



**NEW STUDY: AMERICANS BETWEEN 18 AND 29 INCREASINGLY OPPOSE
A MILITARIZED US FOREIGN POLICY**

Since the Eurasia Group Foundation began polling Americans in 2018, younger Americans ages 18-29 have grown increasingly wary of the United States’ militarized foreign policy. Instead of spreading democracy around the world, they believe the US should focus on priorities at home, like mending its democracy.

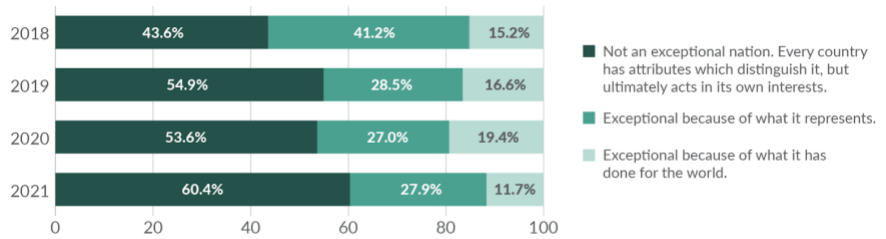
Most young Americans do not ascribe to a notion of “American exceptionalism” as they believe the US behaves, like every other country, in its own interest. Between 2018 and 2021, the number of young Americans with this view has increased significantly (38 percent).

Young Americans believe the primary obligation of the US government is to its citizens at home. Since 2018, there has been a significant increase (62%) in the number who think “the most important obligation of the

American government is to maintain Constitutional rights and liberties for U.S. citizens.” Conversely, the number who think Washington’s most important obligation is to promote democracy worldwide or to protect America from foreign threats has decreased (by 25% and 42% respectively).

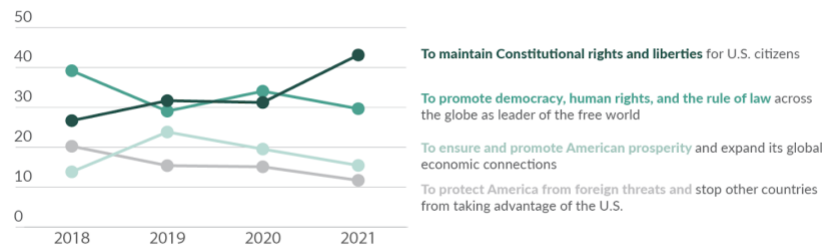
Since 2018, there has been a sizable increase (25%) of young Americans who think “peace is best achieved and sustained... by keeping a focus on domestic needs and the health of American democracy while avoiding

America is:



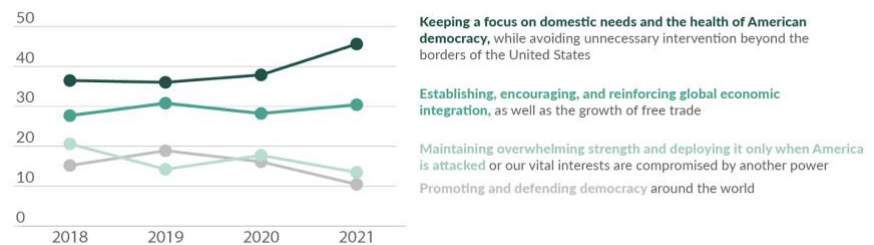
Source: EGF

The most important obligation of the American government is:



Source: EGF

Peace is best achieved and sustained by the United States by:



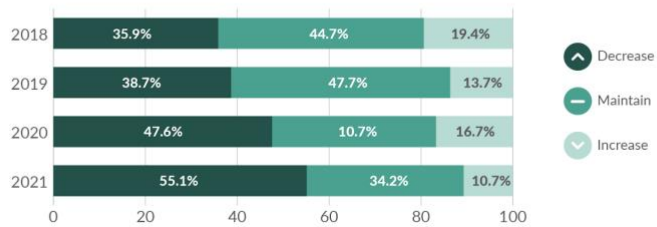
Source: EGF

unnecessary intervention beyond the borders of the United States.” There has also been a significant dip (34%) in young Americans who think the US military needs to maintain “overwhelming strength.”

This translates to skepticism about the necessity of maintaining or increasing defense spending. The number of young Americans who want to decrease the defense budget has risen sharply since 2018 (58%).

Today the United States budgets more than \$700 billion each year for its national defense, more than any other country. By comparison, the next three countries in descending order of military spending are: China (\$228 billion), Saudi Arabia (\$69.4 billion), and Russia (\$66.3 billion). As a percentage of its overall economic output (GDP), the U.S. ranks fourth in military spending, after Saudi Arabia, Israel and Russia.

Do you think American lawmakers should increase, maintain, or decrease our current level of military spending?



Source: EGF

The above shifts correspond with a change in young Americans’ worldviews. Based on respondents’ answers to a series of questions, foreign policy preferences were

categorized into the following ideal types based on scholar Walter Russell Mead’s foreign policy taxonomy: *Jeffersonian*, *Hamiltonian*, *Wilsonian*, and *Jacksonian*.

Between 2018 and 2021, there has been a large increase (48%) in the number of young Americans with a Jeffersonian worldview. Instead of seeing democracy as something that the US has a responsibility or obligation to spread around the world, Jeffersonians are more concerned with protecting democracy at home. The number of young Americans with a Hamiltonian outlook -- which prioritizes American commerce and free trade as a foundation for domestic and international stability -- has also increased significantly (62%).

Worldviews



Source: EGF

In contrast, the number of young Americans with Wilsonian and Jacksonian worldviews have markedly decreased (30% and 70%, respectively). While the former perspective holds that spreading democracy globally is a moral obligation and national security imperative, the latter supports the unilateral use of American force to defend American interests.