

## KEY FINDINGS

**NATURAL SECURITY SURVEY**  
Online Survey of 1,004 Adults 18+  
June, 2019

### METHODOLOGY

KRC Research conducted an online survey among a nationally representative sample of n=1,004 adults (aged 18+) in the U.S., May 2-6, 2019.

Completed interviews are weighted by five variables: age, sex, geographic region, race and education to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population, 18 years of age and older. The raw data are weighted by a custom designed program which automatically develops a weighting factor for each respondent. Each respondent is assigned a single weight derived from the relationship between the actual proportion of the population based on US Census data with its specific combination of age, sex, geographic characteristics, race and education and the proportion in the sample. Tabular results show both weighted and unweighted bases.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have volunteered to participate in online surveys and polls. The data have been weighted to reflect the demographic composition of the 18+ population. Because the sample is based on those who initially self-selected for participation, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to multiple sources of error, including, but not limited to sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

While reading this document please note:

- Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding
- Dashes (-) indicate no responses

## TOP TAKEAWAYS

- Initially, Americans do not feel the threat to U.S. security posed by economic insecurity, food and water insecurity, natural disasters, and illegal wildlife trafficking in other countries in the same way they fear the danger posed by terrorist attacks, criminal activity, and armed conflict.
- A small amount of information goes a long way in heightening Americans' concern about the impacts of economic insecurity, food and water insecurity, natural disasters, and illegal wildlife trafficking in other countries on U.S. safety and security at home.
- After learning this information, Americans support U.S. funding for international conservation to mitigate the security impacts of instability abroad by a 4-to-1 margin.
- Recent DoD and DNI reports on the impacts of natural disasters abroad on U.S. security are very compelling for Americans. Nearly four-in-10 support increasing U.S. funding for international conservation as a result, and 85 percent felt the funding should hold steady or increase.
- Support for U.S. funding for international conservation efforts crosses party lines – majorities of all political parties back current funding levels (and many support an increase).

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### **Americans Reveal Measured Concern for Impact of Economic Insecurity, Food and Water Insecurity, Natural Disasters, and Illegal Wildlife Trafficking Abroad.**

*An initial test shows Americans care about international conservation issues, but are not as worried about them as more headline-grabbing situations abroad.*

Four leading international conservation issues (economic insecurity, food and water insecurity, natural disasters, and illegal wildlife trafficking) were tested as part of a larger list of situations and events abroad that may threaten security at home. They were first tested without additional context or information, then respondents were provided information about their true impacts.

Initially, Americans showed moderate concern for the four conservation issues, but rated them as notably less worrisome than more “in the news” topics such as terrorist attacks, armed conflict, and mass migration.

Economic insecurity in other countries and food and water insecurity in other countries topped the list with more than one-third of Americans saying they were very concerned about the impacts of each on the safety and security of the U.S. and its people (37% and 35%, respectively). **Overall, 64% of Americans surveyed expressed they were very concerned about one or more of the international conservation issues.**

Q1. Many situations and events in other countries can impact us here in the United States. Which of the following would you say you are **very concerned** about when it comes to how it might impact the safety and security of the United States and its people? You may select as many answers as you like.

90%	NET "Very Concerned" about one or more situation abroad
64%	NET "Very concerned" about one or more of the four issues
66%	Terrorist attacks and criminal activities in other countries
53%	Armed conflict and regional tensions within and between other countries
43%	Global mass migration of people in other countries fleeing their homelands
37%	Economic insecurity in other countries
35%	Food and water insecurity in other countries
30%	Natural disasters in other countries
24%	Illegal wildlife trafficking in other countries
10%	None of the above

- Democrats were more likely than their Republican or Independent peers to reveal concern about one or more of the four conservation issues in the pre-test (70% vs. 58% and 64%, respectively).
  - Among the four issues, members of all parties showed highest concern for the potential impacts of economic insecurity in other countries.

Dem	GOP	Ind	
70%	58%	64%	NET "Very concerned" about one or more of the four issues
42%	34%	38%	Economic insecurity in other countries
42%	27%	36%	Food and water insecurity in other countries
38%	22%	22%	Natural disasters in other countries
27%	22%	22%	Illegal wildlife trafficking in other countries

- Younger Americans (aged 18-34) were more likely than older Americans to express concern in the pre-test and they were particularly worried about food and water insecurity in other countries.

**A Little Information Goes A Long Way: Americans Show Heightened Concern About Impacts of Insecurity and Instability Abroad After Learning More.**

*Statements about the relevance and impact of international conservation issues notably increases Americans' concern about their threat.*

After the initial question, respondents were provided with four statements detailing the impact of each of the four international conservation issues on U.S. security (see the Appendix of this report for the full text) and then asked again to indicate which of the situations/events on the list they were very concerned about.

In this post-test, concern for each of the four issues notably increased. **Overall, 72% of Americans expressed their worry about one or more of the four issues – an 8-point increase from the pre-test.**

- “Food and water insecurity in other countries” generated the highest concern among the four issues in the post-test, increasing 12-points from 35% in the pre-test to 47% in the post-test.
- “Illegal wildlife trafficking in other countries” saw the biggest jump among the four issues from pre-test to post-test, increasing 14-points from 24% “very concerned” to 38%.

Q2. Knowing this, which of the following would you now say you are <b>very concerned</b> about when it comes to how it might impact the safety and security of the United States and its people? You may select as many answers as you like.			
Post-Test	Pre-Test	Change	
92%	90%	+2	<i>NET “Very Concerned” about one or more situation abroad</i>
72%	64%	+8	<i>NET “Very concerned” about one or more of the four issues</i>
63%	66%	-3	Terrorist attacks and criminal activities in other countries
50%	53%	-3	Armed conflict and regional tensions within and between other countries
47%	35%	<b>+12</b>	Food and water insecurity in other countries
45%	43%	+2	Global mass migration of people in other countries fleeing their homelands
44%	37%	<b>+7</b>	Economic insecurity in other countries
39%	30%	<b>+9</b>	Natural disasters in other countries
38%	24%	<b>+14</b>	Illegal wildlife trafficking in other countries
8%	10%	-2	None of the above

- A party divide was still evident in the post-test, but closed a bit as concern about the four issues grew among members of all parties. Republicans showed the biggest increase in concern.

	Dem	GOP	Ind	
Pre-Test	70%	58%	64%	<i>NET “Very concerned” about one or more of the four issues</i>
Post-Test	76%	68%	72%	
Change	+6	+10	+8	

- Women were more concerned than men about all four issues and this mostly held true among men and women in each party, though not all gender differences were statistically significant.
- Seniors (aged 65+) also stood out as particularly worried about the four issues.

### U.S. Funding for International Conservation Efforts Earns Full Support in the Court of Public Opinion.

*By a margin of four-to-one, Americans support U.S. funding for international conservation efforts and support crosses party lines.*

Respondents were informed about the relatively small amount of the U.S. federal budget (\$500 million – less than 1% of the total budget) that is invested in international conservation programs and then queried on their opinion of that funding. Their resulting support was clear. Overall, 80% said they supported the U.S. providing this financial support and 38% did so strongly. Just 20% opposed, and only 6% of them strongly objected.

Q3. Currently the United States invests a total of about \$500 million per year – a fraction of a percent of its total budget – in international conservation programs to address issues such as natural disasters, a lack of food and water security, economic insecurity, and illegal wildlife trafficking in other countries. Based on what you just learned, do you support or oppose the United States providing this financial support?	
<b>80%</b>	<b>Total Support</b>
38%	Strongly support
42%	Somewhat support
<b>20%</b>	<b>Total Oppose</b>
13%	Somewhat oppose
6%	Strongly oppose

- Majorities of all parties supported the funding. Democrats stood out as most strongly in favor, while Republicans and Independents were more measured.

Dem	GOP	Ind	
<b>91%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>Total Support</b>
52%	31%	30%	Strongly support
39%	43%	45%	Somewhat support
<b>9%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>Total Oppose</b>
6%	18%	18%	Somewhat oppose
3%	8%	7%	Strongly oppose

- Millennials were particularly forceful in their support (86% vs. 75% of Gen X and 78% of Baby Boomers).

### Americans Fully Behind U.S. Funding to Mitigate Natural Disasters Abroad.

*The vast majority of Americans of all political party affiliations vote for U.S. funding for international conservation to remain steady or increase from present levels.*

Finally, survey respondents read brief details about two recent reports:

- One from the Department of Defense
- One from Director of National Intelligence
- Both detailing the U.S. security threat posed by natural disasters in other countries (see full text in the Appendix)

Respondents were then asked their opinion on funding to address natural disasters abroad. Their support was unequivocal: 85% felt the funding should hold steady (48%) or increase (37%), while just 15% believed it should decrease.

Q4. Based on what you just learned, do you believe the United States should increase, decrease, or hold steady this financial support?	
<b>85%</b>	<b>Total Increase or Hold Steady</b>
37%	Increase
48%	Hold Steady
15%	Decrease

- Strong majorities of all political parties agreed that funding should hold steady or increase. Democrats were most apt to favor increasing funding.

Dem	GOP	Ind	
<b>93%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>Total Increase or Hold Steady</b>
49%	31%	31%	Increase
44%	51%	49%	Hold Steady
7%	18%	20%	Decrease

- Millennials again stood out in their support for U.S. funding for international conservation efforts (46% were in favor of increasing current funding vs. 35% of Gen X and 31% of Boomers).
- Men were more likely than women to say funding should increase (40% of men vs. 34% of women; 45% of men said funding should hold steady vs. 52% of women). This gender split is notably opposite from previous questions in the survey where women tended to express more concern about the impact of the situations abroad on U.S. security.
  - The gender divide was largely driven by Republican and Independent men who were more likely than their female counterparts to support increased funding.

## APPENDIX

### Full Questionnaire

1. Many situations and events in other countries can impact us here in the United States. Which of the following would you say you are very concerned about when it comes to how it might impact the safety and security of the United States and its people? You may select as many answers as you like. [RANDOMIZE STATEMENTS; MULTI-SELECT]
  - a. Natural disasters in other countries
  - b. Food and water insecurity in other countries
  - c. Economic insecurity in other countries
  - d. Illegal wildlife trafficking in other countries
  - e. Global mass migration of people in other countries fleeing their homelands
  - f. Armed conflict and regional tensions within and between other countries
  - g. Terrorist attacks and criminal activities in other countries
  - h. None of the above [ANCHOR; EXCLUSIVE]

Please take a moment to read the following statements:

- **Illegal wildlife trafficking in other countries:** The illegal trade of endangered and threatened wildlife and their parts generates billions of dollars annually, financing criminal networks and extremist groups that threaten U.S. security interests.
- **Food and water insecurity in other countries:** Water and food shortages in developing countries create instability and are accelerating the migration of millions of people, making communities vulnerable to conflict and radicalization, and threatening American interests overseas.
- **Natural disasters in other countries:** Intensifying extreme weather and natural disasters around the world threaten infrastructure, health, and water and food security and increase the risk of migration, economic stress, and regional instability, threatening American security.
- **Economic insecurity in other countries:** Trade in illegally harvested natural resources, including timber and seafood, undermines global markets by depressing prices and making it more difficult for U.S. companies to compete.

2. Knowing this, which of the following would you now say you are very concerned about when it comes to how it might impact the safety and security of the United States and its people? You may select as many answers as you like. [RANDOMIZE STATEMENTS; MULTI-SELECT]
  - a. Natural disasters in other countries
  - b. A lack of food and water security in other countries
  - c. Economic insecurity in other countries
  - d. Illegal wildlife trafficking in other countries
  - e. Global mass migration of people in other countries fleeing their homelands
  - f. Armed conflict and regional tensions in and between other countries
  - g. Terrorist attacks and criminal actions in other countries
  - h. None of the above [ANCHOR; EXCLUSIVE]

3. Currently the United States invests a total of about \$500 million per year – a fraction of a percent of its total budget – in international conservation programs to address issues such as natural disasters, a lack of food and water security, economic insecurity, and illegal wildlife trafficking in other

countries. Based on what you just learned, do you support or oppose the United States providing this financial support?

- a. Strongly support
- b. Somewhat support
- c. Somewhat oppose
- d. Strongly oppose

4. In January 2019, the Department of Defense issued a report indicating that natural disasters abroad are a United States national security issue with potential impacts to U.S. military bases, missions, and operations.

Also in January, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued its annual assessment of threats to U.S. national security, which concluded that intensifying natural disasters around the globe threaten infrastructure and water and food security, as well as increase the risk of social unrest, migration, and economic stress.

As mentioned in the previous question, the U.S. spends about \$500 million on international conservation programs annually – a fraction of a percent of its total budget. Based on what you just learned, do you believe the United States should increase, decrease, or hold steady this financial support?

- a. Increase
- b. Hold Steady
- c. Decrease

5. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or something else?
  - a. Democrat
  - b. Republican
  - c. Independent
  - d. Something else

*Included Demographic Questions:*

- Gender
- Age/Generation
- Race/Ethnicity
- Region
- Education
- Household Income
- Children in Household