



# Harris On Demand

## The Harris Poll

U.S. Attitudes toward U.S. Relationships  
with North Korea and China

Prepared For:



**American  
Friends  
Service  
Committee**

January 25, 2023



## INTRODUCTION

The aim in conducting the *Attitudes toward U.S. Relationships with North Korea and China* study was to understand Americans' knowledge about the Korean War as well as understand their feelings about working with countries like North Korea to change the climate of their relationship with the United States.

## FULL METHODOLOGY

The 2023 survey was conducted online within the United States between January 17-19, 2023 among 2,063 adults (aged 18 and over) by The Harris Poll on behalf of AFSC via its Harris On Demand omnibus product.

Results were weighted for age within gender, region, race/ethnicity, income, education, and size of household where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

Data were weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income, and propensity to be online, to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within +/- 2.8 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

The 2021 survey was conducted between September 24-27, 2021 on behalf of American Friends Service Committee by Ipsos. For the survey, a sample of 1,004 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. The poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents.

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### About The Harris Poll

The Harris Poll is a global consulting and market research firm that strives to reveal the authentic values of modern society to inspire leaders to create a better tomorrow. It works with clients in three primary areas: building twenty-first-century corporate reputation, crafting brand strategy and performance tracking, and earning organic media through public relations research. One of the longest-running surveys in the U.S., The Harris Poll



has tracked public opinion, motivations and social sentiment since 1963, and is now part of Stagwell, the challenger holding company built to transform marketing. To learn more, please visit [www.theharrispoll.com](http://www.theharrispoll.com)

## TOPLINE FINDINGS

A new American Friends Service Committee/Harris Poll finds that more than two-thirds of Americans are incorrect (40% believe it has) or unsure (28%) that the Korean War has **officially** ended. Similar to a 2021 American Friends Service Committee/IPSOS poll, Americans continue to believe the U.S. government should work with other countries to strengthen our relationships and reduce tensions. Additionally, majorities of Americans are, once again, in favor of lifting U.S. imposed sanctions for various reasons.

### Detailed Findings

- **Americans are willing to work with North Korea on various matters, to a greater extent than in 2021.**
  - About three-quarters of Americans believe the U.S. government should work with North Korea to repatriate the remains of U.S. service members that were left in North Korea after The Korean War (76% vs. 70% who felt this way in 2021).
  - Over two-thirds of Americans believe the U.S. president should offer to hold meetings with the North Korean leader (68%).
  - Two-thirds of Americans say the U.S. government should work with North Korea to reunite Korean Americans and their North Korean family members (66% vs. 62% in 2021).
  - About half of Americans (52%) believe the U.S. government should end the Korean War by signing a peace agreement, compared to 2021 when 41% held this view.
- **Since 2021, more Americans generally agree that the U.S. should lift sanctions when they are in violation of international law, interfere with humanitarian aid and global health, and damage the livelihoods of ordinary citizens.**
  - At least half of Americans are in favor of lifting sanctions if they hinder cooperation on climate change (50%), while over half believe sanctions should be lifted if they damage economic activity and livelihoods of ordinary citizens (58% vs. 49% in 2021).
  - Three in five Americans believe the U.S. should lift sanctions if they violate international legal principles (60% vs. 48% in 2021) or interfere with humanitarian aid and global public health (62% vs. 53% in 2021<sup>1</sup>).
  - Male Americans are significantly more likely to be in favor of the U.S. government continuing to impose sanctions even if they are illegal under international law and can hurt access to food and medicine (51%) than females (35%).

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<sup>1</sup> The 2021 statement referenced “COVID-19” instead of “global public health”



- Younger Americans aged 18-44 (46%) are significantly more likely to think that the U.S. should continue to impose sanctions even if they are illegal under international law and can hurt access to food and medicine than their older counterparts aged 65+ (38%), as are those who know the Korean War hasn't officially ended (46%) compared to those who think it has (41%).

### **3. Most Americans are in favor of the U.S government engaging in talks with China, whether motivated to reduce tensions or promote cooperation.**

- About two-thirds of Americans say the U.S. should engage in dialogue as much as possible to reduce tensions (67% vs. 62% who felt this way in 2021).
- About three in five Americans believe the U.S. government should engage in dialogue to promote cooperation rather than competition (63%)



## KEY FINDINGS BY QUESTION

**Q5: To the best of your knowledge, did the Korean War formally end?**

		2023
	<i>n</i> =	2,063
Yes		40%
No		32%
Not at all sure		28%



**Q10: The United States and North Korea have remained in a state of war for over 70 years because the active fighting of the Korean War was stopped with a temporary ceasefire (or armistice) and not a peace treaty in 1953; South Korea promised to observe the cease-fire, but it did not sign because it held out hopes of unifying the Korean Peninsula. The ceasefire was intended to be a temporary measure until a final agreement could be made at a conference in Geneva held the following year, however, at the end of the conference no agreement had been reached; talks between the U.S. and North Korea to end the war were never restarted.**

**Over the past 70 years, both sides have committed violations to the armistice. The U.S. first violated the agreement by stationing nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula in 1957 and, later, North Korea unilaterally announced it no longer abided by the ceasefire beginning in 1994. A state of war between the U.S. and North Korea continues to this day.**

Which of the following actions do you think the U.S. government should take with respect to the Korean War? Please select the statement that most closely represents your views, even if neither is exactly right.

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	2,063	502 <sup>2</sup>
<b>The U.S. government should end the Korean War by signing a peace agreement</b>	52%	41%
<b>The U.S. government should continue a state of war and a military presence on the Korean peninsula</b>	28%	24%
<b>Don't know</b>	21%	35%

<sup>2</sup> The 2021 Ipsos research asked this question in two ways. Half the sample received this wording while the other half received a variation that was not included in this year's research.



**Q15: The United States spends billions of dollars annually to maintain a military presence in South Korea and has maintained this presence for over 70 years because of the unended Korean War. Do you think the U.S. should cut funding or should not cut funding for this military presence?**

		2023
	<b>n=</b>	<b>2,063</b>
<b>Should cut funding</b>		<b>38%</b>
<b>Should not cut funding</b>		<b>44%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>		<b>18%</b>

**Q20: Do you agree or disagree that U.S. citizens should be able to travel at their own risk to North Korea without restrictions from the U.S. government?**

		2023
	<b>n=</b>	<b>2,063</b>
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</i></b>		<b>45%</b>
<b>Strongly agree</b>		<b>18%</b>
<b>Somewhat agree</b>		<b>27%</b>
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</i></b>		<b>44%</b>
<b>Somewhat disagree</b>		<b>22%</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>		<b>22%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>		<b>11%</b>



**Q25: Do you agree or disagree that humanitarian aid workers from privately-funded charities should be able to travel to North Korea without restrictions from the U.S. government?**

		2023
	<i>n=</i>	<b>2,063</b>
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</i></b>		<b>54%</b>
Strongly agree		20%
Somewhat agree		35%
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</i></b>		<b>33%</b>
Somewhat disagree		18%
Strongly disagree		15%
Don't know		13%





**Q30: Here is a list of possible steps that the U.S. government can take to engage with North Korea diplomatically. How much do you agree or disagree that the U.S. government should take the following diplomatic actions with respect to North Korea?**

*Summary of Strongly/Somewhat Agree*

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	2,063	1,004
The U.S. government should work with North Korea to repatriate the remains of U.S. service members that were left in North Korea after the Korean War	76%	70%
The U.S. president should offer to hold meetings with the North Korean leader	68%	-
The U.S. government should work with North Korea to reunite Korean Americans and their North Korean family members	66%	62%
The U.S. government should allow privately-funded charities to deliver humanitarian assistance to the people of North Korea	63%	56%
The U.S. government should establish a diplomatic presence in North Korea, such as a liaison office	59%	52%
The U.S. government should offer diplomatic and economic incentives to North Korea in exchange for steps toward denuclearization	58%	-
The U.S. government should allow U.S. and North Korean faith and religious communities to conduct people-to-people exchanges between leaders and members of these communities	56%	50%
The U.S. government should allow colleges, universities, and privately-funded educational organizations to conduct people-to-people exchange programs between students and scientists	52%	50%



The U.S. government should establish a diplomatic presence in North Korea, such as a liaison office

	2023	2021
<i>n</i> =	2,063	1,004
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>52%</b>
Strongly agree	22%	14%
Somewhat agree	37%	38%
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>24%</b>
Somewhat disagree	15%	15%
Strongly disagree	9%	9%
Don't know	17%	24%

The U.S. government should work with North Korea to reunite Korean Americans and their North Korean family members

	2023	2021
<i>n</i> =	2,063	1,004
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>62%</b>
Strongly agree	29%	23%
Somewhat agree	37%	38%
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>
Somewhat disagree	12%	14%
Strongly disagree	7%	6%
Don't know	15%	19%



*The U.S. government should work with North Korea to repatriate the remains of U.S. service members that were left in North Korea after the Korean War*

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	<b>2,063</b>	<b>1,004</b>
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>70%</b>
Strongly agree	42%	40%
Somewhat agree	34%	30%
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>
Somewhat disagree	7%	9%
Strongly disagree	5%	4%
Don't know	12%	17%

*The U.S. government should allow privately-funded charities to deliver humanitarian assistance to the people of North Korea*

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	<b>2,063</b>	<b>1,004</b>
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>56%</b>
Strongly agree	25%	19%
Somewhat agree	38%	36%
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>24%</b>
Somewhat disagree	15%	16%
Strongly disagree	10%	9%
Don't know	13%	20%



*The U.S. government should allow colleges, universities, and privately-funded educational organizations to conduct people-to-people exchange programs between students and scientists*

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	2,063	1,004
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Strongly agree	20%	17%
Somewhat agree	32%	33%
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>29%</b>
Somewhat disagree	19%	18%
Strongly disagree	14%	11%
Don't know	15%	21%

*The U.S. government should allow U.S. and North Korean faith and religious communities to conduct people-to-people exchanges between leaders and members of these communities*

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	2,063	1,004
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Strongly agree	21%	14%
Somewhat agree	36%	36%
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>25%</b>
Somewhat disagree	15%	17%
Strongly disagree	10%	8%
Don't know	19%	24%



*The U.S. president should offer to hold meetings with the North Korean leader*

2023	
<i>n=</i>	<b>2,063</b>
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</i></b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</i></b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>13%</b>

*The U.S. government should offer diplomatic and economic incentives to North Korea in exchange for steps toward denuclearization*

2023	
<i>n=</i>	<b>2,063</b>
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</i></b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</i></b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>15%</b>



**Q40/45<sup>3</sup>: Which of the following actions do you think the U.S. military should take with respect to U.S. military exercises with South Korea?**

		2023
	n=	1028
The U.S. military should halt military exercises with South Korea to ensure the safety of South Koreans and protect the environment.		
		43%
The U.S. military should continue to conduct military exercises with South Korea even if it endangers individual Koreans and the environment.		
		37%
Don't know		
		21%

		2023
	n=	1035
The U.S. military should halt military exercises with South Korea to ensure the safety of South Koreans and minimize climate impact.		
		41%
The U.S. military should continue to conduct military exercises with South Korea even if it endangers individual Koreans and contributes to climate change.		
		40%
Don't know		
		19%

**Q50: How much do you agree or disagree that economic sanctions are effective at bringing targeted countries to the negotiating table?**

	2023	2021
	n= 2,063	1,004
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</b>		
	62%	52%
Strongly agree	19%	13%
Somewhat agree	43%	39%
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</b>		
	22%	22%
Somewhat disagree	18%	16%
Strongly disagree	4%	6%
Don't know		
	15%	26%

<sup>3</sup> This question was asked as a split sample in the 2023 research



**Q55 How much do you agree or disagree that economic sanctions help stop targeted countries from producing weapons of mass destruction?**

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	<b>2,063</b>	<b>1,004</b>
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</i></b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>42%</b>
Strongly agree	20%	13%
Somewhat agree	33%	28%
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</i></b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>35%</b>
Somewhat disagree	23%	21%
Strongly disagree	9%	14%
Don't know	15%	24%

**Q60 How much do you agree or disagree that economic sanctions reduce human rights violations in targeted countries?**

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	<b>2,063</b>	<b>1,004</b>
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</i></b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>35%</b>
Strongly agree	17%	11%
Somewhat agree	29%	24%
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</i></b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>37%</b>
Somewhat disagree	25%	23%
Strongly disagree	10%	14%
Don't know	19%	28%



**Q65 How much do you agree or disagree that economic sanctions help stop or avoid military conflict between the country that imposes sanctions and the countries that are the targets of sanctions?**

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	2,063	1,004
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>39%</b>
Strongly agree	16%	12%
Somewhat agree	38%	27%
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>31%</b>
Somewhat disagree	23%	22%
Strongly disagree	7%	9%
Don't know	17%	30%

**Q70: Many United Nations officials have pointed out that broad unilateral sanctions imposed by the U.S. are considered illegal under international law, violate human rights principles, and are contrary to international norms. These measures may violate the UN Charter, the U.N.'s Declaration on the Principles of International Law, Article 22 of the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, and other international legal instruments.**

**How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

*Summary of Strongly/Somewhat Agree*

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	2,063	1,004
<b>The U.S. should lift sanctions if they violate international legal principles</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>The U.S. should lift sanctions if they interfere with humanitarian aid and global public health<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>53%</b>
<b>The U.S. should lift sanctions if they damage economic activity and livelihoods of ordinary citizens</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>The U.S. should lift sanctions if they hinder cooperation on climate change</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>The U.S. should continue to impose sanctions even if they are illegal under international law and can hurt access to food and medicine</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>32%</b>

<sup>4</sup> The 2021 statement referenced "COVID-19" instead of "global public health"





*The U.S. should lift sanctions if they violate international legal principles*

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	<b>2,063</b>	<b>1,004</b>
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>48%</b>
Strongly agree	25%	15%
Somewhat agree	35%	33%
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Somewhat disagree	14%	18%
Strongly disagree	10%	12%
Don't know	16%	22%

*The U.S. should lift sanctions if they interfere with humanitarian aid and global public health*

	2023
<i>n=</i>	<b>2,063</b>
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</b>	<b>62%</b>
Strongly agree	25%
Somewhat agree	37%
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</b>	<b>23%</b>
Somewhat disagree	16%
Strongly disagree	7%
Don't know	15%



*The U.S. should lift sanctions if they damage economic activity and livelihoods of ordinary citizens*

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	<b>2,063</b>	<b>1,004</b>
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>49%</b>
Strongly agree	23%	16%
Somewhat agree	35%	33%
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>28%</b>
Somewhat disagree	18%	19%
Strongly disagree	10%	10%
Don't know	14%	23%

*The U.S. should continue to impose sanctions even if they are illegal under international law and can hurt access to food and medicine*

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	<b>2,063</b>	<b>1,004</b>
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>32%</b>
Strongly agree	18%	11%
Somewhat agree	24%	21%
<b>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>46%</b>
Somewhat disagree	25%	27%
Strongly disagree	16%	19%
Don't know	17%	22%



*The U.S. should lift sanctions if they hinder cooperation on climate change*

		2023
	<i>n=</i>	<b>2,063</b>
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Agree (NET)</i></b>		<b>50%</b>
Strongly agree		20%
Somewhat agree		31%
<b><i>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree (NET)</i></b>		<b>32%</b>
Somewhat disagree		19%
Strongly disagree		13%
Don't know		17%



**Q80/85<sup>5</sup>: Prior to 2017 the U.S. government and China had a number of official dialogue processes that improved global economic stability, public health, pandemic management, climate change mitigation, and cooperation on law enforcement. Which of the following actions do you think the Biden Administration should take with respect to U.S.-China dialogue?**

	2023	2021
<i>n=</i>	1,033 <sup>6</sup>	1,004
<b>The U.S. government should engage in dialogue as much as possible to reduce tensions</b>	67%	62%
<b>The U.S. government should not restart official dialogue and instead spend more money on military build-up</b>	20%	16%
<b>Don't know</b>	13%	23%

	2023
<i>n=</i>	1,030
<b>The U.S. government should engage in dialogue to promote cooperation rather than competition</b>	63%
<b>The U.S. government should not restart official dialogue and instead spend more money on military build-up</b>	21%
<b>Don't know</b>	16%

<sup>5</sup> This question was asked as a split sample in the 2023 research



**Q90: We'd like to know whether you or someone in your immediate family is currently serving or has ever served in the U.S. military. Immediate family is defined as your parents, siblings, spouse, and children. Please check all boxes that apply.**

		<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>n=</b>	<b>2,063</b>
<b>I am currently serving in the U.S. military</b>		<b>2%</b>
<b>I have immediate family members currently serving in the U.S. military</b>		<b>9%</b>
<b>I previously served in the U.S. military but I am no longer active</b>		<b>13%</b>
<b>Members of my immediate family have served in the U.S. military but are no longer active</b>		<b>35%</b>
<b>Neither myself nor any members of my immediate family have ever served in the U.S. military</b>		<b>50%</b>

**Q91: There are a number of different issues in the news today.**

**How closely do you follow news pertaining to foreign affairs?**

		<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>n=</b>	<b>2,063</b>
<b>Top 3 Box (Net)</b>		<b>51%</b>
<b>7– Very closely</b>		<b>14%</b>
<b>6</b>		<b>15%</b>
<b>5</b>		<b>22%</b>
<b>4</b>		<b>19%</b>
<b>3</b>		<b>12%</b>
<b>2</b>		<b>7%</b>
<b>1 – Not at all closely</b>		<b>9%</b>
<b>Not sure</b>		<b>2%</b>