 18, 1995, pE15.
7. Details of the TMC June poll, as it also relates to the United Nations and U.S. foreign policy priorities, are contained in "Public Opinion of the UN: Strong Support, Strong Criticism," Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press, Washington, DC, June 25, 1995.
8. "America's Place in the World," Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press, Washington, DC, released November, 1993.
9. Trend data from 1964 to 1991 are from public opinion surveys conducted by Potomac Associates, The Gallup Organization and The Institute for International Social Research.
10. Trend data from 1964 to 1991 are from public opinion surveys conducted by Potomac Associates, The Gallup Organization and The Institute for International Social Research.
11. "Mixed Message about Press Freedom on Both Sides of the Atlantic," Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press, Mar. 16, 1994, Washington DC. Cooperating were El Pais in Spain, La Republica in Italy, Liberation in France, and El Norte in Mexico.

12. "Who Knows?: Political Knowledge in Comparative Perspective," Michael A. Dimock and Samuel L. Popkin, prepared for the Midwest Political Science Association meeting, Chicago, Ill, Apr. 6-8, 1995. See also "Cognitive Engagement and Citizen World Views," Samuel L. Popkin and Michael A. Dimock, prepared for the PEGS Conference on Citizen Competence and the Design of Democratic Institutions, Feb. 10-11, 1995, Washington, DC.
13. Wall Street Journal, Apr. 14, 1995, p. R16