

Research Paper

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Internationalism or Isolationism? The Chatham House–YouGov Survey

British Attitudes Towards the UK's International Priorities



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Summary

Is the United Kingdom becoming more isolationist in its foreign policy outlook? Growing uncertainty about its European future, declining budgets for defence and diplomacy, the government's parliamentary defeat over intervention in Syria: each has contributed to a narrative that the UK's status as an internationalist state is slowly eroding.

Internationalism or isolationism?

It is in this context that this edition of the Chatham House–YouGov survey explores attitudes to international affairs among the British public and opinion-formers. The results indicate that there has been no clear movement towards isolationism: in fact, in some policy areas the reverse appears to be true. Overall, there is support for an ambitious British foreign policy and leadership role.

- Majorities of the public and opinion-formers say that the UK should aspire to be a 'great power' rather than accept that it is in decline. 63% of the public and 61% of opinion-formers support this view, the highest level since the survey was first conducted.
- A majority of the public says that the UK has a responsibility to maintain international security, provide troops for peacekeeping missions and help lead the global response to climate change.

At the same time, the public's attitudes are marked by a degree of caution and defensiveness. They are sceptical of intervention in support of uprisings overseas, think foreign policy should focus on protecting the UK at its borders and remain unsupportive of development aid spending.

- For the public, border protection and counterterrorism continue to be the most important international issue, as has been the case in the past two editions of the survey. Opinion-formers, meanwhile, think promoting British business and trade should be the main focus of foreign policy.
- Among both the public and opinion-formers, international terrorism is most widely identified as a threat to the British way of life.
- Only 17% of the public say that the UK has a moral responsibility to support popular uprisings against dictators.
- The proportion of the public who think that the armed forces do the most to serve UK interests abroad has fallen from a peak of 53% in 2011 to 38% in 2014.

Beyond Brexit

On perhaps the biggest foreign policy question facing the UK, the future of its relationship with the EU, the public and opinion-formers diverge significantly. Public perceptions of the EU remain broadly negative, but there has been a modest but consistent improvement in them since the survey was last conducted in 2012. There is support for the government's ambition to negotiate a looser relationship with the EU, with the return of powers from Brussels to the UK seen as the priority for reform. Opinion-formers, meanwhile, are overwhelmingly supportive of membership of the EU.

- Public support for a referendum on membership of the EU has changed little since the last edition of the survey and remains high at 60%, with 24% opposed. Opinion-formers are narrowly opposed, with 50% against and 46% in favour.
- Support for remaining in the EU has grown among opinion-formers and is now at 72%. Among the public, narrowly more would vote to remain in the EU (40%) than to leave it (39%).
- A plurality of the public now thinks that the UK's closest ties should be to the EU (30%) rather than to the US (25%), a reversal of the position in 2012.
- Skewed perceptions of the financial costs of EU membership have become more pronounced. While Britain's net contribution to the EU budget in 2013 was just over £11 billion, among the public the median estimate of this was £40 billion (up from £27 billion in 2012) and the mean estimate was £118 billion (up from £74 billion in 2012).
- Almost half the public (49%) would support limiting free movement of people within the EU even if that would mean limiting their own rights to live and work elsewhere in Europe. Only 26% oppose such restrictions.

No consensus

The survey also demonstrates the extent to which attitudes to international affairs vary throughout the UK, whether between the public and opinion-formers, between supporters of different political parties, between different nations and regions, or between young and old.

- Voters in London and Scotland would vote to stay in the EU, while those in the rest of the South, the Midlands/Wales and Northern England would vote to leave.
- Scottish respondents are more pro-European, more supportive of development aid, and more likely than English ones to say ethics should play a role in foreign policy.
- While more than two-thirds of Liberal Democrats and half of Labour supporters say they support an ethical foreign policy, only one-third of Conservatives and just 17% of UKIP voters do.
- A plurality of Conservatives and UKIP supporters say the armed forces do the most to serve the UK's interests internationally, whereas Labour and Liberal Democrat supporters place the BBC World Service first.

The challenge ahead

Such views pose a challenge for policy-makers. Britain remains a mid-sized power and a major economy, and it occupies a structurally important position within a number of multilateral organizations. Although there is no public consensus around the means and ends of foreign policy, the survey suggests that there is a base of public support for the UK to pursue an ambitious international agenda in some areas at least.

The challenges for the next government, whatever its political hue, will be to strike the right balance between the desire to be a great power and the political and financial constraints on that ambition; and also between shaping public opinion on foreign policy and the need to reflect it. This will require strong and thoughtful leadership at home as well as abroad.

Introduction

This is the fourth edition of the Chatham House–YouGov survey. It seeks to track and analyse British attitudes to international affairs by polling two groups: a representative sample of the general public, and a panel of ‘opinion-formers’ – leaders drawn from the worlds of business, media, politics, academia, science and the arts. The survey explores opinions on the United Kingdom’s foreign policy priorities, the channels of its influence abroad, and its allies and partners, as well as attitudes to defence, development and European integration.

In 2014 two political forces – Euroscepticism and Scottish nationalism – provided, in very different ways, powerful challenges to the domestic political environment and created uncertainties about the UK’s international engagement. At the same time, the resources the UK devotes to foreign affairs – through diplomacy, defence and development – remain under severe budgetary pressure. More broadly, the UK faces an international context characterized by instability, resource volatility and economic stagnation, and in which its power and influence are in relative decline. Putting these trends together, some have begun to question the UK’s inclination and capacity to be a major power that aspires to play a leading role in international affairs. Discussions of British foreign policy tend to highlight a growing gap between ambition and capacity. The UK has long sought to punch above its weight. As recession struck and deficits have persisted, it has tried to do ‘more with less’.¹ Is that ambitious desire now being replaced by a national desire simply to do less?

To reflect this debate, this edition of the survey, building on a core group of questions asked in each previous one, seeks to explore the extent to which there is any pattern of support for policies that reflect a more withdrawn position for the UK in the world: in other words, to test the appeal of isolationism against the UK’s more traditional internationalist reflexes.

The survey was conducted in August 2014 at a time when the international context was turbulent and the news agenda dominated by different conflicts. The West and Russia were competing in a struggle over the future of Ukraine. Israel was engaged in a military operation in Gaza against Hamas that caused large numbers of civilian casualties. The Syrian civil war continued unabated while the multinational jihadist movement Islamic State (IS) seized control of large swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria. (It should be noted, though, that the survey was conducted before the UK had joined the international military response to the advance of IS.)

The report explores the attitudes of the public and of opinion-formers to international affairs. The first section explores attitudes to the UK’s role in the world, including the level of its ambition, the role of ethical concerns in its foreign policy, what its priorities should be, and who its allies and partners are.

The second section examines attitudes to European integration, including views on a potential referendum on the UK’s membership of the EU, as well as wider attitudes to the benefits and costs of membership, and the priorities for EU reform.

¹ William Hague, ‘Britain’s Foreign Policy in a Networked World’, 1 July 2010, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/britain-s-foreign-policy-in-a-networked-world-2>; David Cameron, ‘Speech to the FCO Leadership Conference’, 6 July 2010, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-calls-on-diplomats-to-do-more-with-less>.

The third section explores attitudes to defence and security, including the attitudes of the public and opinion-formers to NATO, defence spending and the use of military force.

Section four focuses on the way that attitudes to international affairs vary across the UK, in particular by looking at divergences among the UK's nations and regions.

Section five explores the political landscape of foreign policy in the United Kingdom and the different ways that supporters of the UK's political parties view key questions in foreign affairs. This includes data not just on those who have previously voted for the three main Westminster parties, but also from those who intend to vote for the UK Independence Party (UKIP).

Section six provides some concluding thoughts on the implications of the survey's findings, in particular whether there is any discernible increase in support for a more isolationist posture, the extent of the divergences between the public and opinion-formers, and whether there is a degree of consensus among the public on important foreign policy questions.

The United Kingdom and the World

The United Kingdom in 2014 seemed to face something of a crisis of identity. The referendum on Scottish independence tested the very continuation of the country in its present form. It generated a debate that largely struggled to give definition and meaning to ‘Britishness’, and why it was essential to preserve it. Although the referendum was won by the unionists, the fact that 45% of the population of one of the constituent nations of the UK voted to leave it poses an ongoing, unresolved challenge to the union. The rise of the UK Independence Party (UKIP), including its success in the May 2014 European Parliament elections and the success in parliamentary by-elections of two defecting Conservative MPs to UKIP, reflects wider public disaffection with traditional politics and political parties, as well as hostility to immigration and European integration. Many of these trends have major implications for Britain’s international standing.

The modern political consensus around the cornerstones of British foreign policy – including an active if sceptical role in the European Union and a commitment to retaining well-funded and world-class armed forces – is fraying under a new set of political and economic pressures, some domestic and some global. In the past year, commentators have described Britain as ‘an island that has lost its moorings’,² wondered whether it can ‘still afford to sit at the high table of international powers’,³ or condemned it as ‘more interested in trade deals, the PR allure of “soft power”, and a quiet life’ than in global responsibilities.⁴ For others, leadership is part of the problem: ‘Westminster awaits the politician prepared to anatomise this new era and the country’s role in it.’⁵ It is a debate that remains tethered to a conception that the UK has a particular international role to play, even if it is not quite sure what that is. Half a century on, Dean Acheson’s famous description of Britain’s post-imperial angst still frames the discussion.⁶ Among its political class at least, more than in most countries, the UK seems to fret about its place in the world. This section explores where Britain’s public and opinion-formers stand on some of the major foreign affairs challenges facing the country.

Ambitions and ethics

Britain is a mid-sized power and a major economy, and it occupies a structurally important position within a number of multilateral organizations. The Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition government entered office in 2010 determined to avoid any ‘strategic shrinkage’. It has opened new embassies and deepened the Foreign Office’s commitment to language training and research. It has, despite this, also squeezed the budgets of the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence. The tensions between high aspirations and constrained resources have generated questions over how ambitious British foreign policy should be. In relation to this, the survey found the following:

² Philip Stephens, ‘Cast Adrift – island Britain needs a foreign policy’, *Financial Times*, 26 June 2014, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/598ac702-fc52-11e3-86dc-00144feab7de.html>.

³ Steven Erlanger, ‘Britain’s Strange Identity Crisis’, *New York Times*, 28 June 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/29/sunday-review/britains-strange-identity-crisis.html?_r=0.

⁴ Benedict Brogan, ‘Britain once strutted the stage, but now it prefers the quiet life’, *Daily Telegraph*, 9 June 2014, <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/benedictbrogan/100275622/britain-once-strutted-the-stage-but-now-it-prefers-the-quiet-life/>.

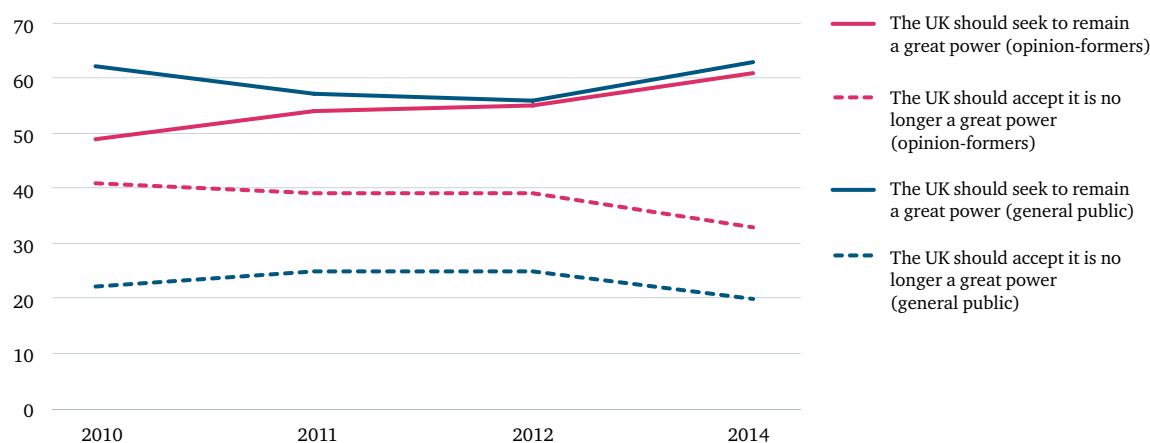
⁵ George Eaton, ‘After Cameron’s summer of indecision, who will give Britain a coherent foreign policy again?’, *New Statesman*, 27 August 2014, <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2014/08/after-america-s-summer-indecision-who-will-give-britain-coherent-foreign-policy>.

⁶ ‘Great Britain has lost an empire but not yet found a role’, Dean Acheson, speech at West Point, 5 December 1962.

- **Majorities of the public and opinion-formers say that the UK should aspire to be a ‘great power’.** 63% of the public and 61% of the opinion-formers support this view. In both samples, this is the highest level of support for this statement recorded in the four editions of the survey. For the opinion-formers it represents a 12-point increase since 2010. Conservatives are most likely to support this statement (78%) and Labour the least likely (though still with 58% in favour). This is one of the few questions in the survey on which Liberal Democrats and UKIP voters have expressed very similar views. Both groups want the UK to be a great power, but differ over how that power should be used. Among the public, only one in five say the UK should accept it is no longer a great power, the lowest figure recorded in the survey.

Figure 1: Support for UK being a ‘great power’

% of respondents

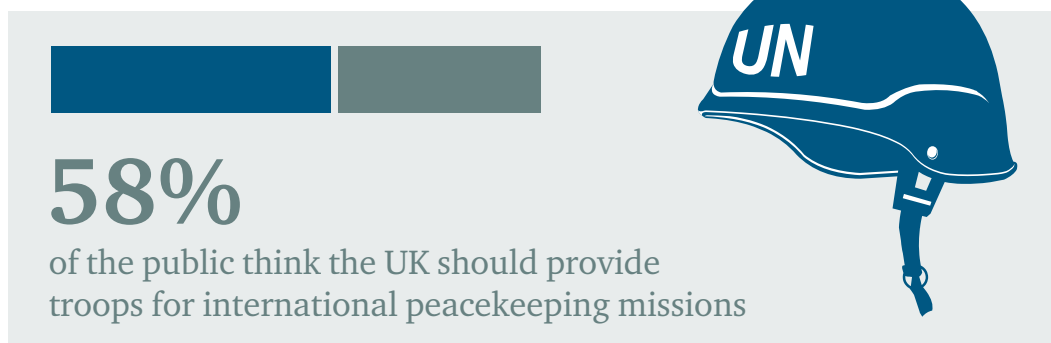


- **The public is evenly split over whether Britain should have an ethical foreign policy, while opinion-formers are overwhelmingly in favour.** 42% of the public think that Britain should pursue its interest at all times even if this means acting unethically, while 41% think ethics should constrain the pursuit of national interests. Among the opinion-formers, 67% say the UK should have an ethical foreign policy, with only 30% expressing support for a narrow pursuit of national interest. There is also notable variation with age: among 18–24-year-olds, a majority support an ethical approach (52% vs 29%) whereas among older voters, a majority (54% vs 37%) support a foreign policy based on national interests alone.

The survey asked the general public to agree or disagree with a series of general statements about the UK’s role in the world. Among the general public, there is robust support for the UK playing a leading role on a number of international issues, although alongside this there is a sense that the country’s burden of responsibility is disproportionate.

- **69% of the public think the UK has ‘a responsibility to maintain international security’.** More specifically, 58% of the public agree that the UK should provide troops for international peacekeeping missions, with just 18% disagreeing. At present, the UK is not a major contributor of troops to UN operations: with 286 troops currently deployed (mostly in Cyprus), it ranks 48th among contributors.⁷

⁷ UN Peacekeeping, ‘Troop and police contributors’, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml>.



- 56% of the public say the UK ‘should help lead the global response to climate change’. There is broad party support, with 82% of Liberal Democrats, 63% of Labour voters and 50% of Conservatives agreeing. Interestingly, although some have accused UKIP of being sceptical about climate change,⁸ the poll shows that more UKIP voters support this statement than oppose it (40% vs 35%).
- Despite this support for international leadership and the UK having international responsibilities, the survey also found that 60% of the public agree with the statement: ‘The UK is expected to do too much internationally. The UK should do less and others should do more.’ Older voters were much more likely than younger ones to agree with this statement (77% of over-60s compared with only 40% of 18–24-year-olds). This statement had particular resonance with those intending to vote for UKIP, with 85% agreeing, although there was also majority support from voters in each of the major parties.
- Only 30% say that they are proud of the UK’s development aid spending and that the UK has a moral responsibility to help the poorest people in the world. Despite the UK’s leading role as an international donor, 54% of the public say that in difficult economic times it should spend less on development aid (see Box 4).

Priorities and assets

The Foreign Office groups its priorities under three areas: security, prosperity and consular. As part of its prosperity drive, the coalition government has made the promotion of commercial interests a high priority. Although this is not a new notion, the government has been increasingly vocal about the important role that diplomats and diplomacy can play in promoting commercial interests and economic growth. This emphasis reflects the systemic importance of a relatively small number of multinational companies to the UK’s economic health. For example, 61% of all dividends paid out by UK companies in the second quarter of 2014 came from just 15 firms, with the top five paying 34%.⁹ Critics, however, worry that the pursuit of commercial goals compromises other foreign policy aims

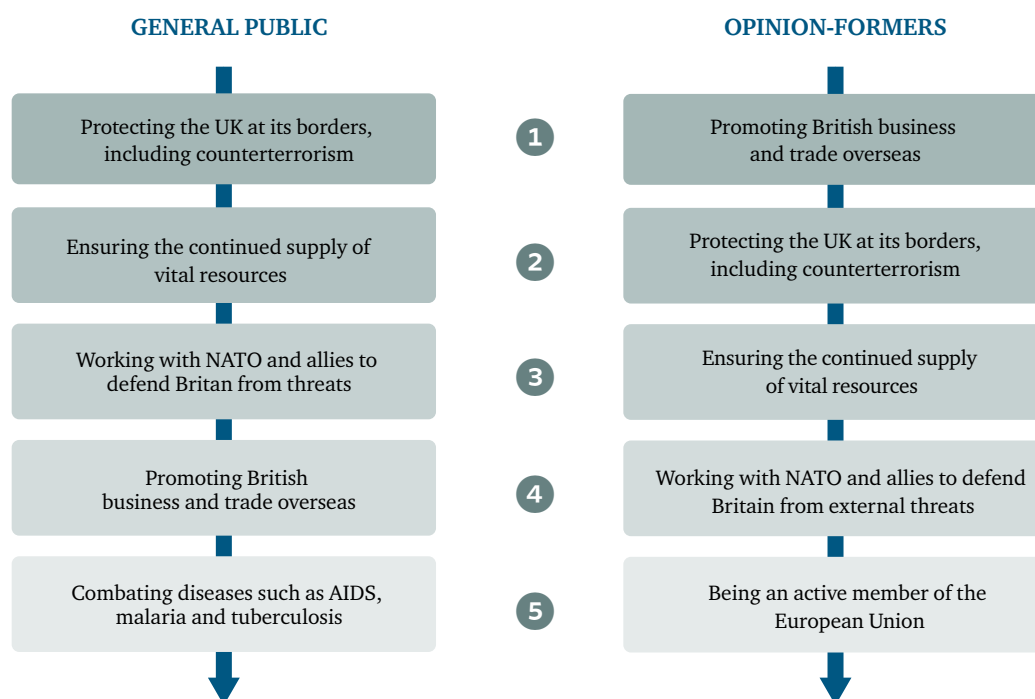
⁸ See, for example, Arthur Neslen, ‘EU climate policy being ‘taken hostage’ by UKIP, MEPs say’, *Guardian*, 23 October 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/oct/23/eu-climate-policy-being-taken-hostage-by-ukip-meps-say>; and Bob Ward, ‘It’s time to challenge UKIP over its climate change denial’, *New Statesman*, 30 May 2014, <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2014/05/its-time-challenge-ukip-over-its-climate-change-denial>.

⁹ *Capita Registrars UK Dividend Monitor*, Issue 20, July 2014, http://www.capitaassetservices.com/assets/media/SS14035_Dividend_Monitor_Q3_2014-v4-PP.pdf.

and makes collective European approaches to major economies like China more difficult. The survey shows that prosperity goals resonate particularly with opinion-formers, while the public is more focused on security concerns.

- **A plurality of opinion-formers think that the main focus of foreign policy should be promoting British business and trade overseas.** When presented with a list of 11 international issues and asked to select up to three that should be prioritized, 42% opted for promoting British business, higher than any other issue. However, among the public, commercial and trade diplomacy ranks fourth (26%) on the list of priorities.
- **For the public, border protection and counterterrorism continue to be the most important international issue,** as has been the case in the past two editions of the survey. This comes second in the opinion-formers’ ranking. In the public ranking, this is followed by resource security (29%) and working with NATO and allies on international security (27%). Being ‘an active member of the EU’ comes bottom of the public ranking (10%) and fifth among opinion-formers (30%).

Figure 2: What should be the main focus of British foreign policy?



- **Opinion-formers overwhelmingly think the BBC World Service is the UK’s top foreign policy tool.** When presented with a list of different foreign policy ‘assets’, 68% of opinion-formers think it does the most to serve the UK’s interests around the world. This is far ahead of the country’s diplomats in second place (38%) and its membership of the EU in third (37%).
- **Among the public, the number who consider the armed forces a leading instrument of the UK’s influence internationally has declined, but a plurality still share that view.** From a peak of 53% in 2011, it has fallen to 38%. This decline is more pronounced among opinion-formers, for

whom the armed forces come seventh out of eight (with 23%), ahead only of the British Council, in a list of sources of UK influence. In 2011, 42% of opinion-formers considered the armed forces a top source of influence, ranking it second.

Friends, allies and adversaries

The coalition government has tried to refocus diplomacy on emerging economies and to reinvigorate bilateral relationships as the bedrock of international cooperation.¹⁰ The survey reveals that the public holds fairly traditional and consistent views of the UK's European neighbours as well as of its allies and partners further afield, and of its competitors or adversaries. Overall, the public expresses the most favourable opinions towards Anglophone countries with which the UK has close historical ties and those European countries to which it is geographically closer.

- **Within Europe, northern countries are viewed most favourably by the public.** The Netherlands is ranked highest, for the fourth time in a row. There is a 9-point increase since 2012 in those saying they have 'especially favourable' views towards the Netherlands, from 24% to 33%. The fact that the survey was conducted shortly after the shooting down over Ukraine of flight MH17 with 196 Dutch citizens aboard may have generated particular sympathy. The other places in the top five are taken by northern European countries: Sweden, Norway, Ireland and Germany.
- Within Europe, Russia and Ukraine are viewed most unfavourably (see Table 1): 56% say they have especially unfavourable views of Russia, while 23% are unfavourable towards Ukraine. The large spike in unfavourable views of Russia, which have risen by 26 points since 2012, is presumably a public response to Russian actions in Ukraine. Meanwhile, views of Ukraine are identical to those recorded in 2012. Turkey comes third in the unfavourability ranking with 17%.
- **Beyond Europe, traditional allies from the Commonwealth continue to be viewed most favourably by the public.** Australia tops the list of states outside Europe, as it has done in each edition of the survey, with 47% of the public saying they feel especially favourable, followed by Canada (44%), the United States (33%) and Japan (15%). North Korea is viewed most unfavourably (47%), followed by Israel (35%). The number of those viewing Israel unfavourably has increased by 18 points since 2012, presumably in response to the controversial military campaign in Gaza and the civilian casualties it caused, which were prominent in the news at the time the survey was conducted. Iran (33%) is the third most unfavourably viewed country, though its rating is down by 12 points compared with 2012. Pakistan (28%) and Nigeria (21%) complete the top five.

¹⁰ William Hague, 'The Business of Diplomacy', speech to the CBI Annual Conference, 21 November 2011, http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/1175146/william_hague_speech_to_cbi.pdf.

Table 1: General public attitudes towards other countries

% of respondents

Which of the following do you feel especially favourable towards?				Which of the following do you feel especially unfavourable towards?			
	2012	2014	Change		2012	2014	Change
Netherlands	24	33	9	Russia	30	56	26
Sweden	21	28	7	Ukraine	23	23	0
Norway	20	26	6	Turkey	14	17	3
Ireland	23	24	1	France	20	11	-9
Germany	17	21	4	Poland	15	10	-5
Italy	17	20	3	Germany	18	9	-9
Spain	18	20	2	Greece	20	9	-11
France	18	18	0	Croatia	7	7	0
Portugal	10	11	1	Czech Republic	5	5	0
Greece	8	10	2	Ireland	5	4	-1
Poland	4	7	3	Italy	7	4	-3
Czech Republic	5	4	-1	Spain	10	4	-6
Croatia	5	4	-1	Netherlands	0	1	1
Turkey	5	4	-1	Norway	1	1	0
Russia	2	2	0	Portugal	4	1	-3
Ukraine	1	2	1	Sweden	0	0	0
None of them	25	21	-4	None of them	30	23	-7
Don't know	8	9	1	Don't know	7	8	1

Which of the following do you feel especially favourable towards?				Which of the following do you feel especially unfavourable towards?			
	2012	2014	Change		2012	2014	Change
Australia	44	47	3	North Korea	40	47	7
Canada	44	44	0	Israel	17	35	18
United States	34	33	-1	Iran	45	33	-12
Japan	14	15	1	Pakistan	32	28	-4
India	10	8	-2	Nigeria	16	21	5
Brazil	8	7	-1	Saudi Arabia	16	21	5
South Africa	7	7	0	Argentina	29	15	-14
Israel	5	6	1	China	18	12	-6
South Korea	3	6	3	United States	8	10	2
China	4	4	0	Egypt	8	9	1
Egypt	4	4	0	India	7	7	0
Mexico	4	4	0	South Korea	6	5	-1
Argentina	2	2	0	South Africa	4	4	0
Indonesia	2	2	0	Brazil	1	2	1
Iran	1	1	0	Indonesia	3	2	-1
Nigeria	1	1	0	Japan	1	2	1
North Korea	0	1	1	Australia	1	1	0
Pakistan	1	1	0	Mexico	2	1	-1
Saudi Arabia	2	1	-1	Canada	0	0	0
None of them	21	19	-2	None of them	19	15	-4
Don't know	8	8	0	Don't know	9	9	0

Conclusion

On general attitudes to the UK's place in the world, the survey gives no clear impression of an isolationist turn. In fact, some results point in the other direction. Among the public and opinion-formers, a higher number than ever say they want an ambitious UK that seeks to remain a great power. Acceptance of what has been called the 'thesis of decline'¹¹ is at its lowest level since the survey began. Such a view may not be the result of a sober reflection on Britain's dwindling resources and reduced capabilities, but it remains a testament to national ambition.

This desire for international influence is not matched, however, by consensus over whether ethics or the hard-headed pursuit of the national interest should guide how Britain's power is used. The public seems to recognize and support the notion that the UK has responsibilities internationally. At the same time, it says these responsibilities should be shared and that the balance weighs too heavily on Britain. On one issue on which the UK does play a global leadership role – development aid – the public remains broadly sceptical. Opinion-formers, for their part, want the UK to be an ethical power, but with a pragmatic focus on commercial interests.

The foreign policy ambitions of most European countries begin in their neighbourhood as members of the EU. The UK's membership of the EU remains a highly contested issue and, as will be seen below, it is where differences between the public and opinion-formers become starker.

¹¹ David Cameron, 'Speech to the Lord Mayor's Banquet', 15 November 2010, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/speech-to-lord-mayors-banquet>.

Beyond Brexit: Attitudes to European Integration

No other international issue divides British politics as much as the question of membership of the European Union, and nowhere is the intersection of the foreign and the domestic more entangled than on European policy. Public perceptions remain an important driver of the government's policy towards the EU. Many of the key developments in the UK–EU relationship over the life of the current parliament – in particular the Conservatives' commitment to a referendum on EU membership and the rise of the anti-EU UKIP – have reflected currents in public opinion.

The government's approach to the EU has oscillated between focused pragmatism and determined obstructionism. The former has brought some successes, including on the EU budget, the adoption of a double-majority voting procedure at the European Banking Authority, and reform of the common fisheries policy. The latter has largely brought isolation or symbolic defeats for the government, such as over the fiscal compact in December 2011 and the appointment of Jean-Claude Juncker to the presidency of the European Commission in 2014.

The survey shows that, overall, there has been a noticeable movement towards more positive attitudes about the EU since the previous edition. This is evident in the headline question about voting to stay in the EU or not, among the public and the opinion-formers.¹² The survey also shows that this is part of a wider, if limited, pattern of improvement in perceptions of the EU among the public and a growing conviction among opinion-formers that the UK's future should lie inside the EU.

Overall attitudes: EU membership

The dominant subject in the UK–EU debate over the past few years has been that of a membership referendum: if there should be one, when it should happen and what question it should ask. Prime Minister David Cameron announced in January 2013 that, should the Conservatives win the next general election, the government would hold an in-out referendum by the end of 2017 on the basis of a negotiated 'new settlement' with the EU.¹³ This commitment has served to focus and energize debate about the EU in Britain in the pro- and anti- camps,¹⁴ although that debate has become disproportionately focused on the question of whether or not to leave. The survey shows public support for the prime minister's approach and a growing divergence between the public and opinion-formers.

- **Public support for a referendum has changed little and remains robust, while opinion-formers are narrowly opposed to one.** The main Westminster parties are split over whether and when they would offer a referendum on EU membership, and on what terms. The survey shows that the public clearly remain supportive of having their say on EU membership, with 60% in favour of a referendum and 24% against. The 2012 figures were 57% for and 26% against. The Conservatives' commitment to offering a referendum has not caused a significant shift in the number of people supportive of the policy. Conservatives voters are overwhelmingly

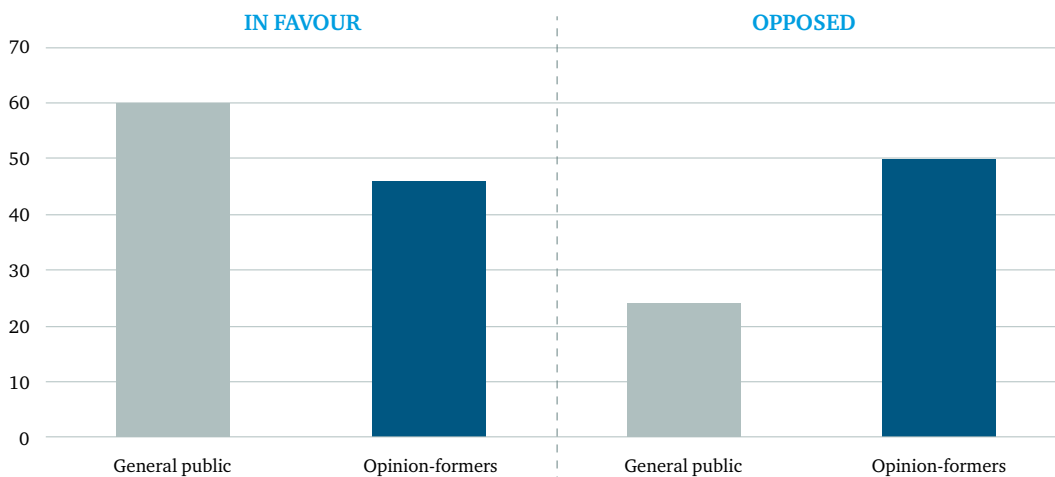
¹² This confirms other polling research on the public by YouGov. See, for example, https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/5jmgyjauym/YG-Archives-Pol-Trackers-Europe-Referendum-011214.pdf.

¹³ David Cameron, 'EU speech at Bloomberg', 23 January 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-speech-at-bloomberg>.

¹⁴ See, for example, the creation of organizations such as British Influence, a cross-party pro-EU campaigning group, and Business for Britain, which campaigns for fundamental reforms to the UK–EU relationship.

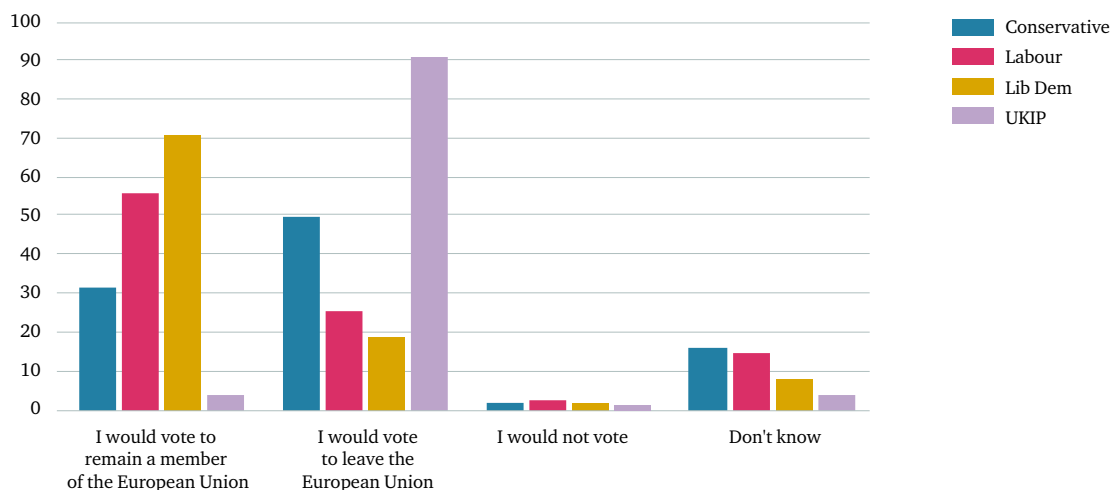
supportive of a referendum, as are a majority of Labour voters and – unsurprisingly – those intending to vote for UKIP. It is only among Liberal Democrats that more oppose a referendum than support it – 47% to 44%. Opinion-formers, meanwhile, remain narrowly opposed – 50% to 46%, a slight tightening from 2012 when the figures were 53% and 42%.

Figure 3: Support for a referendum on EU membership
% of respondents



- **Support for remaining in the EU has hardened among opinion-formers, but now more of the public would vote to remain in the EU than would vote to leave it (40% vs 39%).** This represents a major shift since the last survey in 2012, when leaving had a 19-point lead (49% vs 30%). Support for the EU has increased the most among women (up 13 points, compared with 6 points for men), in Scotland (up 19 points) and in London (up 13 points). This is mirrored by the trend for opinion-formers, which shows a further increase in support for the EU that was already high. 72% of them would now vote to stay in the EU (up from 63%) with only 18% in favour of leaving (down from 27%).

Figure 4: Should Britain remain in the EU?
% of respondents by party



- **A plurality of the public now believes that the UK’s closest ties should be to the EU rather than to the US. 30% of the public think that the UK’s closest ties should be to the EU, while 25% say it should be to the US.** This is a reversal of the 2012 figures. A smaller number (18%) think the UK’s closest ties should be to emerging economies. Among opinion-formers, the results were clearer: 56% chose the EU, with only 25% selecting the US (in 2012, the figures were 46% to 29% in the EU’s favour).

Perceptions of the European Union

The 2014 European Parliament elections helped to invigorate debate about Britain’s relationship with the European Union, including through the holding of two live TV debates between UKIP leader Nigel Farage and Deputy Prime Minister and Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg. This gave voters the opportunity to see the leaders of Britain’s most anti- and pro-EU parties trade barbs and statistics over the merits and disadvantages of membership. While UKIP received the most votes in the elections, perceptions of the costs and benefits of EU membership are more mixed than this suggests. Overall, public perceptions have become slightly more positive since 2012

- **Skewed perceptions of the budgetary cost of membership of the EU are becoming more pronounced.** The public vastly overestimates Britain’s net financial contribution to the EU. In 2013 this was just over £11 billion,¹⁵ but the median public estimate was £40 billion and the mean estimate was £118 billion. The median and mean public estimates have increased notably since the question was first asked in the 2012 survey, when they were £27 billion and £74 billion respectively. This suggests that efforts by pro-EU groups to improve public awareness of the costs of membership have not succeeded. However, the survey was conducted before the UK became liable for £1.7 billion in additional contributions to the EU budget after a recalculation of gross national income figures, which is likely to cause further misperception about the scale of the UK’s contributions.

Figure 5: Estimates of UK’s net contribution to EU budget (general public)



¹⁵ Question 31 in the survey used a March 2014 Office of Budget Responsibility estimate of £9 billion for the UK’s net contribution to the EU in 2013/14 (OBR, Economic and fiscal outlook supplementary fiscal tables, March 2014, Table 2.21). Figures from the Office of National Statistics released after the survey was conducted – but before the publication of this report – show that the actual net contribution in 2013 was around £11.3 billion (ONS, ‘Chapter 12: Statistics for European Union Purposes’, *United Kingdom National Accounts, The Blue Book*, 2014 Edition, October 2014, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_382452.pdf).

The public still generally associates the EU with negative things, but positive associations have increased. Given a list of positive and negative words and phrases, and asked which they most associate with the EU, four of the top five remain negative, with the EU linked in many minds to bureaucracy (46%), loss of national power (37%) and lack of border security (30%). However, every positive association in the list receives a higher score than in the previous survey, with a ‘stronger say in the world’ and ‘freedom to study, work and live anywhere in the EU’ both up by 5 points. Furthermore, with the exception of bureaucracy and lack of border security, the score for every negative association has decreased.

Figure 6: Ideas the public associates with the EU



Cameron’s reform agenda

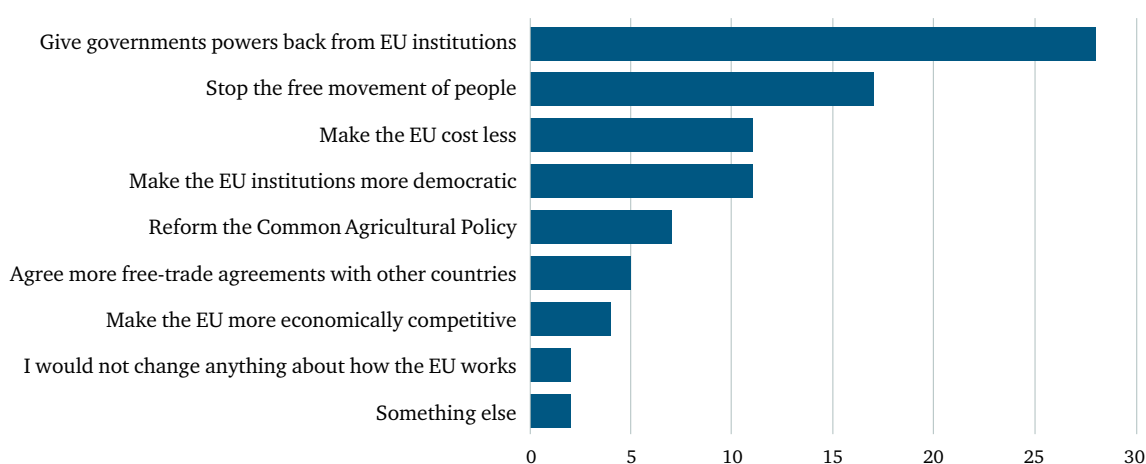
Prime Minister David Cameron’s strategy is to reform the EU and Britain’s relationship with it, and then to put that new relationship before the public in an in-out referendum in 2017. Although the principles that should guide that reform have been articulated, there is not yet a clear sense of what precise changes in the UK–EU relationship the government is seeking or what would satisfy Conservative Eurosceptics. Nevertheless, the government’s overall strategy sits well with a public opinion that is not satisfied with the status quo.

- **The general strategy of negotiating a looser relationship with the EU continues to chime with public opinion.** Presented with a range of options of how the EU could develop, the most popular choice, as in 2012, is for a less integrated EU ‘more like a free-trade area’ (32%). Only one in five respondents favour complete withdrawal. Just 12% favour the status quo, with 16% wanting a more integrated EU. A looser relationship is also the most popular choice among opinion-formers, with 44%, although more than one in four would like the EU to be more integrated than it is now, though without it being a fully federal Europe.

- **Returning powers to the UK remains the priority for reform.** Given the government’s goal of reforming the UK–EU relationship, the 2014 survey asked respondents what their priority would be if they could change one thing about the EU. This included a number of options that have been mentioned by the government or proposed by analysts and commentators. The most popular choice is to give national governments powers back from EU institutions (28%), followed by restricting free movement of people (17%), and making the EU more democratic and cheaper (both at 11%).

Figure 7: If you could pick one area for reform in the EU, what would it be?

% of respondents, general public



- **Almost half the public (49%) support limiting EU free movement even if that means limiting their own rights to live and work elsewhere in the EU.** Limiting freedom of movement within the EU – one of the four basic freedoms embodied in the EU’s single market – will be extremely difficult for the government to negotiate. Previous surveys highlighted the seeming contradiction between a public that is in large part hostile to free movement and EU migration, but yet values the freedom to work and live elsewhere in Europe more than any other benefit of EU membership. To address this, this edition of the survey asked respondents directly whether they would choose to limit free movement if it constrained their own ability to live and work elsewhere in Europe. Overall, 49% of the public support this, with 26% opposing it. UKIP and Conservative voters are particularly supportive, with 77% and 66% respectively in favour of such limits. Labour voters are more split, with 42% in favour and 33% opposed. This is also an issue for which responses vary considerably with age: 34% of younger voters (18–24-year-olds) are supportive of limits, compared with 59% of over-60s. However, it is also true that in each age category more support limits than oppose them.
- **Despite the widespread support for a looser relationship, the public and the opinion-formers do not rate highly the government’s handling of the UK’s relationship with the EU.** 44% of the public believe the government’s handling is fairly bad or very bad. Those intending to vote UKIP are most critical, with 71% viewing the government’s performance negatively. If the government’s strategy in offering a future in-out EU referendum was designed to placate UKIP voters, there is little evidence in the survey that this is succeeding. Opinion-formers are also critical: 64% believe the government has handled EU policy fairly badly or very badly; just 19% say the government has done well.

Conclusion

The survey shows the continuing scepticism and negativity towards the European Union in the UK. But this has declined over the past two years. While the prime minister's intention of renegotiating membership and then holding a referendum sits well with a public that is dissatisfied with the status quo and keen on having its say, his handling of these matters has few admirers. The national figures hide notable divisions, however, between different regions of the UK, between the supporters of different parties, and between different age groups and social grades. Understanding the views of these different groups will be vital to both sides of any referendum.

It is clear that public opinion is an important driver of UK policy towards the EU. One important consequence is the frequent clash between party political proposals designed to appease public opinion and governmental negotiating positions designed to achieve reform in Brussels. The falling out between David Cameron and then-prime minister Donald Tusk of Poland over the welfare benefits paid to EU migrants in Britain, for example, shows that a policy on Europe designed principally to appease public opinion risks alienating the countries whose support is needed for EU reform. The great challenge will be to find a balance that satisfies domestic opinion but does not turn the UK's efforts to reform the EU into special pleading for Britain.

Box 1: Has Euroscepticism reached its peak?

Quentin Peel, Mercator Senior Fellow, Europe Programme

Victory for the uncompromisingly Eurosceptic UK Independence Party (UKIP) in the 2014 European Parliament elections in Britain was a rude shock to the established political parties, but scarcely a surprise.

With almost 27% of the vote, UKIP led the Labour Party in the poll, while David Cameron's ruling Conservative Party trailed in third place – its worst result in a nationwide election in modern history.

At just over 50%, the combined vote for UKIP and the only slightly less Eurosceptic Conservatives reflected the profoundly sceptical mood in the country.

Yet the Chatham House–YouGov survey suggests that this mood in Britain may have peaked. Although negative views remain widespread, the answers on a variety of questions show a slightly but consistently more positive attitude to the EU than they did two years ago. There is also a sharp contrast between more pro-EU views in London and Scotland, of opinion-formers and of younger voters, and the Euroscepticism of the middle-aged and older voters in 'Middle England'.

Two factors may account for the change. Cameron's promise to hold an in-out referendum was made after the last edition of the survey. Such a referendum is even more popular now than in 2012, with 60% in favour and just 24% against. Ironically, though, the promise of it may also have helped reduce hostility to the EU.

The other factor is the reduction of economic turbulence in the eurozone, whose instability has undoubtedly fuelled Euroscepticism in recent years. British attitudes towards the EU have always been influenced by whether the national economy is perceived to be performing better or worse than the continental one – even if the desire to believe that economic conditions on the continent are worse than in Britain may reflect wishful thinking.

Yet the latest poll figures do not suggest that the pro-EU lobby or Britain's partners in Europe can be sanguine about the outcome of a referendum in 2017, should there be one. The entire debate about the EU is very finely balanced and unpredictable. It is marked by deeply held views over the effect of membership on national sovereignty, by ambiguity over what reforms are desirable or necessary, and by a remarkable degree of ignorance about the facts.

Outside factors could easily tip such a fine balance between pro- and anti-EU voters in a referendum. A return of the eurozone crisis would boost the 'out' camp, as would a further surge in immigration from EU member states. On the other hand, a sharpening confrontation with Russia over Ukraine might boost the 'in' camp (although voters do not put 'peace and security' very high on their list of positive contributions from the EU, in contrast to many of their counterparts on the continent).

Ignorance about the facts on Europe is alarming. Ever since Margaret Thatcher demanded 'a very large amount of our own money back' from the EU budget in 1979, the question of the UK's net contribution has been central to the debate. The estimates of most British people of the payments are far higher than the latter really are, but even when told the true figure, 47% still say it is too much.

The differences in attitude to the EU between opinion-formers and the public, between older and younger voters, between social classes and between the British regions are striking. On one thing, however, all groups seem to be agreed. In spite of the popularity of Cameron's decision to hold a referendum if the Conservatives win the next election, a clear majority of all age groups, regions and social classes say that on balance the government is handling Britain's relationship with the EU badly. That comes from both ends of the political spectrum.

David Cameron's promise of a referendum may have marginally reduced Euroscepticism, but its outcome is anything but assured.

Defence and Security

British defence policy is in a period of introspection. After a decade dominated by long and controversial campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, seen by many as distant and unsuccessful, the country seemed to be facing a sustained period without a military engagement, only to be pulled back into a multilateral operation in Iraq in the autumn of 2014. Despite this recent development, however, there is a growing perception that the public and the political elite have lost appetite for foreign intervention.

Cuts and retrenchment in the armed forces have also prompted a debate about a growing gap between ambition and military capability. The 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review committed the UK to significant reductions in defence expenditure. Combined with the end of operations in Afghanistan, it has been calculated that between the 2010/11 and 2015/16 fiscal years real-terms defence spending will fall by 19%.¹⁶ Despite playing host to the 2014 NATO summit, which committed allies to ‘reverse the trend of declining defence budgets’,¹⁷ it is likely that the UK will spend less than the NATO target of 2% of GDP on defence as early as 2015. Without a significant commitment to additional defence expenditure – which seems unlikely in the present political context – it could fall considerably below 2% in the following years. Some fear that the UK is losing critical mass in its military capabilities.¹⁸ Others see this as an overdue adjustment after a period of overstretch or say that defence should not be protected from the budget pressures on other areas of public expenditure.

Whether it was parliamentary mismanagement, conflict fatigue, moral opposition or simple scepticism about the proposed operation that brought about the government’s defeat over intervention in Syria in a House of Commons vote in August 2013, the effect has been to generate self-reflection about the UK’s willingness to use armed force in pursuit of its own and the international community’s interests. Questions of capacity are reinforced by questions of ambition, and doubts over whether the UK is still committed to being a leading military power.

The 2014 survey was conducted at a point of heightened scrutiny of the UK’s defence ambitions, even as the international security situation worsened markedly. The clash between the West and Russia over Ukraine and the perceived threat posed by Islamic State are reminders that the UK is far from living in a benign security environment.

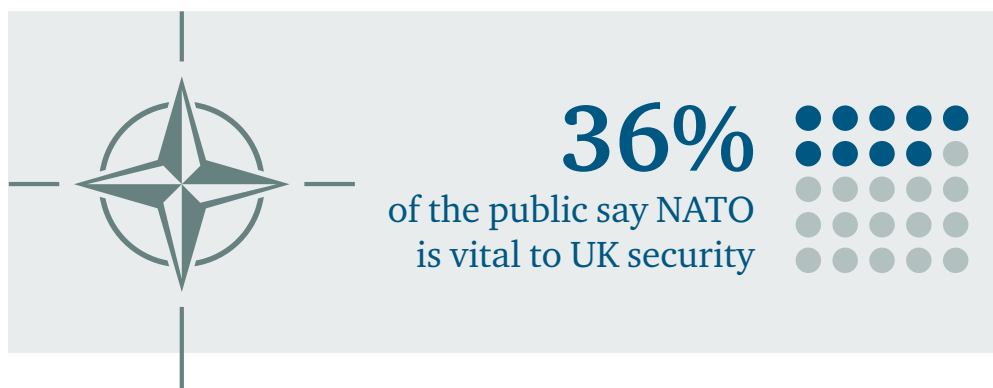
NATO and Russia

Russia’s annexation of Crimea, the conflict in eastern Ukraine and the shooting down of flight MH17 by Russian-backed separatists there heightened tensions with Russia, and drew renewed focus on NATO. The results of the 2014 survey seem to reflect this context.

¹⁶ Malcolm Chalmers, *The Financial Context for the 2015 SDSR: The End of UK Exceptionalism?* (RUSI, September 2014).

¹⁷ NATO 2014 Summit Declaration, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm.

¹⁸ See, for example, General Sir Nick Houghton, ‘Annual Chief of the Defence Staff Lecture 2013’, <https://www.rusi.org/events/past/ref:E5284A3D06EFFD>.



- **Two-thirds of the public and opinion-formers think that Russia is a threat to the security of the EU**, and one in five in both groups regard Russia as a ‘very big’ threat. Out of a list of 16 European countries, Russia is regarded the most unfavourably, with 56% of respondents recording that they feel ‘especially unfavourable’ towards it, a 26-point jump since the previous survey (See Box 2).
- **NATO is considered ‘vital’ to the UK’s security by 36% of the public, with a further 25% saying it is ‘important’.** Only 14% think that NATO is no longer relevant. Older respondents are more likely to say that NATO is vital (half of those aged over 60), compared with just one-quarter of those aged 18–24. The fact that those with memories of the Cold War are more supportive of the organization is no surprise, but the different view of younger voters is a reminder of the work ahead for leaders seeking to promote NATO’s role. Men are also more likely to see NATO as vital – 44% compared with 28% of women. Almost one-third of female respondents said they did not know what to think about NATO’s importance. Among opinion-formers, almost half (47%) consider NATO to be vital, while 14% – exactly the same proportion as in the public – say that NATO is no longer relevant.

Box 2: Russia – out in the cold

James Nixey, Head, Russia and Eurasia Programme

There has never been a time when the British public has felt especially favourably towards Russia. Relative high points include Peter the Great’s extended visit to England in 1698, the comradeship provided by a common foe in two world wars and Mikhail Gorbachev’s policies of perestroika and glasnost in the 1980s. These made Russia a shade more accessible and comprehensible to a UK audience.

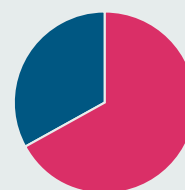
For the most part, however, Russia has been too distant and too alien to the British mindset for warm feelings to take hold. The underlying suspicion and mistrust of the Cold War was amplified after 1991 by news headlines exposing Russia’s transgression of international norms of behaviour. The last decade has also seen a number of damaging incidents specific to UK-Russian relations, including the closure of British Council offices in Russian cities, unilateral amendments to contracts between British and Russian firms, and the murder of Alexander Litvinenko in London.

Russia may well fit more easily into the ‘rest of the world’ category than into that of Europe, where it sits in this survey.^a None the less, the country has been the subject of an unprecedented spike in ‘unfavourable feelings’ on the part of the British public. A number of factors may explain the near-doubling of negative perceptions of Russia:



67%

of the public think
Russia is a threat
to the EU



President Vladimir Putin’s frequent anti-Western rhetoric; Russia’s military provocations towards NATO; its annexation of Crimea and destabilization of Ukraine; and, in particular, Russia’s indirect involvement in the shooting-down of an airliner carrying hundreds of Europeans, Asians and Australians. Russia has never performed well in this index, but through its actions in 2014 it has transformed broad indifference into strong ill-feeling.

Yet Russia’s close-to-pariah status in the British public’s eyes in no way equates to favourable feelings towards Ukraine. Ukraine has, in fact, achieved the second lowest reputational score of all countries polled in the ‘European’ category – with only Russia doing worse. Perhaps Ukraine’s home-grown problems, its distance from the UK and its under-developed public relations efforts are factors. Recent Western foreign policy ‘adventurism’, coupled with intervention fatigue, may also have desensitized the British public to the subversion and dismemberment of this seemingly alien land.

The crisis over Ukraine has inspired additional response options in some of the survey questions. So, although a direct comparison cannot be made with previous editions, it is striking that a full quarter of respondents from the public selected ‘conflict with Russia’ as one of the four greatest threats to the British way of life. While this ranks well below ‘international terrorism’, it is not far in perceived likelihood from other listed threats such as a nuclear Iran and North Korea, organized crime, energy cut-offs and economic failure – and well above global pandemics or climate change.

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The most striking anomaly in the survey with regard to Russia is the difference between the public’s perceptions of the likelihood of conflict with Russia and those of the opinion-formers. Despite all that has happened in the past 12 months, only 11% of opinion-formers agree that conflict with Russia is a top threat, in contrast to 25% of the public. When asked *specifically* about Russia (as opposed to it being compared as part of a list of other possible threats), nearly 70% of those polled from the public think that Russia is a security threat to the EU or EU member states. For opinion-formers, this figure falls to just over half.

Can this be explained by opinion-formers being more knowledgeable? Or, more cynically, could it reflect a desire among a stratum of Britain’s elite to avoid Britain being drawn into a new conflict with an energy-supplying ‘great power’ and overlook Russia’s transgressions?

^a For continuity, Russia has been included in the European category of the favourability index, as it has been in previous editions, as opposed to ‘rest of the world’. Russia may have been perceived unfavourably by comparison with, say, France or Croatia, yet might perhaps have been seen more favourably alongside North Korea and Iran. It is conceivable that switching Russia from one category to another (or perhaps including it in both) might produce a significant difference in results.

Despite Russia's global aspirations, very few among the public or the opinion-formers see it as being the world's leading power – either today or in 20 years' time. This may seem self-evident with China and the United States in the picture, but the near-universal dismissal of Russia as the future leading world power ought to be of concern to Putin, whose overriding aim is to see his country at least as one of the top three world powers. If the Russian leadership cares about British opinion, which seems probable considering its major efforts to promote and enhance Russia's image in recent years through public relations, lobbying and media outlets, the Russia-specific elements of the survey will make sobering reading.

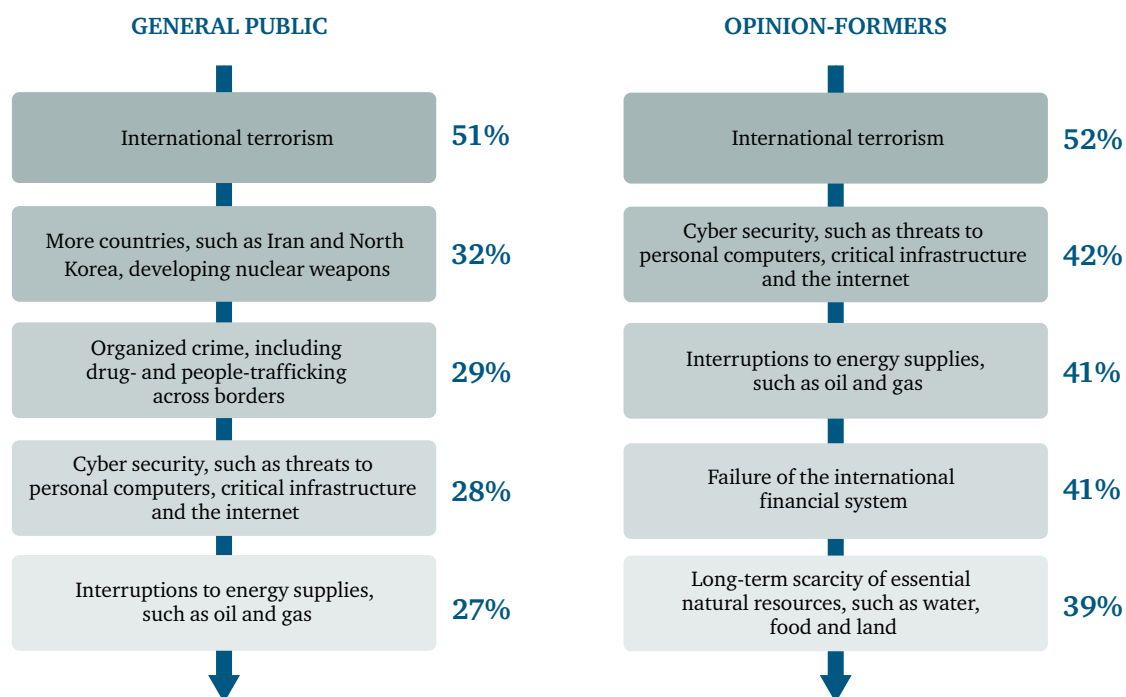
Threat perceptions

With the UK now once more engaged in military action in Iraq, David Cameron has described the country as being in a 'generational struggle' against Islamist extremism. How do the public and opinion-formers view this and other threats Britain faces?

- **When presented with a range of threats to the UK, the public and opinion-formers regard international terrorism as among the greatest, while fears of economic collapse have eased.** In each edition of the survey, terrorism has been the threat that the highest proportion of the public are concerned about. It is also what the public says should be the main focus of foreign policy. However, it is now also the most frequent choice of opinion-formers for the first time, with 52% selecting terrorism as one of the greatest threats to the UK. This could be linked to the fear of attacks carried out by UK citizens returning from fighting with Islamist militant groups in Syria and Iraq. But it may also be a comparative assessment of risk. In previous years, opinion-formers most frequently highlighted the failure of the international financial system. But the proportion of them highlighting this risk has fallen from 71% in 2012 to 41% in 2014, presumably reflecting the improved financial stability in the eurozone when the survey was conducted and the recent growth in the UK economy. Similarly, risk to the international financial system was the second-most widespread public concern in 2012 but the eighth in 2014.
- **There is a growing awareness of the threats to cyber security.** The number of people citing a cyber threat to the UK has increased in each edition since the survey began. Among opinion-formers, cyber threats are the second most widespread concern, with 42% regarding it as among the four greatest threats. The share of the public that also perceives the importance of this threat has grown to 28%, and it is now the fourth most frequently highlighted threat.

Figure 8: What are the greatest threats to the UK?

% of respondents



Intervention

Survey data from YouGov at the time of the parliamentary vote on military action in Syria showed that the public opposed the most likely form of intervention (targeted missile strikes in response to the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime) by a ratio of two to one.¹⁹ Some members of the House of Commons referred to this during the debate, and a perception emerged that there had been a structural shift in attitudes to intervention among the public.

- **Only 17% of the public think that the UK has a moral responsibility to support popular uprisings against dictators.** This is the lowest number in the history of the survey, albeit a fall of only 6 points from 2012. 19% think that the UK should support uprisings, but only when it serves the national interest. Younger people tend to be far more supportive than those over 60: while 29% of 18–24-year-olds say the UK has this moral responsibility, only 11% of the over-60s do. Overall, almost half the public (47%) say that the UK should ‘not involve itself at all’ in uprisings abroad, the same level as in 2011. 64% of the over-60s also express this view.
- **A plurality of the public (40%) think the UK should only use force when its borders are under threat.** Almost a quarter say force should be used whenever it serves the UK’s interests, while one-fifth think that it should use force in the service of the international community.

¹⁹ A summary of the timeline of the polling data, the media coverage and the vote can be found at <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2013/08/30/public-opinion-syria-policy/>.

- **The proportion of the public who think that the armed forces do the most to serve UK interests abroad has fallen from a peak of 53% in 2011 to 38% in 2014**, although the military is still ranked highest on this list. This fall is mirrored in the opinion-former data, in which the armed forces are ranked seventh out of eight, down from second in 2011.²⁰
- **Public attitudes to defence spending are split, with more wanting to increase it than to see it cut.** 33% of the public would like to see an increase, with 11% saying that spending should be increased a great deal. 31% of the public say they want to keep spending at current levels, while 22% would favour a cut. UKIP voters were most likely to support an increase, with more than one-quarter favouring a major increase. Nearly half of over-60s (47%) express support for an increase in defence spending.

Box 3: In Britain, NATO has popular support to reverse decline

Robin Niblett, Director, Chatham House

‘This Alliance must and will adapt.’ That was the first conclusion in the summit communiqué when the UK hosted a NATO summit in London in 1990. Then, the UK stood alongside its allies on the winning side in the Cold War. The spread of democracy and economic transformation promised a new era for Europe, and NATO would need to change.

Since then, NATO has nearly doubled in size, as former Warsaw Pact countries concluded that joining the alliance was an essential component of their national modernization and of guaranteeing their independence. It has engaged in operations far from its shores, from Afghanistan to the Gulf of Aden and Libya, and supported humanitarian assistance in Pakistan. It has reformed its command structures and defined a new ‘strategic concept’ at its 2010 Lisbon summit.

But it has also appeared to be an alliance in decline. Defence spending by most of its members has fallen precipitously, with the United States accounting for an ever larger share in the alliance. NATO’s security commitment to many of its new members is not credible. Its most prominent ‘out-of-area’ operation in Afghanistan has been held up as an example of the inability of Western countries to intervene successfully in post-conflict stabilization. And now NATO is being challenged in its backyard by Russia’s intervention in Ukraine.

Britain’s strategic position has mirrored that of NATO. A victor at the end of the Cold War, the UK has been a strong proponent of NATO’s enlargement and has been a leading player in its overseas operations. But the UK is now in the midst of severe cuts in defence spending following the financial crisis. And the failed vote on punishing Bashar al-Assad for his regime’s use of chemical weapons in Syria has exposed the level of public aversion to further overseas military interventions.

Will the UK now place its commitment to the Atlantic alliance back at the heart of its foreign policy, just as President Vladimir Putin challenges the West’s commitment to collective security? The results of the survey reveal a clear public awareness of NATO’s continuing value and importance to Britain’s security.

²⁰ This could be attributable in part to an additional option (‘Britain’s membership of the European Union’) that was not included in the 2011 version of this question.

61% of the public consider NATO ‘vital’ or ‘important’ and only 14% think it is ‘irrelevant’. Opinion-formers are slightly firmer in their views, with almost half (47%) saying NATO is ‘vital’ and 32% opting for ‘important’. This appears to be driven in part by real concern about Russia. 67% of the public consider Russia to be a ‘threat to the security of the EU’, and a quarter say that conflict with Russia is one of the top threats facing the UK. And more of the British public would like to raise defence spending than reduce it, underpinned by the fact that the highest number of respondents since our first survey in 2010 now say the UK should remain a ‘great power’ (63%).

Britain may be in the throes of a period of profound domestic introspection and possible radical change, following the referendum on Scottish independence and another potentially in the wings on its future membership of the EU. But on perceptions of the risks to its security and the need for NATO to remain at the heart of any response, the UK government has something to work with.

Scotland and the Regions

On 18 September 2014, Scots voted to remain part of the United Kingdom rather than for independence by a margin of 55% to 45%. But the referendum campaign and the debates that followed the result revealed profound divisions within the country and the large number of people dissatisfied with the status quo.

Aside from a debate over whether, when and on what terms an independent Scotland could acquire EU membership, foreign affairs did not play a major role in the campaign. When they did surface the case for independence rested, as with aspects of domestic public policy, in part on a belief in the political distinctiveness of Scotland from the rest of the UK.

The Scottish National Party argued that an independent Scotland's approach to international affairs would be different to that of the remainder of the UK because Scotland has a different outlook. The Scottish government's white paper, *Scotland's Future*, which set out its vision of the foreign and defence priorities of an independent Scotland, put it this way:

Independence will provide a step change for Scotland internationally. We will no longer be in the shadow of Westminster, with its increasingly insular and isolationist elements. Instead we can bring a new and distinct accent and approach to world affairs.²¹

This section explores whether different nations and regions within the UK have different views on foreign policy and international affairs. The survey polls a nationally representative sample divided into Scotland, the North, the Midlands and Wales (combined in this survey), London, and the rest of the South. These smaller regional sub-samples have higher margins of error. Overall, Scots in the sample are more pro-European, more supportive of development aid and more inclined to support ethical dimensions of foreign policy. This finding supports other research in this area.²² However, on other issues, including attitudes to NATO, the threats that face the UK or perceptions of allies abroad, it is not clear that Scots have views that deviate much from the national average.

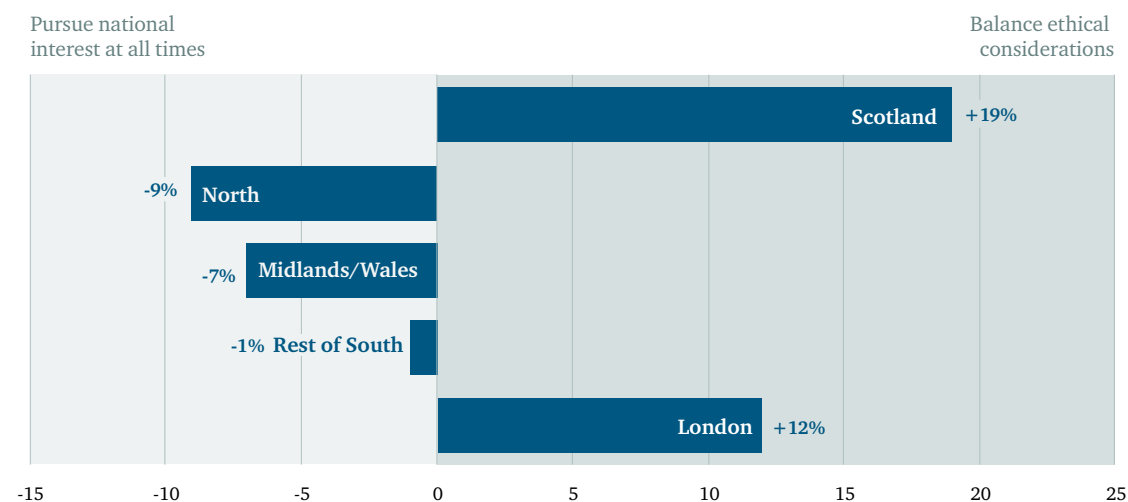
- **Ethical issues appear to be of greater concern to Scottish voters than to those in other regions.** A majority of Scots (52%) think that foreign policy should be based at least in part on ethical considerations, rather than simply pursuing the national interest at all times (33%). The former figure is noticeably higher than the national figure of 41% who support an ethical foreign policy, and even more so compared to some other regions: in the Midlands/Wales and the North of England, the figure is 38%.

²¹ *Scotland's Future: Your Guide to An Independent Scotland* (Scottish Government, November 2013), p. 210.

²² See, for example, IPSOS Mori polling, <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3131/Scots-want-EU-referendum-but-would-vote-to-stay-in.aspx>; and forthcoming research by Chris Hanretty and Nick Vivyan, as reported in 'Research shows Scots and English voters split over EU membership', *Times*, 23 October 2014, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/scotland/article4245089.ece>.

Figure 9: Should ethics or national interest drive policy?

% of respondents selecting 'ethics' minus % selecting 'national interest'



- **Scots are more likely to be proud of the UK's development aid spending, while those in the North of England are least likely to be.** 42% of Scottish respondents say the UK has a moral responsibility as a donor to help the poorest in the world, while the average in the English regions and Wales is 29%. In addition, Scots are more likely to say that aid should be used to alleviate poverty rather than promote national interests; 67% of Scottish respondents support this view, against a national average of 54%. In the Midlands/Wales, only 46% hold this view.

The European Union

The path to full membership of the EU available to an independent Scotland was hotly contested throughout the referendum campaign. It is commonly assumed that the public in Scotland is more pro-European than that south of the border. The Conservative Party's strongly negative views of the EU and its lack of support in Scotland have given British Euroscepticism something of an English accent. The success of UKIP in England has reinforced this impression (although UKIP did win one of Scotland's European parliamentary seats in 2014). Indeed, the Scottish government's white paper articulates fears that a UK-wide in-out referendum 'could see Scotland taken out of the EU against the wishes of the people of Scotland'.²³

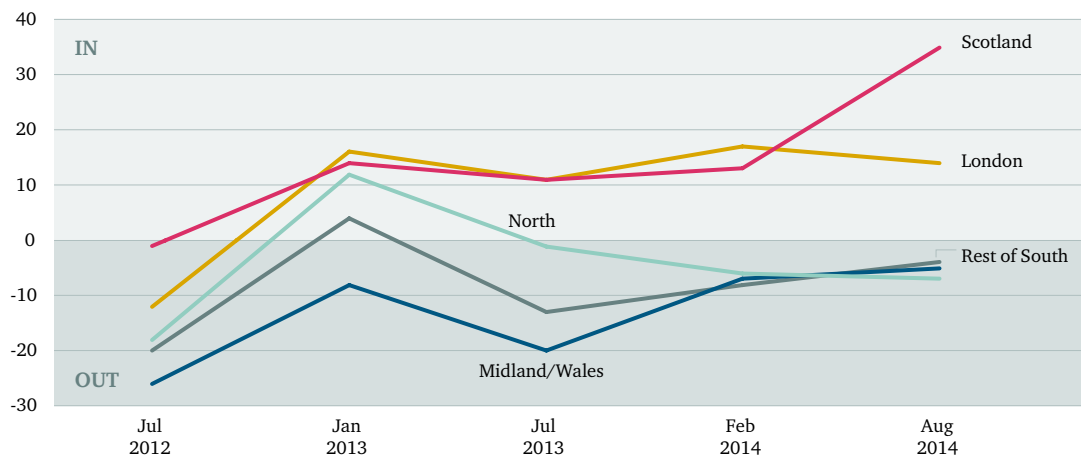
The 2014 survey results reinforce the view that voters in Scotland tend to be more supportive of membership of the EU. They also suggest that attitudes towards the EU seem to have shifted notably since 2012. This is apparent in a number of areas:

- **Scots would vote to remain in the EU by a two-to-one margin.** Asked how they would vote in a referendum, 59% of Scots said they would vote to stay in (a score far higher than for any other part of the country) and just 24% said they would vote to leave. Only Londoners and Scots would vote to stay in the EU, while the rest of the country would narrowly support leaving. This is a big shift from the previous survey when there was a slight lead among Scots in the sample for those voting to leave (41% vs 40%).

²³ *Scotland's Future*, p. 210.

Figure 10: Net support for EU membership across the UK

% of respondents who would vote to stay in the EU minus % who would vote to leave²⁴



- Scottish respondents are more likely to think that the EU offers good value for money.** Although Scots, like other British voters, significantly overestimate the UK's net contribution to the EU budget, Scotland is the only region where more respondents feel that the current figure is 'about right' rather than 'too much' (43% vs 37%). At the national level the split is 30% vs 47%.
- Scots are more likely to see advantages to EU membership.** Presented with different statements about the consequences of EU membership, Scots are more likely to identify advantages than respondents in any other region, in some cases by considerable margins. 64% of Scots consider 'increased trade and investment' to be an advantage, 19 points above the national average. 44% of them think EU membership has made it easier to catch criminals across borders, 13 points above the national average. Similarly, 60% of Scots value greater ease of travel within Europe, compared with a national figure of 47%. In 2012 one in five Scottish respondents thought there were no advantages to EU membership, the highest response of any region. Now, that figure is fewer than one in 12, the lowest of any region.
- Scots seem less worried about the effects of freedom of movement in the EU, though a plurality would still favour restrictions.** The public in Scotland and London have very similar views about migration from within the EU. In Scotland, 40% of people identify too much intra-EU migration as a disadvantage of EU membership, similar to the level in London (38%) but considerably lower than the figures for the rest of the South (54%), the North (53%) and the Midlands and Wales (56%). When asked whether they support limiting freedom of movement even if that means restricting the rights of British citizens to live and work elsewhere in the EU, 41% of Scots and of Londoners agree. While the net difference between supporting and opposing that statement in Scotland is +6%, it is +29% in the Midlands/Wales and the North.

²⁴ This graph includes data from other surveys by YouGov asking the same question.



Conclusion

It would not be surprising for the Scottish debate on one union (the UK) to have moved views on another (the EU). Heightened scrutiny over the position of an independent Scotland within the EU may have driven more respondents to consider the value of membership, and most of them seem to have moved to the pro-EU camp. This will give encouragement to those in the UK who think that a positive campaign for EU membership ahead of an in-out referendum would convince some sceptics of the benefits. The ‘no’ vote in Scotland’s referendum has strengthened the body of pro-EU opinion in the UK and makes an ‘in’ vote in any referendum on the UK’s membership more achievable.

In other areas, though, attitudes to foreign affairs are evenly shared across the UK, such as perceptions of the favourability of other countries. With regard to European countries, public attitudes are consistently warmest towards northern ones such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Ireland, and coolest towards Russia (by a large margin) and Ukraine. Attitudes towards the use of military force are fairly consistent across regions too. The view that the UK should help lead the global response to climate change is also widely shared across the country.

Overall, though, London and Scotland stand out as the two regions whose attitudes diverge most from the UK average while opinions in the North, Midlands, Wales and the rest of the South tend to group together on many issues. Regardless of political differences between Holyrood and Westminster, Scots and Londoners seem to share similar attitudes on a number of international issues, most clearly EU membership.

The Political Landscape of Foreign Policy in Britain

International affairs rarely divide the British political system deeply. In the last few decades, only European integration has consistently created ideological divisions, but these tend to cross party lines or divide parties rather than pitch them against one another. The most significant foreign policy decisions of the last 35 years – including over the Falklands war, the Gulf war, the war in Afghanistan and even the publicly divisive war in Iraq – enjoyed broad partisan support or the support of at least the two largest parties and parliamentary assent. Differences of emphasis surface more frequently than strong divisions over policy. This probably reflects the greater willingness of politicians to seek consensus on issues of foreign and security policy, which made the events around the Syria parliamentary vote in August 2013 seem all the more extraordinary. But the survey reveals that, on a number of points, the attitudes of voters vary more than the policies of the parties they support.

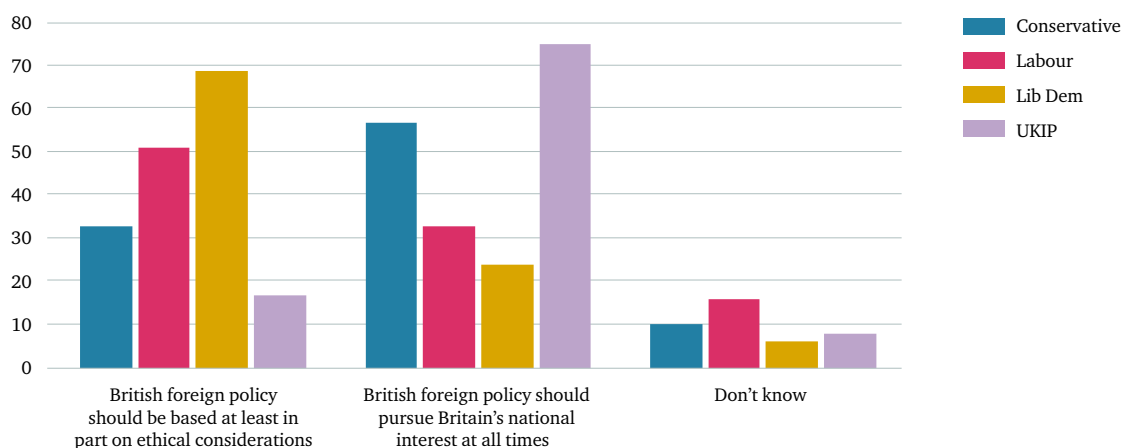
Power – but to what end?

There seems to be consensus among the supporters of all parties that they want the UK to be an international power and to have an ambitious foreign policy, but there is little consensus beyond that.

- **Majorities of supporters of the main parties share the view that the UK should seek to remain a ‘great power’ rather than accept decline.** Conservatives are most likely to hold this view (78%), but it is also supported by 58% of Labour voters, 67% of Liberal Democrats and 66% of UKIP voters.
- **There are stark divides between different party supporters over whether the UK should have an ethical approach to foreign policy or pursue the national interest without regard for ethics.** While more than two-thirds of Liberal Democrats and half of Labour supporters say they believe in an ethical foreign policy, only a third of Conservatives do, and just 17% of UKIP voters. 57% of Conservatives think that the UK should pursue the national interest, even if this means acting unethically. Fully three-quarters of UKIP voters agree.

Figure 11: Support for an ethical foreign policy, by party

% of respondents



- **When asked with which countries the UK should have its closest ties, party supporters are also split.** 34% of Conservatives and 40% of UKIP supporters think the relationship with the US should be the UK's closest, whereas Labour and Liberal Democrat voters tend to think the UK's closest ties should be to the EU. More Conservatives think the UK's closest ties should be to major emerging economies such as China and India than to the EU. More Liberal Democrats think the UK's closest ties should be with these emerging economies than with the US.
- **Conservatives and UKIP supporters tend to think the armed forces do the most to serve the UK's interests internationally,** whereas Labour and Liberal Democrat supporters place the BBC World Service first. Conservatives and UKIP supporters are also more likely to see the intelligence services as a key source of UK influence.

Development aid

Development aid remains one of only two areas of government expenditure that have been protected from budget cuts during the current parliament. The government has made much of meeting the internationally agreed target for overseas development assistance (0.7% of gross national income), and the UK is one of only a handful of countries to do so. Despite political consensus among the leading Westminster parties, however, international development splits their supporters.

- Only 29% of Liberal Democrats want to see aid cut, compared with 43% of Labour supporters, 58% of Conservatives and 84% of those intending to vote UKIP.
- While 55% of Liberal Democrats are proud of the UK's role as a donor and believe in a moral responsibility to help the poorest in the world, only 28% of Conservatives support this view. Only 5% of UKIP supporters are proud of the UK's development role. 62% of Conservatives and 50% of Labour supporters say that in difficult economic times the UK should spend more at home.
- The purpose of aid also divides the supporters of different parties. 62% of Labour voters and 80% of Liberal Democrats think aid should be to alleviate poverty. Conservatives are more evenly split, with 46% thinking aid should principally reduce poverty and 44% thinking it should promote UK interests. It is only among UKIP supporters that a majority (55%) think aid should be driven by national interests.

Conclusion

Despite a tendency for agreement at Westminster, the landscape of foreign policy attitudes in the UK is diverse and voters have views that differ more than the policies of the parties they support. The survey shows how far apart the supporters of different parties can be on fundamental questions such as the extent to which ethical considerations should shape foreign policy. The unity of the coalition government, which is composed of the two main Westminster parties whose supporters have the most divergent views on international affairs, has not been significantly challenged by foreign policy issues, however.

As the UK approaches the May 2015 general election, the outcome of which is difficult to predict, UKIP, the Scottish National Party and the Greens are seeking to challenge the established Westminster party system. In different ways, international issues are important causes for each of these parties. Although foreign affairs are not generally a key driver of voting behaviour, some issues, particularly the UK–EU relationship, are likely to play an important role in the campaign.

Box 4: The political paradox of UK aid spending

Rob Bailey, Research Director, Energy, Environment and Resources

In 2013, the UK government increased spending on overseas aid from 0.56% of gross national income to 0.72%, fulfilling a commitment made in the coalition agreement and placing the UK among a small group of donor countries – the so-called G07 – to have reached the internationally accepted 0.7% aid target. Doing so had cross-party support from Labour (which set the commitment when last in government), the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives, but the 2014 Chatham House–YouGov survey indicates the policy is unlikely to be a vote-winner. Although 30% of voters would hold aid spending at current levels, over half (54%) agree with the statement that the UK ‘spends too much on aid’ and that ‘in difficult economic times we should spend more money at home’. The proportion rises to 62% among Conservative voters and 87% among UKIP voters, demonstrating the policy’s unpopularity on the right of the electorate where the Conservatives are under pressure to defend their share of the vote from an ascendant UKIP.

In general, UKIP voters are most sceptical about the value of aid. They are least likely to see it as being in the national interest, most strongly in favour of cutting the aid budget, least likely to trust that aid will be spent wisely and most likely to estimate that the UK spends more on aid than other countries. While opinion-formers and voters for the three main Westminster parties generally believe the priority for aid should be poverty reduction and helping people in the developing world, UKIP voters are more likely to favour the use of aid to promote British interests abroad.

In contrast, it is only among Liberal Democrat voters that aid policy appears to be a clear vote-winner: 55% are ‘proud that the UK is a leading donor of aid’, and 66% would maintain or increase current aid spending. Opinion-formers are more likely to be supportive of the UK’s record as a donor – 84% of Labour- and Liberal Democrat-supporting opinion-formers are ‘proud that the UK is a leading donor of aid’, a figure that falls to 44% among Conservative ones.

Overall, support for the level of aid spending declines from its highest point among Liberal Democrats, to Labour voters, Conservatives and finally UKIP voters. However, there is broad consensus on which countries should receive aid and how it should be delivered.

What factors do the public think should determine

WHO GETS AID?

1

Democracy and human rights



2

Risk of wasted aid



3

Level of poverty



4

Potential security threat to the UK



5

Strength of relationship with the UK



Overall, among the general public the two most important considerations in deciding which countries should receive aid are, first, the presence of a democratic government with respect for human rights and, second, how much aid is likely to be wasted. How poor a country is comes third, despite most people believing the priority for aid should be poverty reduction.

Among the public, supporters of all parties trust charities and non-governmental organizations most ‘to spend international aid money wisely’, with international organizations a distant second. Least trusted (again among all voters) are governments in recipient countries, probably reflecting commonly held concerns about corruption and waste.

Will aid be an election issue in 2015? While there is a cross-party consensus on the 0.7% target among the three main Westminster parties, it is a somewhat uncomfortable one for Labour and the Conservative party, as support for the target does not extend as far into their voter bases as they might wish. It is therefore likely that the two largest parties will remain relatively quiet on the issue in the run-up to the general election. The winners from making aid an election issue are likely to be the Liberal Democrats and UKIP: respective arguments for and against aid will resonate with their core supporters. The opportunity is arguably greatest for UKIP, which could attract aid-sceptic Conservative voters with attacks on the government’s aid policy. Well-publicized calls from UKIP for aid to be cut or diverted to supporting victims of the 2013 winter floods in the UK indicate an effort in this direction is already under way.

The government’s decision to increase aid during a period of economic hardship and pervasive cuts in public spending was remarkable. It has certainly benefited a great many people in the developing world. Ironically, it may also benefit UKIP.

Box 5: UKIP and foreign affairs

Matthew Goodwin, Associate Fellow, Europe Programme

The UK Independence Party (UKIP) is the most significant new party in Britain for a generation. In May 2014, and against the backdrop of broader gains across Europe for Eurosceptic and radical-right parties, UKIP came first among British parties in the European Parliament elections, attracting over four million voters or 26.6% of the vote. It was the first time since 1906 that a party other than the Conservatives or Labour had won the highest share of the vote in a nationwide election. UKIP has gone on to make more headlines, with two Conservative MPs defecting to the party, in both cases triggering a by-election and winning re-election on a UKIP ticket.

UKIP is anchored in deep social and value divides in modern Britain and is appealing to ‘left behind’ voters: older, white, working-class Britons who feel intensely hostile towards the EU, immigration, and the Westminster elites and institutions, and who are anxious about rapid social change. Since 2010, UKIP has targeted these left-behind voters.

The latest Chatham House–YouGov survey confirms this general picture while offering insight into how the supporters of UKIP view the world. It paints a picture of a section of the British electorate that is not only hostile towards Britain’s membership of the EU, but is motivated by a very different set of foreign policy objectives from the ‘mainstream’, and feels under threat from an array of global challenges.

UKIP advocates a ‘hard’ brand of Euroscepticism organized around a principled objection to Britain’s EU membership. This contrasts with the ‘soft’ Euroscepticism that characterizes most voters in Britain, who, while they might be instinctively sceptical of the EU and in favour of reform, do not want withdrawal. This is confirmed by the fact that in the survey UKIP voters are three times as likely as the average respondent to favour withdrawal, are significantly more likely to think that Britain spends too much on the EU, overwhelmingly want a referendum on membership (93% vs 60% in the full sample) and typically think that the current coalition government is handling Britain’s EU relationship badly.

When asked to identify phrases that they associate with the EU, those voters shifting behind UKIP select ‘loss of national power’, ‘waste of money’, ‘bureaucracy’ and ‘lack of border security’. This picture of intense Eurosceptic concerns over sovereignty and migration is mirrored in responses to another question in the survey, which asks voters to select only one EU reform that they would like to see. Those identifying with UKIP are relatively split between stopping the free movement of people (36%) and giving national governments power back from European institutions (34%).

Given their generally conservative beliefs, it is perhaps unsurprising that UKIP supporters are significantly more likely to favour alliances with traditional allies such as Australia, Canada and the United States, while holding negative views of historical ‘enemies’ of Britain, such as Argentina, France and Germany, as well as of countries that more recently have been an important source of recent migration to Britain, including the Czech Republic, Poland and Croatia (where restrictions on free movement remain in place but are set to be lifted in the future).

These voters also have clear views about other aspects of foreign policy. They support the armed forces and security services, but generally oppose overseas aid, which they do not believe serves Britain’s national interest (fewer than one in ten say that it does). In terms of alliances, these voters want to see Britain forge stronger links with the US, or even with emerging economies such as China, India and Brazil, and value these relationships over EU membership.

These voters want to see foreign policy focused foremost on the protection of national borders. 77% of UKIP supporters say so (compared to 50% of the full sample), far ahead of other priorities, such as working with NATO and other allies to defend Britain from external threats (35%), and working to ensure the continued supply of vital resources (34%). They want to see Britain involved in far fewer conflicts, not more. 67% of them take the view that Britain should not involve itself in popular uprisings abroad (20 points above the national average) and they reject the argument that the UK has a moral responsibility to help the poorest people in the world (with just 5% saying so). Other priorities such as tackling climate change or being an active member of the EU also elicit scant support from UKIP voters.

Conclusion

The Chatham House–YouGov survey shows that the narrative that the United Kingdom is becoming more insular, or even more isolationist, in its foreign policy outlook is not borne out in the data in a consistent way. More than in previous editions of the survey, majorities of the public and opinion-formers aspire for the country to be a great power. The public says the UK should play a leadership role in international security and the fight against climate change. More support a rise in the defence budget than a cut.

At the same time, though, many in the public think that the UK's international burden is too great and that other countries should do more. The public is hostile to development aid. It also remains reflexively Eurosceptic, seeing more costs than benefits to membership of the European Union, despite evidence of a modest improvement in perceptions of the EU. Many in the public support leaving the EU altogether, but more continue to favour a looser relationship rather than a 'Brexit'.

This is not a straightforward environment for making foreign policy. Nor does it change any of the material constraints on a mid-sized country like the UK, particularly one that still faces huge economic challenges. In meeting its international commitments to aid spending against the tide of public opinion, the government has shown political courage, albeit within a Westminster political consensus that has made sustaining that decision simpler. The government's hope to negotiate a looser relationship with the EU resonates with a Eurosceptic public, yet its handling of Europe does not receive very high marks from voters. Nor does its handling of foreign policy overall.

Such views pose a challenge for policy-makers, who must determine the extent to which they try to lead public opinion or are led by it. There is a traditional view in some circles that the complexity and sensitivities of foreign policy mean that the influence of public opinion on it should be limited. This survey shows that on an issue like the EU budget the public is indeed poorly informed. In this edition, though, the survey also asked the public one further question: whether foreign policy should be determined by experts with specialist knowledge, or whether it should be democratic and answerable to ordinary people. In response 50% support a transparent, accountable view of foreign policy-making, while 27% take the more technocratic position. So, perhaps unsurprisingly, the public think their views should be heard.

The most significant foreign policy question facing the government, and where the voice of the public often seems loudest, is the future of Britain's relationship with the European Union. This is also the issue on which the public and opinion-formers most consistently diverge in their views. A public that is broadly Eurosceptic contrasts sharply with opinion-formers of whom three-quarters would vote to stay in the EU. The government is seeking a settlement with the EU that enjoys the confidence and consent of the public. This is as it should be. Yet there is a danger that by simply reflecting aspects of the public's Euroscepticism, the government will complicate its efforts to build coalitions for reform with some partners in the EU. British exceptionalism will never be a good basis for reforming the EU, even if it is a true reflection of where the public stands.

The challenges for the next government, whatever its political hue, will be to find the right balance between the desire to be a great power and the political and financial constraints on that ambition; and between the desire to shape public opinion and the need to reflect it. This will require strong and thoughtful leadership at home as well as abroad.

Annex 1: Methodology

Survey specifics

YouGov, on behalf of Chatham House, conducted two surveys. The first was of a representative sample of 2,059 adults. This fieldwork was undertaken between 6 and 12 August 2014. The survey was carried out online, and the figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in Great Britain (aged 18 and over, excluding Northern Ireland).

The second survey was conducted using the YouGov Reputation panel and surveyed 704 panellists on YouGov's panel of opinion-formers. Fieldwork was undertaken between 31 July and 16 August 2014. The survey was carried out online.

YouGov Reputation

YouGov runs a panel of over 4,000 UK 'opinion-formers', leaders drawn from the worlds of business, media, politics, academia, science and the arts. These 'influentials' respond to regular surveys on topics of public interest, providing detailed insights into what they think about key issues of the day.

YouGov survey methods

Most of the surveys conducted by YouGov are sent to a nationally representative sample of British adults selected from YouGov's online panel. For this, YouGov draws a sub-sample of the panel that is representative of the GB electorate by age, gender, social class, political party identification, region and type of newspaper (upmarket, mid-market, red-top, no newspaper), and invites this sub-sample to complete a survey. Once the sample has been identified, YouGov's in-house software sends out email invitations for a survey. Respondents are never told what the survey will be about prior to clicking the link. This aims to prevent respondents only taking surveys on topics in which they have an interest. Only respondents invited to the survey may take part in it. Once they follow the link to the webpage, they are taken to a survey and may complete this only once.

Almost all surveys involve statistical weighting, whether they are conducted online, face to face or by telephone. This is a fine-tuning measure to ensure that the published results properly reflect the population they seek to measure. At YouGov, the targets for the weighted data are derived from three sources:

1. Census data;
2. The National Readership Survey (a random probability survey comprising 34,000 random face-to-face interviews conducted annually);
3. YouGov estimates on party identity. These are derived from an analysis of more than 80,000 responses to YouGov surveys at, or shortly after, the May 2010 general election, when respondents were asked both i) whether they generally thought of themselves as Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat etc. (party identity); and ii) which party they would support,

or had supported, in the 2010 general election. Data are weighted to May 2010 party identity wherever this information is available. The weights used for party identity are consistent with the outcome of the 2010 general election.

Given the debate surrounding the online approach to research, YouGov recognizes the need to ensure communities that are digitally excluded (e.g. the elderly) are represented in each project. YouGov has established an online research panel of over 350,000 adults living in the UK, from which samples can be easily drawn to cover almost all requirements. YouGov expends much of its recruitment resource concentrating on areas traditionally 'hard to reach' online. A large number of people on the panel are economically inactive, of C2DE socio-economic status or over retirement age, for example. Respondents can join the panel by either signing up directly on the website, being referred by a friend or family member, receiving an email invitation from YouGov, or responding to advertisements on the web. YouGov targets its email invitation to the specific needs of the panel. In a similar fashion, YouGov creates advertisements on the web which are targeted to appeal to and only appear to certain demographic groups.

Annex 2: Full List of Survey Questions

N.B. All questions were posed to the general public sample. Those marked with an asterisk were also posed to the ‘opinion-former’ sample.

Section I: The UK and the world

1. Which of the following countries, if any, do you feel especially FAVOURABLE towards?
(Please tick up to five.)

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Czech Republic | <input type="checkbox"/> Poland |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Croatia | <input type="checkbox"/> Portugal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> France | <input type="checkbox"/> Russia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Germany | <input type="checkbox"/> Spain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greece | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ireland | <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italy | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukraine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Netherlands | <input type="checkbox"/> None of them |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Norway | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

2. And which of the following countries, if any, do you feel especially UNFAVOURABLE towards?
(Please tick up to five.)

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Czech Republic | <input type="checkbox"/> Poland |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Croatia | <input type="checkbox"/> Portugal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> France | <input type="checkbox"/> Russia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Germany | <input type="checkbox"/> Spain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greece | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ireland | <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italy | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukraine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Netherlands | <input type="checkbox"/> None of them |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Norway | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

3. Again, which of the following countries, if any, do you feel especially FAVOURABLE towards?
(Please tick up to five.)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Argentina | <input type="checkbox"/> Mexico |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australia | <input type="checkbox"/> Nigeria |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brazil | <input type="checkbox"/> North Korea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canada | <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> China | <input type="checkbox"/> Saudi Arabia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Egypt | <input type="checkbox"/> South Africa |
| <input type="checkbox"/> India | <input type="checkbox"/> South Korea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indonesia | <input type="checkbox"/> United States |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iran | <input type="checkbox"/> None of them |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Israel | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Japan | |

4. And which, if any, do you feel especially UNFAVOURABLE towards? (Please tick up to five.)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Argentina | <input type="checkbox"/> Mexico |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australia | <input type="checkbox"/> Nigeria |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brazil | <input type="checkbox"/> North Korea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canada | <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> China | <input type="checkbox"/> Saudi Arabia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Egypt | <input type="checkbox"/> South Africa |
| <input type="checkbox"/> India | <input type="checkbox"/> South Korea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indonesia | <input type="checkbox"/> United States |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iran | <input type="checkbox"/> None of them |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Israel | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Japan | |

*5. Which of the following do you think do most to serve Britain's national interests around the world? (Please tick up to three.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The armed forces | <input type="checkbox"/> BBC World Service radio and TV broadcasting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomats in the UK's Embassies and High Commissions | <input type="checkbox"/> British Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The intelligence services, such as MI5, SIS (MI6) and the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) | <input type="checkbox"/> UK-based multinational companies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The UK's overseas/international aid programme/Department for International Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Britain's membership of the EU |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

*6. Which of the following, if any, do you think should be the main focus of UK foreign policy? (Please select up to three.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting British business and trade overseas | <input type="checkbox"/> Combating diseases such as AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working with NATO and allies to defend Britain from external threats | <input type="checkbox"/> Tackling climate change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spreading British values abroad – including democracy, rule of law and human rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty reduction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring the continued supply of vital resources, such as oil, gas, food and water | <input type="checkbox"/> Protecting the UK at its borders, including counterterrorism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Protecting British nationals abroad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being an active member of the EU | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

*7. Here are some international issues that some people regard as current or possible future threats to the British way of life. Which, if any, do you regard as the GREATEST threats? (Please tick up to four.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More countries, such as Iran and North Korea, developing nuclear weapons | <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber security, such as threats to personal computers, critical infrastructure and the internet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International terrorism | <input type="checkbox"/> Failed and weak states, such as Somalia, Yemen and Pakistan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organized crime, including drug- and people-trafficking across borders | |

-
- Climate change/global warming
 - Interruptions to our energy supplies, such as oil and gas
 - Natural disasters, such as flooding, hurricanes and ash clouds, which disrupt our transport, communications and other networks
 - Global pandemics such as bird flu
 - Failure of the international financial system
 - Long-term scarcity of essential natural resources, such as water, food and land
 - A ‘trade war’ with countries abandoning free trade in favour of protectionism
 - Conflict with Russia
 - None of them
 - Don’t know

*8. Which ONE of the following statements comes closest to your view?

- The UK should seek to remain a great power, with substantial armed forces and its own seat at the UN Security Council as one of the ‘big five’ permanent members (the others are the United States, Russia, France and China)
- The UK should accept that it is no longer a great power, cut its defence budget further, in due course give up its seat on the UN Security Council, and reduce its contribution to maintaining international security
- Don’t know

*9. Which ONE of the following statements comes closest to your view?

- British foreign policy should be based at least in part on ethical considerations, even if this means sometimes not acting in Britain’s immediate national interest
- British foreign policy should pursue Britain’s national interest at all times, even if this means doing things that some people regard as unethical
- Don’t know

10. Would you say that the coalition government has changed UK foreign policy for the better, for the worse, or has made no difference?

- Better
- Worse
- It has made no difference
- Don’t know

*11. Which ONE, if any, of the following do you think the UK should have closest ties with?

- The EU
- The US
- Emerging economies, such as China,
- India and Brazil
- None of these
- Don’t know

12. Which ONE of the following do you think is the world’s leading power today?

- Britain
- The US
- China
- Germany
- India
- Brazil
- Russia
- The EU
- Another country
- Don’t know

13. And which of the following do you think will be the world’s leading power in 20 years’ time?

- Britain
- The US
- China
- Germany
- India
- Brazil
- Russia
- The EU
- Another country
- Don’t know

Section II: NATO, defence and use of force

14. The UK government currently spends £38 billion on defence, about 5% of all government spending.

Do you think this amount should be...?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased a great deal | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced a little |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased a little | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced a great deal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kept at its current level | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

*15. In September, the UK will host a NATO summit. Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NATO is vital to the UK's security | <input type="checkbox"/> but is no longer relevant today |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NATO is important to UK security, but other organizations are more important | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NATO used to be an important organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

*16. Following events in Ukraine, do you think Russia is or is not a security threat to the EU [or EU member states]?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is a very big threat to the EU's security | <input type="checkbox"/> It not a threat at all to the EU's security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is a fairly big threat to the EU's security | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is not much of a threat to the EU's security | |

17. Thinking about popular uprisings (such as in Syria) in which citizens attempt to overthrow a dictator, which ONE of these statements comes closest to your view?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Britain has a moral responsibility to support such uprisings regardless of whether it benefits Britain's national interests | <input type="checkbox"/> Britain should only support such uprisings if it benefits Britain's national interests |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Britain should not involve itself at all in such uprisings |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

18. Which of these statements comes closest to your view on when the government should use military force?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Should never use force | <input type="checkbox"/> Should use force whenever it is in the broader interests of the international community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Should only use force if Britain's borders are under threat | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Should use force whenever it serves British interests | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

19. The UK government is expanding the number of unmanned military vehicles, sometimes called drones, within its armed forces. Some of these drones carry weapons and have been used in recent military operations. Do you support or oppose the use of armed drones by the British armed forces?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

Thinking about the UK's role in the world, what are your views on the following statements:

20. 'The UK has a responsibility to help maintain international security'

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

21. 'The UK has a responsibility to provide troops for international peacekeeping missions'

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

22. 'The UK should help lead the global response to climate change'

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

23. 'The UK is expected to do too much internationally. The UK should do less and others should do more'

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

Section III: Development spending

Thinking about the British government's spending on international aid...

24. Do you think that Britain gives more, less or about the same amount of money as each of the following countries? (Please tick one option per row)

Other West European countries (e.g. France, Germany)

Other developed nations (e.g. the US, Japan)

Emerging economies (e.g. Brazil, China, India)

Resource-rich Arab states (e.g. Saudi Arabia, the UAE)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Much more | <input type="checkbox"/> A little less |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A little more | <input type="checkbox"/> Much less |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About the same | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

25. Of its total budget of nearly £720 billion, the British government currently allocates 1.6% – £11.3 billion – to overseas aid to poor countries. Do you think that the government should increase or decrease the amount of money that it spends on overseas aid to poor countries?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase a great deal | <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease somewhat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase somewhat | <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease a great deal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stay the same | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

* 26. In 2013, the UK overseas aid budget was 0.7% of national income. This meets the international target that the UK has committed to. Only five other countries have met this target.

Which statement comes closest to your view?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am proud that the UK is a leading donor of aid. We have a moral responsibility to help the poorest people in the world | <input type="checkbox"/> The UK spends too much on aid. In difficult economic times, we should spend more money at home |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

* 27. If you had to choose, which of these do you think should be the priority for British spending on overseas aid?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To reduce poverty and help people in the developing world | <input type="checkbox"/> To promote British interests abroad |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

28. Which of the following do you trust the most to spend international aid money wisely?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charities and other non-governmental organizations (e.g. Oxfam) | <input type="checkbox"/> International organizations (e.g. the UN) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private companies | <input type="checkbox"/> Governments of the countries that receive aid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The UK government | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

* 29. What do you think should be the most important factors in deciding who should get aid from the UK? Please tick up to THREE.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> How poor they are | <input type="checkbox"/> Whether they are democratic and respect human rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How good their relationship is with the UK | <input type="checkbox"/> Whether they support gender equality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How much of the aid could get wasted | <input type="checkbox"/> Something else |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whether they are important economically for the UK | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whether they are a security threat to the UK | |

Section IV: Britain and Europe

30. In 2013–14, the British government spent approximately £732 billion in total. Of this, £140 billion was spent on health care, £98 billion on education, £38 billion on defence and £11 billion on international aid. How many billion pounds do you think, or guess, the government contributed to the EU in 2013–14, after deducting the amount the UK receives back? Please answer in whole numbers, you do not need to include the '£' sign.

31. In 2013 to 2014, the UK government made a net contribution to the EU of just under £9 billion (1.2% of all government spending). Do you think this amount is too much, too little or is it about right?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too much | <input type="checkbox"/> Too little |
| <input type="checkbox"/> About right | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

32. Below are some advantages that people have identified from the UK's membership of the EU.

Which, if any, of the following do you think have been ADVANTAGES of the UK's membership of the EU? Please tick all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greater ease of travel within Europe | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic prosperity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased trade and investment between member states | <input type="checkbox"/> Stronger say in the world |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easier for British people to live, work and retire elsewhere in Europe | <input type="checkbox"/> Something else |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peace in Europe | <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable, I do not think there have been any advantages from the UK's membership of the EU |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easier to catch criminals across European borders | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

33. Below are some disadvantages that people have identified from the UK's membership of the EU.

Which of the following do you think have been DISADVANTAGES of the UK's membership of the EU? Please tick all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less safe borders meaning more people come to Britain illegally | <input type="checkbox"/> Too many imports into Britain from the rest of Europe damaging UK jobs and prosperity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too many EU laws and regulations | <input type="checkbox"/> Something else |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too many people from the rest of the EU coming to work in Britain | <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable, I do not think there have been any disadvantages from the UK's membership of the EU |
| <input type="checkbox"/> British parliament having less power | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subsidizing agriculture in other EU countries through the EU's Common Agricultural Policy | |

*34. Looking at the words and phrases below, which three or four, if any, do you most associate with the EU? (Please tick up to four.)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bureaucracy | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural diversity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corruption | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace and security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Undermining our national culture | <input type="checkbox"/> Better quality of life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of national border security | <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom to study, work and live anywhere in the EU |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A waste of money | <input type="checkbox"/> A stronger say in the world |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of national power | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protection of citizens' rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Democracy | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job creation | |

*35. People hold different views about how they would like to see the EU develop. Which of these statements comes closest to your view?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A fully integrated Europe with all major decisions taken by a European government | <input type="checkbox"/> A less integrated Europe than now, more like a free-trade area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A more integrated EU than now, but not a common European government | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete British withdrawal from the EU |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The situation more or less as it is now | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

*36. Do you think that the government should or should not commit to holding a referendum on whether the UK should remain a member of the EU?

- Should commit to holding a referendum
- Should NOT commit to holding a referendum
- Don't know

*37. If there was a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, how would you vote?

- I would vote to remain a member of the EU
- I would not vote
- I would vote to leave the EU
- Don't know

*38. How do you think the government is handling Britain's relationship with the EU?

- Very well
- Fairly well
- Neither well nor badly
- Fairly badly
- Very badly
- Don't know

*39. The government would like to reform the way the EU works and has suggested some ways in which the EU should change. If you could pick one of these for reform, what would it be? (TICK ONE ONLY)

- Make the EU institutions more democratic, for example by involving national parliaments more in EU decisions
- Make the EU cost less
- Give national governments powers back from European institutions
- Stop the free movement of people across the continent
- Make the EU more economically competitive
- Reform the Common Agricultural Policy
- Agree more free-trade agreements with other countries, such as the proposed trade deal with the United States
- Something else
- I would not change anything about how the EU works
- Don't know

40. Freedom of movement is considered to be a core principle of the EU. Would you support or oppose limiting freedom of movement in the EU to restrict the number of people coming to Britain even if that meant restricting the rights of British citizens to live and work elsewhere in Europe?

- Support
- Oppose
- Neither
- Don't know

41. Thinking now about how Britain makes decisions on foreign policy, which of the following comes closest to your view?

- Foreign policy is often complex and challenging, and most ordinary people aren't familiar enough with international diplomacy and the politics of foreign countries to know what is in Britain's best interests abroad. It is best left to foreign policy experts
- Foreign policy, like all areas of public policy, needs to be transparent, democratic and answerable to ordinary people. Experts don't always know all the answers, and it would be better if the public had more say in foreign policy
- Neither
- Don't know

About the Author

Thomas Raines is a research associate at Chatham House, where he manages the Europe Programme. Previously, he worked as an analyst in the strategy unit of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in London. His research interests lie in British and EU foreign policy, the UK's relationship with the EU and public attitudes to international affairs. He is the co-author of the Chatham House reports *Hard Choices Ahead: British Attitudes Towards the UK's International Priorities* (2012), with Jonathan Knight and Robin Niblett; and *A Diplomatic Entrepreneur: Making the Most of the European External Action Service* (2011), with Staffan Hemra and Richard Whitman.

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