

Time to Reexamine the American Public's Alleged Disinterest in Activist Foreign Policy

by [James Jeffrey \(/experts/james-jeffrey\)](/experts/james-jeffrey)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[James Jeffrey \(/experts/james-jeffrey\)](/experts/james-jeffrey)

Ambassador is a former U.S. special representative for Syria engagement and former U.S. ambassador to Turkey and Iraq; from 2013-2018 he was the Philip Solondz Distinguished Fellow at The Washington Institute. He currently chairs the Wilson Center's Middle East Program.



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Polling suggests that Americans are open to backing overseas engagements if the president demonstrates will, casualties remain low, and the United States does not act alone.

The president's decision to keep almost 10,000 troops in Afghanistan, albeit with a rapid withdrawal plan, and his speech at West Point suggest at least a modest "reset" of his approach to foreign policy and power. Such a course correction is frankly overdue.

The world we thought we were in a few years ago -- a post-Cold War march toward a democratic, Wilsonian world, challenged mainly with "boutique" foreign policy problems, some serious (al Qaeda and the U.S. response in Iraq), AIDS in Africa, many minor, none fundamental -- is rapidly disappearing, as constellations of powerful actors, notably China and Russia, challenge the American global vision in various ways. Much of this is perhaps inevitable, given the opposition of much of "Eurasia" to the Western European/North American liberal worldview...

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