

1790 SECTION THINGS

Chapter 5: Public Opinion

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**Does public opinion
matter in foreign policy
decision-making?**

Scenario: NATO Expansion

- It is **January 23, 1997**, and you are part of the NSC staff.
- President Clinton has been lobbying Congress to approve extending NATO membership to 🇵🇱, 🇮🇪, and 🇨🇪.
- Pew just released poll on public attitudes toward NATO expansion.
- Task: Assess the consequences of this new poll for Clinton's approach toward NATO expansion.





Pew Research Center

REPORT | JANUARY 24, 1997

Public Indifferent about NATO Expansion

Survey Findings

The American public continues to support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) but is uninterested and equivocal about the question of expanding the alliance to include some former Soviet satellites in East Europe. A Pew Research Center poll found a 61% majority favoring maintaining NATO despite the end of the Cold War. However, only a narrow plurality want its membership expanded (45% to 40%). Few Americans are thinking about the issue — just 20% have followed the debate about enlargement very closely (5%) or fairly closely (15%). Among this engaged segment of the public, however, enlargement was backed by a strong majority (54% vs. 37%).

**Where do the public's
foreign policy views
originate?**

Breaking down the articles!

Explanatory variable(s)	Outcome(s)	Mechanisms	Authors
Core dispositions, ideology, images	Threat perception	- Motivated skepticism - Selective attention	Kertzer, Rathbun, & Rathbun
Racial/ethnic identity	Support for free trade	- Racial prejudice - SDO - National attachment - Racial solidarity	Mutz, Mansfield, & Kim
Age cohort	Threat perception, support for war, policy priorities	- Historical context - Major events during YA years	Thrall & Goepner

Exam #2 on 10/19

