TRIP Policymaker Survey 2022 Report

Teaching, Research & International Policy (TRIP) Project
Global Research Institute (GRI)
https://trip.wm.edu/home

Paul C. Avey
Virginia Tech

Irene Entringer Garcia Blanes
William & Mary

Shauna N. Gillooly
William & Mary

Susan Peterson
William & Mary

Ryan Powers
School of Public and International Affairs
University of Georgia

Andrew Shaver
University of California, Merced

Michael J. Tierney
William & Mary

January 2023

Introduction

With funding from Carnegie Corporation of New York and their "Bridging the Gap" initiative, the Teaching, Research and International Policy (TRIP) Project at William & Mary's Global Research Institute has fielded three surveys of senior government officials. The first survey was fielded in 2011, the second in late 2017 and early 2018, and the third in 2022. For the 2022 survey wave, TRIP partnered with the Political Violence Lab (PVL).

This report covers the 2022 survey. The methodology and results from the previous waves can be found here.

Methodology

To construct the survey pool, we included national security policy officials, international trade officials, and international development policy officials. We collected responses from officials who served during the George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump administrations. We included positions tasked with making, analyzing, and implementing policy. Officials at the level of "assistant/deputy director" (or equivalent) and above were included. We excluded positions whose primary responsibilities included management, coordination, and/or legal counsel. Not every department or agency existed for the entire period. We relied primarily on the U.S. Government Manual and the Federal Yellow Book to identify "policy-relevant positions" within each department and agency. We examined each year individually because administrations create, merge, and eliminate various positions from year to year. We included the top officials for each department and agency and then identified positions within lower-level policy-relevant offices.

Contact information was collected through web-based searches. When information was not publicly available, we tried contacting them via 'Contact Us' forms embedded on websites and/or via general phone or email of an organization which the individual is affiliated with.

2022 Survey

The survey was sent to 3,579 individuals employed in one of several dozen offices or agencies with responsibility for creating and/or implementing US trade, development, and national security policy during the administrations of George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump. Of the individuals contacted, 291 responded to at least one question. The resulting response rate was approximately 8.13 percent. The survey was open from November 2, 2022 to January 17, 2023.

Data contacts: Irene Entringer Garcia Blanes. Email: irsurvey@wm.edu

Results

Questions about You and Your Work

Table 1: Which of the following most accurately describes your highest rank in the U.S. government?

Response option	Count	Percentage
Senate confirmable policy or department/agency leader	64	22.07%
Political appointee not-confirmable (DASD, office director, special assistant)	60	20.69%
SES-level civil servant	65	22.41%
Professional at the GS/GG 15/Band 5 level	52	17.93%
Professional at the GS/GG 13/Band 4 level	3	1.03%
Professional at the GS/GG 12/Band 3 level	0	0.00%
Military officer	15	5.17%
Other	31	10.69%
Total	290	100.00%

Table 2: Which of the following most accurately describes your highest rank in the U.S. military?

Response option	Count	Percentage
O-10	2	13.33%
O-9	4	26.67%
O-7 or O-8	8	53.33%
O-6	0	0.00%
O-5	1	6.67%
O-4	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%
Total	15	100.00%

Table 3: For how many years have you worked in the U.S. government? If you have worked there for less than one year, please write a zero (0).

Response option	Count	Valid percentage
0-4	12	4.84%
5-9	32	12.90%
10-14	33	13.31%
15-19	26	10.48%
20-24	26	10.48%
25-29	29	11.69%
30-34	37	14.92%
35-39	38	15.32%
40-44	13	5.24%
45-49	2	0.81%
Total	248	100.00%

Table 4: Thinking about your most recent position, which of the following best describes your primary job responsibility?

Response option	Count	Percentage
Management	70	24.05%
Policy decision making	115	39.52%
Policy analysis	32	11.00%
Policy implementation	42	14.43%
Policy support staff	7	2.41%
Other:	25	8.59%
Total	291	100.00%

Table 5: Please select the field that best relates to your work when you were in government.

Response option	Count	Valid percentage
Security	147	50.52%
Trade	87	29.90%
Development	57	19.59%
Total	291	100.00%

Bridging the Gap

Table 6: Outside of your primary appointment in government, have you held positions in any of the following? Please select all that apply.

Response option	Count	Percentage
University or college	106	37.72
Civil society organization	34	12.1
Think tank or private foundation	82	29.18
Private sector	175	62.28
Non-governmental organization	89	31.67
Foreign government or military	8	2.85
Other:	33	11.74
Total	527	-

Table 7: In your opinion, how should think tank researchers contribute to the policy-making process? Please select all that apply.

Response option	Count	Percentage
Public education	241	85.77
Public advocacy	201	71.53
Media interviews	202	71.89
Publications	248	88.26
Pursuing judicial remedies	29	10.32
Lobbying members of Congress	94	33.45
Lobbying members of the executive branch	92	32.74
Other:	33	11.74
Do not know	2	0.71
Total	1142	-

Table 8: In your opinion, how should university-based scholars contribute to the policy-making process? Please select all that apply.

Response option	Count	Percentage
As formal participants	85	30.25
As informal advisors	214	76.16
As creators of new information/knowledge for policymakers	249	88.61
Other:	13	4.63
Do not know	1	0.36
Should not be involved in policy-making process	4	1.42
Total	566	-

Table 9: What are your main source(s) of information about international events/affairs? Please select up to 3.

Response option	Count	Percentage
Internet News Sources	136	48.4
News Aggregators	27	9.61
Television	56	19.93
Major Newspapers in print	122	43.42
Major International News Outlets	75	26.69
Local News Media	19	6.76
Magazines	87	30.96
Radio	40	14.23
Social Media: Major news accounts	32	11.39
Social Media: Non major news accounts	23	8.19
Work/Broader Professional Network	102	36.3
International Travel	34	12.1
Academic Research Articles/Books	55	19.57
Podcasts	19	6.76
Other:	11	3.91
Total	838	-

Foreign Policy Views

Table 10: Which area of the world do you consider to be of greatest strategic importance to the United States today?

Response option	Count	Valid percentage
Arctic	7	2.85%
Antarctic	0	0.00%
Central and Eastern Europe (including the Baltic states)	13	5.28%
Central Asia (not including Afghanistan)	1	0.41%
East Asia (including China)	135	54.88%
Latin America (including Mexico and the Caribbean)	16	6.50%
Middle East and North Africa (including Turkey)	2	0.81%
North America (not including Mexico)	19	7.72%
Oceania	1	0.41%
Russia/Former Soviet Union (excluding Baltic states)	8	3.25%
South Asia (including Afghanistan)	1	0.41%
Southeast Asia	7	2.85%
Sub-Saharan Africa	2	0.81%
Western Europe (including the United Kingdom)	29	11.79%
Transnational actors/International Organizations/International NGOs	2	0.81%
None	3	1.22%
Total	246	100.00%

Table 11: What are the three most important foreign policy issues facing the United States today?

Response option	Count	Percentage
Cybersecurity	84	34.29
Ethnic conflict	6	2.45
Global climate change	108	44.08
Global human rights	8	3.27
International migration	31	12.65
International terrorism	18	7.35
Trade	40	16.33
Regional dis-integration	15	6.12
Russian revanchism	89	36.33
Rising power of China	181	73.88
U.S. domestic political instability	97	39.59
WMD proliferation	18	7.35
Other	33	13.47
Total	728	-

Table 12: How likely is war between the United States and China over the next decade? Please use the 0 to 100 scale with 100 indicating that war will definitely occur and 0 indicating war will definitely not occur

Response option	Count	Valid percentage
0	0	0.00%
1-9	20	8.23%
10-19	47	19.34%
20-29	51	20.99%
30-39	44	18.11%
40-49	23	9.47%
50-59	26	10.70%
60-69	19	7.82%
70-79	8	3.29%
80-89	0	0.00%
90-99	4	1.65%
100	1	0.41%
Total	243	100.00%

Table 13: How confident are you in your answer to the previous question on likelihood of war between the U.S. and China?

Response option	Count	Valid percentage
Very confident	30	12.35%
Somewhat confident	122	50.21%
Not very confident	86	35.39%
Not very confident at all	5	2.06%
Total	243	100.00%

Table 14: How likely is war between the United States and Russia over the next decade? Please use the 0 to 100 scale with 100 indicating that war will definitely occur and 0 indicating war will definitely not occur

Response option	Count	Valid percentage
0	1	0.41%
1-9	14	5.79%
10-19	60	24.79%
20-29	44	18.18%
30-39	38	15.70%
40-49	39	16.12%
50-59	21	8.68%
60-69	14	5.79%
70-79	6	2.48%
80-89	2	0.83%
90-99	1	0.41%
100	2	0.83%
Total	242	100.00%

Table 15: How confident are you in your answer to the previous question on likelihood of war between the U.S. and Russia?

Response option	Count	Valid percentage
Very confident	27	11.20%
Somewhat confident	147	61.00%
Not very confident	59	24.48%
Not very confident at all	8	3.32%
Total	241	100.00%

49.48 percent of respondents answered the following question in the form of a multiselect, and 50.52 percent as a slider with a 100-point scale.

Table 16: Respondents by Question Type

	Count	Percentage (%)
100-point scale	147	50.52
Multiselect	144	49.48
Total	291	100.00

Table 17: In the next year, will China use military force against the territory of Taiwan or Taiwanese military forces?

Response option	Count	Valid percentage
Yes	8	6.67%
No	90	75.00%
Do not know	22	18.33%
Total	120	100.00%

Table 18: In the next year, will China use military force against the territory of Taiwan or Taiwanese military forces? Please use the 0 to 100 scale with 100 indicating that China will definitely use military forces against the territory of Taiwan or Taiwanese military forces and 0 indicating China will not use military forces.

Response option	Count	Valid percentage
0	4	3.25%
1-9	29	23.58%
10-19	33	26.83%
20-29	21	17.07%
30-39	10	8.13%
40-49	6	4.88%
50-59	7	5.69%
60-69	4	3.25%
70-79	5	4.07%
80-89	1	0.81%
90-99	1	0.81%
100	2	1.63%
Total	123	100.00%

Table 19: Please indicate your level of confidence in your previous answer

Response option	Count	Valid percentage
Very confident	44	19.91%
Somewhat confident	126	57.01%
Not very confident	48	21.72%
Not very confident at all	3	1.36%
Total	221	100.00%

Table 20: If China uses direct military force against Taiwan in the coming months, the United States should: Please check all that apply

Response option	Count	Percentage
Place sanctions on the Chinese government and/or its leaders	231	94.29
Deploy U.S. military forces to the region	190	77.55
Send additional arms and military supplies to Taiwan	226	92.24
Initiate direct military operations against Chinese military forces	55	22.45
Initiate cyber attacks against Chinese military forces	155	63.27
Impose a 'no fly zone' above and in the direct vicinity of Taiwan	105	42.86
Not purchase computers or electrical machinery and equipment from China during the conflict even if it causes prices to increase	173	70.61
Take in Taiwanese refugees	182	74.29
None of the above	1	0.41
Total	1318	-

48.8 percent of respondents answered the following two questions on a 100-point scale, and 51.2 percent on a 10-point scale. Questions: 'Please indicate your level of support for NATO membership for each of the following countries' and 'Independent of your level of support, how likely are each of the following countries to become members of the NATO alliance within the next 5 years?'.

Table 21: Respondents by QuestionType

	Count	Percentage (%)
10-point scale	149	51.2
100-point scale	142	48.8
Total	291	100.0

Table 22: Please indicate your level of support for NATO membership for each of the following countries on a 100-point scale where 0 indicates no support at all and 100 indicates extremely strong support

Response option	0	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	100	Total
Austria	1 (0.84%)	3 (2.52%)	3 (2.52%)	3 (2.52%)	6 (5.04%)	4 (3.36%)	8 (6.72%)	4 (3.36%)	7 (5.88%)	12 (10.08%)	16 (13.45%)	52 (43.70%)	119 (100.00%)
Georgia	5 (4.31%)	10 (8.62%)	11 (9.48%)	7 (6.03%)	16 (13.79%)	10 (8.62%)	12 (10.34%)	10 (8.62%)	5 (4.31%)	8 (6.90%)	6 (5.17%)	16 (13.79%)	116 (100.00%)
Moldova	4 (3.57%)	5 (4.46%)	15 (13.39%)	6 (5.36%)	15 (13.39%)	3 (2.68%)	19 (16.96%)	5 (4.46%)	6 (5.36%)	9 (8.04%)	4 (3.57%)	21 (18.75%)	112 (100.00%)
Sweden	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.83%)	2 (1.67%)	3 (2.50%)	4 (3.33%)	11 (9.17%)	99 (82.50%)	120 (100.00%)
Ukraine	5 (4.39%)	6 (5.26%)	8 (7.02%)	4 (3.51%)	4 (3.51%)	9 (7.89%)	18 (15.79%)	7 (6.14%)	11 (9.65%)	5 (4.39%)	6 (5.26%)	31 (27.19%)	114 (100.00%)

Table 23: Please indicate your level of support for NATO membership for each of the following countries on a 10 point scale where 0 indicates no support at all and 10 indicates extremely strong support.

Response option	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Austria	6 (4.96%)	6 (4.96%)	6 (4.96%)	4 (3.31%)	6 (4.96%)	16 (13.22%)	7 (5.79%)	10 (8.26%)	8 (6.61%)	6 (4.96%)	46 (38.02%)	121 (100.00%)
Georgia	11 (9.57%)	12 (10.43%)	16 (13.91%)	7 (6.09%)	12 (10.43%)	19 (16.52%)	13 (11.30%)	6 (5.22%)	8 (6.96%)	1 (0.87%)	10 (8.70%)	115 (100.00%)
Moldova	8 (7.14%)	15 (13.39%)	20 (17.86%)	7 (6.25%)	10 (8.93%)	21 (18.75%)	7 (6.25%)	8 (7.14%)	8 (7.14%)	1 (0.89%)	7 (6.25%)	112 (100.00%)
Sweden	1 (0.82%)	1 (0.82%)	1 (0.82%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	6 (4.92%)	3 (2.46%)	4 (3.28%)	8 (6.56%)	8 (6.56%)	90 (73.77%)	122 (100.00%)
Ukraine	12 (10.53%)	8 (7.02%)	9 (7.89%)	10 (8.77%)	5 (4.39%)	20 (17.54%)	8 (7.02%)	8 (7.02%)	13 (11.40%)	6 (5.26%)	15 (13.16%)	114 (100.00%)

Table 24: Independent of your level of support for particular countries joining NATO, how likely are each of the following countries to become members of the NATO alliance within the next 5 years?

Response option	0	1-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	100	Total
Austria	6 (5.50%)	6 (5.50%)	12 (11.01%)	11 (10.09%)	6 (5.50%)	7 (6.42%)	21 (19.27%)	5 (4.59%)	9 (8.26%)	10 (9.17%)	9 (8.26%)	7 (6.42%)	109 (100.00%)
Georgia	10 (9.71%)	14 (13.59%)	22 (21.36%)	15 (14.56%)	9 (8.74%)	8 (7.77%)	9 (8.74%)	5 (4.85%)	4 (3.88%)	4 (3.88%)	2 (1.94%)	1 (0.97%)	103 (100.00%)
Moldova	8 (7.92%)	12 (11.88%)	21 (20.79%)	17 (16.83%)	6 (5.94%)	7 (6.93%)	16 (15.84%)	4 (3.96%)	7 (6.93%)	1 (0.99%)	2 (1.98%)	0 (0.00%)	101 (100.00%)
Sweden	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.84%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.84%)	6 (5.04%)	0 (0.00%)	5 (4.20%)	6 (5.04%)	35 (29.41%)	65 (54.62%)	119 (100.00%)
Ukraine	4 (3.74%)	5 (4.67%)	20 (18.69%)	11 (10.28%)	11 (10.28%)	9 (8.41%)	18 (16.82%)	4 (3.74%)	9 (8.41%)	8 (7.48%)	3 (2.80%)	5 (4.67%)	107 (100.00%)

Table 25: Independent of your level of support for particular countries joining NATO, how likely are each of the following countries to become members of the NATO alliance within the next 5 years?

Response option	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Austria	9 (8.26%)	21 (19.27%)	13 (11.93%)	6 (5.50%)	5 (4.59%)	20 (18.35%)	7 (6.42%)	8 (7.34%)	6 (5.50%)	2 (1.83%)	12 (11.01%)	109 (100.00%)
Georgia	12 (12.63%)	18 (18.95%)	17 (17.89%)	18 (18.95%)	4 (4.21%)	15 (15.79%)	5 (5.26%)	3 (3.16%)	1 (1.05%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (2.11%)	95 (100.00%)
Moldova	11 (11.58%)	21 (22.11%)	24 (25.26%)	15 (15.79%)	5 (5.26%)	9 (9.47%)	4 (4.21%)	3 (3.16%)	3 (3.16%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	95 (100.00%)
Sweden	1 (0.83%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.83%)	1 (0.83%)	2 (1.67%)	7 (5.83%)	4 (3.33%)	4 (3.33%)	10 (8.33%)	14 (11.67%)	76 (63.33%)	120 (100.00%)
Ukraine	14 (14.14%)	16 (16.16%)	11 (11.11%)	12 (12.12%)	10 (10.10%)	13 (13.13%)	5 (5.05%)	4 (4.04%)	5 (5.05%)	4 (4.04%)	5 (5.05%)	99 (100.00%)

Table 26: How has President Biden performed in the area of foreign policy during his first and second years in office?

Response option	Count	Percentage
Very well	52	21.22%
Well	101	41.22%
Neither well nor poorly	39	15.92%
Poorly	25	10.20%
Very poorly	28	11.43%
Total	245	100.00%

Table 27: How likely is it that the wave of left-wing administrations recently elected in Latin America will threaten U.S. strategic interests in the region?

Response option	Count	Percentage
Very likely	22	9.48%
Likely	42	18.10%
Somewhat likely	69	29.74%
Unlikely	86	37.07%
Very unlikely	13	5.60%
Total	232	100.00%

Demographics

Table 28: What is your highest level of education?

Response option	Count	Percentage
Bachelor's degree	12	5.53%
Master's degree	76	35.02%
MPP/MPA/MIA	19	8.76%
MBA	13	5.99%
JD	49	22.58%
All but dissertation	1	0.46%
Ph.D.	36	16.59%
Other:	11	5.07%
Total	217	100.00%

Table 29: With which of the following gender identities do you most identify?

Response option	Count	Valid percentage
Female	43	19.91%
Male	170	78.70%
Non-binary	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	3	1.39%
Total	216	100.00%

Table 30: What is your age?

Response option	Count	Valid percentage
25-34	2	0.95%
35-44	18	8.53%
45-54	43	20.38%
55-64	69	32.70%
65-74	63	29.86%
75-84	16	7.58%
85-94	0	0.00%
95+	0	0.00%
Total	211	100.00%

Table 31: What is your race/ethnicity? Please select all that apply

Response option	Count	Percentage
Asian Indian	5	2.33
Black/African-American	5	2.33
Hispanic and/or Latino	8	3.72
Japanese	1	0.47
Korean	1	0.47
White (not of Hispanic origin)	177	82.33
Other	7	3.26
Prefer not to say	20	9.3
Total	224	-

[a] Full response option: 'Hispanic and/or Latino (Chicano, Mexican, Mexican-American, or of other Latin American descent)'

Table 32: Which of the following best describes your positions generally on economic issues?

Response option	Count	Percentage
Very liberal	7	3.24%
Somewhat liberal	62	28.70%
Middle of the road	58	26.85%
Somewhat conservative	76	35.19%
Very conservative	13	6.02%
Total	216	100.00%

Table 33: Which of the following best describes your positions generally on social issues?

Response option	Count	Percentage
Very liberal	33	15.28%
Somewhat liberal	102	47.22%
Middle of the road	44	20.37%
Somewhat conservative	27	12.50%
Very conservative	10	4.63%
Total	216	100.00%

Table 34: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

Response option	Count	Percentage
Republican	46	21.70%
Democrat	93	43.87%
Independent	68	32.08%
Other:	5	2.36%
Total	212	100.00%