Expert Consensus: Joe Biden will be a better foreign policy president than Donald Trump

On Twitter: @TRIP_irsurvey and #TRIPsurvey

Selected findings are published on ForeignPolicy.com: [Poll: How Biden and Trump Differ on Foreign Policy](#)

[Full report with Data Visualizations available here.](#)

WILLIAMSBURG, VA — Results from a Teaching, Research, & International Policy (TRIP) survey of 706 international relations (IR) scholars at U.S. universities finds that IR scholars are far more likely to support former Vice President Joe Biden than President Donald Trump for president and overwhelmingly agree that Biden will be better able to achieve his foreign policy agenda. Even experts who identify themselves as Republicans and Independents are far more skeptical of President Trump's approach to foreign policy than are their co-partisans in the U.S. population at large.

Despite concerns about foreign election interference, most scholars are confident that Russia, Iran, and China will not significantly impact the outcome of the election. They do believe, however, that foreign efforts to interfere will undermine American citizens' confidence in election results. These experts see Russia as the most pernicious of the three states when it comes to election meddling, even though they see the rise of Chinese power and influence as a greater long-term threat to the United States than the rise of Russian power and influence.

Other Key Results
        #1: These experts believe that Trump and Biden's foreign policies would differ most markedly in the areas of climate change, engagement with multilateral organizations, and global public health. IR scholars see the most similarities between the two candidates' policies on exchange rate policy, counterterrorism, and the use of military force abroad.

        #2: Respondents overwhelmingly said that foreign governments will be more willing to cooperate with the United States if Biden (92 percent) wins the election than if Trump (2 percent) wins.

        #3: By a significant margin, the experts also agreed that Biden (95 percent) will be a more effective foreign policy president than Trump (5 percent).

        #4 If the election were held today, more than 94 percent of IR faculty who are eligible to vote would cast a vote for Biden, and 5 percent would vote for Trump.

Other results:
- 88.5 percent of IR scholars believe climate change is a major global threat, followed by the spread of infectious diseases, with 76 percent agreeing that it is a major threat to society.
- Over 70 percent of IR scholars believe that Obama outperformed Trump in 13 foreign policy areas. Only 18 percent agreed that Trump's use of military force was better than his predecessor.

- Regardless of which candidate wins the upcoming election, IR scholars predict that the U.S. will provide limited support to Belarus. 33.5 percent believe Biden will provide at least moderate support to the country, whereas only 20.5 percent believe the same actions will be taken under Trump.

Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) Project Snap Polls survey all faculty members employed at a U.S. university in a political science department or policy school who teach or conduct research on issues that cross international borders. Snap polls are conducted several times a year to provide real-time information on expert views of emerging foreign policy issues. The current TRIP Snap Poll, which included 23 questions on foreign policy and the U.S. presidential election, was sent to 4,983 IR scholars across the nation. 708 individuals answered the survey for a response rate of approximately 14.2 percent.

This is the 14th survey in the TRIP Project's Snap Poll series, made possible by the generous support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The TRIP Project started conducting snap polls for IR experts in 2014.

QUOTES from Principal Investigators on the study:

"To paraphrase James Suroweiecki, these snap polls provide the public and policymakers with the 'wisdom of an expert crowd.' While IR scholars rarely agree on much of anything, we see a striking consensus on some big issues facing the United States over the next few years"
- Michael J. Tierney, Hylton Professor of Government at William & Mary

"I think one of the most striking results highlights which issues are likely to attract some bipartisan support after one of the most bitterly divided campaigns in modern history. Relations with China, Cybersecurity, and Global Public Health provide dim rays of hope for bipartisanship, whereas issues like climate change are likely to remain quite partisan."
- Michael J. Tierney, Hylton Professor of Government at William & Mary

"While the experts expect big differences between the two candidates when it comes to policy on climate change, immigration, and collaboration within multilateral organizations, they see less of a difference when it comes to use of military force abroad and counter-terrorism policy."
- Michael J. Tierney, Hylton Professor of Government at William & Mary

About the TRIP Project
To date, the Teaching, Research and International Policy (TRIP) Project has focused on trends in IR teaching, scholarship, and disciplinary norms through a periodic survey of IR scholars. The project also is building the world's largest, systematically coded database of IR articles from peer-reviewed journals. The TRIP Project is best known for its "Inside the Ivory Tower" rankings of graduate and undergraduate programs in IR published in *Foreign Policy* and for a recent book published by Georgetown University Press entitled: *Bridging the Theory-Practice Divide in International Relations*. 2020. TRIP is based at the Global Research Institute at William & Mary in Williamsburg, VA.

TRIP Principal Investigators:
    Susan Peterson
    Ryan Powers
    Michael J. Tierney

About the Global Research Institute:
W&M's Global Research Institute (GRI) empowers teams of students and faculty to make a difference in the world. GRI is a multidisciplinary hub that brings together academics, practitioners, and students to apply research to real world issues.

Media Contact:
    Rebecca Halleran Latourell, Assistant Director of Programs and Outreach
    rmhalleran@wm.edu
    Cell: 757.912.2427

Experts available for comment:
    Michael Tierney, TRIP Principal Investigator
    mjtier@wm.edu
    Phone: 757.870.3870

    Susan Peterson, TRIP Principal Investigator
    smpete@wm.edu
    Office: 757.221.3036

    Ryan Powers, TRIP Principal Investigator
    ryan.powers@uga.edu
    Office: 706.542.2798