# MIDTERMS POLITICS DA- BLV 2022

## NOTES

Thanks to labbies Edwin Avery, Angie Chao, Amber Deng, Moonyoung Hwang, Albert Khawam, Jeff Vallyath, Liam Werner, Patrick Wong for their work on this DA.

Rather than have a traditional neg file and Aff AT, we divided all we found into 2 scenarios—Affs should def make link turn blocks to run the opposite midterms scenario that negs run against them. My hunch is that most teams will run scenarios that “GOP Win Bad” in which case you should read the internal link turns that talk about how a GOP loss would lead to political violence, backlash and civil war.

Because debate is fun though, the civil war impact can also link to “Dem win good” scenario talking about how Dems in congress are key to maintaining guardrails of election law etc.

You will need to sell the story of why plan will be perceived by the public (use cross ex and the Affs own 1AC evidence to build up story that plan is a BFD) and that plan will be perceived by Democrat/Republican voting block. You could also try to be fancy and add “winners win” cards to tell a story that plan would be perceived as a win for a political party and that it would give them momentum heading into the elections. Be creative. Find your own adventure.

## GOP WIN BAD SCENARIO

### 1NC Shell

### UNIQUENESS

#### Dems Will win in Nov- Abortion Ruling has Mobilized Dem Voters

##### Unified opinions of abortion of the Democrats gives them an edge to win in the midterm election

**Borter and Oliphant 5/3** [5/3/2022] Gabriella Borter and James Oliphant; Borter is a U.S. News correspondent for Reuters, currently based in Washington, DC and covering abortion, politics and national breaking news; Oliphant is a writer and editor who excels in entrepreneurial enterprise pieces and also a lawyer, having practiced in commercial litigation for several years, and have a firm grasp of policymaking, government legal affairs, campaigns, and power politics; <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/democrats-look-abortion-rights-threat-boost-midterm-election-prospects-2022-05-03/> \_Amber

WASHINGTON, May 3 (Reuters) - Democrats have needed something to turn around their flagging midterm election fortunes, and the U.S. Supreme Court may have just given it to them.

A leaked draft showing the court's conservative majority apparently poised to overturn the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade decision has set off a political firestorm over abortion rights just as the 2022 election season heats up. read more

U.S. abortion rights have been under direct threat for years, if not decades. But if the high court follows through and does away with constitutional protection for terminating a pregnancy, the issue will crystallize for millions of voters like never before, Democratic advocates and strategists say.

"You have a right that is wildly popular with the electorate, and you have an electorate that has not really grappled with the fact that it could be taken away," said Jessica Floyd, president of American Bridge, a Democratic political action committee. "The dynamic here is fairly unprecedented."

Democrats quickly seized on the issue as one that could reshape a difficult political environment going into the November elections, when control of both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives will be at stake.

Democratic candidates and party-aligned groups sent out fundraising pleas pegged to the prospect of Roe being overturned. "Every single one of my GOP (Republican) opponents supports dangerous, restrictive anti-abortion laws," congressman Tim Ryan, who is running for Senate in Ohio, wrote in an email to supporters on Tuesday.

The party in power typically loses seats in the first term of a new president. With opinion polls showing Democratic President Joe Biden unpopular with a majority of Americans, analysts have forecast Republicans to take over the House and perhaps the Senate as well. read more

But polls have also shown the right to abortion to be broadly popular. A Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted on Tuesday found 63% of respondents, including 78% of Democrats and 49% of Republicans, would be more likely to back candidates who support abortion rights in November. read more

Democrats contend the clear-and-present danger to reproductive rights will galvanize independent voters, particularly suburban women and women without college degrees, to vote for their candidates.

"There's going to be a whole swath of voters who may not consistently vote for Democratic candidates, but who will be really animated around the dramatic change in the landscape for abortion access," said Kristin Ford, a spokesperson for NARAL Pro-Choice America.

NARAL said it had seen a "big uptick" in donations and website traffic since the news broke late on Monday. Alongside other abortion rights groups Planned Parenthood Action Fund and Emily's List it has announced a $150 million investment in spending on the midterm elections, mostly in swing states and states that will be pivotal to preserving abortion access across the country.

Protest after the leak of a draft majority opinion on Roe v. Wade abortion rights decision, in New York City

Pro-abortion demonstrators protest in Foley Square, after the leak of a draft majority opinion written by Justice Samuel Alito preparing for a majority of the court to overturn the landmark Roe v. Wade abortion rights decision later this year, in New York City, New York, U.S., May 3, 2022. REUTERS/Jeenah Moon

Anti-abortion groups also plan to use the upcoming court decision - due by the end of June - to drive turnout. Mallory Carroll, a spokesperson for Susan B. Anthony List, said the group's political action committee has been on the ground talking to voters in nine battleground states since last summer.

"If this draft opinion... is resemblant of the final opinion, this will be a huge encouragement to the pro-life movement because it will reflect a return on investment of our political engagement these last 50 years," Carroll said. "I think that it's going to mobilize people on both sides."

ECONOMY STILL TOP CONCERN?

Geoffrey Skelley, an elections analyst for the website FiveThirtyEight, was skeptical the abortion issue would be enough to improve the chances of Democrats holding onto the House and the Senate.

"Midterm elections are still mostly about the president and the president's party, and Joe Biden has approval ratings in the low 40s," he said.

Skelley said he expected the economy, jobs and inflation to remain the top concerns for many voters, including those who support abortion rights.

The prospects could be better for Democrats in state governor's races, he said. Should the Supreme Court overturn Roe, the legality of abortion will be left to individual states. read more

Both Michigan's Gretchen Whitmer and Wisconsin's Tony Evers are up for reelection. Their Republican opponents oppose abortion rights and would support legislative efforts in those states to ban the procedure.

"I promise you this: I will fight like hell to make sure abortion remains safe, legal, and accessible in our state," Whitmer said on Twitter on Monday.

The nonpartisan University of Virginia Center for Politics suggests there could be a voter backlash in states including Arizona, New Hampshire, North Carolina and Pennsylvania, where support for abortion rights is strong but where Republicans are seeking to curb them.

The issue also could boost Democrat Stacey Abrams in Georgia, who narrowly lost to Governor Brian Kemp four years ago.

"If you were looking for a message to reactivate the suburbs in Georgia, this is a great one," said Jared Leopold, a former aide to the Democratic Governors Association.

##### UQ – Abortion ruling unifies Democrats; Republicans have mixed responses

**Glueck 6/24** [June 24, 2022] Katie Glueck is a national political reporter at The New York Times. Previously, she was chief Metro political correspondent, and a lead reporter for The Times covering the Biden campaign. She has covered politics for McClatchy’s Washington bureau and for Politico, and her work has also appeared in publications including The Wall Street Journal, Washingtonian magazine, Town & Country magazine and The Austin American-Statesman. She is a graduate of the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, and is a native of Kansas City. She lives in New York. https://www.nytimes.com/by/katie-glueck\_Moonyoung

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The Supreme Court’s decision overturning Roe v. Wade on Friday catapulted the explosive battle over abortion rights into the center of several marquee midterm races, turning the fight over key governor’s contests and coveted Senate seats into heated debates about personal freedom and public health. Devastated Democrats, facing staggering political challenges amid high inflation and President Biden’s low approval ratings , hoped the decision might reinvigorate disaffected base voters. They also saw the moment as a fresh chance to hold on to the moderate, suburban swing voters who have helped them win recent elections. Republicans, for their part, publicly celebrated the ruling as the realization of a decades-long effort, even as some strategists — and former President Donald J. Trump — privately acknowledged that the issue created at least some risk for a party that has enjoyed months of political momentum. Many argued that competitive races would ultimately be decided by other issues. “From the grass-roots perspective, there’s a lot of joy,” said Scott Jennings, a Republican who is a former top campaign aide to Senator Mitch McConnell, the minority leader. “This is why we fight. And at the same time, this election is going to be decided on a couple of issues: Joe Biden’s approval rating, inflation, the economy, crime, quality of life.” For years, the prospect of overturning Roe v. Wade was an abstract concept for many Americans — a distressing but distant worry for some and a long-term goal rather than an imminent possibility to others. The Supreme Court’s opinion eliminating the constitutional right to an abortion ended that era of disbelief, opening a new chapter of concrete consequences, in which races for governor, state legislature and attorney general, and even state courts might determine whether millions of Americans have access to the procedure. “This fall, Roe is on the ballot,” Mr. Biden said on Friday. “Personal freedoms are on the ballot.” Both parties agree that the high stakes will be galvanizing, to some degree, to their respective bases. But the critical question remains whether swing voters — in particular, independent women from the diverse suburbs, who are currently focused on economic uncertainty — will turn their attention to the fight over access to abortion. “There are a lot of independent women, I think there are a lot of women who haven’t been participating in elections, and are going to engage,” Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan said in an interview earlier this week, after hosting an emotional round table focused on abortion rights at a brewery in Grand Rapids. “But I’m not going to assume it. We’re going to have to make sure that we’re doing the work of education and persuasion and activation.” Already this year, Democratic campaigns and supportive outside groups have spent nearly $18 million in advertising on abortion issues, while Republicans and affiliated outside groups have spent nearly $21 million, according to the media tracking firm AdImpact. Both figures may balloon. Activists and party strategists, who have been preparing for months to mobilize around this issue, are focusing in particular on governor’s races in Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, three states currently led by Democratic governors, and places where the outcomes this fall could directly impact the future of abortion rights after the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization decision handed control over abortion protections back to the states. Candidates and organizations have employed focus groups and polling to assess the issue; there are sprawling fund-raising efforts; and the abortion rights groups Planned Parenthood Action Fund, NARAL Pro-Choice America and Emily’s List have said they intend to spend $150 million on the midterm elections. American Bridge 21st Century, a Democratic-aligned super PAC, says it has tapped social media influencers to communicate about abortion rights and Republican records on that issue to Americans who may be only casually political. “We will see, state by state by state, pre-existing bans go into effect, state legislatures rush to pass abortion bans,” said Cecile Richards, the former president of Planned Parenthood who is now a chair of American Bridge. “It’s a different conversation now because it’s become real.” Despite all the mobilization, many party strategists do not anticipate that even Friday’s seismic decision will fundamentally change voters’ focus on cost-of-living worries. But some see it as reinforcing their core argument against Republicans: that the right wing of the party is in control, out of step with public opinion, and focused above all else on cultural battles. Senate Democrats and strategists are particularly focused on highlighting the Republican candidates who support near-total bans on abortion. “Economic issues are always going to outweigh abortion for a lot of voters,” said Celinda Lake, a veteran Democratic strategist. “But it’s very, very important for Democrats — to win these swing voters — to make this a choice, not a referendum.” Abortion, she said, “is going to be a major factor in that, because it is a very clear distinction.” Polling shows that Americans strongly oppose completely overturning Roe v. Wade — in a Washington Post-ABC poll conducted in late April, 54 percent of Americans thought the Roe decision should be upheld, while 28 percent believed it should be overturned. But views on abortion vary depending on a state’s political tilt. That is one reason Republicans’ messaging on the issue has been less unified. On Friday, as some candidates, lawmakers and the Republican National Committee rushed to celebrate the ruling, others sought to quickly return their focus to pocketbook issues. Adam Laxalt, the Republican Senate candidate in Nevada — a state with a history of supporting abortion rights — on Friday cheered the “historic victory for the sanctity of life,” but stressed that access to abortion was already “settled law” in Nevada. “It won’t distract voters from unaffordable prices, rising crime or the border crisis,” he said. When asked for comment, Jesse Hunt, a spokesman for the Republican Governors Association, responded in a statement that “the persuadable voters that will determine the outcome in competitive races are deeply concerned with the damage being done to their financial security” by Democrats. Even Mr. Trump, the former president who put conservatives on the court, has privately told people that he believes the court’s decision will be “bad for Republicans.” In a public statement on Friday, Mr. Trump called the decision “the biggest WIN for LIFE in a generation.” Abortion rights opponents are working to capitalize on conservatives’ enthusiasm. The anti-abortion rights group Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America launched a field program last year, with plans to engage eight million voters in critical battleground states. The group is focusing on “those people that are in play, that could go either way based on this particular issue,” said Marjorie Dannenfelser, the president of the organization. “It’s not just some theoretical vote about somebody who says they’re pro-life,” she said. “It’s now an opportunity to actually do something about it.” Penny Nance, the president of Concerned Women for America, an organization that opposes abortion rights, said the group was planning a summit that would focus on the role of state activism in a post-Roe nation. Some state officials have “basically said, ‘We don’t really have the ability to change the law because of the Supreme Court decision,’” she said. “Now,” she continued, “it changes everything.” That new focus on state laws has already intensified the debate in statehouses and governor’s races in politically divided states. In Pennsylvania, the next governor and a Republican-led statehouse will likely determine access. “Roe v. Wade is rightly relegated to the ash heap of history,” said Doug Mastriano, the far-right Republican nominee for governor in Pennsylvania. Josh Shapiro, the state attorney general and the Democratic nominee for governor, wrote on Twitter on Friday that “without Roe, the only thing stopping them is the veto pen of our next Governor.” In Michigan, abortion rights supporters are working to secure a constitutional amendment protecting the right to an abortion. Ms. Whitmer has also filed a lawsuit asking “the Michigan Supreme Court to immediately resolve” whether the State Constitution protectAt her roundtable discussion this week, Ms. Whitmer spoke with women about whether they thought voters had yet grasped the significance of what overturning Roe v. Wade would mean. “So many people,” one attendee told her, “didn’t realize it was this serious.”

##### Overturning the 50-year precedent of Roe v. Wade is bad news for the Republican Party and for the conservative majority on the high court.

**Bannon 6/30** [Brad Bannon, Opinion Contributor, 6-30-2022, "Polling shows overturning Roe shakes up midterms for shocked voters," Hill, <https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/3542637-polling-shows-overturning-roe-shakes-up-midterms-for-shocked-voters/>] Jeff and Liam

For every action, there is a reaction. The court’s revocation of a constitutional right that women have had for half a century sent shockwaves through the system. A national poll conducted after the official release of the decision for The PBS News Hour and National Public Radio by Marist University demonstrated the degree of damage to the court and the GOP. Most Americans disapprove of the high court’s decision to overturn Roe v. Wade. Almost half of the public strongly disapproves of the verdict. The public hostility to the ruling has put a dent in GOP prospects for the midterms. It is hardly a surprise that just about every Democrat opposes the decision, while four of every five Republicans support it. But the key finding is that most independents — who are the swing voters in elections — disapprove of the high court’s verdict. What is even more telling is the effect that the case could have on turnout in November. Up until now, Democratic enthusiasm for voting in the midterms lagged compared to interest among GOP voters. But Democratic voters are far more likely than Republicans to indicate the Dobbs decision will drive them to the polls in November. Women want a choice, and this gives Democrats a chance to win the midterms. Women are 18 points more likely to support a “pro-choice” congressional candidate than an “anti-abortion” candidate. Three out of every four suburban women say they worry that the Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe could lead it to block other legal rights like contraception. In the wake of the decision, Democrats have a 7-point advantage in the national generic congressional trial heat. This is a 10-point swing from April when the GOP had a three-point edge. The big swing toward Democrats in the last few months is a crystal-clear indicator of how volatile the political climate is four months before the midterms. Political pundits have written off Democratic chances of retaining control of Congress. But the shock waves from the Dobbs case — as well as the new revelations from the House investigation of former President Trump’s behavior leading up to and during the failed Jan. 6 Capitol coup attempt — could blunt GOP prospects in November. The mixture of outrage over Trump’s encouragement of the attackon the Capitol and the court’s decision to gut reproductive rights could be too much for voters at the ballot box this fall. To regain their momentum in the midterms and to counter the political damage from rising inflation as well as President Biden’s problematic approval rating, Democrats must put Republicans on the defensive. They should aggressively press their advantage from the reversal of Roe. This strategy means pressing GOP candidates on their reaction to the loss of reproductive rights for women and holding Republican officials responsible for the care for the health and well-being of young children. Democratic candidates should put their GOP counterparts on the spot and ask them whether they support former Vice President Mike Pence’s proposal for a national abortion ban. Michael Steele, the former chair of the Republican National Committee, predicts that Senate Republicans will abolish the filibuster rule if they gain control of Congress to pass a national abortion ban. The political damage extends to the Supreme Court. The six justices appointed by Republican presidents all supported the decision. By a 57 percent-to-36 percent margin Americans believe the Dobbs decision was based on politics instead of the law. Back in 2019, six out of every 10 people had confidence in the Supreme Court. Now only four in 10 do. To counter abortion ruling, shift from recriminations toward development/ We need U.S. industry to counter the next global food crisis. The lack of public confidence in Supreme Court could encourage “pro-choice” proponents of abortion rights voters and public officials to minimize the impact that Roe’s reversal will have on women. Several Democratic governors have already offered help to women who cannot receive safe and legal abortions in their home states. The Supreme Court has rolled back decades of progress for women’s rights. The dust is still settling from the disastrous decision, but the early returns prove what many already knew. The reversal of Roe is a cross that women will need to bear and a be a thorn in the side of the GOP.

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/393626/usual-midterm-indicators-unfavorable-democrats.aspx>

##### Democrats may be able to keep the Senate

**Enten 7/5** [Analysis By Harry Enten, Cnn, 7-5-2022, "Analysis: Here's why Democrats could keep the Senate," CNN, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/05/politics/democrats-senate-2022-republicans-house/index.html>] Liam and Jeff

The Supreme Court’s recent ruling against reproductive rights in [Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization](https://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/dobbs-v-jackson-womens-health-organization/) — **overturning the 50-year precedent of Roe v. Wade — is bad news for the Republican Party and for the conservative majority on the high court**. For every action, there is a reaction. **The court’s revocation of a constitutional right that women have had for half a century sent shockwaves through the system**. [**A national poll**](https://maristpoll.marist.edu/polls/npr-pbs-newshour-marist-national-poll-the-overturning-of-roe-v-wade-june-2022/)**conducted after the official release of the decision for The PBS News Hour and National Public Radio by Marist University** **demonstrated the degree of damage to the court and the GOP. Most Americans disapprove of the high court’s decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.** Almost half of the public strongly disapproves of the verdict.The public hostility to the ruling has put a dent in GOP prospects for the midterms. It is hardly a surprise that just about every Democrat opposes the decision, while four of every five Republicans support it. But the key finding is that most independents — who are the swing voters in elections — disapprove of the high court’s verdict. What is even more telling is the effect that the case could have on turnout in November. Up until now, Democratic enthusiasm for voting in the midterms lagged compared to interest among GOP voters. But Democratic voters are far more likely than Republicans to indicate the Dobbs decision will drive them to the polls in November. **Women want a choice, and this gives Democrats a chance to win the midterms.** Women are 18 points more likely to support a “pro-choice” congressional candidate than an “anti-abortion” candidate. Three out of every four suburban women say they worry that the Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe could lead it to block other legal rights like contraception. In the wake of the decision, Democrats have a 7-point advantage in the national generic congressional trial heat. This is a 10-point swing from April when the GOP had a three-point edge. The big swing toward Democrats in the last few months is a crystal-clear indicator of how volatile the political climate is four months before the midterms. Political pundits have written off Democratic chances of retaining control of Congress. But the shock waves from the Dobbs case — as well as the [new revelations from the House investigation of former President Trump’s](https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/28/politics/january-6-hearing-day-6-takeaways-hutchinson/index.html) behavior leading up to and during the failed Jan. 6 Capitol coup attempt — could blunt GOP prospects in November. The mixture of outrage over [Trump’s encouragement of the attack](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/28/us/politics/trump-meadows-jan-6-surprise-hearing.html) on the Capitol and the court’s decision to gut reproductive rights could be too much for voters at the ballot box this fall. To regain their momentum in the midterms and to counter the political damage from [rising inflation](https://www.forbes.com/advisor/investing/why-is-inflation-rising-right-now/) as well as President Biden’s problematic [approval rating](https://news.gallup.com/poll/394028/biden-job-approval-not-budging-satisfaction-dips.aspx), Democrats must put Republicans on the defensive. They should aggressively press their advantage from the reversal of Roe. This strategy means pressing GOP candidates on their reaction to the loss of reproductive rights for women and holding Republican officials responsible for the care for the health and well-being of young children. Democratic candidates should put their GOP counterparts on the spot and ask them whether they support former[Vice President Mike Pence’s proposal](https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/mike-pence-roe-v-wade-abortion-ban-1373779/) for a national abortion ban. [Michael Steele](https://www.businessinsider.com/gop-would-overturn-filibuster-impose-abortion-ban-michael-steele-2022-6), the former chair of the Republican National Committee, predicts that Senate Republicans will abolish the filibuster rule if they gain control of Congress to pass a national abortion ban. The political damage extends to the Supreme Court. The six justices appointed by Republican presidents all supported the decision**. By a 57 percent-to-36 percent margin Americans believe the**[**Dobbs decision was based on politics**](https://www.npr.org/2022/06/27/1107733632/poll-majorities-oppose-supreme-courts-abortion-ruling-and-worry-about-other-righ)**instead of the law.Back in 2019, six out of every 10 people had confidence in the Supreme Court. Now only**[**four in 10**](https://www.npr.org/2022/06/27/1107733632/poll-majorities-oppose-supreme-courts-abortion-ruling-and-worry-about-other-righ)**do.**

[**To counter abortion ruling, shift from recriminations toward development**](https://thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/3550951-to-counter-abortion-ruling-shift-from-recriminations-toward-development/)[**We need U.S. industry to counter the next global food crisis**](https://thehill.com/opinion/international/3550927-we-need-u-s-industry-to-counter-the-next-global-food-crisis/). The lack of public confidence in Supreme Court could encourage “pro-choice” proponents of abortion rights voters and public officials to minimize the impact that Roe’s reversal will have on women. [Several Democratic governors](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/california/articles/2022-06-24/governors-announce-west-coast-offense-to-protect-abortion) have already offered help to women who cannot receive safe and legal abortions in their home states. The Supreme Court has rolled back decades of progress for women’s rights. The dust is still settling from the disastrous decision, but the early returns prove what many already knew. The reversal of Roe is a cross that women will need to bear and a be a thorn in the side of the GOP.

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#### GOP Infighting/ Trump/ RINO Extremism Threaten GOP

##### Trump may threaten GOP’s expected win

**Bolton 7/6** [Alexander Bolton, 7-6-2022, "Trump White House bid threatens GOP midterm strategy," Hill, [https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/3546856-trump-white-house-bid-threatens-gop-midterm-strategy/]\_ Liam](https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/3546856-trump-white-house-bid-threatens-gop-midterm-strategy/%5d_%20%20%20%20%20%20Liam) and Jeff

Former President Trump’s plans to announce his 2024 presidential campaign as early as this summer, well before what he previously indicated, throws a wrench into Republicans’ strategy for winning back the Senate and House majorities in November. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) made clear they want the 2022 midterms to be a referendum on President Biden and his handling of inflation and the economy. But that strategy will run into trouble if Trump announces his plans to run for president again in 2022. An early Trump campaign kickoff would give plenty of opportunity for Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and other Democrats to make November a referendum on Trump instead of Biden. **Republican and Democratic strategists say Trump will also provide a shot of energy and motivation to a dispirited Democratic base that right now feels less enthusiastic than Republicans about voting in the midterms.** “Midterm elections tend to be referenda on the governing party and given President Biden’s rock-bottom job approval rating, anything that detracts from a focus on the Biden administration and its many failures weakens the Republicans’ ability to take control of Congress,” said Whit Ayres, a leading Republican pollster. Biden’s job approval rating now stands at 38 percent, according to an average of recent polls compiled by RealClearPolitics.com. Ayres says Republican voters are significantly more motivated than Democrats to vote given liberal disappointment over the Biden agenda. “No question about it. The administration has managed to increase Republican enthusiasm and depress Democratic enthusiasm by the way it has governed,” he said. Former Rep. Jim Walsh (R), who represented a swing district in upstate New York, said a Trump 2024 announcement could hurt Republican candidates in competitive races. “I think it causes problems for Republicans. If Trump were to announce this summer, I think it definitely causes problems for Republicans,” he said. Walsh said if Trump launches his campaign, “it’s not going to bring Republicans out this election but what it may do is motivate Democrats.” The nonpartisan Cook Political Report races four New York House races as toss-ups. Democrats acknowledge they face an enthusiasm gap but say that would likely change if Trump announces plans to run again for president. They say their voters are already more energized in the wake of the 6-3 Supreme Court decision striking down Roe v. Wade, the landmark abortion rights case. Trump considered announcing his White House bid last year in the aftermath of the chaotic withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan when Biden’s approval ratings began their downward spiral but was talked out of it by his advisers. Trump advisers cautioned the former president at the time that he didn’t want to “own” the midterm results if Republicans fell short of winning back the Senate and House, according to a Washington Post report in October of 2021. The former president is now motivated to announce a bid as polls show he is losing popular support amid the damaging revelations from the House select Jan. 6 committee’s hearings. This has opened the door for potential rivals, such as Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who led Trump 39 percent to 37 percent among likely Republican voters in New Hampshire, an early primary state, according to a recent University of New Hampshire poll. Republican leaders in Congress fear a new Trump bid would ensure the midterms will be a fight over Trump’s false claims that he won the 2020 election. Leaders in Congress repeatedly advise Republican candidates to focus on Biden’s agenda and the economic problems facing the nation today instead of re-litigating the 2020 election. “Objectively speaking it would be best if this midterm were run as a referendum on Biden, his overall performance and inflation, the economy and quality of life. That’s an unassailable fact,” said Scott Jennings, a Republican strategist who has advised McConnell’s past campaigns. But Jennings said analysts can’t assume “Donald Trump cares about whether Republicans win the midterms or not.” “His tactical objectives here are different than the party’s and he’s never shown much of an interest in what’s best of the party in this regard,” he added. Many Senate Republicans blamed Trump for contributing to their loss of two Senate seats in last year’s election runoff in Georgia because he claimed fraud in the 2020 November election, depressing GOP turnout in the following January runoff. “Case in point the Georgia special we had in January of last year. Trump gave no thought whatsoever to what it meant to tell Republicans their vote no longer counted,” Jennings pointed out. McConnell on Tuesday hammered Biden’s successful push for the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan, which Congress passed in March of last year without a single Republican vote, which Republicans say fueled inflation. “On a party-line basis, not a single Republican in the House or Senate voting for it, they dumped almost two trillion [dollars] on the economy,” he said during remarks to the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce, echoing what has become his midterm election message. McConnell regularly deflects questions about Trump and his actions in the run-up to the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol when asked by reporters, usually replying that he’s paying more attention to the issues immediately before the Senate. Jennings predicted that McConnell and other Republicans will find a way to adapt if Trump launches his White House campaign early, even if it’s not an ideal scenario. He also said that Democrats were always planning on making Trump central to their midterm campaign message for the Senate and House, even though Democratic candidate Terry McAuliffe’s effort to do just that in the Virginia 2021 gubernatorial race failed to earn him a victory. Ford O’Connell, a GOP strategist who was close to the Trump White House, acknowledged the GOP establishment doesn’t want Trump to jump into the presidential race early but argued Republican leaders in Washington don’t fully understand Trump’s effectiveness on the campaign trail. Bidens wish Muslims celebrating Eid al-Adha ‘a joyous holiday’ Ukrainian Foreign Ministry hits Rep. Spartz over ‘baseless speculation’ on Zelensky chief of staff. “If he’s driving the conversation, you could make an argument that he could help the Republicans even more because it’s not like the Democrats aren’t trying to focus on Trump anyway as part of their plan to scrape back some seats in the House or the Senate,” he said. “Democrats are underestimating the fact that Trump is a one-man political force of nature.” “Mitch McConnell’s a very establishment person and he’s going to go along with the conventional wisdom” that Republicans are better off in November with Trump on the sidelines, Ford said. “That’s what Mitch is probably thinking but I don’t if Mitch is right on that front,” he added. “It’s not like the Democrats aren’t trying to run on Trump already.”

##### GOP Infighting Will Doom Republicans in Midterms

**Morgan.** **Feb 9.** Morgan, David.   “Senate's McConnell pushes back against Republican Party censure of Trump critics”  Reuters Newservice  [https://www.reuters.com/world/us/republican-infighting-rattles-mcconnells-us-midterm-elections-strategy-2022-02-08.February 9](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/republican-infighting-rattles-mcconnells-us-midterm-elections-strategy-2022-02-08.February%209), 2022

WASHINGTON, Feb 8 (Reuters) - Top U.S. Senate Republican Mitch McConnell on Tuesday criticized his party's censure of two prominent Republican critics of Donald Trump, joining an intra-party battle that could upend his efforts to project an image of party moderation in this year's midterm elections. Last week, the Republican National Committee censured Representatives Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger, the only two Republicans serving on the House of Representatives select committee investigating the events of Jan. 6, 2021, when supporters of then-President Trump stormed the Capitol in a failed attempt to prevent Congress from certifying President Joe Biden's 2020 election victory. "The issue is whether or not the RNC should be sort of singling out members of our party who may have different views from the majority. That's not the job of the RNC," McConnell told a news conference. The RNC took its action on Friday, calling the Democratic-led committee's inquiry an attack on "legitimate political discourse." McConnell rejected that description, saying, "We saw what happened. It was a violent insurrection for the purpose of trying to prevent the peaceful transfer of power after a legitimately certified election from one administration to the next. That's what it was." \ The controversy comes as **Republicans are hoping to regain majorities in the House and Senate in the Nov. 8 midterm elections.** McConnell, the Senate minority leader and one of his party's most wily political tacticians, has been trying to paint Biden as a former moderate radicalized by the Democratic Party's left wing. **Projecting an image of moderation for the Republicans could help the party's Senate candidates in key states.** \\ Lawmakers close to McConnell have found themselves on the defensive about the RNC censure resolution. "They said, in the resolution, they wanted Republicans to be unified. That was not a unifying action," said Senator John Cornyn of Texas. Senate Republican leaders were quick to acknowledge the trouble that party divisions might pose for Republican Senate candidates. "If we **want to win the elections in November, there are better things for us to be focused on," said Senator John Thune, the chamber's No. 2 Republican after McConnell. "The focus right now needs to be forward, not backward. If we want to get majorities in the fall, then it's better to turn our fire on Democrats and not on each other,"** Thune added. Others pointed to Senate Republican criticism of the RNC as a problem for candidates in some states. "Whatever you think about the RNC vote, it reflects the view of most Republicans," said Senator Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican who objected to 2020 election results on Jan. 6. "In my state, it's not helpful to have a bunch of D.C. Republicans commenting on the RNC... super unhelpful," he said. Democrats may be vulnerable in November, particularly considering Biden's falling public approval numbers in opinion polls. The party of sitting presidents typically loses congressional seats in the first midterm elections after winning the White House. McConnell has sought to cast Biden and his pricy "Build Back Better" social spending plan that is stalled in the Senate as creatures of the Democratic Party's left wing. McConnell has accused Biden of ignoring troubles facing American families such as inflation, including higher energy costs. "If the president starts acting like a moderate, like he campaigned, we can do business," McConnell told Fox News last month. While McConnell is calling for bipartisanship, he often has been a partisan warrior himself. As majority leader, he refused to consider Democratic President Barack Obama's nominee to fill a Supreme Court vacancy and last year said he might block Biden's nominees to the high court if Republicans gain Senate control. He also has used the Senate's filibuster rule to thwart parts of Biden's legislative agenda, including voting rights. McConnell did deliver critical Republican votes last year for two bipartisan priorities - a $1 trillion infrastructure bill and a deal to avert a default on the federal government's debt. Both prompted enraged statements from Trump, who has called for McConnell's ouster from his Senate leadership post.

##### A2 Red Wave/No Red Wave

**Enten 7/5** Harry, Harry Joe Enten is an American journalist best known for his former role as a senior political writer and analyst for the website FiveThirtyEight and his current job as a senior writer and analyst for CNN Politics, July 5, 2022, Here's why Democrats could keep the Senate, CNN, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/05/politics/democrats-senate-2022-republicans-house/index.html>, \_Patrick

(CNN)Election Day 2022 is now four months away. Democrats are trying to hold on to slim majorities in both the House and Senate. They're doing so [against the backdrop](https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/05/politics/biden-economy-midterms-poll-blame/index.html) of high inflation and an economy viewed in poor shape, which is the issue dominating voters' minds. I've generally been high on Republicans' chances of taking [control of the Senate](https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/12/politics/ron-johnson-republicans-senate-2022-analysis/index.html) and [especially the House](https://www.facebook.com/cnn/videos/democrats-are-in-a-lot-of-trouble-harry-enten-on-2022-midterms/309399197712219/). You [don't normally see](https://news.gallup.com/poll/393626/usual-midterm-indicators-unfavorable-democrats.aspx) the party controlling the White House do well in midterms when the President's approval rating is in the high 30s. But can Democrats defy political gravity and retain power, even with an unpopular [Joe Biden](https://www.cnn.com/specials/politics/joe-biden-news) in office? The answer in the House is likely not, but the answer in the currently evenly divided Senate is far less clear. And it's in the upper chamber where we begin our look at the political news of the week. Don't write off the Senate Democrats just yet Perhaps, the biggest polling shock this past week came from the [state of Georgia](https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/24/politics/herschel-walker-raphael-warnock-georgia-senate-race/index.html). A [Quinnipiac University poll](https://poll.qu.edu/poll-release?releaseid=3851) found Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock with a 10-point lead over Republican Herschel Walker, 54% to 44%. The result was far better for Warnock than the [long-term average for the race](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/senate/2022/georgia/) (which has either candidate up by a point or two, depending on how the average is calculated). But even the average indicates that Warnock could win, despite Biden's approval rating being well below 40% in the Peach State. The Georgia race is among several in 2020 battleground states that the national environment suggests should be leaning Republicans but polling on the ground suggests otherwise. It's an indication that the outcome for Senate control isn't close to being finalized. The 2022 Senate map is rather small. Of the 35 seats up this cycle, I would categorize less than 10 of them at this point as competitive -- i.e., where each side has a better than 10% chance of winning. A few races could make the difference either way. I base that assessment off a [simple data model](https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/02/politics/senate-landscape/index.html) that looks at state-level polling, national indicators (i.e., the generic congressional ballot and the President's approval rating), the past presidential vote, whether the election was a midterm or not, and expert race ratings (by, say, [the Cook Political Report](https://www.cookpolitical.com/)). All told, the model indicates that the most likely outcome is for Republicans to pick up a seat or two. That's enough for a majority, as the GOP needs a net gain of just a seat for control. Considering past errors of the model, it suggests that Republicans have a roughly 3-in-5 shot at winning back the Senate. The reason the model is so high on Senate Democrats compared with what you might expect given the national environment is simple: the state-level polling in swing states. Recent public data has looked surprisingly strong for Democrats in places such as [Arizona](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/senate/arizona/), Georgia, [Nevada](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/senate/nevada/), [New Hampshire](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/senate/new-hampshire/) and [Pennsylvania](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/senate/pennsylvania/). In fact, Democrats would be favored if we didn't take into account the Republican lead on the generic ballot, Biden's low approval rating and the tendency for the opposition party's lead to grow during midterm elections. State-level polling averages at this point in a midterm year has been fairly predictive of the actual fall result since 2006 (with an average difference of a little more than 6 points). It's not all that different from state polling averages during the final weeks of a campaign (which have an [average absolute error](https://github.com/fivethirtyeight/data/tree/master/pollster-ratings) of a little less than 5 points). On the other hand, Republicans would be favored to pick up three Senate seats, if we ignored the state polling and concentrated on the President's approval rating and expert ratings for each seat. It is possible that this estimate could be closer to the truth. Senate Republicans could even do better and pick up five seats. I will admit that the 2-in-5 chance of Democrats maintaining Senate control was a surprisingly high percentage. (Although the model is very slightly more bullish on Republicans than the percentages pumped out by the far more complicated [FiveThirtyEight model](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2022-election-forecast/senate/).) After all, the model is trained on past years when there were a number of close Senate races at this point that ended up swinging wildly toward Republicans. Senate contests such as [Arkansas in 2014](https://elections.huffingtonpost.com/pollster/2014-arkansas-senate-cotton-vs-pryor), [Indiana in 2016](https://elections.huffingtonpost.com/pollster/2016-indiana-senate-young-vs-bayh), [Missouri in 2018](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/senate/2018/missouri/) and [Montana in 2020](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/senate/2020/montana/) jump out in my mind. All were fairly tight at this point, according to the polls, and all were won by the Republican candidates by at least 5 points, if not upward of 15 points, when all the votes were counted. Here's the thing though: The vast majority of races in which Republicans were vastly outperforming their polling at this point were places that heavily tilted toward the GOP in [national elections](https://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/). With perhaps the exception of Ohio (though the model doesn't view that Senate race as all that competitive), all the states with key Senate elections this year were competitive in the 2020 presidential race. So why the big difference between national indicators and state-level polling? It could be that the latter is wrong. But think about who the Republican nominees are or are likely to be in places such as Arizona (Blake Masters), Georgia (Walker) and Pennsylvania (Mehmet Oz). All are seen as weaker candidates, with the latter two having what most observers view as considerable baggage. The question is whether that baggage will be enough to keep them out of the Senate with such an unpopular President in office and an economy viewed by voters as weak. Republicans look strong in race for the House One reason to be skeptical of Senate Democrats' chances is what is going on in the race for the House. Republicans have maintained a position on the generic congressional ballot better than in any midterm at this point [since the 1938 cycle](https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/25/politics/republicans-congress-polling-roe-v-wade/index.html). Remember, Republicans only need a net gain of four seats for House control. There is every reason to think they will get it. The macro-indicators look strong for Republicans. Beyond their 2-point advantage on the generic ballot, Biden's approval rating is below 40%. There has never been a president with such a [low approval rating](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/biden-approval-rating/) whose party didn't lose at least four seats in a midterm election. The White House party sees minimal midterm losses or gains when the president has an approval rating north of 60%. Biden's low approval rating makes sense given that inflation and the economy are viewed as the top issues. Consumer sentiment is low. The [University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index](http://www.sca.isr.umich.edu/) reading for June was the lowest it has ever been in its 70-year history. House race ratings by experts at the Cook Political Report and [Inside Elections](https://insideelections.com/) indicate the same thing. Based on a model of expert rating data going back to 2000, House Democrats, on average, would lose around 25 seats if the election were held today. This would give Republicans somewhere around 240 House seats in the next Congress. You might be wondering how the House and the Senate estimates could end up being so different. Both are federal elections, which are increasingly influenced by how voters feel about the president. One explanation is that it's all a mirage. The two outcomes could end up converging. Another is that there is a history of Democrats doing better in Senate races, even in unfriendly terrain. Democrats won Senate seats in deep-red Montana and West Virginia [in 2018](https://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/national.php?year=2020&f=0&off=3&elect=0), even though Democratic House candidates in those states didn't succeed. The correlation between feelings toward the president and the way people vote is high, but it's lower in [Senate races](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/there-were-no-purple-states-on-tuesday/) than it is for [House contests](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/cms/asset/cde0368c-255c-4605-a64d-6870b1167800/psq12724-fig-0005-m.jpg). The truth is that one or two great or awful candidates can sink a party's chance of winning the Senate when there are only 35 races. That may just happen this year. One or two great or awful candidates are very unlikely to sink a party's chance of winning the House when there are 435 races, however.

##### RINO extremism is setting up GOP for failure in midterms.\_

**Budowsky 6/22 –** Brent, a liberal / progressive American political opinion writer and blogger for publications including The Hill, the LA Progressive, and the Huffington Post, “Budowksy: Rightist ‘RINO’ extremism could sink GOP in midterms”, 06-22-2022, The Hill, https://thehill.com/opinion/3531998-budowsky-rightist-rino-extremism-could-sink-gop-in-midterms/ //EddyV

The real “Republicans in name only” **(RINOs**) are far-rightists who attack true Republicans who admire Abe Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan. Former Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens, who resigned in disgrace as governor and is now a leading candidate for the Republican U.S. Senate nomination, recently released a campaign ad in which he holds a shotgun and says, “today we go RINO hunting.” One might conclude that Greitens’s ad could incite violence against other Republicans. On the 50th anniversary of Watergate, we remember President Nixon and his famous “enemies list.” Today, rightist RINOs, in the image of former President Trump, are creating so many enemies lists that they make Nixon look like a civil libertarian. Except their enemies — against whom they wage political war — are often real Republicans. Political parties are like magnets; they can attract, but also repel. The real RINOs are extreme rightists who direct so much anger, hatred and fear against true Republicans that they aggressively violate Reagan’s “11th Commandment” that Republicans should not attack other Republicans. Their extremism could well alienate, frighten and **repel so many** Republicans and independents **that Democrats end up maintaining control of the House and Senate, or even gain seats.** How many Republican or independent voters want to back rightist RINOs who directly or indirectly threaten or incite political violence? How many Republican or independent voters want to back rightist RINOs who have made death threats against state election officials and members of Congress who defend honest elections against attempts to steal the 2020 election? Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-Texas) is a staunchly conservative retired Navy Seal and Afghanistan war hero who was wounded in combat. I do not agree with most of Crenshaw’s political views but salute his service, admire his courage and respect his sincerity in advocating his views. Incredibly, and unpatriotically, he has been called “eyepatch McCain,” an insult to his war wound and the heroism of the late Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), whom I knew and consider one of the Senate’s greatest patriots. What have war heroes done to so many rightist RINOs to inspire such derision? Have they no honor? Have they no shame? **Many Republican swing voters and veteran voters would vote against these rightist RINOs**. At the recent Texas Republican Convention, rightist RINO delegates favored nullifying any federal law they disagreed with and held a vote on whether Texas should secede from America. In several states, the rightist RINO agenda attacking transgender people has become so hostile and extreme that it is deeply offensive to many voters across the political spectrum. On Roe v. Wade, the rightist RINO agenda aims to eliminate choice for Americans, threaten women with criminal punishment and enlist citizens as informal police to watch women closely. On gun violence, the rightist RINO agenda opposes critical “red flag” laws, comprehensive background checks and any assault weapons ban, even for people under 21 years old. Their policies would enable even men who violently abuse women to have assault weapons. Why there’s still a rational case for climate optimism When Ukraine needed help, Boris Johnson was there Every believer in democracy should read the full text of the opening statement of retired Court of Appeals Judge J. Michael Luttig, a nationally respected conservative, before the Jan. 6 committee. He sounds the alarm in dramatic terms about how former President Trump and his supporters threaten American democracy, tried to steal the 2020 election, plan to steal the 2024 election and pose a clear and present danger to American democracy. Every issue raised in this column is supported by most Americans. Lincoln, Roosevelt, Eisenhower and Reagan would all be appalled by the rightist RINO extremism**. If enough voters join them, it could lift Democrats decisively in the midterms**. Budowsky was an aide to former Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-Texas) and former Rep. Bill Alexander (D-Ark.), who was chief deputy majority whip of the House of Representatives.

### LINKS

#### NATO Unpopular

##### L - Plan increases Trumpist populism in the US politisphere via anti-NATO GOP

Lemon 7/13 Before joining Newsweek, Jason Lemon was a contributor to The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, where he wrote primarily about health, science and the environment. Prior to that, he spent five years living in Lebanon, where he helped build a Middle East-focused viral media startup called StepFeed. He has also written for a range of Middle Eastern and Western publications including The Christian Science Monitor, The Palm Beach Post, Al Fanar Media and A Magazine.https://www.newsweek.com/marjorie-taylor-greene-warns-nuclear-war-russia-calls-protests-1720722 – MH

GOP Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene has raised alarms about the possibility of nuclear war, claiming that President Joe Biden and his administration are "sending" the U.S. into a direct conflict with Russia. Biden and other top administration leaders have consistently said they do not want a war with Russia and will not send troops to fight in Ukraine. However, the president has repeatedly pushed for and sent substantial military aid to the Eastern European nation. In addition, Congress, with wide bipartisan support, has approved billions of dollars in support for Kyiv as it fights against Moscow's aggression. Meanwhile, Greene, a Georgia Republican, has consistently opposed supporting Ukraine with military aid. While she has criticized Vladimir Putin's invasion, she has contended that Kyiv's forces cannot win and that Western support is only prolonging the conflict. In a Thursday morning Twitter post, she called for protests against the Biden administration's response to the war. "Maybe now is the time to go 'into the streets' to stop this insane President and his cabinet from sending us into a NUCLEAR WAR with Russia. With our current fragile state, WW3 will destroy us all," she tweeted. "And it won't matter how you vote. Stop the drums of war! China is cheering.” In a follow-up post, Greene wrote: "Everywhere I go on Main Street America people say, 'our federal government is failing us.' NO ONE says, 'we must go to war with Russia.' NO ONE." She added, "All of those in the DC bubble who want war with Russia should suit up and go fight it yourself. Take the all knowing commentators with you. Send your kids and leave ours alone." No one in the White House or Congress has suggested sending U.S. troops to fight the Russians or engaging in other kinds of direct conflict with them. To the contrary, Biden has pushed back against taking any military action that could provoke Russia, such as a no-fly zone over Ukraine, and risk a nuclear confrontation. Russia has the world's largest stockpile of nuclear weapons, with 6,255, according to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. The U.S. has the second-largest number, with 5,550. China is a distant third with 350. The U.S. has increased the number of troops it has stationed in Europe since Putin launched the internationally condemned invasion of Ukraine. Before the war, the number of U.S. troops in allied nations was 80,000, and that has been elevated to 100,000. Biden announced this week at the NATO summit in Spain that those numbers would remain elevated in an effort to deter Russia. "In a moment when Putin has shattered peace in Europe and attacked the very, very tenets of the rules-based order, the United States and our allies—we're going to step up. We're stepping up," the president said Wednesday. "We're proving that NATO is more needed now than it ever has been and it's as important as it has ever been," he added. Polling data collected by the University of Maryland from May 6 to 16 showed bipartisan support for mobilizing NATO support against Russia. Fifty-eight percent of Republicans said they viewed this effort "very" or "somewhat" favorably, as did 54 percent of independents and 85 percent of Democrats. Furthermore, 64 percent of Republicans had a favorable view of supplying Ukraine with weapons, as did 65 percent of independents and 83

##### Trump-Republicans vote against NATO to support Trump NOW.

**Parker et al 22, Ashley**, **Marianna Soto, Isaac Stanley-Becker,** White House Bureau Chief for The Washington Post. She covered all four years of the Trump presidency, as well as his 2016 campaign. She was part of The Post team that won a Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting in 2018, for their coverage of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, Inside the Republican drift away from supporting the NATO alliance, April 29 2022, Washington post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/04/29/nato-republicans-trump/

In early 2019, several months after President Donald Trump threatened to upend the North Atlantic Treaty Organization during a trip to Brussels for the alliance’s annual summit, House lawmakers passed the NATO Support Act amid overwhelming bipartisan support, with only 22 Republicans voting against the measure. But this month, when a similar bill in support of NATO during the Russian invasion of Ukraine again faced a vote in the House, the support was far more polarized, with 63 Republicans — 30 percent of the party’s conference — voting against it. The vote underscores the Republican Party’s remarkable drift away from NATO in recent years, as positions once considered part of a libertarian fringe have become doctrine for a growing portion of the party. The isolationist posture of some Republicans is in line with the “America First” ethos of Trump, the GOP’s de facto leader, who has long railed against NATO. Last week, speaking at a Heritage Foundation event in Florida, Trump implied that as president he had threatened not to defend NATO allies from Russian attacks as a negotiating tactic to pressure them to contribute more money toward the organization’s shared defense. The vote also comes against the backdrop of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which has catapulted NATO to its most prominent role in decades. And it comes as some hawkish Republicans seek to cast themselves as stronger opponents of Russia than Democrats. Metin Hakverdi, a German lawmaker who chairs the North America working group within the ruling Social Democratic Party, said the question that preoccupies him is, “Was Donald Trump the exception, or will Joe Biden be the exception?” Some two dozen House GOP lawmakers who voted for the 2019 NATO Support Act voted against the similar resolution this month, which reaffirmed support for the alliance and its principles. But in interviews, several of those House Republicans said they still support the organization and simply objected to what they viewed as problematic provisions that Democrats had added to the bill for perceived political purposes. Several who switched their votes since 2019 objected to measures they said did not specifically address strengthening NATO to help Ukraine. Rep. Barry Loudermilk (R-Ga.) found it particularly problematic that the resolution instructed NATO to be involved when a country has “internal threats from proponents on illiberalism,” which he says could be interpreted as conservatism. “I am a huge supporter of NATO — I served in the Air Force during the Cold War, worked with NATO during that time period,” he said. “These issues should be left to those individual nations.” NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, center left, speaks with President Donald Trump after a group photo at a 2019 NATO leaders meeting in England. (Francisco Seco/AP) Loudermilk argued that Democrats had inserted “poison pills” into the symbolic resolution, which could be used against Republicans in the 2022 midterms. “It was the Democrats trying to politicize something and add things in there that we have no business working on,” he said, explaining his vote against the bill. Donald Trump's effort to rewrite history on his support of NATO and Ukraine Similarly, from Rep. Robert B. Aderholt (R-Ala.): “I am wholeheartedly, unequivocally, without reservation, supportive on NATO.” But Aderholt said he worried that the resolution “had some language in that I thought went on the political side. And I don’t want to see NATO go political. I want to see NATO stand up for, you know, what’s going on in Ukraine — stand up for Ukraine against Russia.” The two bills are not exactly the same. The legislation in 2019 reaffirmed that federal money should not be used to remove the United States from NATO — which Trump was threatening at the time — while the bill from this month called on the government to “uphold the founding democratic principles of NATO,” as well for NATO “to continue to provide unwavering support to the people of Ukraine as they fight for their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and a democratic future.” Another sign of the party’s isolationist wing emerged Thursday, as the House passed an update to a World War II-era military bill creating a lend-lease program intended to make it easier for the United States to supply Ukraine with military aid. Only 10 lawmakers **— all Republicans — voted against the measure**. In an exchange earlier in the week between Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who was testifying before Congress, and Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), Paul pushed back on Blinken’s assertion that over the years Russia has shown a willingness to attack countries like Georgia that are not part of NATO, while giving wider berth to countries that are members of the alliance. Rand Paul suggests NATO expansion provoked Russia 2:36 Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) on April 26 said while there was no “justification” for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, there were “reasons” for the invasion. (Video: Reuters) “You could also argue the countries they’ve attacked were part of Russia, or were part of the Soviet Union,” said Paul, who was one of just two senators who voted against a 2018 bill reaffirming support for a NATO, in what was at the time a pointed rebuke of Trump. “Yes, and I firmly disagree with that proposition,” Blinken responded. For some foreign policy experts and international allies, the mere fact that nearly one-third of the Republican conference voted against a bill that fundamentally seeks to support both NATO and Ukraine highlights a marked foreign policy evolution in the Republican Party. “We now are really seeing the true impact of deep, deep political polarization, where it is better to harm the other side than do what’s right for the country,” said Heather Conley, president of the German Marshall Fund. “This deep domestic polarization has now crept into foreign and security policy. There has always been strong bipartisan support for NATO, but everything now has become polarized and can be weaponized against the other side, even if it supports U.S. national security interests.” President Biden speaks at a March 24, 2022, news conference at NATO headquarters in Brussels after meeting with allies about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. (Evan Vucci/AP) Many European diplomats breathed a sigh of relief when President Biden, a staunch Atlanticist, denied Trump another term in 2020. Now, 16 months later, Biden’s role in marshaling Western allies behind Ukraine — and his recent vow to protect “every inch of NATO territory” — has alleviated doubt in Europe about U.S. commitments, at least in the short term. But Europeans who were heartened by the outcome of the last American election are beginning to eye upcoming contests, including this year’s midterms and the 2024 presidential race. Their apprehension about a Republican takeover of Congress, which could revive Trump’s brand of foreign policy, is offset by hope that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine will strengthen the Republican Party’s internationalist wing and compel the party to lock arms with Europe. “I’m very concerned about the situation in America — the split of the society, the concentration on domestic issues, the underestimation of the importance of America’s international role,” said Thomas de Maizière, a former center-right lawmaker and high-ranking government minister in Germany who co-chaired a NATO working group convened in 2020. “But there are Republicans we work excellently with, and I would expect them to take on a larger role if their party takes power.” Whether that assessment reflects an accurate reading of Republican politics is an open question. The answer, however, is existential in Europe, where the fallout from the war in Ukraine has showcased the importance of the United States and the limits of aspirations for European autonomy on matters of technology and defense, according to lawmakers and diplomats. Flash points are already coming into view. In 2020, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg started a working group aimed at strengthening NATO. The group’s final product, “NATO 2030: United for a New Era,” included proposals, such as the creation of a Center for Democratic Resilience, that have been scorned by pro-Trump Republicans, including many of the 63 Republicans who recently voted against the House resolution affirming support for NATO. Biden at war: Inside a deliberate yet impulsive Ukraine strategy The outcome of that vote surprised even Trump’s former ambassador to NATO, Kay Bailey Hutchison, who argued that the U.S. commitment to the alliance has remained ironclad across administrations, despite bellicose rhetoric. “I was nonplussed by that vote,” she said in an interview. A diplomat from a Baltic state, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid alienating U.S. partners, called the vote a “Trump effect.” “But how many voted for it?” the diplomat added. “The mainstream is clearly in favor of NATO and strengthening NATO.” Similarly, Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), the co-chair of the Senate NATO Observer Group, who just returned from a trip to the alliance’s headquarters in Brussels, said the recent Republican votes against NATO were “poorly timed,” but he dismissed the 63 House Republicans as an “inconsequential” number. Amid the war in Ukraine, Tillis said, “this is a time where the alliance has really proven its mettle.” Another European diplomat said the war in Ukraine has caused European nations to address some of the complaints leveled by Trump, including insufficient spending on defense and reliance on Russian oil and gas. Those were the two issues raised by the former president when he criticized Stoltenberg at an alliance summit in 2018. ADVERTISING “It should no longer be a big issue for his supporters,” the diplomat said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to be candid on a sensitive issue. But for some, the changes are not enough. Rep. Warren Davidson (R-Ohio), who voted against the recent resolution, said he objected not to NATO but to its future direction, which in his view places too large a burden on the United States and involves too much promotion of specific values. The resolution’s affirmation of “unequivocal support” risks being mistaken for unconditional support, Davidson said. When asked whether he could envision the United States exiting the alliance — as Trump considered with former advisers — Davidson said the real issue is rather whether other member nations who are not spending sufficiently on defense should leave the club. Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing in which he challenged Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Ukraine policy on April 26, 2022. (Al Drago/Bloomberg News) “Is there a point where America would consider pulling out? It’s something we should discuss,” said Davidson, an Army veteran who was stationed in Germany when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989. “The better question is whether there’s a point where we would say to other member countries, ‘This might not be your place — you’re disinvited.’” Davidson said he objected in particular to the resolution’s endorsement of the Center for Democratic Resilience, which he called an “entity designed to meddle in other countries’ domestic politics.” Disagreements have broken out among member nations over the erosion of democracy within the alliance, with criticism directed in particular at Turkey, Hungary and Poland. A Central European diplomat said objections to the democracy center reflect admiration for the likes of Hungary’s Viktor Orban in other Western nations. De Maizière echoed that view, saying his primary concern about upcoming U.S. elections was that “right-wing Republicans are drifting away from this common path of Western values.” “But I have confidence that you more or less win elections in the middle in America, not at the extremes,” he added. “**In the end,** perhaps **Biden will lose Congress,** but I don’t see Trump again as president.” Biden says Putin 'cannot remain in power' in forceful speech in Poland Radoslaw Sikorski, a Polish member of the European Parliament who chairs the body’s delegation for relations with the United States, said Ukraine “is the second big issue on which Republicans and Democrats agree, after China.” “Ukraine has given new credibility to the Atlanticist wing of the Republican Party, which I find encouraging,” said Sikorski, a member of his country’s centrist Civic Platform party and a prominent critic of the ruling, right-wing Law and Justice party. “There seems to be competition in being pro-Ukrainian and wanting to stop Putin.” Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.), the co-chair of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus and the top Republican on the Foreign Affairs Europe subcommittee, said a significant portion of House Republicans are “more libertarian in their foreign policy,” a position with which he disagrees. “We’re certainly going to have a lot of these talks with my colleagues, particularly next cycle, if there’s any assault on NATO that is launched,” Fitzpatrick said. “I will tell you that NATO needs to be reformed significantly. But it is absolutely critical that it be maintained because without NATO, dictators are going to, it’s going to be the Wild West internationally.” Tommy Vietor, a National Security Council spokesman under Democratic President Barack Obama, said: “It’s a pretty shocking turn.” “There’s an appropriate and important conversation to be had about the history of NATO expansion and whether it was well-thought-through,” said Vietor, now a co-host of “Pod Save America.” “But you didn’t see people in either party really fundamentally questioning the value of the alliance.” Seung Min Kim contributed to this report.

##### NATO is the cause of the Ukraine war – people agree NATO needs to disband in order to dismantle the endless war machine

###### The People’s Party 22[4/3/2022] The People’s Party is made up of more than 100,000 members and thousands of volunteers across the country; <https://peoplesparty.org/nato-ukraine/_Amber> D

The People’s Party holds that all wars are waged to enrich the wealthy and impoverish the poor. War has nothing to do with the interests of the people, be they in Ukraine, Russia, the United States, Germany, Belarus or any other country. The military-industrial complex, oil and gas multinationals, and the corporate media profit from war while Ukrainians and Russians are killed and forced from their homes, Americans and Europeans face higher energy prices and economic hardship, and the whole world faces the risk of nuclear armageddon.

We reject all war, military and economic, including the war in Ukraine and the militarization of Europe that has made it inevitable. The Warsaw Pact dissolved in 1991, with the promise of an end to the Cold War. But Bill Clinton and the administrations that followed squandered hopes of a peace dividend. Instead of disbanding NATO, the US and western allies nearly doubled its size and encircled Russia with military bases.

Devastating invasions from Germany and the West have killed 30 million Russians in the last century, which is why maintaining a buffer of neutral countries between it and potentially hostile powers has always been so important to Russia’s security. In the thirty years since the dissolution of the USSR, NATO has integrated most of Eastern Europe, including several former Soviet and Warsaw Pact states.

Dismantle NATO and the endless-war machine

To understand what NATO encirclement would look like against the US, imagine Russia forming a hostile military alliance in the Western Hemisphere with 30 countries and marching it right to our southern border in Mexico. The US would start a nuclear war to prevent such an existential threat. NATO should have been disbanded when the Warsaw Pact disbanded at the end of the Cold War. It serves no purpose now other than as an aggressor outside of the UN security framework.

To end the war in Ukraine, stand with its people, avert escalation and future wars, and create a more peaceful and collaborative world, we support getting to the origins and heart of the conflict and taking these actions when we are in government:

Disband NATO and its military bases

Recognize the UN as the global security authority

Disband permanent membership and veto power on the UN Security Council Recognize Ukraine as an independent and militarily neutral country End all wars of aggression, regime-change wars and resource wars Ban funding and arming Nazis Ban Congress and government officials from war profiteering and insider trading Cut the US military budget in half and invest those resources into guaranteeing jobs, health care, housing and college at home US wages decades of war in the Middle East

#### AI Unpopular

##### People don’t trust AI, especially after the Ukraine Crisis

**UAE NEWS 22,** a broadcasting company that based in UAE, Fear of ‘killer robots’ using AI to target humans grows as Ukraine war rages on, June 23 2022, EAU NEWS, https://uaenews.ekumkum.com/fear-of-killer-robots-using-ai-to-target-humans-grows-as-ukraine-war-rages-on/

KILLER robots have raised ethical concerns as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine demonstrates the carnage of modern warfare. Autonomous weapons are powered by artificial intelligence algorithms and fire at targets without human intervention. Ukrainian soldiers taking part in a military exerciseCredit: AFP-Getty Russian President Vladimir Putin has expressed interest in growing Russia's AI sector Russian President Vladimir Putin has expressed interest in growing Russia’s AI sectorCredit: Getty Images-Getty There are no confirmed cases of an autonomous weapon being used to kill humans (although there are suspicions that an operatorless freewheeling drone was deployed in Libya in 2020). Autonomous weapons could reduce the amount of risk human soldiers are exposed to, an obvious strategic benefit for a country at war. But weapons systems could also make mistakes that result in destroyed cities and civilian casualties, potentially committing war crimes in the process. Nations with the capacity to produce autonomous weapons face a strategic and moral dilemma, especially as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues. The AI ​​system could scan a battlefield and select targets for destruction; it’s pretty simple, on paper. But James Dawes, an expert on the weaponization of AI, wrote a harsh review of autonomous weapons and their potential for The Conversation: “When selecting a target, will autonomous weapons be able to distinguish between hostile soldiers and 12-year-olds playing with toy guns? Between civilians fleeing a conflict site and insurgents making a tactical retreat?” Worse, a robot cannot be held accountable for mistakes in battle – the charge of responsibility has nowhere to go. Attempts to regulate autonomous weapons have run into walls erected by threat actors, while human rights organizations advocate for their ban. Russia boycotted a February 2022 conference on autonomous weapons regulation and will refrain from further discussions this month. Meanwhile, the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, a nonprofit organization, conducted a survey and found that **61% of respondents from 26 countries oppose the use of lethal autonomous weapons.** Devastating Update in Search of Missing Family Members as Police Investigate Mysterious Deaths Derek Chauvin's house for sale for $475k after it was painted For experts, the most likely cause of an autonomous arms race is the use of killer robots against the Ukrainians. “I can guarantee that if Russia does deploy these weapons, some people in the US government will ask, ‘Do we need comparable capabilities now or will we need later for an effective deterrent?'” diplomacy expert Gregory Allen told New Scientist. .

#### Majority of Americans don’t support AI military initiatives

**Darrell M. West, ‘18** [8-29-2018, "Brookings survey finds divided views on artificial intelligence for warfare, but support rises if adversaries are developing it," Brookings, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2018/08/29/brookings-survey-finds-divided-views-on-artificial-intelligence-for-warfare-but-support-rises-if-adversaries-are-developing-it/]

Thirty percent of adult internet users believe AI technologies should be developed for warfare, 39 percent do not, and 32 percent are unsure, according to a survey undertaken by researchers at the Brookings Institution. However, if adversaries already are developing such weapons, 45 percent believe the United States should do so, 25 percent do not, and 30 percent don’t know. There are substantial differences in attitudes by gender, age, and geography. Men (51 percent) are much more likely than women (39 percent) to support AI for warfare if adversaries develop these kinds of weapons. The same is true for senior citizens (53 percent) compared to those aged 18 to 34. Those living in the Northeast (51 percent) were the most likely to support these weapons, compared to people living in the West (41 percent). Support AI for Warfare and Support AI for Warfare if Adversaries Develop Weapons. The Brookings survey was an online U.S. national poll undertaken with 2,000 adult internet users between August 19 to 21, 2018. It was overseen by Darrell M. West, vice president of Governance Studies and director of the Center for Technology Innovation at the Brookings Institution and the author of The Future of Work: Robots, AI, and Automation. Responses were weighted using gender, age, and region to match the demographics of the national internet population as estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey.

### INTERNAL LINKS

#### GOP Win Bad

#### NATO-GOP Win Bad for US/NATO Partnership--Turns Case

##### Trumpism and right-wing isolationist opinions are collectively moving the GOP away from NATO – Republican win in the midterms is going to enable them to ditch NATO altogether.

Bernstein 4/7, Jonathan, Jonathan Bernstein is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering politics and policy. He taught political science at the University of Texas at San Antonio and DePauw University and wrote A Plain Blog About Politics, “Are Republicans Turning Against NATO?”, 4-7-2022, Bloomberg, https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-04-07/are-republicans-turning-against-nato //EddyV

When it came to public policy, Donald Trump’s presidency was marked by repeated defeats whenever he attempted to take on Republican orthodoxy. When he championed tax cuts, the party was right there with him. When he urged massive spending for infrastructure, they ignored him. On several foreign-policy questions, including Trump’s antagonism toward NATO, congressional Republicans actively opposed him. Those foreign-policy issues reflected the enduring triumph of Dwight Eisenhower. Republicans were always anti-communists. But before Ike, conservatives had also been isolationists, preferring that the U.S. stay out of the world, and especially out of long-term alliances. Harry Truman had worked with internationalist Republicans in Congress to commit the U.S. to the United Nations, NATO, the Marshall Plan, and more, but the rank and file was less than comfortable with all of that, and it wasn’t at all clear where a Republican president would take the party. In fact, Eisenhower only narrowly won the Republican nomination in 1952, defeating the conservative wing of a party that was desperate after losing five consecutive presidential elections and happy to have a war hero leading the ticket. Eisenhower’s popular and effective two-term presidency moved isolationism to the fringe. His vice president, Richard Nixon, followed his lead during his own presidency. Even when conservatives fully took control of the party with the election of Ronald Reagan, the old isolationist impulse was reduced to occasional UN-bashing. There were plenty of real differences on foreign policy between the parties during the Cold War, but Ike’s presidency put Republicans firmly on the side of an active continuing role for the U.S. in world affairs, including participation in a series of alliances and agreements. Indeed, that commitment outlasted the Cold War. Trump didn’t care much about public policy when he was president. But he did undermine this internationalist consensus, even using the old “America First” slogan from an isolationist (and anti-Semitic) movement from the 1930s. And while he had little success actually implementing his foreign-policy preferences — as he was repeatedly rolled by Congress, the bureaucracy and allied nations — it’s quite possible he could have the last laugh. Earlier this week, an astonishing 63 House Republicans opposed a resolution supporting NATO. That’s still not a full third of the Republican conference, but it’s not exactly a tiny fringe, either. To be fair, some of those objecting claimed to oppose the non-binding, symbolic resolution because of some of its specific wording rather than because they opposed the alliance — but quite a few seem to be wary of the whole concept of an alliance of democracies against authoritarianism. These lawmakers are only reflecting where their party appears to be heading. In two recent polls, strong minorities of Republicans — 40% of respondents in one survey — supported leaving the alliance altogether. If a Republican committed to the old consensus wins the 2024 nomination and is elected president, I’d expect all of that to dissipate pretty rapidly. Both parties will once again be strong supporters of NATO in particular and of the general overarching direction of U.S. foreign policy since the 1940s. But if Trump is nominated, and especially if he wins the presidency, it’s hard to see the party working as hard to constrain his foreign-policy choices as it once did. And if Democrats remain in the White House for another four years (or more)? It’s easy to imagine partisan polarization extending into this area, as it has so many others, with Republicans automatically opposing whatever it is that Democratic presidents are doing — including participation in the alliances that Eisenhower, Nixon, Gerald Ford, Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush all strongly supported. Preventing that result would require strong, responsible leadership from Republican politicians. I’m not optimistic that will happen.

##### Link Turns Case: If the GOP wins, Republicans will block plan, Trump will win in 2024 and leave NATO

Bernstein 4/7 Jonathan Bernstein is an analyst at Bloomberg. “ Are Republicans Turning Against NATO?” 4/7/2022. Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/are-republicans-turning-against-nato/2022/04/07/46c1e36e-b66f-11ec-8358-20aa16355fb4\_story.html. AK

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Bernstein 4/7, Jonathan, Jonathan Bernstein is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering politics and policy. He taught political science at the University of Texas at San Antonio and DePauw University and wrote A Plain Blog About Politics, “Are Republicans Turning Against NATO?”, 4-7-2022, Bloomberg, https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-04-07/are-republicans-turning-against-nato //EddyV

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##### IL – NATO is vital to US strategic leadership & American prosperity and Vice Versa

McInnis 6/28 Kathleen J. McInnis is a senior fellow in the International Security Program and the director of the Smart Women, Smart Power Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. <https://foreignpolicy.com/author/kathleen-j-mcinnis/> MH

As NATO meets in Madrid this week, the question inevitably arises: Why does the United States need the alliance in the first place? Why is it worth risking New York to save Vilnius or Warsaw, capitals of faraway countries separated from the United States by a wide ocean? The answer lies in the way NATO has worked, as amply demonstrated in practice, for the simultaneous advancement of both American and European interests. Although the U.S. security guarantee for its NATO allies has been at the heart of the alliance’s political-military framework, and the United States has spent considerable sums on the maintenance of defense capabilities as a result, this has never been a one-way bargain. These treaty relationships have afforded the United States a position of strategic leadership. As a result of America’s central role in trans-Atlantic and international relations that NATO cemented, Americans have enjoyed enormous economic prosperity and freedom. Put more bluntly: Successive American governments have been afforded privileged status when it has come to issues including trade partnerships and access to bases in large part because of the outsized role that the United States plays in the defense of its allies. Nor would the United States have been able to sustain its significant portfolio of foreign military sales and defense technology cooperation activities without the strategic foundation laid by its role as NATO’s primary security guarantor for seven decades. This position of leadership—manifested in its overseas presence—also allows the United States to set the international security agenda in both political and practical ways. America would not have been able to, for example, prosecute expeditionary and counterterrorism operations in the Middle East and Africa were it not for the bases and pre-positioned equipment that the United States has been able to maintain on allied soil in Europe. Coalition operations to stabilize the Balkans or conduct anti-piracy missions off the Horn of Africa would not be as comparatively straightforward (or maybe even possible) without the decades of interoperability standardization agreements, multinational training exercises, or the International Military Staff through which allies can collectively plan for and integrate their military operations. NATO’s structures also afford U.S. military leaders direct experience of the complexities of commanding multilateral military operations. Another long-standing reason for U.S. engagement in the European theater is to enable U.S. strategic depth. Labeled “defense in depth” by security practitioners, military technological developments and adversary operations during the world wars demonstrated that the United States was no longer protected by the two oceans off of its shores. As a result, it was deemed strategically prudent to station U.S. forces overseas in order to be able to contend with adversary aggression—if not outright conflict—far away from the American homeland. Not only did this make the American homeland less vulnerable to outright war, but forward presence was also viewed as relatively cost-effective—especially given the potentially enormous social, political, and economic costs of a war on the American continent. The advent of the nuclear age changed that calculation somewhat—intercontinental ballistic missiles made the American homeland vulnerable—but given that even a nuclear war with the Soviet Union would also likely involve combined arms combat in the European theater, the logic of defense in depth held. Over the decades, that rationale has endured even as the strategic context changed. For example, a primary reason for U.S. counterterrorism operations in the Middle East after the 9/11 attacks was to tackle the root sources of violent extremist groups before they could again build sufficient capability and capacity to conduct terrorist attacks against the U.S. homeland. The war in Ukraine, along with the attendant concerns about the security and defense on the European continent that are now heightened, once again underscore the importance—and relative cost-effectiveness—of forward military presence. Moreover, the global political significance of the United States’ track record when it comes to maintaining these alliances over the long haul can arguably give the United States another kind of depth: credibility. While the United States’ reliability as a security partner is frequently called into question in response to day-to-day events, taking a step back it is quite remarkable that U.S. commitments to its allies in Europe have weathered any number of geopolitical storms. The daily management of alliance relationships is a complicated business, of course. But in constructing and recalibrating security relationships with other states, including critical ties in Asia, the U.S. record of building and maintaining a long-standing alliance helps build credibility with others. More broadly, NATO affords its members an extraordinary—and extraordinarily important—degree of strategic flexibility. NATO has proved capable of reinvention, as its post-Cold War experience showed. From the late 1990s until approximately 2014—and largely as a result of U.S. prompting—NATO was primarily focused on collective security and crisis management in Europe’s near abroad and the Middle East. Security interests were framed in terms of promoting global stability and prosperity—including through countering and dismantling terrorist groups outside NATO allied borders. In other words, contrary to expectations in the early 1990s, NATO endured and evolved to contend with myriad security challenges absent an overwhelming threat. And, by the way, against this backdrop, U.S.-European trade remained strong. In 2014, as Russia annexed Crimea and began waging a proxy war in Ukraine, old adversarial geopolitics came rushing back. NATO’s role as a bulwark against an expansionist and revisionist power immediately gained renewed salience, although today the front line is considerably farther eastward than during the Cold War. Further complicating matters, despite any number of assurances by Brussels, Russia has made clear that it views NATO’s eastward expansion as counter to its own interests, and it views the existence of the alliance itself as a threat. Yet NATO is managing to both address the challenge of a revanchist Russia and tackle a broader array of security challenges to the alliance, including China, climate change, and advanced disruptive technologies. More broadly, the lines between foreign and domestic policy, war and peace, civilian and military, public and private are all being blurred, calling long-standing approaches to contending with security and defense challenges into question. Nontraditional security challenges including disinformation operations, pandemic response, migration, and terrorism have put significant stress on the governments of allies on both sides of the Atlantic. None of these challenges can be tackled by one state alone, not even by the United States. And in these blurry spaces, NATO can—and has—played an important role in catalyzing solutions for these complex problems. For example, NATO played a key role in facilitating the international community’s response to the rise of the Islamic State, plans formed in the margins of the 2014 summit in Wales. Strategic leadership, strategic depth, and strategic flexibility are why NATO’s value is difficult to overstate. It is a political-military arrangement that has proved remarkably resilient over decades and has consistently demonstrated its value to its members on both sides of the Atlantic. This is arguably why Vladimir Putin’s Russia is so intent on undermining it. The strategic conundrum for the United States—and for its NATO allies—is therefore how to keep intact the alliance system that serves as the bedrock for myriad social, economic, and political benefits to its members in the face of an aggressive adversary. But defend its old and new allies alike the United States must. Otherwise it risks losing a leadership position and benefits that have become a central, if overlooked, aspect of American prosperity. In a very real way, the security of NATO allies is inextricably linked with American interests. Kathleen J. McInnis is a senior fellow in the International Security Program and the director of the Smart Women, Smart Power Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

#### DEMOCRACY-GOP Win Endangers Democracy

##### House Republicans will reverse work of Jan 6 committee if they retake House

Porter 7/6: Tom Porter, A reporter at Business Insider based in London. ”Republicans plan ways to get revenge on Jan. 6 Committee if they retake the house, report says.” July 6, 2022. Business Insider. https://www.businessinsider.com/gop-plans-undermine-jan-6-committee-if-retakes-house-axios-2022-7

House Republicans are planning to subpoena records from the Jan. 6 committee if they take back control of the lower chamber in the midterm election, [Axios reported.](https://www.axios.com/2022/07/06/republicans-plot-vengeance-jan-6-committee) The plan is part of a wider effort to get revenge on the committee and undermine its findings per the report. Its hearings have proved damaging for former President Donald Trump and his wider party. The committee has in a series of hearings presented testimony about Donald Trump's campaign to overturn the election, the Republican lawmakers who supported him, [and his determination to lead an armed mob to the Capitol](https://www.businessinsider.com/jan-6-lofgren-asks-why-doj-hasnt-subpoenaed-hutchinson-2022-7?r=US&IR=T) on the day of the riot. Although they have not had great success responding in real time, according to Axios the party hopes to unpick the work of the committee after the midterm elections in November, where many predict they will retake the House of Representatives. "When Republicans retake the majority, we will exercise our oversight responsibilities including subpoena authority to review all transcripts and information that the committee has access to in order to identify the truth," a senior GOP staffer on the House Administration Committee told Axios. Rep. Rodney Davis, an Illinois Republican has charted a course for Republicans looking to damage the findings of the committee if they win a House majority. The top Republican on the Administration Committee, Davis told Axios the committee would seek to investigate House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and had requested the preservation of Jan. 6 committee records. Some Republicans have baselessly sought to blame Pelosi for the riot, wrongly claiming that it was her job to ensure sufficient security at the Capitol on the day of the riot. Decisions on security are actually made by Capitol security chiefs, with some input from the House Speaker as well as the Senate Majority Leader, who at the time was Republican Mitch McConnell. House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy boycotted the Jan. 6 committee after Pelosi blocked two of his selections for the panel. The two Republicans sitting on the panel, Rep. Liz Cheney and Rep. Adam Kinzinger, defied McCarthy to take part and have been made pariahs in the GOP as a result. Trump and other Republicans have since expressed regret at not having seats on the committee that would let them rebut its findings during the hearings themselves.

##### A Republican win in the midterms will allude to civil war in the United States

**Patteson 6/14 -** Callie, Callie graduated from The King’s College in 2020 and is skilled in business, politics, coronavirus, crimes, personal finance and travel reporting. She has previously worked for and/or been published by TODAY.com, The Sun-US, Religion Unplugged, Empire State Tribune/Magazine, Moms.com, MSNBC, and NH1 News, “‘Squad’ Rep. Bowman predicts ‘civil war’ if GOP takes control in midterms”, 06-14-2022, New York Post, https://nypost.com/2022/06/14/squad-rep-bowman-warns-of-civil-war-if-gop-takes-midterms/# //EddyV

Progressive Democratic Rep. Jamaal Bowman warned of a stark outcome if Republicans take back power in the November midterm elections — one that would “embolden” far-right extremists and white nationalists who he claims “have been pushing” for “civil war.” During a Saturday interview with MSNBC’s “The Cross Connection with Tiffany Cross,” the Bronx-Westchester member of the congressional “Squad” led by socialist darling Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) claimed Republicans will quickly take action to halt Democratic progress in the investigation into the Jan. 6 Capitol riot, saying the House select committee’s findings would be “completely suppressed.” Bowman also claimed the GOP would “impeach President Biden as quickly as possible and they will continue to find ways to impeach him going forward.” Rep. Bowman made the comments during an appearance on MSNBC’s “The Cross Connection with Tiffany Cross." Rep. Bowman made the comments during an appearance on MSNBC’s “The Cross Connection with Tiffany Cross.” MSNBC But Bowman went on to warn that Republicans gaining control of the House and/or Senate would “embolden” dangerous and violent extremists to take further control. “It would also embolden Republicans and the far right, and white nationalistsacross the country to begin to believe that it is their time to not just take power in the House, but the Senate, the WhiteHouse and statehouses across the country,” Bowman said, “We’ve got to understand that this is a group that has been radicalized by the great replacement myth and many other things, and have been pushing for violence and pushing for even civil war, **so that is what’s at stake right now in terms of this election**,” he warned. Bowman warned that Republicans would try to halt the ongoing investigations into the Jan. 6 Capitol riot. "Our democracy is hanging by a thread," Bowman added. Above, extremists clash with police in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 6, 2021. The “great replacement myth” refers to a theory often held by white nationalists that purports white Americans are being intentionally “replaced” by other minority races through mass immigration. “Our democracy is hanging by a thread, and black and brown people, our lives are in the balance if these people come back into power,” Bowman added. The progressive lawmaker’s warning of further division among the parties comes as **44% of Americans believe the US “seems headed toward a civil war in the near future,” according to an April survey**. The poll, done by the Southern Poverty Law Center among 1,500 Americans, found that a majority of Republicans — 53% — agreed the US is headed toward civil war, compared to 39% of Democrats. Less seem inclined to approve of general political violence. Only 41% of Republicans agreed that “some violence might be necessary to protect the country from radical extremists,” compared to 34% of Democrats and 29% of independent voters.

##### Republican win can affect Climate Change spending strategies

**Moran Stanley 5/24:** “How midterm elections can affect markets” 5/24/22. Morgan Stanley. https://www.morganstanley.com/ideas/midterm-elections-2022-equities-fixed-income\_Albert

Investor complacency regarding U.S. midterm congressional elections is understandable given that prediction markets are indicating a high likelihood of Democrats losing control of at least one chamber.But political pundits have been proven wrong before, and markets have a history of misinterpreting policy impacts of election results. With tax, healthcare and tech regulation among policy variables that could hinge on the outcome, planning ahead—and leaving room for a scenario that goes against the consensus—is especially important.“While we're not arguing that Democrats are likely to keep Congressional control, we do think the consensus is likely too complacent, opening the door to volatility in the pockets of the market that we've flagged as sensitive to election outcomes,” says Michael Zezas, Head of U.S. Public Policy Research and Municipal Strategy at Morgan Stanley Research.

Signals to Watch Prediction markets—which are exchange-traded markets for speculating on events—recently implied a 90% chance that Republicans will win at least one chamber of Congress. Prediction markets often are closely correlated with the final outcomes and significant moves in the weeks immediately before the election and can give investors a signal they may need to adjust.Likewise, a president’s disapproval rating, and in turn his party’s midterm prospects, track closely with inflation and generic ballots—which are polls that indicate the political party voters plan to support—and have a solid track record of predicting election results.Recently, both indicators pointed to a Republican win of at least the House and a high chance of winning the Senate too. Investors should watch these numbers in the months ahead for potential signs of a different outcome than expected in November. What the Possible Outcomes May Mean: To understand the potential regulatory implications on sectors, including pharmaceuticals and technology, as well on as issues such as China competition, taxes and climate, Zezas and analysts across a dozen research disciplines explored the plausible policy paths of three outcomes. Policy Path #1 Republicans Win Control of Both Houses Republicans need to gain four seats to take the House. Meanwhile, a 50/50 Senate means they need to net one seat to gain control. With such relatively low barriers to victory, prediction markets recently implied a 74% probability that Republicans would win both chambers and control of the legislative agenda. Market Impact: This outcome would make major new spending initiatives unlikely to materialize over the next two years, while fiscal policy would remain reactive rather than proactive. “In this scenario, certain legislative priorities are immediately off the table–like tax increases or investments in clean energy–while others become much more difficult to achieve,” says Zezas. Moreover, if Republicans won’t have the ability to push their policy preferences past the White House, investors should prepare for gridlock.

##### **Republicans Have Set the Stage to Legally Overturn Election Results they don’t like; Biggest Threat to our Democracy Is GOP Overturning Election Results**

Levitsky and Ziblatt July 2021

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt (:Steven Levitsky is a professor of government at Harvard University. Daniel Ziblatt is the Eaton Professor of the Science of Government at Harvard University. They are the authors of How Democracies Die, and are at work on a follow-up.) “The Biggest Threat to Democracy Is the GOP Stealing the Next Election” https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/07/democracy-could-die-2024/619390/ The Atlantic. July 9, 2021. LV

Unless and until the Republican Party recommits itself to playing by democratic rules of the game, American democracy will remain at risk. The greatest threat to American democracy today is not a repeat of January 6, but the possibility of a stolen presidential election. Contemporary democracies that die meet their end at the ballot box, through measures that are nominally constitutional. The looming danger is not that the mob will return; it’s that mainstream Republicans will “legally” overturn an election. In 2018, when we wrote How Democracies Die, we knew that Donald Trump was an authoritarian figure, and we held the Republican Party responsible for abdicating its role as democratic gatekeeper. But we did not consider the GOP to be an antidemocratic party. Four years later, however, the bulk of the Republican Party is behaving in an antidemocratic manner. Solving this problem requires that we address both the acute crisis and the underlying long-term conditions that give rise to it. Addressing the short-term threat Last year, for the first time in U.S. history, a sitting president refused to accept defeat and attempted to overturn election results. Rather than oppose this attempted coup, leading Republicans either cooperated with it or enabled it by refusing to publicly acknowledge Trump’s defeat. In the run-up to January 6, most top GOP officials refused to denounce extremist groups that were spreading conspiracy theories, calling for armed insurrection and assassinations, and ultimately implicated in the Capitol assault. Few Republicans broke with Trump after his incitement of the insurrection, and those who did were censured by their state parties.. From November 2020 to January 2021, then, a significant portion of the Republican Party refused to unambiguously accept electoral defeat, eschew violence, or break with extremist groups—the three principles that define prodemocracy parties. Because of that behavior, as well as its behavior over the past six months, we are convinced that the Republican Party leadership is willing to overturn an election. Moreover, we are concerned that it will be able to do so—legally. That’s why we serve on the board of advisers to Protect Democracy, a nonprofit working to prevent democratic decline in the United States. We wrote this essay as part of “The Democracy Endgame,” the group’s symposium on the long-term strategy to fight authoritarianism. As we argued in How Democracies Die, our constitutional system relies heavily on forbearance. Whether it is the filibuster, funding the government, impeachment, or judicial nominations, our system of checks and balances works best when politicians on both sides of the aisle deploy their institutional prerogatives with restraint. In other words, when they avoid applying the letter of the law in ways contrary to the spirit of the law—what’s sometimes called constitutional hardball. When contemporary democracies die, they usually do so via constitutional hardball. Democracy’s primary assailants today are not generals or armed revolutionaries, but rather politicians—Hugo Chávez, Vladimir Putin, Viktor Orbán, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan—who eviscerate democracy’s substance behind a carefully crafted veneer of legality and constitutionality. This is precisely what could happen in the next U.S. presidential race. Elections require forbearance. For elections to be democratic, all adult citizens must be equally able to cast a ballot and have that vote count. Using the letter of the law to violate the spirit of this principle is strikingly easy. Election officials can legally throw out large numbers of ballots on the basis of the most minor technicalities (e.g., the oval on the ballot is not entirely penciled in, or the mail-in ballot form contains a typo or spelling mistake). Large-scale ballot disqualification accords with the letter of the law, but it is inherently antidemocratic, for it denies suffrage to many voters. Crucially, if hardball criteria are applied unevenly, such that many ballots are disqualified in one party’s stronghold but not in other areas, they can turn an election. Republican officials across the country are laying the legal infrastructure to do just that. Since January, according to Protect Democracy, Law Forward, and the States United Democracy Center, Republicans have introduced 216 bills (in 41 states) aimed at facilitating hardball electoral tactics. As of June, 24 of these bills had passed, including in the battleground states of Arizona, Florida, Georgia, and Texas. Approved measures allow Republican-controlled state legislatures or election boards to sideline or override local election administrations in Democratic strongholds. This would allow state legislatures or their appointees to meddle in local decision making, purge voter rolls, and manipulate the number and location of polling places. It would also allow Republicans in Arizona, Georgia, and elsewhere to do something Trump tried and failed to do in 2020: throw out ballots in rival strongholds in order to overturn a statewide result. Finally, the new laws impose criminal penalties for local election officials deemed to violate election procedure. This will enable statewide Republican officials to compel local officials, via threats of criminal prosecution, to engage in electoral hardball. Throwing out thousands of ballots in rival strongholds may be profoundly antidemocratic, but it is technically legal, and Republicans in several states now have a powerful stick with which to enforce such practices. Republican politicians learned several things in the 2020 election’s aftermath. First, Trump’s failed campaign to overturn the results revealed a variety of mechanisms that may be exploited in future elections. Second, Republicans discovered that their base would not punish them for attempting to steal an election. To the contrary, they now know that efforts to overturn an election will be rewarded by Republican voters, activists, local and state parties, and many donors. The 2020 election was, in effect, a dress rehearsal for what might lie ahead. All evidence suggests that if the 2024 election is close, the Republicans will deploy constitutional hardball to challenge or overturn the results in various battleground states. Recent history and public-opinion polling tell us that the Republican activist base will enthusiastically support—indeed, demand—such tactics. The new state election laws will make that easier. Democratic strongholds in Republican-led swing states will be especially vulnerable. And if disputed state-level elections throw the election into the House of Representatives, a Republican-led House would likely hand the presidency to the Republican candidate (no matter who actually won the election). The American system has faced crises before—including the disputed elections in 1824, 1876, and 2000. Given the considerable authority that the Constitution grants to state legislatures, the processes of voting, vote counting, and even the selection of electors can easily be subverted for partisan ends. Electoral guardrails must therefore be hardened through federal legislation prior to the 2024 election. To save democracy, democratize it Beyond the acute crisis facing American democracy, however, is a deeper problem: the radicalization of the Republican Party. Unless and until the GOP recommits itself to playing by democratic rules of the game, American democracy will remain at risk. Each national election will feel like a national emergency. Therefore, the de-radicalization of the Republican Party is a central task for the next decade. Normally, in a two-party democracy, if one party veers off course, it is punished at the ballot box. Electoral competition is thought to be a natural corrective for political extremism: Parties that stray too far from the average voter’s positions lose votes, which compels them to moderate and broaden their appeal to win again. When a professional sports team loses, it fires its coach, acquires new players, and regroups. The same should hold for political parties. Indeed, if you ask moderate or Never Trump Republicans what will get Republicans back on course, they will almost invariably answer “devastating electoral defeat.” They may be right. There is a hitch, however: Competition’s effects are being undermined in the U.S. today by what political scientists call countermajoritarian institutions. We believe that the U.S. Constitution, in its current form, is enabling the radicalization of the Republican Party and exacerbating America’s democratic crisis. The Constitution’s key countermajoritarian features, such as the Electoral College and the U.S. Senate, have long been biased toward sparsely populated territories. But given that Democrats are increasingly the party of densely populated areas and Republicans dominate less populated areas, this long-standing rural bias now allows the Republican Party to win the presidency, control Congress, and pack the Supreme Court without winning electoral majorities. Consider these facts: Republicans have won the popular vote for the presidency only once since 1988, yet have governed the country for nearly half of that period. The Democratic and Republican Parties each control 50 seats in the U.S. Senate, even though Democratic senators represent 40 million more voters than do Republican senators. The three justices who most recently joined the Supreme Court were appointed by a president who did not win the popular vote—and were confirmed by Senate majorities that did not represent a majority of Americans. Countermajoritarian institutions shield Republicans from genuine competition. By allowing Republicans to win power without national majorities, this constitutional welfare allows the GOP to pursue extremist strategies that threaten our democracy without suffering devastating electoral consequences. Most Americans oppose most of the Republicans’ current positions. But if we do not reform our democracy to allow majorities to speak, expecting the GOP to change course would be naive. Americans tend to view countermajoritarian institutions as essential to liberal democracy. And some of them are. In the United States, the Bill of Rights and judicial review help ensure that individual liberties and minority rights are protected. But many of our countermajoritarian institutions are legacies of a pre-democratic era. Where they pervade the electoral or legislative arenas, they do not protect minority rights so much as empower partisan minorities and, in some cases, enable minority rule. To save our democracy, we must democratize it. A political system that repeatedly allows a minority party to control the most powerful offices in the country cannot remain legitimate for long. Following the example of other democracies, we must expand access to the ballot, reform our electoral system to ensure that majorities win elections, and weaken or eliminate antiquated institutions such as the filibuster so that majorities can actually govern. Congress is considering limited democratizing reforms, such as banning legislative gerrymandering. But those proposals pale in comparison with the extent of the problem. Serious constitutional reform may seem like a daunting task, but Americans have refounded our democracy before. After the Civil War and during the Progressive era and the civil-rights movement, political leaders, under pressure from organized citizens, remade our democracy. Always unfinished, our Constitution requires continuous updating. American democracy thrived because it allowed itself to be reformed. Given the scale of the threat, reforming our democracy over the next decade is among the most pressing challenges we face today.

#### DEM AGENDA-GOP Win Crush Dem Agenda incl. Climate Legislation

##### Manchin Hasn’t Fully Crushed Dem Climate Agenda-Midterms Key

Sobczyk 7-18, Nick, covers Capitol Hill and climate change for E&E News. Since joining the company as an intern in 2016, he has reported on the Department of Defense, infrastructure, permitting rollbacks under the Trump administration and American Indian issues. He holds a degree in government and creative writing from Hamilton College, DEMS GRAPPLE WITH CLIMATE DEFEAT, SEARCH FOR PATH FORWARD, JULY 18, 2022, E&E News, <https://huffman.house.gov/media-center/in-the-news/dems-grapple-with-climate-defeat-search-for-path-forward_PW>

West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin left his party in a climate bind, as Democrats prepare to move ahead this week on a budget reconciliation bill without the clean energy provisions they negotiated for nearly a year. President Joe Biden on Friday called on Congress to pass a narrow bill that includes only an agreement on drug pricing and Affordable Care Act subsidies after Manchin said he would not vote on climate provisions and tax hikes this month in the wake of another round of high inflation numbers. It would effectively mean meeting Manchin’s requests and putting an end to Democrats’ effort to pass climate policy along party lines under the Senate’s reconciliation rules. Manchin said he was open to finalizing a climate deal in September if next month’s Consumer Price Index numbers improve (Greenwire, July 15). But with the midterm elections nearing — and potential ACA premium increases next month ahead of the midterms — the prospect for legislating on climate change in this Congress is all but dead. It’s a stinging defeat for climate activists and Democrats who watched the last major congressional effort to legislate on climate change die in the Senate in 2010. “**He has sabotaged the president’s agenda**,” Senate Budget Chair Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) said yesterday on ABC’s “This Week.” “The problem was that we continued to talk to Manchin like he was serious. He was not,” Sanders said. “This is a guy who is a major recipient of fossil fuel money, a guy who has received campaign contributions from 25 Republican billionaires.” Democrats are left with few remaining options. Some want to continue negotiating for a bigger legislative deal in the next two months, and most are calling for more robust executive action on climate from the Biden administration. Others are holding out slim hopes of simply electing more Democrats to pass a climate bill in the midterms. “If the Senate will not move to tackle the climate crisis and strengthen our domestic clean energy industry, I will take strong executive action to meet this moment,” Biden said in a statement last week (E&E News PM, July 15). “My actions will create jobs, improve our energy security, bolster domestic manufacturing and supply chains, protect us from oil and gas price hikes in the future, and address climate change.” It’s not entirely clear yet what that would entail. Biden has pledged to slash U.S. emissions 50 to 52 percent by 2030 compared to 2005 levels, and the clean energy provisions under negotiation were seen a crucial policy to get there. For now, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) is preparing to move ahead with the narrow drug pricing deal this week, POLITICO reported, sending it to the parliamentarian for review. Negotiations on the bipartisan innovation and competition bill have gotten tied up with reconciliation after Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) threatened to kill it should Democrats move forward on their social spending package. The Senate is set to move ahead with a slimmed down version — centered on $52 billion for the semiconductor industry — this week, but it’s unclear what the package might look like. Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas), who is close to McConnell, tweeted that the demise of the Democrats’ broad budget reconciliation effort with climate spending and new taxes would pave the way for bipartisan action on innovation. Still, the atmosphere on Capitol Hill remains tense. Many Democrats are bitterly disappointed and distrustful of Manchin, who whittled away at their climate policy options for months before sinking them entirely last week. Progressives, in particular, viewed climate legislation as a key selling point to younger voters ahead of the midterms. The failure to pass broader climate and social spending policies “has already hurt Democrats” on the campaign trail, Congressional Progressive Caucus Chair Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.) told reporters. “We’re going to have to get two more Democrats, real Democrats [in the Senate], who will actually help us to implement the president’s agenda, not obstruct it,” Jayapal told reporters. KEEP TALKING? Key House committee chairs, however, said last week they would be willing to continue waiting it out until September if it meant they could secure a broader deal. “If he’s leaving a gap in the door, then that’s the way it is,” said House Natural Resources Chair Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.). Ways and Means Chair Richard Neal (D-Mass.) similarly noted that House lawmakers have spent a lot of political capital negotiating and working on a framework for a larger deal over the last year. “I want to believe, for the purpose of getting a big deal, that [Manchin] wants to act in good faith,” Neal told reporters. Despite the fact that talks have fallen apart multiple times over the last year, “it’s never a bad deal to try and reengage,” said House Budget Chair John Yarmuth (D-Ky.). “Do I think it would be productive to do it? No. Do I think it would be advisable to do it? Yeah, sure,” Yarmuth told reporters. Many environmental groups have essentially written Manchin off and even called for him to be removed as chair of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. But Tiernan Sittenfeld, senior vice president for government affairs at the League of Conservation Voters, said she’s not giving up on a legislative deal quite yet. “The Senate is not supposed to go out for August recess for three weeks,” Sittenfeld said Friday at a news conference on Capitol Hill. “That is plenty of time for Sen. Manchin to come back to the table today, right now, and get this bill passed before they go out on their August recess.” CALLS FOR EXECUTIVE ACTION Climate rally and press conference. Rep. Jared Huffman (D-Calif.) during a press conference with lawmakers and environmental advocates on Capitol Hill on Friday. | Francis Chung/E&E News The focus for many Democrats now is on the executive branch, where Biden still has power to stiffen emissions regulations and halt new fossil fuel projects. Top of the mind for progressives is declaring a climate emergency. Many Democrats have called for Biden to do it for years now, and now they see an obvious opening because Biden no longer has to walk a delicate line to please Manchin. As Rep. Jared Huffman (D-Calif.) put it, Biden should “open the full suite of emergency authorities to do big things on the clean energy transition.” It would offer the administration authority to support lawsuits against the fossil fuel industry and accelerate things like heat pump manufacturing and the transition of the federal fleet to electric vehicles, Huffman said. “We’re not powerless, and I think it’s important to make that distinction,” Huffman said. “**Nobody is surrendering here. Nobody is putting up the white flag and saying, ‘Joe Manchin wins,’** but it is time to change tactics.” Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) offered up a ten-point plan for executive action. It includes buffing up the federal social cost of carbon, requiring all major emitters to install carbon capture, using the bully pulpit to call out corporations who obstruct climate action and limiting co-pollutants from fossil fuel power plants. “With legislative climate options now closed, it’s now time for executive Beast Mode,” Whitehouse tweeted last week. Still, gas price politics remain a factor. The Biden administration — and many moderate Democrats — are wary of the optics of any move that could be seen as exacerbating high energy prices with the midterms around the corner. The Manchin news last week, for instance, came as Biden was in oil-rich Saudi Arabia, where the president said he was “doing all I can to increase the supply for the United States of America.” And the reality is that executive action would be fundamentally limited in scope without Congress pumping big money into the deployment of new and existing clean energy technology. “I’m not there yet. I think some stuff you have to do through legislation,” Rep. Scott Peters (D-Calif.) said in an interview. “I wouldn’t want to suggest this is something you can’t backfill with executive action — you can — but this is something we will not have the opportunity to do again.” The Supreme Court also limited EPA’s power to regulate power plant greenhouse gas emissions in last month’s West Virginia v. EPA decision, another blow to the administration’s efforts. “It’s clear that there needs to be swift progress on all fronts of government if the US is going to get on track to achieving the target. This means that Congress, the Biden administration, and states all need to accelerate progress this year towards closing the emissions gap,” researchers at the Rhodium Group wrote this month. “If any front fails to act, it will be increasingly difficult to see a reasonable path to the 2030 climate target.” With current policy trajectories, the Rhodium Group found the United States is on track to cut emissions 24 percent to 25 percent below 2005 levels in 2030. That’s well under Biden’s promise under the Paris agreements to halve emissions by 2030. Grijalva acknowledged the uncertain path forward. “I don’t know,” he told reporters Friday when asked what executive action the administration should take. “It’s something you can’t delay, and you can’t hide it with smoke and mirrors. Essentially, no action and the crisis gets worse.” WHAT HAPPENED? With little legislative recourse left, Democrats on Capitol Hill have largely been left to fume at Manchin and unleash months of pent-up frustration. And even if some want to hold out for the broader deal, Manchin has repeatedly called for delays and slimmer spending since Democrats began talking about a reconciliation bill last year. In September of last year, the West Virginia Democrat called for a “strategic pause” and said he would not support the original proposed price tag of $3.5 trillion. As negotiations continued, Manchin ruled out the so-called Clean Electricity Performance Program — once the centerpiece of the bill’s climate provisions — and took issue with electric vehicle incentives and the fee on methane emissions. He eventually sunk the entire effort in December amid increasing inflation fears. When Schumer and Manchin began talking again this year, discussions centered around a much smaller package with some $500 billion in spending and $1 trillion in revenues. Adding to the current Democratic frustration is the fact that the pair were close to a deal on the climate provisions, according to staffers familiar with the negotiations and Democratic lawmakers. Manchin himself said Friday that climate talks had been headed in a “very, very productive” direction. The House-passed version of the “Build Back Better Act” contained $555 billion in climate spending. In the latest round of talks, Schumer had agreed to slash that to $375 billion to secure Manchin’s support, according to a Democrat briefed on the matter. That essentially left a suite of clean energy tax credits for a host of wind, solar, energy storage, carbon capture and nuclear energy technologies. Schumer had also agreed to nix direct pay options and electric vehicle credit expansions — two major Manchin sticking points — according to the Democrat. “Sen. Schumer will have to decide whether he wants to continue this tease with Joe Manchin, but I think we should stop empowering this guy to be his own branch of government,” Huffman said. “And if you care about climate in particular, it’s time to just accept that he’s going to screw us every single time.” Manchin, for his part, said he had simply told Schumer he supports much of the clean energy package but could not move on it immediately while inflation is at 9.1 percent. “He took that as ‘no,’ I guess, and came out with this big thing last night. I don’t know why they did that, I guess to try to put pressure on me, but they’ve been doing that for over a year now,” Manchin told Hoppy Kercheval of West Virginia MetroNews on Friday. However, since last year, Manchin has gone from from supporting the climate portion of the reconciliation package to questioning its price tag, its provisions and its very purpose. Manchin has expressed concerns about the minerals needed for clean energy and said the transition to renewables is already happening. But Manchin’s view, Schumer’s move “doesn’t make any sense at all.”

#### Any Legislation Passed Now that is Not Core to Dem Base Saps Finite PC

Olsen, Henry. ”As Biden reaches his 100-day mark, his approval ratings suggest he’s no FDR” The Washington Post. Apr 26, 2021.

Many Democrats dream that President Biden can transform America as thoroughly as Franklin D. Roosevelt did. But Biden's political standing as he approaches his administration's 100-day mark has more in common with Bill Clinton and Barack Obama than with the legendary FDR. Roosevelt took office after winning a massive landslide at the depths of the Great Depression. Backed by a nearly 200-seat majority in the House and a 58-to-37 Senate majority, FDR pushed through law after law designed to pull the country out of the economic doldrums. Growth and confidence returned, and he and his party were rewarded with more historic victories in the 1934 and 1936 elections. In just four years, FDR had pulled America leftward and entrenched his party's dominance for nearly 50 years. Compare this with the tenures of Clinton and Obama. Both Democratic presidents won office with comfortable, but not landslide, wins. Their parties also controlled the House and Senate with comfortable, but not enormous, margins. Both men set to work reviving the economy, Clinton from a mild recession and Obama from the 2008 financial collapse. Both succeeded in pushing through significant stimulus measures by spring. But after that initial success, they diverged from FDR's playbook. Each changed their focus from economic recovery to pushing longtime Democratic priorities. They made health reform the centerpieces of their presidencies and promoted other issues (e.g., allowing gay people to serve in the military for Clinton, addressing climate change for Obama) that were not priorities for the swing voters who had empowered them and their party. The results were dire for each: Record-setting Republican midterm victories stopped their efforts to change America in their tracks. Biden and House Democrats are pushing an even more aggressive agenda with smaller political capital. Democrats hold a thin majority in the House and control a 50-50 Senate only by virtue of Vice President Harris's ability to break ties. Yet, Democrats under Biden, after pushing through their covid-19 stimulus bill, are signaling another lurch to the left. The House is busy passing bills that have nothing to do with the crisis that got them elected, such as their election reform bill and D.C. statehood. Biden is proposing more massive expansions of government power and spending that have more to do with Democratic priorities than aiding post-pandemic recovery. Biden's job approval ratings also have much more in common with his predecessors than with FDR. As of Friday morning, Biden has a 52.7 percent approval rating on the RealClearPolitics polling average. That's a lot higher than Donald Trump's rating was at this point of his presidency, but it's lower than every other one of Biden's predecessors since 1980 at this stage of their presidencies except Clinton, whose approval rating at this point was statistically identical to Biden's. Some of this is surely due to the country's polarized politics, but it also reflects that Biden might not be pulling new voters into his coalition. His 52.7 percent rating is only 1.4 percentage points higher than the 51.3 percent of the vote he received last November. That's the smallest improvement over a president's prior share of the vote of any president in decades, again with the exception of the terminally unpopular Trump. History suggests the political outlook for Democrats is grim, should they stay on this track. Clinton's job approval rating hovered around the 50-percent mark until the summer of 1994, with one dramatic dip in the summer of 1993. As the public focused on his priorities, however, they started to sour on him. By mid-October, the Gallup poll gave him only a 41 percent approval rating. Obama's approval rating also stayed above 50 percent for a long time, dipping below it in May 2010. It bottomed out at a higher level than Clinton's, about 46 percent, but that still did not prevent Republicans from gaining 63 House seats and the lion's share of gubernatorial and state legislative races. This should be ringing Democratic alarm bells, but instead it seems to be having the opposite effect. Biden is trying to do more legislatively, apparently on the theory that if enough change happens fast enough, Republicans can't undo it even if they tried. It's the political version of throwing everything on the wall and seeing what sticks. Progressives might tell Biden to damn the torpedoes and full speed ahead. As captain of the Democratic navy, Biden looks like he will take their advice. We'll see if his moderate helmsmen among Senate Democrats are willing to go down with the ship.

### IMPACT SCENARIOS

#### CIVIL WAR Election Chaos/Democratic Decline

##### The impact of a civil war outweighs all aff impact scenarios – civil war is probable in this context, goes international and effects become widespread

Elshelmani 2015 Arij, a studious author with multiple publications all revolving around unique socio-economic, political, cultural issues, “Why Are Civil Wars so Protracted and Difficult to End?”, 10-20-2015, E-International Relations, <https://www.e-ir.info/2015/11/20/why-are-civil-wars-so-protracted-and-difficult-to> end/#:~:text=While%20the%20populations%20of%20warring,large%20number%20of%20civilian%20casualties. //EddyV

As interstate war has become less common, academic attention has shifted to the plethora of armed conflicts occurring within the boundaries of states. These civil wars have proven to be more protracted and difficult to terminate for numerous reasons that vary according to their unique socio-economic, political and cultural contexts. Hence, providing a perfect general theory is problematic. Nevertheless, a number of critical factors that affect the duration of civil wars and their inability to be resolved relative to interstate wars can be distinguished. Firstly, unlike interstate wars, which occur between clearly-defined armies and are generally amenable to compromise, civil wars tend to be low-intensity, existential struggles, making them, therefore, inherently-protracted affairs. Moreover, the decentralized organizational structure of contemporary insurgencies and their tendency to fragment and become engulfed in internecine fighting further undermines attempts at reaching a political settlement. Third, peace is difficult to achieve when, for many actors, war is preferable. Often ignored is the capacity of war to endow belligerents with profits and power. Various cases of “enemies” colluding to prolong violence challenge the common assumption that the ultimate objective of war is victory. Finally, the essay questions what an “end” to civil war implies. Even when one side claims total victory or in the rare cases where peace accords are signed and the war is formally concluded, the transition from large-scale civil violence to peace is not so clear. Collective memories of mutual violence persist into the post-conflict period, and cultures of violence are sustained. If not fully addressed, along with the underlying grievances that originally inspire violence, peace will remain at best fragile, and violence may continue in other forms. In this light, even the success stories of post-accord societies in Latin America and Lebanon appear to be “unfinished” civil wars.[1] The Asymmetric Nature of Civil Wars: Given that interstate wars are generally fought in a series of direct confrontations between professional armies and across defined frontlines, they are relatively quick and decisive. In contrast, intrastate wars are distinguished by the asymmetric distribution of material power among the main parties of the conflict, usually the incumbent government or power and the rebels or insurgents opposing it. The asymmetric nature of internal conflicts forces insurgents to adopt a strategy of guerrilla warfare in which the evasion of the enemy is a matter of survival. To overcome its military weakness, the insurgent force gradually wears down the enemy through hit-and-run tactics. Civil war is thus an inherently-protracted affair. What adds complexity to these wars is that they are almost never wholly internal. In an age of interconnectivity and interdependency, their outcome is often of strategic interest not only to neighboring powers but also to the international community at-large. The role of external intervention in influencing the balance of power between parties and therefore the trajectory of civil wars is critical. When external intervention is balanced between the opposing sides it can increase the duration of war.[2] This was most evident when the Cold War superpowers played out their ideological struggle in the conflict theater of the global South. The weaponry and supplies they provided fueled some of the most ferocious internal conflicts. Similarly, the internationalization of the contemporary Syrian conflict seems to have reconfigured the balance of power towards a prolonged stalemate.[3] Here, negotiation may only be contemplated when both parties reach a “mutually hurting stalemate,”[4] that is, a stage of deadlock when both sides simultaneously perceive continued fighting as offering little returns and mounting costs. However, with external actors distorting the perception of warring parties’ prospects on the battlefield, arriving at this stage may take many years. Limited Space for Compromise Interstate wars may be driven by border disputes; they could be a reaction to some existential threat, an attempt at regional hegemony, or a contest for access to trade routes and resources, to name a few. In theory, all of these factors are amenable to compromise, even if they too can produce long and costly wars. The Persian Gulf War is but one example; after eight years of conflict, Saddam Hussein relinquished his demands for complete control over Shatt-Al Arab and began withdrawing his forces from Iran, effectively bringing the war to a close. Where civil wars are driven by limited aims and objectives, the government can respond with the necessary reforms and negotiate with the aggrieved parties to stifle the conflict. When the objective is to secede, to overthrow the government, or even to radically transform social structures, compromise is improbable if not impossible. Secession is unfeasible for there can only be one government. Such wars are existential struggles with each side framing the conflict in terms of “victory or death.” Unsurprisingly, they take an intensely violent nature. Where belligerents cannot envision a common future of power sharing, incumbents have attempted to delegitimize their opponents by labeling them “terrorists,” “criminals,” or “ foreign agents.” This de-politicization of the opposition is a common feature of civil wars and serves as a serious impediment to their termination through civil means. As long as insurgents are excluded from the political arena, violent force will remain their primary means of communication. In other cases, parties may be willing to compromise on their original political goals and form a united government. However, the vulnerability of disarming and demobilizing entails, given the absence of mutual trust and the lack of a third party entity to monitor and enforce the agreement, can encourage combatants to reject opportunities for a peace settlement.[5] Here, it is the security dilemma, rather than the limited scope of compromise that inhibits the resolution of civil wars.[6] Organizational Structure: Fragmentation and Internal Rivalry A central requirement for any effective peace settlement is the presence of strong, representative leaders at the negotiating table. Interstate wars meet this condition more easily. Governments tend to maintain a unified hierarchical structure, with a strategic apex that exerts a tight reign over its security apparatus. In contrast, contemporary insurgencies are decentralized coalitions, plagued by factionalism and weak command and control.[7] Their propensity for fragmentation is a serious impediment to their resolution, which only becomes more potent as the war goes on and as new sub-groups emerge with their own interests and agendas. As the number of parties to a conflict increases, the prospects for agreement shrink, and, consequently, the duration of the internal war expands.[8] The contemporary experience of Syria is telling. As the war enters its third year, the broad coalition of groups constituting the armed opposition has grown to include thousands of foreign fighters and Salafist groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, who all possess their own unique ideological vision of Syria’s future.[9] These increasingly potent groups, among other factions, refuse to succumb to the influence and control of the Free Syrian Army and its political wing, viewing the latter as an elite grouping of self-interested exiles. The detachment between the political wing of the opposition and those on the battleground is problematic. Any decision made on the negotiating table at the national or international level is of limited value without the consent of those who control the reality on the ground. The Personalization of Civil Wars Though fragmentation can prolong civil wars, strong leadership is not necessarily a panacea. The Syrian civil war, like others, has also been sustained by its deeply personalized nature. The reputation of Bashar Al Assad among loyalists has achieved a “non-negotiable” status, while the opposition has refused to accept anything short of his removal from power. Gaddafi and Milosevic are two examples of leaders who opted for their own political survival over the national interest, manipulating and inflaming existing social divisions to escalate the war and secure their power.[10] Jonas Savimbi appeared to be the main “spoiler” of the Bicesse peace accords, rejecting the outcome of 1992 presidential election and returning the country to a state of war. Indeed, it was only with his death that his successor, Paulo Armindo Lukamba returned UNITA to the negotiating table and large-scale violence subdued.[11] General Michel Awn’s sense of omnipotence drove him to reject numerous invitations to join the post-Ta’ if government, and instead to declare a “war of liberation” against the Syrian military presence that would claim more than a thousand lives.[12] Of course, leaders are not always the all- powerful decision makers who the media portrays, and placing too much emphasis on their character can lend to their demonization. Nonetheless, the role of the individual cannot be completely discredited either. Indeed, breakthroughs in peace negotiations have frequently coincided with changes in the top leadership.[13] A Political Economy Perspective: Entrenched Interests in the Continuation of Violence The amount of material destruction and human suffering a civil war produces is immense. Yet, while the majority of the population may seek its end, a minority can develop an entrenched interest in its continuation. Thus, attempts to explain the longevity of civil wars are only complete with reference to the political and economic incentives they present. As the civil war rages on, the state’s capacity to control all its territories, enforce the law, and provide basic goods and services are eroded. A range of informal actors, from warlords, militias, and gangs, emerges to fill the vacuum, often carving out their own enclaves where they can become the prime source of social administration and coercion as well as the de-facto owners of the area and its resources. In this context of the state collapse, ordinary civilians can become willing participants in violence. For young uneducated and unemployed men and women, joining an armed band may be the only alternative to a life of destitution. Violence becomes a means of subsistence, supplying its members with shelter and food as well as a sense of protection, belonging and status in a society in which family networks and state institutions have disintegrated.[14] State collapse does not imply an inherent descent into anarchy and senseless violence. Rather, an organized war economy based on looting, extortion, and protection rackets forms around the armed groups. Militias originally relying on volunteers to fill their ranks and finance their operations mutate into professional business entities with profitable links to regional and international trading networks. This has been particularly the case after the end of Cold War. With the sudden absence of external patronage, the warring parties to many conflicts in the South still had to look beyond their borders for alternative means of financing their operations. Therefore, even if economic globalization may not cause civil wars, for their roots often lay in cultural, historical and political grievances, one cannot deny its role in empowering violent sub-national actors by sustaining contemporary war economies. [15] As sub-national actors develop their taste for the status, power and profits violence accrues, they may show small interest in capturing a weak state with no means of enforcing its control over its territories and resources. In the current state of conflict there is a sense of familiarity and economic security. Meanwhile, peace represents uncertainty. For a negotiated peace is ultimately based on promises of political and economic inclusion that can easily be betrayed. A popular assumption is that the objective of each of the warring parties is the total defeat of the enemy’s capability.[16] In reality, the state of violent conflict can endow criminal activities with a rare legitimacy, and therefore every effort is made by belligerents to eschew decisive battles.[17] Indeed, governments may form informal alliances with their enemies to exploit unarmed civilians and natural resources. In Sierra Leone, the poor pay and training of government forces and their affiliated irregulars encouraged them to prey on civilians rather than engage in costly combat with the Revolutionary United Front. Demonstrating this, elite figures in the Angolan administration and security forces have been accused of selling weapons to UNITA on multiple occasions.[18] Similarly, an authoritarian government may deliberately prolong the civil war as a means of concentrating its power and destroying all opposition. In the name of combating “terror” and suppressing “rebels,” a government may declare a state of emergency; introduce draconian laws to limit the freedom of expression, assembly, and association; and indefinitely delay elections. The actions of the Algerian government’s in its contest with Islamist insurgents during the 1990s seem to follow this logic. In the series of massacres of the mid and late 1990s, government forces merely watched from a close distance as Islamist guerrillas slaughtered and mutilated civilians for hours.[19] As the war progressed, the population became alienated from the Islamist cause while the government enjoyed an increase in its support. Only by escalating and prolonging the war could Algeria’s military regime entrench its political power. Unfinished Civil Wars: Sustained Cultures of Violence and the Legacy of Atrocities Even where these barriers to negotiated settlement have been overcome and contesting forces have engaged in dialogue and agreed to end all military confrontations, the transition from war to peace has been less than clear. In Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, the ideological violence of their protracted civil wars seems to have been merely substituted with extreme levels of criminal violence.[20] There are many explanations for why “peace” can be difficult to distinguish from war. However, in all cases where the peace process has failed to address the roots of the conflict and to challenge the political structures, social divisions and economic inequalities that gave rise to insurgencies in the first place, violence has been renewed. In the case of Nicaragua and Guatemala, the continued economic marginalization of its youth and the incomplete efforts to reintegrate ex-combatants into civilian life have manifested in the plethora of criminal gangs that dominate urban and increasingly rural areas and threaten the rule of law.[21] The same failure to reintegrate demobilized fighters was a feature of the Dayton and Abouja peace processes.[22] Post- Ta’if Lebanon’s peace is at best described as a fragile one. The incessant paralysis of state institutions, which is to a large extent the product of the accords’ consociational formula, has allowed crime to fester and the country to be consumed by political assassinations and kidnappings. More problematically, it has led citizens to increasingly rely on their own sects for economic and social security.[23] Consequently, the relationship between the various confessional groups in Lebanon is still dominated by a degree of distance, suspicion, and even animosity. Problematically, these social divisions have proven to be easily inflamed by regional developments and external forces as well as local elites.[24] It follows that Post-Ta’if Lebanon is more accurately conceptualized as a prolonged ceasefire, rather than as a consolidated peace as virtually the same socio-economic and political structures that gave rise to the civil war remain intact. In such an environment the threat of renewed large-scale violence is omnipresent. Critical to understanding the fragility of post-conflict societies peace are the legacies of atrocities, which remain unaddressed. While the populations of warring states are separated and secured by their respective borders, civil wars do not offer such sanctuary. By their nature, civil wars occur among and between the people and, therefore, claim large number of civilian casualties. With the objective of controlling the populace, factions resort to coercive and brutal means. When so many civilians are displaced, brutalized and killed, a once unified society becomes a deeply polarized one. Healing the psychological wounds of a protracted civil war to avoid its renewal proves to be a long and challenging process. The consolidation of peace is further endangered by the culture of violence that protracted civil wars can breed and sustain, and which often persists into the post-war period. During the civil war, the barrel of the gun becomes the main means of resolving disputes, making demands, and attaining perceived rights among large swaths of the population. The intensity of battle and the level of atrocities against civilians can erode the social norms that may have regulated the use of violence in the past. In the post-civil war environment, often characterized by a weak security apparatus and criminal justice system, the widespread availability of weapons and weak civil society, and with the collective memories of atrocities still fresh, every incentive is available for an individual to distribute his or her own retributive justice. When violence is not sanctioned and barely condemned it becomes normalized and legitimated. Conclusion This essay has attempted to present a number of structural explanations for the protracted and persistent nature of civil wars relative to interstate conflicts. At the most fundamental level, civil wars’ protracted nature stems from the material asymmetry between the incumbent and the insurgents, their tendency to become internationalized, and the limited space of compromise they involve. The essay has also highlighted the role of their factionalized as well as personalized nature as barriers to a negotiated settlement. Given the immense physical destruction protracted civil wars entail, they are often reduced to irrational and meaningless conflicts. However, such views disregard the economic and political incentives that the continuation of violence presents to both sub-state actors and the state itself. The structural aspects of intrastate conflict present clear barriers to a negotiated settlement, but even in the cases where it has been reached, it has rarely succeeded in putting a decisive end to the war. As long as the root causes of civil war: insecurity, poverty, overpopulation, political exclusion as well as the legacy of atrocities and cultures of violence, are not addressed, violence continues, even if it mutates into different forms and occurs between different parties.

##### Democracy Survived 2020 but Renewed Efforts to Overturn Election Results Lead to Destruction of our Democracy and widespread violence and chaos

Galston and Kamarck -1/4/22

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SECTION 1: IS DEMOCRACY FAILING? We examine this question along two key dimensions: public opinion and institutional performance. THE AMERICAN PUBLIC Based on six high-quality surveys conducted in the last year and a half, support for democracy as the best form of government remains overwhelming and mostly stable across party lines.[3] However, about 1 in 5 Americans have views that make them at least open to, if not outright supportive of, authoritarianism.[4] But there’s an important qualification: Americans distinguish sharply between democracy in principle and in practice. There is near-universal agreement that our system is not working well—in particular, that it is not delivering the results people want. This is troubling because most people value democracy for its fruits, not just its roots.[5] Given that situation, it is not surprising that public support is very high for fundamental change in our political system to make the system work better. There is no party of the status quo in contemporary America: both sides want changes, but they disagree about the direction of change. Unfortunately, about 6 in 10 Americans do not think that the system can change.[6] And because it has not changed despite growing dysfunction, polarization has led to legislative gridlock, which has generated rising support for unfettered executive action to carry out the people’s will. - Center for Effective Public Management Senior Fellow - Governance Studies Democracy means the rule of the people, but Americans do not fully agree about who belongs to the people. Although there are areas of agreement across partisan and ideological lines, some in our nation hold that to be “truly” American, you must believe in God, identify as Christian, and be born in the United States.[7] In a period of increasing immigration and religious pluralism, these divisions can become dangerous. Disagreements about who is truly American are part of a broader cleavage in American culture. 70% of Republicans believe that America’s culture and way of life have changed for the worse since the 1950s, while 63% of Democrats believe that they have changed for the better.[8] Strong majorities of Republicans agree that “Things have changed so much that I often feel like a stranger in my own county,” that “Today, America is in danger of losing its culture and identity,” and that “the American way of life needs to be protected for foreign influences.” Majorities of Democrats reject these propositions. Support for political violence is significant. In February 2021, 39% of Republicans, 31% of Independents, and 17% of Democrats agreed that “if elected leaders will not protect America, the people must do it themselves, even if it requires violent actions.” In November, 30% of Republicans, 17% of Independents, and 11% of Democrats agreed that they might have to resort to violence in order to save our country.”[9] While public support for many of the reforms in federal compromise legislation is strong, there is a divide in the electorate on what they view as the largest problem in our current system.[10] In September, only 36% believed that “rules that make it too difficult for eligible citizens to vote” constituted the largest problem for our elections, compared to 45% who identified “rules that are not strict enough to prevent illegal votes from being cast” as the largest problem. The conclusion we draw from this quick review of public opinion is that if democracy fails in America, it will not be because a majority of Americans is demanding a non-democratic form of government. It will be because an organized, purposeful minority seizes strategic positions within the system and subverts the substance of democracy while retaining its shell—while the majority isn’t well organized, or doesn’t care enough, to resist. As we show in a later section, the possibility that this will occur is far from remote. AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS A second way of considering whether democracy is failing is to look at the institutions of government. Successful democratic systems are not designed for governments composed of ethical men and women who are only interested in the public good. If leaders were always virtuous there would be no need for checks and balances. The Founding Fathers understood this. They designed a system to protect minority points of view, to protect us from leaders inclined to lie, cheat and steal, and (paradoxically) to protect the majority against minorities who are determined to subvert the constitutional order. During the Trump presidency, the formal institutional “guardrails” of democracy—Congress, the federalist system, the Courts, the bureaucracy, and the press—held firm against enormous pressure. At the same time, there is evidence that the informal norms of conduct that shape the operation of these institutions have weakened significantly, making them more vulnerable to future efforts to subvert them.[11] There is no guarantee that our constitutional democracy will survive another sustained—and likely better-organized—assault in the years to come. We begin with the good news about our institutions. Former President Trump did not succeed in materially weakening the powers of the Congress.[12] He did not try to disband Congress, and while he often fought that institution, it fought back. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) had no trouble confronting him, and Democrats brought impeachment charges against him not once but twice. Although speculation was rampant, in the end then-Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) did not block either trial. While former Leader McConnell and allies have been called former President Trump’s lapdogs, on virtually all domestic policy issues they have acted like almost any Republican majority would act, and on foreign policy former Leader McConnell neither stopped nor punished Republican senators who tried to constrain Trump when they thought he was wrong.[13] The American system is a federalist system. The Constitution distributes power between the federal government and the state government, codified in the 10th Amendment to the Constitution. States have repeatedly and successfully exercised their power against former President Trump, especially in two areas, COVID-19 and voting.[14] Despite Mr. Trump’s attempts to pressure the nation’s governors and other state officials into doing what he wanted, he did not inflict lasting damage on the federalist system, and the states are no weaker—perhaps even stronger—than they were before his presidency. Citizens now understand that in a crisis, states are the ones who control things that are important to them like shutdown orders and vaccine distribution. DEMOCRACY In the spring of 2020 then-President Trump, anxious to get past COVID in time for his re-election campaign, was pushing hard for states to open up early. Only a few complied, while many—including some Republican governors—ignored him. Seeing that the governors were not scared of him, Mr. Trump then threatened to withhold medical equipment based on states’ decisions about opening up. He came up against the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the 10th Amendment, which prevents the president from conditioning federal aid on the basis of governors’ acquiescing to a president’s demands.[15] The guardrails between the federal government and the states also held when it came to Mr. Trump’s campaign to reverse the 2020 election results. In Georgia, the Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, a stalwart Republican and Trump supporter, certified election results in spite of personal calls and threats from the president. In Michigan, Republican Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and Republican House Speaker Lee Chatfield did not give in to Trump’s attempts to get them to diverge from the process of choosing electors. One of the hallmarks of failing democracies is a weak judicial system under heavy political control. But under assault from then-President Trump, the judiciary remained independent despite his repeated attempts to win in the courts what he could not win at the ballot box. President Trump-appointed judges often made decisions that thwarted Mr. Trump’s attempts to overturn the results. In fact, after the election Mr. Trump’s team and allies brought 62 lawsuits and won exactly one.[16] (The others he either dropped or lost.) Many of those decisions were handed down by Republican judges.[17] Perhaps former President Trump’s biggest disappointment was the Supreme Court’s decision not to hear election challenges concerning states he claimed he had won.[18] A free press is an essential element of a healthy democracy. Former President Trump spent four years using the bully pulpit of the presidency to mock the press, calling them names and “the enemy of the people” and referring to outlets he does not like as “failing.” He revoked the press credentials of reporters he did not like. (The courts restored them.) Nevertheless, reporters were not afraid to call out his lies. With Mr. Trump out of office for months now, no major news outlets have gone broke. Few are afraid to criticize former President Trump or his supporters. The free press is still fundamentally free (although President Trump undoubtably contributed to some decline in public trust of the media, which in turn weakens its oversight and accountability functions). Its financial and structural problems, most of which are attributable to the challenges of internet age, predated Mr. Trump. Some argue that former President Trump increased distrust in the media but, as polling indicates, the lack of trust in media declined to less than fifty percent in the first decade of the 21st century and has stayed in the low forties in recent years.[19] One final point: democracies often fail when their military sides with anti-democratic insurgents. But in the United States, the tradition of civil control over the armed forces remains strong—especially within the military. After the chaos in Lafayette Park last June, when Mark Milley, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, appeared with then-President Trump in military fatigues, Mr. Milley and other top military leaders went out of their way to reaffirm this tradition, which is drilled into all officers throughout their careers. A military coup is the least likely way for democracy in America to end.[20] SO WHY ARE WE WORRIED? Although scholars and pundits have long chronicled with regret the rise of partisan polarization and the decline of congressional effectiveness, concern about the outright failure of American democracy was rare before the rise of Donald Trump. Never before in American history have we had a candidate, not to mention a president, who disparaged the integrity of the electoral system and who hinted repeatedly during his election that he would not accept the results of the election if he lost. This behavior began during the Republican primaries and continued in advance of the 2016 election, which he won, and the 2020 election, which he lost.[21] It built to a crescendo that exploded on January 6, 2021, when supporters, called to Washington for a “Stop the Steal” rally, marched to the Capitol, attacked law enforcement officers, vandalized offices, and breached the Senate gallery where the electoral college vote was supposed to be taking place. The non-stop attacks on American elections were part of a broader attack on the truth. Any story Mr. Trump and his supporters disliked became “fake news,” creating, slowly but surely, an alternate universe that encompassed everything from the integrity of the election to public health guidelines for the COVID pandemic. The very existence of a sizeable number of citizens who cannot agree on facts is an enormous threat to democracy. As the Yale historian Timothy Snyder points out in his 2018 book, The Road to Unfreedom, authoritarians like Vladimir Putin have no use for truth or for the facts, because they use and disseminate only what will help them achieve and maintain power.[22] As our colleague Jonathan Rauch argues in The Constitution of Knowledge, disinformation and the war on reality have reached “epistemic” proportions.[23] Even though constitutional processes prevailed and Mr. Trump is no longer president, he and his followers continue to weaken American democracy by convincing many Americans to distrust the results of the election. About three-quarters of rank-and-file Republicans believe that there was massive fraud in 2020 and Joe Biden was not legitimately elected president. “A ‘Politico’/Morning Consult survey found that more than one-third of American voters feel the 2020 election should be overturned, including three out of five Republicans.”[24] The aftermath of the 2020 election revealed structural weaknesses in the institutions designed to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process. A focus of concern is the Electoral Count Act of 1887, which was adopted in response to the contested election of 1876. This legislation is so ambiguously drafted that one of former President Trump’s lawyers used it as the basis of a memorandum arguing that former Vice President Pence, whom the Constitution designates as the chair of the meeting at which the Electoral College ballots are counted, had the right to ignore certified slates of electors the states had sent to Washington. If Mr. Pence had yielded to then-President Trump’s pressure to act in this manner, the election would have been thrown into chaos and the Constitution placed in jeopardy.[25] Recently, former President Trump’s assault on the integrity of the 2020 election has taken a new and dangerous turn. Rather than focusing on federal government, his supporters have focused on the obscure world of election machinery. Republican majorities in state legislatures are passing laws making it harder to vote and weakening the ability of election officials to do their jobs. In many states, especially closely contested ones such as Arizona and Georgia, Mr. Trump’s supporters are trying to defeat incumbents who upheld the integrity of the election and replace them with the former President’s supporters.[26] At the local level, death threats are being made against Democratic and Republican election administrators, with up to 30% of election officials surveyed saying they are concerned for their safety.[27] As seasoned election administrators retire or just quit, Mr. Trump supporters are vying for these obscure but pivotal positions. In Michigan, for instance, the Washington Post reports that there is intense focus on the boards charged with certifying the vote at the county level. Republicans who voted against former President Trump’s efforts to alter the vote count are being replaced. And most dangerous of all, some states are considering laws that would bypass the long-established institutions for certifying the vote-count and give partisan legislatures the authority to determine which slate of electors will represent them in the Electoral College. American democracy is thus under assault from the ground up. The most recent systematic attack on state and local election machinery is much more dangerous than the chaotic statements of a disorganized former president. A movement that relied on Mr. Trump’s organizational skills would pose no threat to constitutional institutions. A movement inspired by him with a clear objective and a detailed plan to achieve it would be another matter altogether. The chances that this threat will materialize over the next few years are high and rising. The evidence suggests that Mr. Trump is preparing once again to seek the Republican presidential nomination—and that he will win the nomination if he tries for it. Even if he decides not to do so, the party’s base will insist on a nominee who shares the former president’s outlook and is willing to participate in a plan to win the presidency by subverting the results of state elections if necessary. The consequences could include an extended period of political and social instability, and an outbreak of mass violence.

##### Democracy is on the brink of destruction, Trump dictatorship is within reach

**DeVega 6-23**, CHAUNCEY,  politics writer for Salon, host of The Chauncey DeVega Show, CHUD hunter, expert on TrumpWorld, Is American democracy already lost? Half of us think so — but the future remains unwritten, JUNE 23, 2022, salon, https://www.salon.com/2022/06/23/is-american-democracy-already-lost-half-of-us-think-so--but-the-future-remains-unwritten/

the American people understand that their **democracy and** their **society are in deep trouble**. But they do not agree on who or what is the cause of the problem, and do not share a common understanding of basic facts. To make matters worse there is a kind of sinister synergy between America's democracy crisis and other serious problems facing the country, which risks creating a state of collective paralysis. During his prepared comments before the House Jan. 6 committee last Thursday, retired judge J. Michael Luttig, a lifelong conservative Republican who advised former Vice President Mike Pence before and during Donald Trump's coup attempt, issued this dire warning: A stake was driven through the heart of American democracy on Jan. 6, 2021, and our democracy today is on a knife's edge. America was at war on that fateful day, but not against a foreign power. She was at war against herself. We Americans were at war with each other — over our democracy. Jan. 6 was but the next, foreseeable battle in a war that had been raging in America for years, though that day was the most consequential battle of that war even to date. In fact, Jan. 6 was a separate war unto itself, a war for America's democracy, a war irresponsibly instigated and prosecuted by the former president, his political party allies, and his supporters. Both wars are raging to this day. … America is now the stake in these unholy wars. … America is adrift. We pray that it is only for this fleeting moment that she has lost her way, until we Americans can once again come to our senses. Advertisement: In response to a question from committee chairman Bennie Thompson about the danger to the republic still represented by Trump and his supporters, Luttig elaborated further: Almost two years after that fateful day … Donald Trump and his allies and supporters are a clear and present danger to American democracy. That's not because of what happened on Jan. 6. It is because, to this very day, the former president and his allies and supporters pledge that in the presidential election of 2024, if the former president or his anointed successor as the Republican party presidential candidate were to lose that election, they would attempt to overturn that 2024 election in the same way that they attempted to overturn the 2020 election, but succeed in 2024 where they failed in 2020. Advertisement: Background Image Progress Bar 00:19 / 02:27 Volume Bar If there are any reasonable and intelligent Americans who continue to doubt that this country is in the midst of an existential crisis, facing the dangers of Trumpism and a growing white supremacist authoritarian movement, Luttig's words should shock them back into reality. A new Yahoo News/YouGov poll adds even more weight to Luttig's warnings about American democracy as it teeters on the precipice of irrecoverable disaster. The lead finding is that more than half of those surveyed, across the political spectrum — 55% of Democrats and 53% of Republicans — believe it is "likely" that the United States will "cease to be a democracy in the future." RELATED: Global forecaster on "another bad year for democracy": Is the world near a dire tipping point? Further findings in that poll are arguably even more troubling given the events of Jan. 6 and the Republican-fascist movement's increasing embrace of violence and terrorism: Advertisement: Among Republicans, 52% believe it is likely that "there will be a civil war in the United States in [their] lifetime." The proportion among Democrats is only slightly smaller, at 46%, while 50% of independents share that view While 50% of respondents were willing to rule out using violence or "taking up arms against the government" to protect the country from "radical extremists," 26% percent of those who participated said that political violence could sometimes be justified. This new poll also demonstrates that negative partisanship and other forms of extreme political polarization now appear to be permanent features of American political life. Andrew Romano summarizes this at Yahoo News: When asked to choose the phrase that best "describes most people on the other side of the political aisle from you," a majority of Republicans pick extreme negatives such as "out of touch with reality" (30%), a "threat to America" (25%), "immoral" (8%) and a "threat to me personally" (4%). A tiny fraction select more sympathetic phrases such as "well-meaning" (4%) or "not that different from me" (6%). The results among Democrats are nearly identical, with negatives such as "out of touch with reality" (27%), a "threat to America" (23%), "immoral" (7%) and a "threat to me personally" (4%) vastly outnumbering positives such as "well-meaning" (7%) or "not that different from me" (5%). Advertisement: These findings offer further evidence that the U.S. in the Age of Trump and beyond is what political scientists call an "anocracy," a system that combines features of dictatorship and democracy. The coup against democracy and the rule of law did not end when Trump's insurrectionists left the Capitol on Jan. 6. The Republican-fascists and the larger white right continue to advance a strategy whose ultimate goal is a Christian fascist plutocracy, one modeled on a system of competitive authoritarianism in which political parties still exist and elections occur, but where outcomes are manipulated as in Russia, Hungary or Turkey. Want a daily wrap-up of all the news and commentary Salon has to offer? Subscribe to our morning newsletter, Crash Course. This dystopia made real will be a combination of such books and films as "The Handmaid's Tale," "Atlas Shrugged," "Brazil," "Idiocracy," "Robocop," "CSA: The Confederate States of America" and "1984." Advertisement: Donald Trump and his acolytes continue to threaten political violence against their "enemies," meaning liberals and progressives, nonwhite people, Muslims, immigrants, LGBTQ people and any other groups or individuals they deem insufficiently "American" and not part of the MAGA faithful. The Republican Party, its propaganda machine and other opinion leaders continue to amplify Trump's Big Lie and its inherent conclusion that further violence may be necessary to return Trump (or a successor) to the White House — and, more generally, to prevent Democrats from winning or holding power by any means necessary. The core tenets of the "great replacement" conspiracy theory — which a white supremacist terrorist recently claimed as the motive for murdering 10 Black people last month at a Buffalo supermarket — have been embraced by a majority of Republicans, and an even larger majority of Trump followers. Advertisement: National security experts on terrorism and armed conflict have continued to warn that Trump's coup attempt and the Capitol attack are further evidence that the U.S. may face a period of sustained right-wing violent insurgency. Robert Pape, director of the University of Chicago Project on Security and Threats, has estimated that more than 20 million Americans believe that using political violence to return Trump to power is justified. In a widely read December 2021 essay in the Globe and Mail, Canadian political scientist Thomas Homer-Dixon offered a memorably grim prognosis of America's future. He predicted that "**American democracy could collapse" by 2025** — that is, following the next presidential election — and that by 2030, the U.S. "could be governed by a right-wing dictatorship": We mustn't dismiss these possibilities just because they seem ludicrous or too horrible to imagine. In 2014, the suggestion that Donald Trump would become president would also have struck nearly everyone as absurd. But today we live in a world where the absurd regularly becomes real and the horrible commonplace…. Mr. Trump's electoral loss has energized the Republican base and further radicalized young party members. Even without their concerted efforts to torque the machinery of the electoral system, Republicans will probably take control of both the House of Representatives and Senate this coming November, because the incumbent party generally fares poorly in mid-term elections. Republicans could easily score a massive victory, with voters ground down by the pandemic, angry about inflation, and tired of President Joe Biden bumbling from one crisis to another. Voters who identify as Independents are already migrating toward Republican candidates. Once Republicans control Congress, Democrats will lose control of the national political agenda, giving Mr. Trump a clear shot at recapturing the presidency in 2024. And once in office, he will have only two objectives: vindication and vengeance. Advertisement: Homer-Dixon then drew the this parallel between the current state of the U.S. and the collapse of the Weimar Republic in the early 1930s: The situation in Germany in the 1920s and early 1930s was of course sui generis; in particular, the country had experienced staggering traumas — defeat in war, internal revolution and hyperinflation — while the country's commitment to liberal democracy was weakly rooted in its culture. But as I read a history of the doomed republic this past summer, I tallied no fewer than five unnerving parallels with the current U.S. situation. **America's future stability is so much in doubt** that even global rivals or enemies are concerned about the destructive forces unleashed by the Age of Trump. In a series of phone calls before and after the 2020 election, Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, sought to reassure his Chinese counterpart, saying, "The American government is stable and everything is going to be OK. ... Everything's fine. But democracy can be sloppy sometimes." Advertisement: An ambush is always disorienting, and intentionally so, but the best option is always to fight back. That's where we are right now. This situation is undeniably bewildering, and deliberately so. But for pro-democracy Americans, inaction is not an option. That will inevitably lead to defeat. In military terms, a successful ambush is almost always disorienting, but the best option is always to fight back, not hunker down. The Republican-fascists and their allies want the American people to feel so confused and overwhelmed by their unending attack on democracy, the rule of law, the common good and basic human decency that they essentially turn away, close their eyes and surrender. In essence, the Republican-fascist movement is using their own version of a political "shock and awe" strategy here at home against the American people. Advertisement: The Lincoln Project recently offered this evaluation of America's democracy crisis: After three [Jan. 6 committee] hearings we know for certain the nation is at one of the most dangerous moments in its history. These revelations will not change the true MAGA believers mind but will cause them to double and triple down on the "Big Lie" — making them more dangerous and perhaps more violent. Every single American needs to decide if they are the side of the seditionists who tried to tear down a free and fair election, or do they support our Republic and its democratic principles? In short, the American people must act with deliberate purpose and speed if they hope to save their democracy and society. Voting is of course necessary, but by itself is insufficient. "Hashtag activism," with its "likes" and "shares" and memes, is for the most part symbolic or performative politics that accomplishes little or nothing in the long run, and may actually be counterproductive if people mistake it for real action. In the long-term struggle, substantive movement-building and organizing will be required to defeat fascism in America and around the world. Advertisement: Voting is necessary, but not sufficient. "Hashtag activism" accomplishes little or nothing, and may even be counterproductive. What we need is movement-building. Supporters of democracy must engage in grassroots organizing. They need to join, establish, and grow a range of civil society organizations. They must raise and donate money in effective ways, not by giving it to doomed Democratic candidates in hopeless races. Ultimately, they must be willing to engage in corporeal politics, including general strikes, street protests, civil disobedience and other forms of direct action where they can confront the Republican-fascists and their allies with overwhelming numbers. Advertisement: Right now, almost all the momentum is with the Republican-fascists and their broad-spectrum attack on American democracy and society. They are in revolutionary mode, and they are are winning. They will press onward to total victory, unless and until they are stopped. This will require people of conscience to take a personal inventory and ask themselves, **"How much am I willing to sacrifice to save my country, my family and future generations from this nightmare?"** The future of American democracy and society largely hinges on how many of us can answer that question honorably and rise to the challenge.

##### The impact of a civil war outweighs all aff impact scenarios – civil war is probable in this context, goes international and effects become widespread

Elshelmani 2015 Arij, a studious author with multiple publications all revolving around unique socio-economic, political, cultural issues, “Why Are Civil Wars so Protracted and Difficult to End?”, 10-20-2015, E-International Relations, https://www.e-ir.info/2015/11/20/why-are-civil-wars-so-protracted-and-difficult-to-end/#:~:text=While%20the%20populations%20of%20warring,large%20number%20of%20civilian%20casualties. //EddyV

As interstate war has become less common, academic attention has shifted to the plethora of armed conflicts occurring within the boundaries of states. These civil wars have proven to be more protracted and difficult to terminate for numerous reasons that vary according to their unique socio-economic, political and cultural contexts. Hence, providing a perfect general theory is problematic. Nevertheless, a number of critical factors that affect the duration of civil wars and their inability to be resolved relative to interstate wars can be distinguished. Firstly, unlike interstate wars, which occur between clearly-defined armies and are generally amenable to compromise, civil wars tend to be low-intensity, existential struggles, making them, therefore, inherently-protracted affairs. Moreover, the decentralized organizational structure of contemporary insurgencies and their tendency to fragment and become engulfed in internecine fighting further undermines attempts at reaching a political settlement. Third, peace is difficult to achieve when, for many actors, war is preferable. Often ignored is the capacity of war to endow belligerents with profits and power. Various cases of “enemies” colluding to prolong violence challenge the common assumption that the ultimate objective of war is victory. Finally, the essay questions what an “end” to civil war implies. Even when one side claims total victory or in the rare cases where peace accords are signed and the war is formally concluded, the transition from large-scale civil violence to peace is not so clear. Collective memories of mutual violence persist into the post-conflict period, and cultures of violence are sustained. If not fully addressed, along with the underlying grievances that originally inspire violence, peace will remain at best fragile, and violence may continue in other forms. In this light, even the success stories of post-accord societies in Latin America and Lebanon appear to be “unfinished” civil wars.[1] The Asymmetric Nature of Civil Wars: Given that interstate wars are generally fought in a series of direct confrontations between professional armies and across defined frontlines, they are relatively quick and decisive. In contrast, intrastate wars are distinguished by the asymmetric distribution of material power among the main parties of the conflict, usually the incumbent government or power and the rebels or insurgents opposing it. The asymmetric nature of internal conflicts forces insurgents to adopt a strategy of guerrilla warfare in which the evasion of the enemy is a matter of survival. To overcome its military weakness, the insurgent force gradually wears down the enemy through hit-and-run tactics. Civil war is thus an inherently-protracted affair. What adds complexity to these wars is that they are almost never wholly internal. In an age of interconnectivity and interdependency, their outcome is often of strategic interest not only to neighboring powers but also to the international community at-large. The role of external intervention in influencing the balance of power between parties and therefore the trajectory of civil wars is critical. When external intervention is balanced between the opposing sides it can increase the duration of war.[2] This was most evident when the Cold War superpowers played out their ideological struggle in the conflict theater of the global South. The weaponry and supplies they provided fueled some of the most ferocious internal conflicts. Similarly, the internationalization of the contemporary Syrian conflict seems to have reconfigured the balance of power towards a prolonged stalemate.[3] Here, negotiation may only be contemplated when both parties reach a “mutually hurting stalemate,”[4] that is, a stage of deadlock when both sides simultaneously perceive continued fighting as offering little returns and mounting costs. However, with external actors distorting the perception of warring parties’ prospects on the battlefield, arriving at this stage may take many years. Limited Space for Compromise Interstate wars may be driven by border disputes; they could be a reaction to some existential threat, an attempt at regional hegemony, or a contest for access to trade routes and resources, to name a few. In theory, all of these factors are amenable to compromise, even if they too can produce long and costly wars. The Persian Gulf War is but one example; after eight years of conflict, Saddam Hussein relinquished his demands for complete control over Shatt-Al Arab and began withdrawing his forces from Iran, effectively bringing the war to a close. Where civil wars are driven by limited aims and objectives, the government can respond with the necessary reforms and negotiate with the aggrieved parties to stifle the conflict. When the objective is to secede, to overthrow the government, or even to radically transform social structures, compromise is improbable if not impossible. Secession is unfeasible for there can only be one government. Such wars are existential struggles with each side framing the conflict in terms of “victory or death.” Unsurprisingly, they take an intensely violent nature. Where belligerents cannot envision a common future of power sharing, incumbents have attempted to delegitimize their opponents by labeling them “terrorists,” “criminals,” or “ foreign agents.” This de-politicization of the opposition is a common feature of civil wars and serves as a serious impediment to their termination through civil means. As long as insurgents are excluded from the political arena, violent force will remain their primary means of communication. In other cases, parties may be willing to compromise on their original political goals and form a united government. However, the vulnerability of disarming and demobilizing entails, given the absence of mutual trust and the lack of a third party entity to monitor and enforce the agreement, can encourage combatants to reject opportunities for a peace settlement.[5] Here, it is the security dilemma, rather than the limited scope of compromise that inhibits the resolution of civil wars.[6] Organizational Structure: Fragmentation and Internal Rivalry A central requirement for any effective peace settlement is the presence of strong, representative leaders at the negotiating table. Interstate wars meet this condition more easily. Governments tend to maintain a unified hierarchical structure, with a strategic apex that exerts a tight reign over its security apparatus. In contrast, contemporary insurgencies are decentralized coalitions, plagued by factionalism and weak command and control.[7] Their propensity for fragmentation is a serious impediment to their resolution, which only becomes more potent as the war goes on and as new sub-groups emerge with their own interests and agendas. As the number of parties to a conflict increases, the prospects for agreement shrink, and, consequently, the duration of the internal war expands.[8] The contemporary experience of Syria is telling. As the war enters its third year, the broad coalition of groups constituting the armed opposition has grown to include thousands of foreign fighters and Salafist groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, who all possess their own unique ideological vision of Syria’s future.[9] These increasingly potent groups, among other factions, refuse to succumb to the influence and control of the Free Syrian Army and its political wing, viewing the latter as an elite grouping of self-interested exiles. The detachment between the political wing of the opposition and those on the battleground is problematic. Any decision made on the negotiating table at the national or international level is of limited value without the consent of those who control the reality on the ground. The Personalization of Civil Wars Though fragmentation can prolong civil wars, strong leadership is not necessarily a panacea. The Syrian civil war, like others, has also been sustained by its deeply personalized nature. The reputation of Bashar Al Assad among loyalists has achieved a “non-negotiable” status, while the opposition has refused to accept anything short of his removal from power. Gaddafi and Milosevic are two examples of leaders who opted for their own political survival over the national interest, manipulating and inflaming existing social divisions to escalate the war and secure their power.[10] Jonas Savimbi appeared to be the main “spoiler” of the Bicesse peace accords, rejecting the outcome of 1992 presidential election and returning the country to a state of war. Indeed, it was only with his death that his successor, Paulo Armindo Lukamba returned UNITA to the negotiating table and large-scale violence subdued.[11] General Michel Awn’s sense of omnipotence drove him to reject numerous invitations to join the post-Ta’ if government, and instead to declare a “war of liberation” against the Syrian military presence that would claim more than a thousand lives.[12] Of course, leaders are not always the all- powerful decision makers who the media portrays, and placing too much emphasis on their character can lend to their demonization. Nonetheless, the role of the individual cannot be completely discredited either. Indeed, breakthroughs in peace negotiations have frequently coincided with changes in the top leadership.[13] A Political Economy Perspective: Entrenched Interests in the Continuation of Violence The amount of material destruction and human suffering a civil war produces is immense. Yet, while the majority of the population may seek its end, a minority can develop an entrenched interest in its continuation. Thus, attempts to explain the longevity of civil wars are only complete with reference to the political and economic incentives they present. As the civil war rages on, the state’s capacity to control all its territories, enforce the law, and provide basic goods and services are eroded. A range of informal actors, from warlords, militias, and gangs, emerges to fill the vacuum, often carving out their own enclaves where they can become the prime source of social administration and coercion as well as the de-facto owners of the area and its resources. In this context of the state collapse, ordinary civilians can become willing participants in violence. For young uneducated and unemployed men and women, joining an armed band may be the only alternative to a life of destitution. Violence becomes a means of subsistence, supplying its members with shelter and food as well as a sense of protection, belonging and status in a society in which family networks and state institutions have disintegrated.[14] State collapse does not imply an inherent descent into anarchy and senseless violence. Rather, an organized war economy based on looting, extortion, and protection rackets forms around the armed groups. Militias originally relying on volunteers to fill their ranks and finance their operations mutate into professional business entities with profitable links to regional and international trading networks. This has been particularly the case after the end of Cold War. With the sudden absence of external patronage, the warring parties to many conflicts in the South still had to look beyond their borders for alternative means of financing their operations. Therefore, even if economic globalization may not cause civil wars, for their roots often lay in cultural, historical and political grievances, one cannot deny its role in empowering violent sub-national actors by sustaining contemporary war economies. [15] As sub-national actors develop their taste for the status, power and profits violence accrues, they may show small interest in capturing a weak state with no means of enforcing its control over its territories and resources. In the current state of conflict there is a sense of familiarity and economic security. Meanwhile, peace represents uncertainty. For a negotiated peace is ultimately based on promises of political and economic inclusion that can easily be betrayed. A popular assumption is that the objective of each of the warring parties is the total defeat of the enemy’s capability.[16] In reality, the state of violent conflict can endow criminal activities with a rare legitimacy, and therefore every effort is made by belligerents to eschew decisive battles.[17] Indeed, governments may form informal alliances with their enemies to exploit unarmed civilians and natural resources. In Sierra Leone, the poor pay and training of government forces and their affiliated irregulars encouraged them to prey on civilians rather than engage in costly combat with the Revolutionary United Front. Demonstrating this, elite figures in the Angolan administration and security forces have been accused of selling weapons to UNITA on multiple occasions.[18] Similarly, an authoritarian government may deliberately prolong the civil war as a means of concentrating its power and destroying all opposition. In the name of combating “terror” and suppressing “rebels,” a government may declare a state of emergency; introduce draconian laws to limit the freedom of expression, assembly, and association; and indefinitely delay elections. The actions of the Algerian government’s in its contest with Islamist insurgents during the 1990s seem to follow this logic. In the series of massacres of the mid and late 1990s, government forces merely watched from a close distance as Islamist guerrillas slaughtered and mutilated civilians for hours.[19] As the war progressed, the population became alienated from the Islamist cause while the government enjoyed an increase in its support. Only by escalating and prolonging the war could Algeria’s military regime entrench its political power. Unfinished Civil Wars: Sustained Cultures of Violence and the Legacy of Atrocities Even where these barriers to negotiated settlement have been overcome and contesting forces have engaged in dialogue and agreed to end all military confrontations, the transition from war to peace has been less than clear. In Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, the ideological violence of their protracted civil wars seems to have been merely substituted with extreme levels of criminal violence.[20] There are many explanations for why “peace” can be difficult to distinguish from war. However, in all cases where the peace process has failed to address the roots of the conflict and to challenge the political structures, social divisions and economic inequalities that gave rise to insurgencies in the first place, violence has been renewed. In the case of Nicaragua and Guatemala, the continued economic marginalization of its youth and the incomplete efforts to reintegrate ex-combatants into civilian life have manifested in the plethora of criminal gangs that dominate urban and increasingly rural areas and threaten the rule of law.[21] The same failure to reintegrate demobilized fighters was a feature of the Dayton and Abouja peace processes.[22] Post- Ta’if Lebanon’s peace is at best described as a fragile one. The incessant paralysis of state institutions, which is to a large extent the product of the accords’ consociational formula, has allowed crime to fester and the country to be consumed by political assassinations and kidnappings. More problematically, it has led citizens to increasingly rely on their own sects for economic and social security.[23] Consequently, the relationship between the various confessional groups in Lebanon is still dominated by a degree of distance, suspicion, and even animosity. Problematically, these social divisions have proven to be easily inflamed by regional developments and external forces as well as local elites.[24] It follows that Post-Ta’if Lebanon is more accurately conceptualized as a prolonged ceasefire, rather than as a consolidated peace as virtually the same socio-economic and political structures that gave rise to the civil war remain intact. In such an environment the threat of renewed large-scale violence is omnipresent. Critical to understanding the fragility of post-conflict societies peace are the legacies of atrocities, which remain unaddressed. While the populations of warring states are separated and secured by their respective borders, civil wars do not offer such sanctuary. By their nature, civil wars occur among and between the people and, therefore, claim large number of civilian casualties. With the objective of controlling the populace, factions resort to coercive and brutal means. When so many civilians are displaced, brutalized and killed, a once unified society becomes a deeply polarized one. Healing the psychological wounds of a protracted civil war to avoid its renewal proves to be a long and challenging process. The consolidation of peace is further endangered by the culture of violence that protracted civil wars can breed and sustain, and which often persists into the post-war period. During the civil war, the barrel of the gun becomes the main means of resolving disputes, making demands, and attaining perceived rights among large swaths of the population. The intensity of battle and the level of atrocities against civilians can erode the social norms that may have regulated the use of violence in the past. In the post-civil war environment, often characterized by a weak security apparatus and criminal justice system, the widespread availability of weapons and weak civil society, and with the collective memories of atrocities still fresh, every incentive is available for an individual to distribute his or her own retributive justice. When violence is not sanctioned and barely condemned it becomes normalized and legitimated. Conclusion This essay has attempted to present a number of structural explanations for the protracted and persistent nature of civil wars relative to interstate conflicts. At the most fundamental level, civil wars’ protracted nature stems from the material asymmetry between the incumbent and the insurgents, their tendency to become internationalized, and the limited space of compromise they involve. The essay has also highlighted the role of their factionalized as well as personalized nature as barriers to a negotiated settlement. Given the immense physical destruction protracted civil wars entail, they are often reduced to irrational and meaningless conflicts. However, such views disregard the economic and political incentives that the continuation of violence presents to both sub-state actors and the state itself. The structural aspects of intrastate conflict present clear barriers to a negotiated settlement, but even in the cases where it has been reached, it has rarely succeeded in putting a decisive end to the war. As long as the root causes of civil war: insecurity, poverty, overpopulation, political exclusion as well as the legacy of atrocities and cultures of violence, are not addressed, violence continues, even if it mutates into different forms and occurs between different parties.

#### CLIMATE-Failure to Pass Climate Legislation ASAP Catastrophic

###### Failure to Keep Control Of Congress Jeopordizes Climate Legislation that Will Avert Climate Catastrophe

Grandoni et al. 7/16. Dino Grandoni, Brady Dennis and Juliet Eilperin “Democrats push sweeping climate legislation amid a scorching summer The Senate budget plan, which would compel power plants to slash emissions and impose a tax on laggard nations, still faces major hurdles” The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2021/07/16/climate-deal-democrats/> July 16, 2022. LV

While the $3.5 trillion budget deal that emerged Wednesday could change in key ways in the months ahead, the proposal represents one of the biggest efforts yet that Congress has undertaken to address climate change. It underscores how cutting U.S. greenhouse gas emissions — and spurring other nations to do the same — has emerged as a central priority for President Biden and his party after years of relative indifference from lawmakers in Washington. “We are facing a planetary crisis, not in the future or somewhere far away, but in every community across the country,” said Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), who along with several other Senate Democrats has said he won’t support more traditional infrastructure spending without a separate bill that includes meaningful climate action. “So what we do has to be bold enough to meet the moment.” Still, the climate measures unveiled this week face significant political, legal and technical hurdles — including some from within the Democratic Party itself. Already, Sen. Joe Manchin III (D-W.Va.), a crucial vote Democrats will need to pass any legislation opposed by Republicans, has expressed skepticism over the push to rapidly phase out fossil fuels. The package represents the best chance of locking in the emissions cuts required to meet Biden’s goal of cutting U.S. greenhouse gas emissions at least in half by 2030, compared to 2005 levels. Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) and other Democrats have assembled policies that would help realize that goal, while nudging the rest of the world to do the same. A central element in the plan would allow the United States to impose a tax on nations lagging in reducing their own pollution, as well as a fee on emissions of methane, a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide in the short term. Domestically, Democrats also want to institute a new set of requirements — called a clean-electricity standard — on power providers to shift them toward wind, solar, hydroelectric, nuclear and other cleaner forms of energy generation, with the goal of achieving 80 percent clean electricity by the end of the decade. The package would also offer a slew of tax breaks for buying electric vehicles and producing clean energy, and would create a Civilian Climate Corps, modeled after Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal-era Civilian Conservation Corps, which would enlist young Americans in planting trees, hardening coasts against rising tides and otherwise preparing the country for changing conditions. The details of the budgetary package will be fleshed out in the coming months, and it remains an open question as to whether the cuts in emissions that would result — both here and abroad — would be enough to help meet the goals of the Paris climate agreement, which calls for keeping warming “well below” 2 degrees Celsius, compared to preindustrial levels. By packing the climate provisions into a budget measure, Schumer is aiming to avoid a Republican filibuster and pass the bill through budget reconciliation, which requires a simple majority of 51 votes. But Democrats hold the narrowest of margins in the Senate, and Schumer probably will need to rally the support of every member of his caucus to pass the legislation. He and other Democrats know the clock is ticking, in more ways than one. Passing far-reaching climate measures, much less the litany of other infrastructure-related priorities, will become only more difficult as the midterm election year approaches and Democrats risk losing the House, Senate or both. In addition, environmental advocates have kept up pressure on Biden to make good on promises to combat climate change. The youth-led Sunrise Movement, for example, said the House needs to go even bigger than the Senate proposal to fund climate-friendly policies. “This is the first time since 2009 that Democrats have control of both chambers of Congress and the White House,” Lauren Maunus, the group’s advocacy director, said in a statement. “They cannot afford to waste this opportunity.” For many Democrats, nature has been displaying another form of urgency in the kind of startling and deadly events that scientists say are made more frequent and intense by the Earth’s warming. A series of brutal heat waves has roasted the Pacific Northwest and western Canada in recent weeks, setting temperature records, fueling intense wildfires and causing hundreds of deaths. A Canadian town burned. Once unthinkable triple-digit temperatures baked landscapes, contributing to what the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration called the hottest June on record for the United States. Meanwhile, crippling floods swept through Belgium and Germany this week, killing dozens of people and sweeping away cars and buildings. The catastrophe came amid a stretch of extreme weather in parts of Europe, including unusually heavy rains. All that may just be a prelude of what’s to come. Climate scientists say the United States and the rest of the world have less than a decade to get greenhouse gas emissions under control, or countries can expect ever more calamitous consequences from warming. Paul Bledsoe, a former Senate Finance Committee staffer and Clinton White House climate adviser, noted that the climate elements of this week’s budget proposal are in line with policies Biden promised to pursue during his presidential campaign. “He ran on it,” Bledsoe said of the border tariff proposal in particular. “He characterized it in his campaign climate plan as a way to curb China's emissions, specifically.” As to whether it will ever become a reality, that could take months or even years to fully play out. Even if the United States passed such an emissions-based tariff similar to that proposed this week by the European Union, the ultimate question is whether such measures would survive scrutiny by the World Trade Organization. European Commission proposes ambitious climate change policies, urging U.S. and other nations to follow “In my view, at this stage, the carbon tariff is more important as a political mechanism rather than in policy terms,” Bledsoe said. “It sends a global message that the U.S. does intend to eventually pursue carbon border taxes. It also sends a message to Republican critics who claim we are not forcing other nations to reduce their emissions, especially China.” Danny Richter, vice president of government affairs at the Citizens’ Climate Lobby, said the United States may ultimately need to place a price on carbon for domestic producers if it wants to tariff carbon pollution abroad without running afoul of global trade rules. “They want to keep it even-steven between countries,” Richter said of the WTO. The proposal from Senate Democrats also comes as the European Commission this week unveiled its own ambitious blueprint to tackle climate change, with a goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 55 percent in coming years, compared to 1990 levels. The swath of proposals announced Wednesday in Europe included its own carbon border tariff mechanism, as well as potentially phasing out new gas-powered vehicles by 2035. They also include dozens of other measures, from ramping up support for renewable energy to planting billions of trees. On this side of the Atlantic, the push for a clean-energy standard that would shift the nation closer to Biden’s goal of carbon-free electricity by 2035 could prove a tough sell for more conservative Democrats. “That jumps out at me as the most vulnerable,” said Bledsoe. Not only will a clean-energy standard probably need the support of every Senate Democrat, it also will require a favorable ruling from the Senate parliamentarian, Elizabeth MacDonough, to be included in a budget bill — a tall order given her rejection of a minimum-wage increase, another Democratic priority, in a pandemic relief measure. Some parliamentary experts caution that because the primary aim of the policy is not related to federal revenue, it is likely to be ruled out. Sen. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), a longtime advocate of more ambitious climate action, said Democrats have no choice but to try however possible to pass legislation that tackles a looming global problem. “This is the most significant moment for climate action in years,” Markey said in a statement Thursday. “We’ve got work to do in order to get these programs right, but I’m confident we will construct a final bill that has justice and equity, creates jobs, and reduces emissions in a meaningful way.” One major hurdle is Manchin, chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and a conservative Democrat from the coal- and gas-producing state of West Virginia who has already expressed concern to other Democrats about moving too quickly. “I told them that I was concerned about some of the language I’ve seen that moves away from fossil [fuels],” Manchin told reporters Wednesday, without going into specifics. One coal state senator holds the key to Biden’s ambitious climate agenda. And it’s not McConnell. On the other side of the Capitol, Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.), chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, said the Senate budget proposal “makes significant down payments,” but he ultimately wants to see even more funding to combat climate change. “I will say we were hoping for more, but we’re dealing with the Senate,” he said. Some Republican opponents made clear they want less, not more. In a statement Thursday, Sen. John Barrasso (Wyo.), the ranking Republican on the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, criticized the border tax proposal and said the Democratic version of a clean-energy standard “would be disastrously expensive and harmful to U.S. competitiveness.” “Instead of mandating expensive energy and starting a global green trade war,” Barrasso said, “we need to focus on finding ways to use all of our nation’s energy sources and make them cleaner and more affordable.” If Congress fails to pass requirements for power plants to cut greenhouse gas emissions, it will fall to the Environmental Protection Agency to write climate rules on its own. But doing so has proved in the past to be difficult. The Supreme Court blocked the Obama administration’s Clean Power Plan from ever taking effect. With former president Donald Trump having appointed three justices, the high court has only become more conservative since that 2016 ruling. Bob Perciasepe, a senior adviser at the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions and former deputy EPA administrator under Barack Obama, said existing law is “not well done when it comes to trying to deal with something like greenhouse gases and different kinds of power plants all over the place.” Despite the uncertainties ahead for Biden-era climate proposals, Schatz said he remains optimistic. “We are determined, hopeful and unified,” he said. “That doesn’t mean there won’t be multiple near-death experiences for this effort — there always is — but we are in a position to succeed. And we must.” Mike DeBonis and Jeff Stein contributed to this report.

##### NATO GOOD

###### NATO is one of the best bargains in geopolitics – working with NATO benefits Americans

McInnis 6/28 [6/28/2022] Kathleen J. McInnis, a senior fellow in the International Security Program  
and the director of the Smart Women, Smart Power Initiative at the Center for Strategic and   
International Studies. https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/06/28/us-nato-alliance-madrid/ AD

worth risking New York to save Vilnius or Warsaw, capitals of faraway countries separated from the United States by a wide ocean? The answer lies in the way NATO has worked, as amply demonstrated in practice, for the simultaneous advancement of both American and European interests.

Although the U.S. security guarantee for its NATO allies has been at the heart of the alliance’s political-military framework, and the United States has spent considerable sums on the maintenance of defense capabilities as a result, this has never been a one-way bargain. These treaty relationships have afforded the United States a position of strategic leadership. As a result of America’s central role in trans-Atlantic and international relations that NATO cemented, Americans have enjoyed enormous economic prosperity and freedom.

Put more bluntly: Successive American governments have been afforded privileged status when it has come to issues including trade partnerships and access to bases in large part because of the outsized role that the United States plays in the defense of its allies. Nor would the United States have been able to sustain its significant portfolio of foreign military sales and defense technology cooperation activities without the strategic foundation laid by its role as NATO’s primary security guarantor for seven decades.

This position of leadership—manifested in its overseas presence—also allows the United States to set the international security agenda in both political and practical ways. America would not have been able to, for example, prosecute expeditionary and counterterrorism operations in the Middle East and Africa were it not for the bases and pre-positioned equipment that the United States has been able to maintain on allied soil in Europe.

Coalition operations to stabilize the Balkans or conduct anti-piracy missions off the Horn of Africa would not be as comparatively straightforward (or maybe even possible) without the decades of interoperability standardization agreements, multinational training exercises, or the International Military Staff through which allies can collectively plan for and integrate their military operations. NATO’s structures also afford U.S. military leaders direct experience of the complexities of commanding multilateral military operations.

Another long-standing reason for U.S. engagement in the European theater is to enable U.S. strategic depth. Labeled “defense in depth” by security practitioners, military technological developments and adversary operations during the world wars demonstrated that the United States was no longer protected by the two oceans off of its shores. As a result, it was deemed strategically prudent to station U.S. forces overseas in order to be able to contend with adversary aggression—if not outright conflict—far away from the American homeland.

Not only did this make the American homeland less vulnerable to outright war, but forward presence was also viewed as relatively cost-effective—especially given the potentially enormous social, political, and economic costs of a war on the American continent. The advent of the nuclear age changed that calculation somewhat—intercontinental ballistic missiles made the American homeland vulnerable—but given that even a nuclear war with the Soviet Union would also likely involve combined arms combat in the European theater, the logic of defense in depth held.

Over the decades, that rationale has endured even as the strategic context changed. For example, a primary reason for U.S. counterterrorism operations in the Middle East after the 9/11 attacks was to tackle the root sources of violent extremist groups before they could again build sufficient capability and capacity to conduct terrorist attacks against the U.S. homeland. The war in Ukraine, along with the attendant concerns about the security and defense on the European continent that are now heightened, once again underscore the importance—and relative cost-effectiveness—of forward military presence. Moreover, the global political significance of the United States’ track record when it comes to maintaining these alliances over the long haul can arguably give the United States another kind of depth: credibility.

While the United States’ reliability as a security partner is frequently called into question in response to day-to-day events, taking a step back it is quite remarkable that U.S. commitments to its allies in Europe have weathered any number of geopolitical storms. The daily management of alliance relationships is a complicated business, of course. But in constructing and recalibrating security relationships with other states, including critical ties in Asia, the U.S. record of building and maintaining a long-standing alliance helps build credibility with others.

More broadly, NATO affords its members an extraordinary—and extraordinarily important—degree of strategic flexibility. NATO has proved capable of reinvention, as its post-Cold War experience showed. From the late 1990s until approximately 2014—and largely as a result of U.S. prompting—NATO was primarily focused on collective security and crisis management in Europe’s near abroad and the Middle East. Security interests were framed in terms of promoting global stability and prosperity—including through countering and dismantling terrorist groups outside NATO allied borders. In other words, contrary to expectations in the early 1990s, NATO endured and evolved to contend with myriad security challenges absent an overwhelming threat. And, by the way, against this backdrop, U.S.-European trade remained strong.

In 2014, as Russia annexed Crimea and began waging a proxy war in Ukraine, old adversarial geopolitics came rushing back. NATO’s role as a bulwark against an expansionist and revisionist power immediately gained renewed salience, although today the front line is considerably farther eastward than during the Cold War. Further complicating matters, despite any number of assurances by Brussels, Russia has made clear that it views NATO’s eastward expansion as counter to its own interests, and it views the existence of the alliance itself as a threat. Yet NATO is managing to both address the challenge of a revanchist Russia and tackle a broader array of security challenges to the alliance, including China, climate change, and advanced disruptive technologies.

More broadly, the lines between foreign and domestic policy, war and peace, civilian and military, public and private are all being blurred, calling long-standing approaches to contending with security and defense challenges into question. Nontraditional security challenges including disinformation operations, pandemic response, migration, and terrorism have put significant stress on the governments of allies on both sides of the Atlantic. None of these challenges can be tackled by one state alone, not even by the United States. And in these blurry spaces, NATO can—and has—played an important role in catalyzing solutions for these complex problems. For example, NATO played a key role in facilitating the international community’s response to the rise of the Islamic State, plans formed in the margins of the 2014 summit in Wales.

Strategic leadership, strategic depth, and strategic flexibility are why NATO’s value is difficult to overstate. It is a political-military arrangement that has proved remarkably resilient over decades and has consistently demonstrated its value to its members on both sides of the Atlantic. This is arguably why Vladimir Putin’s Russia is so intent on undermining it.

The strategic conundrum for the United States—and for its NATO allies—is therefore how to keep intact the alliance system that serves as the bedrock for myriad social, economic, and political benefits to its members in the face of an aggressive adversary. But defend its old and new allies alike the United States must. Otherwise, it risks losing a leadership position and benefits that have become a central, if overlooked, aspect of American prosperity. In a very real way, the security of NATO allies is inextricably linked with American interests.

## DEM WIN BAD SCENARIO

### UNIQUENESS-Dems will Lose in November

#### Democrats expected to take historic loss in midterms – Gallup Poll proves.

**Durkee 6/14 -** Alison, New York-based journalist covering breaking news at Forbes, Previously covered politics and news for Vanity Fair and Mic, and a theater critic that serves as a member of the New York Outer Critics Circle, “Democrats’ Midterm Nightmare: Polls Suggest Party Could Face Historic Loss”, 06-14-2022, Forbes, https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2022/06/14/democrats-midterm-nightmare-polls-suggest-party-could-face-historic-loss/?sh=2ae68e8f5193. Edwin

Democrats could experience a “greater-than-average” loss in the midterm elections this November, new Gallup polling suggests, finding that voters’ satisfaction with the country and federal government are largely at record lows compared with other midterm years. President Biden Returns To The White House From Delaware President Joe Biden waves as he returns to the White House June 13 in Washington, DC. The Gallup poll, conducted May 2-22 among 1,007 U.S. adults, found only 41% approve of President Joe Biden’s job performance, 18% approve of Congress’ performance and 16% are “satisfied with the way things are going in the U.S.” Only 14% have a positive view of economic conditions right now and 46% rate the economy negatively, meaning Americans have a 32-point net negative view of the economy. All of those metrics are at least 10 points below the average for midterm years, based on Gallup’s polling going back to 1974. PROMOTED Americans have a 51% approval rating for the president on average during midterm election years, a 30% congressional approval rating, 35% satisfaction with the state of the U.S. and a nine-point net positive rating of the economy. Other than presidential approval rating—where Biden’s 41% approval is tied with former President Donald Trump’s in 2018 and higher than President George W. Bush’s 38% in 2006—every metric recorded this year marks a historic low. Gallup suggests the low ratings mean Democrats will likely lose seats in the election this year—as a president’s party typically does during the midterms—and their losses would likely be even larger than usual if these low ratings hold. BIG NUMBER 23. That’s the average number of House seats a president’s party loses during the midterms, Gallup found based on data going back to 1974. Parties suffer even bigger losses when Americans aren’t satisfied with how things are going, though: Republicans lost 40 seats in 2018 when Americans had a 21% positive view of Congress and 41% approval of Trump, for instance, and Democrats lost 63 seats in 2010 during Barack Obama’s presidency. Though Obama was slightly more popular than Biden (45% approval), Americans similarly had a 21% approval of Congress, 22% satisfaction with the U.S. and 31-point net-negative view of the economy that year. WHAT TO WATCH FOR How Democrats will fare in the midterms. Republicans only need to flip five House seats to gain control of the chamber, and one seat in the Senate, where the parties are now evenly split. Based on current trends, Gallup projects the midterms will potentially be a **“wave election”** for the GOP and give them a “comfortable governing majority.” WHAT WE DON’T KNOW How things could change before November for Democrats. The Supreme Court is poised to likely overturn Roe v. Wade and let states ban abortion in the coming weeks, for instance, which recent polling has suggested may help galvanize Democrats and get more to the polls. Gun control could also come into play in the wake of a string of mass shootings, Gallup notes, as polling shows most Americans favor stricter gun measures and thus could be motivated to vote against Republicans who oppose them. KEY BACKGROUND Gallup’s polling comes as Biden has seen record-low approval ratings in recent months, with a FiveThirtyEight analysis finding 39.7% approve of him on average—the lowest share at any point during his presidency. The president has not had an average approval rating over 50% since August 2021. Other polls have similarly found Republicans are likely to have a clear advantage in the midterms, with a FiveThirtyEight poll analysis finding 45% of Americans prefer to vote for a Republican candidate in November versus a Democrat (42.6% would support the Democrat). A Morning Consult/Politico poll from May found Republicans were still more enthusiastic about voting in the midterms than Democrats (61% versus 54%), even after Politico leaked a draft opinion suggesting the Supreme Court will overturn Roe v. Wade.

#### Dems set to suffer huge losses at midterms

**Roche 7/7,** Darragh, reporter at US News. “Democrats Worst Case Scenario for the Midterms” 7/7/2022 Newsweek.com. https://www.newsweek.com/democrats-worst-case-scenario-midterms-joe-biden-republicans-1722543\_Albert

Democrats are widely expected to suffer defeats in the upcoming 2022 midterm elections, with [Republicans](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans) aiming to retake the House of Representatives and the [Senate](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/senate). The serving president's party [usually performs poorly during midterms](https://www.newsweek.com/joe-biden-approval-rating-worse-donald-trump-this-stage-presidency-midterms-1720688) and while it seems likely President [Joe Biden](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden) will see major losses this November, it's not clear just how bad things will be for the [Democrats](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats). Polls suggest the Democrats are on course for disappointment and that the party could potentially lose control of both chambers of [Congress](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/congress) and see newly empowered Republican majorities stymying Biden's agenda in the run up to the next presidential election. A GOP gain in either chamber would hamstring the Biden administration, but the worst case scenario would see comfortable Republican majorities in both chambers, potentially leading to a slew of investigations and possibly even impeachment of the president. Poll tracker FiveThirtyEight's 2022 election forecast rates the Senate as a toss up with 35 seats up for re-election. Fourteen are currently held by Democrats and 21 by Republicans. **FiveThirtyEight gives Republicans an 80 percent chance of holding between 47 and 54 seats. If that latter figure is reached, it would represent a major defeat for Biden's party.** The Senate is currently divided between 50 Republicans, 48 Democrats and two independents who caucus with the Democrats. Vice President [Kamala Harris](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/kamala-harris) has had to use her casting vote on a number of occasions and a single Democratic loss in the midterms would hand control to the Republicans. FiveThirtyEight rates the Senate races in Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and Pennsylvania as toss-ups. If Republicans can win all four, it would be a major loss for the Democrats. Three of those seats are held by incumbent Democrats, while Republican Senator Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania is retiring. However, it's highly unlikely that Republicans could gain enough seats in November to secure a 60-vote, filibuster proof majority. This means Democrats are likely to deploy the filibuster if the GOP retakes the chamber. Nonetheless, a Republican-led Senate could hold up Biden's judicial nominees and potentially prevent him filling any vacant seats that might arise on the U.S. [Supreme Court](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/supreme-court), as Senate Minority Leader [Mitch McConnell](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/mitch-mcconnell) did in 2016 when he was majority leader. A new poll found that nearly 60 percent of Americans disapprove of the job President Joe Biden is doing as president. Above, Biden bows his head in prayer Tuesday before presenting the Medal of Honor to four Army soldiers who fought in the Vietnam War. Republicans are favored to win the House, according to FiveThirtyEight, while Democrats currently hold 220 seats to Republicans' 210, with five seats vacant. The poll tracker's analysis gives Republicans an 80 percent chance of holding between 215 and 258 seats. If the larger figure proves accurate, that would be a huge gain for the GOP, though it remains an outside possibility. The single worst midterm loss of House seats occurred in 2010 when Democrats lost 63 seats under then President [Barack Obama](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/barack-obama). However, Obama's party retained control of the Senate until the 2014 midterms. It seems likely that Republican gains this year will be more modest but that the GOP will still win the House. That will allow House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy to become speaker for the first time and possibly mean [the end of Speaker Nancy Pelosi's political career.](https://www.newsweek.com/nancy-pelosi-time-democrats-house-leader-over-midterms-1720238) FiveThirtyEight's generic congressional ballot shows Republicans with 44.8 percent support to the Democrats' 43.2 percent, as of July 6 - a margin of just 1.7 percent. If Republicans retake the House, recent reporting suggests they will launch a series of investigations into the Biden administration. Those probes could include the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, the business dealings of [Hunter Biden](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/hunter-biden) and even an investigation into the House Select Committee currently examining the events of January 6, 2021. Republican investigations could dominate the political agenda heading into the 2024 presidential election. Democrats may also be concerned about potential impeachment charges against President Biden, as [some Republicans have previously suggested.](https://www.newsweek.com/mitch-mcconnell-quashes-calls-bidens-impeachment-over-afghanistan-1625154) An impeachment push could center on the withdrawal from Afghanistan or accusations relating to Biden's involvement in his son's business. He has denied any involvement with Hunter Biden's foreign business affairs. If the GOP controls both the House and Senate, investigations could multiply and the possibility of impeachment could be even greater. Losses in the midterms will prove disappointing for Democrats and politically difficult for Biden, but Thomas Gift, founding director of University College London's Centre on U.S. Politics, told **Newsweek** the president's party may have even bigger problems. "For Democrats, the worst case scenario isn't just that they lose big in November. It's that they lose big—and learn the wrong lessons about why they got beat," Gift said. "There's a certain faction within the [Democratic Party](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democratic-party) that will argue that its looming defeats in the midterms are the result of not leaning hard enough into the progressive agenda. That's not just wrong. It's delusional," he said. Gift said that data showed centrist positions "poll well with American voters. Far-left positions don't." "If Democrats continue to embrace policies that most voters perceive as unacceptably liberal, 2022 will only be the harbinger of more losses in 2024," he said. "The sooner Democrats realize that what earns likes on [Twitter](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/twitter) doesn't earn votes in swing states, the sooner they'll figure out what it takes to beat the eminently beatable Republican Party," Gift added.

#### Republican’s red wave will hit congress

**Cillizza 6/17**, Chris, a CNN Politics Reporter and Editor-at-Large, covering national politics including the White House, Congress and every district they represent, June 17, 2022 could house democrats lose 70 seats this fall, cnn, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/17/politi> cs/midterm-election-house-gains-republican-democrat/index.html\_Patrick

(CNN)Last month, Newt Gingrich made a bold (and seemingly wild) prediction about the [midterm elections](https://www.cnn.com/election/2022). "I think we'll pick up between 25 and 70 seats in the House," the former Republican House speaker [said in an interview with Fox](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/newt-gingrich-predicts-gop-could-pick-up-historic-70-house-seats)**. Seventy seats!** That would not only eclipse the 63-seat gain Republicans made in the 2010 midterm elections, but would also be the largest seat switch in the House since 1948. Gingrich, as he often does, was likely just riffing -- going for an outlandishly high ceiling on Republican gains to draw headlines and attention. Which, well, mission accomplished. Gingrich's ceiling of 70 seats is well in excess of where nonpartisan political handicappers are -- at least at the moment. David Wasserman, the House editor at the [Cook Political Report with Amy Walter](https://www.cookpolitical.com/analysis/house/house-overview/house-rating-changes-10-more-races-move-towards-republicans), is projecting Republicans gain between 20 and 35 seats. Nathan Gonzales [of Inside Elections](https://insideelections.com/ratings/house/2022-house-ratings-june-15-2022) hasn't released his range just yet -- it's coming next week -- but says, "Republicans are well positioned to win the **majority.**" New data from Gallup suggests that the national political environment is arguably worse for Democrats than it was in 2010 -- raising at least the possibility that the party suffers even larger losses than currently predicted. [As Gallup's Jeffrey M. Jones and Lydia Saad write](https://news.gallup.com/poll/393626/usual-midterm-indicators-unfavorable-democrats.aspx): "The party of the president typically loses U.S. House seats in midterm elections -- an average of 23 since 1974. However, 2022 is not shaping up to be an average year. Rather, as of May, Gallup finds presidential job approval and three other key national mood indicators well below the historical averages measured in past midterm election years. On their own**, those numbers would all predict a greater-than-average loss of seats for the Democratic Party this fall."** A glance at the [Gallup data](https://news.gallup.com/poll/393626/usual-midterm-indicators-unfavorable-democrats.aspx) -- which looks at presidential approval, congressional approval, satisfaction with the direction of the country and overall judgment of economic conditions -- reveals that the environment that was measured in May looks a lot like it did at the end of the 2010 cycle. Consider: 2022 Biden approval: 41% Congressional approval: 18% US satisfaction: 16% Economic conditions (net): -32 2010 Obama approval: 45% Congressional approval: 21% US satisfaction: 22% Economic conditions (net): -31 Pretty similar, right? If anything, the national political environment -- as understood through these four factors -- is worse for Democrats now than it was in 2010. Now, before you sign on to Gingrich's 70-seat prediction, it's worth considering that: a) The past two national redistricting processes (in 2011 and 2021) have, broadly speaking, created more safe districts that are virtually certain to elect a member of one party. b) The 2020 election, in which Republicans netted 12 House seats, likely limits the ceiling of GOP gains since some of the lower-hanging fruit has already been, um, picked. To be very clear here: A 70-seat Republican gain in the fall still feels more like a Gingrich fever dream than a fact-based possibility. But as [Gallup concludes](https://news.gallup.com/poll/393626/usual-midterm-indicators-unfavorable-democrats.aspx): "The current Democratic congressional majority is facing an extremely unfavorable election environment." The Point: Democrats are in as bad a shape as they have been at this point of a midterm election as they have been in many decades. And what's worse for the party is that there's no obvious event or series of events that could (or will) turn things around.

#### No chance for Dems

**Durkee 6/14,** , Alison, is a breaking news reporter at Forbes and an NYC-based arts writer specializing in theatre, dance, politics, and cultural tourism, Democrats’ Midterm Nightmare: Polls Suggest Party Could Face Historic Loss, Jun 14, 2022 , Forbes, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2022/06/14/democrats-midterm-nightmare-polls-suggest-party-could-face-historic-loss/?sh=474601a65193_Patrick>

Democrats could experience a “greater-than-average” loss in the midterm elections this November, new Gallup polling suggests, finding that voters’ satisfaction with the country and federal government are largely at record lows compared with other midterm years. President Biden Returns To The White House From Delaware President Joe Biden waves as he returns to the White House June 13 in Washington, DC. GETTY IMAGES KEY FACTS The Gallup poll, conducted May 2-22 among 1,007 U.S. adults, found only 41% approve of President Joe Biden’s job performance, 18% approve of Congress’ performance and 16% are “satisfied with the way things are going in the U.S.” Only 14% have a positive view of economic conditions right now and 46% rate the economy negatively, meaning Americans have a 32-point net negative view of the economy. All of those metrics are at least 10 points below the average for midterm years, based on Gallup’s polling going back to 1974. PROMOTED Americans have a 51% approval rating for the president on average during midterm election years, a 30% congressional approval rating, 35% satisfaction with the state of the U.S. and a nine-point net positive rating of the economy. Other than presidential approval rating—where Biden’s 41% approval is tied with former President Donald Trump’s in 2018 and higher than President George W. Bush’s 38% in 2006—every metric recorded this year marks a historic low. Gallup suggests the low ratings mean Democrats will likely lose seats in the election this year—as a president’s party typically does during the midterms—and their losses would likely be even larger than usual if these low ratings hold. BIG NUMBER 23. That’s the average number of House seats a president’s party loses during the midterms, Gallup found based on data going back to 1974. Parties suffer even bigger losses when Americans aren’t satisfied with how things are going, though: Republicans lost 40 seats in 2018 when Americans had a 21% positive view of Congress and 41% approval of Trump, for instance, and Democrats lost 63 seats in 2010 during Barack Obama’s presidency. Though Obama was slightly more popular than Biden (45% approval), Americans similarly had a 21% approval of Congress, 22% satisfaction with the U.S. and 31-point net-negative view of the economy that year. WHAT TO WATCH FOR How Democrats will fare in the midterms. Republicans only need to flip five House seats to gain control of the chamber, and one seat in the Senate, where the parties are now evenly split. Based on current trends, Gallup projects the midterms will potentially be a “wave election” for the GOP and give them a “comfortable governing majority.” WHAT WE DON’T KNOW How things could change before November for Democrats. The Supreme Court is poised to likely overturn Roe v. Wade and let states ban abortion in the coming weeks, for instance, which recent polling has suggested may help galvanize Democrats and get more to the polls. Gun control could also come into play in the wake of a string of mass shootings, Gallup notes, as polling shows most Americans favor stricter gun measures and thus could be motivated to vote against Republicans who oppose them. KEY BACKGROUND Gallup’s polling comes as Biden has seen record-low approval ratings in recent months, with a FiveThirtyEight analysis finding 39.7% approve of him on average—the lowest share at any point during his presidency. The president has not had an average approval rating over 50% since August 2021. Other polls have similarly found Republicans are likely to have a clear advantage in the midterms, with a FiveThirtyEight poll analysis finding 45% of Americans prefer to vote for a Republican candidate in November versus a Democrat (42.6% would support the Democrat). A Morning Consult/Politico poll from May found Republicans were still more enthusiastic about voting in the midterms than Democrats (61% versus 54%), even after Politico leaked a draft opinion suggesting the Supreme Court will overturn Roe v. Wade.

#### Democrats expected to lose big.

**Roche 7/7** [Darragh Roche, 7-7-2022, "Democrats' worst case scenario for the midterms," Newsweek, <https://www.newsweek.com/democrats-worst-case-scenario-midterms-joe-biden-republicans-1722543>] Liam and Jeff

Democrats are widely expected to suffer defeats in the upcoming 2022 midterm elections, with Republicans aiming to retake the House of Representatives and the Senate. The serving president's party usually performs poorly during midterms and while it seems likely President Joe Biden will see major losses this November, it's not clear just how bad things will be for the Democrats. Polls suggest the Democrats are on course for disappointment and that the party could potentially lose control of both chambers of Congress and see newly empowered Republican majorities stymying Biden's agenda in the run up to the next presidential election. A GOP gain in either chamber would hamstring the Biden administration, but the worst case scenario would see comfortable Republican majorities in both chambers, potentially leading to a slew of investigations and possibly even impeachment of the president. Losing the Senate. Poll tracker FiveThirtyEight's 2022 election forecast rates the Senate as a toss up with 35 seats up for re-election. Fourteen are currently held by Democrats and 21 by Republicans. FiveThirtyEight gives Republicans [have] an 80 percent chance of holding between 47 and 54 seats. If that latter figure is reached, it would represent a major defeat for Biden's party. The Senate is currently divided between 50 Republicans, 48 Democrats and two independents who caucus with the Democrats. Vice President Kamala Harris has had to use her casting vote on a number of occasions and a single Democratic loss in the midterms would hand control to the Republicans. FiveThirtyEight rates the Senate races in Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and Pennsylvania as toss-ups. If Republicans can win all four, it would be a major loss for the Democrats. Three of those seats are held by incumbent Democrats, while Republican Senator Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania is retiring. However, it's highly unlikely that Republicans could gain enough seats in November to secure a 60-vote, filibuster proof majority. This means Democrats are likely to deploy the filibuster if the GOP retakes the chamber. Nonetheless, a Republican-led Senate could hold up Biden's judicial nominees and potentially prevent him filling any vacant seats that might arise on the U.S. Supreme Court, as Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell did in 2016 when he was majority leader. A new poll found that nearly 60 percent of Americans disapprove of the job President Joe Biden is doing as president. Republicans are favored to win the House, according to FiveThirtyEight, while Democrats currently hold 220 seats to Republicans' 210, with five seats vacant. The poll tracker's analysis gives Republicans an 80 percent chance of holding between 215 and 258 seats. If the larger figure proves accurate, that would be a huge gain for the GOP, though it remains an outside possibility. The single worst midterm loss of House seats occurred in 2010 when Democrats lost 63 seats under then President Barack Obama. However, Obama's party retained control of the Senate until the 2014 midterms. It seems likely that Republican gains this year will be more modest but that the GOP will still win the House. That will allow House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy to become speaker for the first time and possibly mean the end of Speaker Nancy Pelosi's political career. FiveThirtyEight's generic congressional ballot shows Republicans with 44.8 percent support to the Democrats' 43.2 percent, as of July 6 - a margin of just 1.7 percent. If Republicans retake the House, recent reporting suggests they will launch a series of investigations into the Biden administration. Those probes could include the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, the business dealings of Hunter Biden and even an investigation into the House Select Committee currently examining the events of January 6, 2021. Republican investigations could dominate the political agenda heading into the 2024 presidential election. Democrats may also be concerned about potential impeachment charges against President Biden, as some Republicans have previously suggested. An impeachment push could center on the withdrawal from Afghanistan or accusations relating to Biden's involvement in his son's business. He has denied any involvement with Hunter Biden's foreign business affairs. If the GOP controls both the House and Senate, investigations could multiply and the possibility of impeachment could be even greater. Losses in the midterms will prove disappointing for Democrats and politically difficult for Biden, but Thomas Gift, founding director of University College London's Centre on U.S. Politics, told Newsweek the president's party may have even bigger problems. "For Democrats, the worst case scenario isn't just that they lose big in November. It's that they lose big—and learn the wrong lessons about why they got beat," Gift said. "There's a certain faction within the Democratic Party that will argue that its looming defeats in the midterms are the result of not leaning hard enough into the progressive agenda. That's not just wrong. It's delusional," he said. Gift said that data showed centrist positions "poll well with American voters. Far-left positions don't." "If Democrats continue to embrace policies that most voters perceive as unacceptably liberal, 2022 will only be the harbinger of more losses in 2024," he said. "The sooner Democrats realize that what earns likes on Twitter doesn't earn votes in swing states, the sooner they'll figure out what it takes to beat the eminently beatable Republican Party," Gift added.

[https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/05/politics/democrats-senate-2022-republicans-hcouse/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/05/politics/democrats-senate-2022-republicans-house/index.html)

#### Democrats Lose --Roe can’t save Democrats in Midterms – Filibuster thumps

Marshall ‘ 6/22 [June 06, 2022] Josh Marshall; Mr. Marshall has covered politics and elections for 25 years. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/06/opinion/democrats-midterms-abortion-roe.html> \_Moonyoung

Democrats hope to make November’s midterm elections a referendum on Roe v. Wade, the linchpin decision upholding abortion rights, which the Supreme Court is almost certain to strike down this summer. That strategy makes sense. Polls show that roughly two in three Americans oppose overturning Roe and almost 60 percent support passing a bill to set Roe’s protections in a federal law. What’s more, polls showed a rising number of voters listing abortion as their top midterm issue after news of Roe’s imminent demise leaked in the form of a draft court opinion published by Politico. Unfortunately, their current plan is almost sure to fail. After the Democrats came up with just 49 votes to bring a Roe-protecting bill before the Senate on May 11, they promised to keep fighting and, in the words of Senator Amy Klobuchar, “take that fight right to the ballot box” in November. But you can’t make an election into a referendum on an issue if you can’t point to anything winning the election would accomplish. To make the 2022 elections a referendum on Roe, Democrats have to put protecting Roe and abortion rights on the table. Here’s one way to do that: get clear public commitments from every Senate Democrat (and candidate for Senate) not only to vote for the Roe bill in January 2023 but also to change the filibuster rules to ensure that a majority vote would actually pass the bill and send it to the White House for the president’s signature. At present, there are likely 48 Senate Democrats who can make that pledge. Senators Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema are dead set against any changes to the filibuster — a fact you likely know because most of President Biden’s agenda has been bottled up behind their refusal for the past year. Some claim that Senators Manchin and Sinema are just taking the public heat for a number of other Senate Democrats who are also unwilling to change the filibuster rules. That’s highly unlikely. But if any do have misgivings, that’s why the public commitments are so important. Getting a list of holdouts down to a publicly named handful is the first step to persuading them to fall in line. If my math is right and there are 48 Senate Democrats ready to make that pledge, they need two additional Democratic senators in the next Congress. And that is the party’s message that makes the 2022 midterms a referendum on Roe: “Give us the House and two more senators, and we will make No ambiguity, no haggling, no living in Senator Manchin’s head for a year. You give us this, and we’ll give you that. That tells voters exactly what will be delivered with a Democratic win. It also defines what constitutes a win: control of the House and two more Senate seats. The campaign message is clear: If you want to protect Roe, give us those majorities. If this is your passion, here’s where to channel that passion. These are the Senate seats we need to hold (in New Hampshire, Arizona, Georgia and Nevada) and here are the ones we need to win (in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and possibly in Ohio, Florida and North Carolina). With those commitments in hand, one question should be on the lips of every Democratic candidate. Will you make a firm commitment to never vote for a federal law banning abortion nationwide? Few, if any, Republicans would be able to make that pledge. And their evasions wouldn’t just make them look ridiculous; that would put squarely on the table the very real threat that Republicans would enact a nationwide abortion ban as soon as January 2025. That could prove enough to win Senate races in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Ohio. In a way, though, this strategy isn’t so much about winning the 2022 midterms or even making Roe into a federal law, although it’s the best way to accomplish both. It’s just an example of how you win elections. Effective campaigns are built on connecting the intense beliefs of the electorate — their hopes and fears — directly to the hard mechanics of political power. You’ve got to connect those wires. If you were testing some new electrical contraption, that’s the first thing you’d do: make sure the energy supply is wired to the engine that makes it run. This is no different. Without tying a specific electoral result to a clear commitment to a specific legislative action after the elections, you’re not connecting those wires. What Democrats would be proposing is a classic small-c conservative solution in the best sense of the word. Codifying Roe would preserve the set of rights and protections that the vast majority of Americans have lived their entire adult lives with and that the overwhelming majority of Americans do not want to change. The threat that the court will strike down such a law is real but overstated. And in any case, refusing to act because of what opponents might do is the definition of political paralysis. So how do Democrats get from here to there? They likely can’t rely on the party’s leaders, at least not at first. But they’re not essential. It’s really up to voters and activists and particularly committed members of Congress. Probably half the Democrats in the Senate would be happy to sign on this dotted line by the end of the day. Those who are up for re-election, even in safe races, will come around quickly. Some senators may resist at first. And that wouldn’t be surprising. Politicians seldom see any advantage to committing themselves in advance or reducing their room for maneuver. It’s always safer to keep your options open and be as general as possible until the final moment. That’s why assembling a clear public list of commitments is critical. Once the list gets down to a handful of hesitaters, the pressure from Democrats nationwide, focused on those members, will be overwhelming. If there are real holdouts, they’ll fold in short order. You don’t need to wait on Nancy Pelosi or Chuck Schumer or President Biden. You can get the ball rolling by calling up your Democratic senator today.

#### Midterms are not looking hopeful for Dems

**Gallup 6/14** [Gallup, Inc., 6-14-2022, "Usual Midterm Indicators Very Unfavorable for Democrats," Gallup, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/393626/usual-midterm-indicators-unfavorable-democrats.aspx>] Jeff and Liam

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- With less than five months to go before voters elect all members of the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate, the current Democratic congressional majority is facing an extremely unfavorable election environment. The party of the president typically loses U.S. House seats in midterm elections -- an average of 23 since 1974. **However, 2022 is not shaping up to be an average year.** Rather, as of May, Gallup finds presidential job approval and three other key national mood indicators well below the historical averages measured in past midterm election years. On their own, those numbers would all predict a greater-than-average loss of seats for the Democratic Party this fall. **Gallup's latest data, from a May 2-22 survey, finds 41% of Americans**[**approving of the job President Joe Biden is doing**](https://news.gallup.com/poll/393038/satisfaction-dips-biden-approval-steady.aspx)**, 18% approving of the job Congress is doing, 16% satisfied with the way things are going in the U.S., and a 32-percentage-point deficit in positive (14%) versus negative (46%) ratings of current economic conditions**. Each of those metrics is at least 10 points lower than the historical average at the time of past midterm elections, and most are on pace to be the worst of such readings. The following sections of this report discuss how each of these four polling indicators, as well as party affiliation, has related to midterm election outcomes historically. Midterm elections are widely seen as a referendum on the incumbent president, and this is justified by the high correspondence between overall job approval and seat loss for the president's party. Given this, congressional seat losses for unpopular presidents' parties have been above average historically, [averaging 37 since 1946](https://news.gallup.com/poll/242093/midterm-seat-loss-averages-unpopular-presidents.aspx)**. Biden's current 41% approval rating puts him in the lower tier of all prior presidents' job approval ratings taken just before past midterm elections. Biden currently has the same approval rating that Donald Trump did at the time of the 2018 elections, when the GOP lost 40 House seats, and similar to Ronald Reagan's 42% in October 1982, before the Republicans lost 26 seats.** Only one president, George W. Bush, had a lower rating than Biden does today, and his 38% rating in November 2006 was associated with a 30-seat loss. Biden's fellow Democrats Bill Clinton and Barack Obama lost an even larger number of House seats in 1994 and 2010, respectively, with slightly higher approval ratings than Biden has now. Those steeper losses reflect the relatively large number of House seats held by Democrats going into those elections in addition to the president's unpopularity. The Democratic Party lost fewer seats in Obama's second midterm in 2014 when Obama was no more popular than in his first midterm four years earlier, but Democrats were defending fewer seats. In the few elections where the president's party has gained seats (1998 and 2002) or lost a small number of seats (1986 and 1990), the incumbent president has been broadly popular, with approval ratings well above 50%. The exception was 1974, with Gerald Ford's 54% job approval more reflective of his honeymoon period in the months after he took office following Richard Nixon's resignation in August of that year. The GOP's 43-seat loss was likely tied to Nixon's unpopularity (24% approval in his last rating) stemming from the Watergate scandal that led to his resignation. While Biden's job approval rating could improve by November, putting his party in a less precarious position, he would be bucking the trend for second-year presidents. Historically, presidents' job approval ratings have [rarely improved](https://news.gallup.com/poll/391973/biden-job-approval-stuck-low-40s.aspx) in the last few months before their first midterms. Democrats currently hold 220 seats in the House, just two above the number needed for a majority, and far fewer than the 250-plus they held before the Republican wave elections of 1994 and 2010. This relatively low seat exposure could help to check Democratic losses, as occurred in 2014. The 18% of Americans who approve of the job Congress is doing would be the lowest Gallup has measured in a midterm election if it holds at that level through the fall. However, it would not be much lower than the 20% to 21% approval ratings for Congress at the time of the past three midterm elections. Americans' view of the job Congress is doing is also broadly predictive of how the president's party -- if not also the majority party in Congress -- will perform in the midterms. In 1994, 2010 and 2018 -- all years when Congress' approval rating was between 21% and 23% and the president's party was in the majority -- the incumbent party lost between 40 and 63 House seats. In 2014, even with approval of Congress at 20%, the Democratic Party lost only 13 seats -- again explained by Democrats' weak starting position that year when House Republicans were in the majority. In years when congressional approval was significantly higher, the president's party suffered minimal losses or even gained seats. Americans' satisfaction with the way things are going in the U.S. is also on pace to be the worst it has been in a midterm election year. The 16% currently satisfied is six points lower than the prior midterm low -- 22% in 2010. Satisfaction relates to midterm House seat loss in a similar way as the job approval variables, with greater losses tending to happen in elections when satisfaction is low -- such as in 1982 (24%), 1994 (30%) and 2010 (22%) -- and more minimal losses or gains for the president's party in years when satisfaction is high, including 1986 (58%), 1998 (60%) and 2002 (48%). Gallup has a shorter history of measuring Americans' perceptions of current U.S. economic conditions, dating back to the early 1990s. Since that time, Americans' views of the economy during midterm election years have only ever been similarly bad as now once before -- in 2010, when net ratings of economic conditions were -31. Economic ratings tend to be less strongly related to midterm election outcomes than other mood indicators are, though views of the economy certainly influence how Americans rate the job that political leaders are doing and whether they are satisfied with the way things are going in the country. Positive evaluations of the economy in 2006 and 2018 were not enough to overcome weak job approval ratings for Presidents Bush and Trump, respectively, and for Congress, suggesting political leaders were being evaluated on factors besides the economy. But even if the economy is less correlated with midterm election outcomes, the fact that Americans view it negatively this year is just one more issue that does not reflect favorably on the governing Democratic Party. Vote choices in elections are strongly tied to a voter's political leanings. Party affiliation has been a good indicator of midterm election outcomes in the past because it either related to the partisanship of the electorate or was a harbinger of **how** people would vote. On average over the past three months, Americans have been equally likely to identify politically as Republicans or say they are independents who lean toward the Republican Party (45%) as to identify as Democrats or to lean Democratic (45%). While the parties appear, then, to be on equal footing heading into the midterms, the figures are generally a better sign for the Republican Party than the Democratic Party for two key reasons: First, historically, Democrats usually have an advantage on this measure of party affiliation. For example, in [2021](https://news.gallup.com/poll/388781/political-party-preferences-shifted-greatly-during-2021.aspx), Democrats had a three-point advantage (though the numbers varied greatly over the course of the year), which is typical. Second, Republican voters usually turn out at higher rates than Democratic voters do. If usual turnout patterns hold, and partisanship among all national adults is even, then the electorate will have more Republican identifiers and leaners than Democratic ones. There were also even splits in party affiliation in 1994, 2002, 2010, 2014 and 2018 election years, and all but one were good years for Republican candidates. The major exception was 2018, a year in which the parties were fairly evenly matched but Democrats did better in the elections, perhaps because of Trump's unpopularity and the [unusually high turnout](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/11/19/18103110/2018-midterm-elections-turnout?utm_source=link_newsv9&utm_campaign=item_393626&utm_medium=copy) that year. By contrast, in years when the Democratic Party had sizable advantages on party identification, like in 1998 and 2006, Democrats picked up seats in Congress. At the same time, the relatively slim majority enjoyed by House Democrats should shield the party from losses in the upper range of what's possible when presidential approval is in the low 40s and less than a quarter of Americans are satisfied with the state of the nation. While it is unclear whether policy issues can eclipse presidential performance or the national mood as midterm election voting factors, **Democrats may benefit politically from the Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade and Republican opposition to gun control measures in the wake of a series of mass shootings.** Recent Gallup data suggest abortion will be [a more important voting factor](https://news.gallup.com/poll/393263/abortion-poised-bigger-voting-issue-past.aspx) this year than it usually is in U.S. elections, more so among those who support rather than oppose legalized abortion. Also, even before the mass shootings, the majority of Americans expressed dissatisfaction with [U.S. gun laws](https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/393092/americans-recent-attitudes-toward-guns.aspx) and favored enacting stricter laws. On the other hand, further increases in gas prices or renewed focus on the border crisis could compound Democrats' problems in November. **Regardless of what issues might drive voter behavior, unless Americans' opinions of the job Biden is doing and the state of the nation improve over the next five months, the Democratic Party may face a situation similar to 1994 and 2010 when it suffered major losses in its presidents' first midterms but regrouped in time to win the presidential election two years later.**

#### Voter dissatisfaction with POTUS gives the GOP an edge to win in November.

**Zurcher 5/3** [5/3/2022] Anthony Zurcher is BBC’s senior North American reporter, covering US politics and cultural happenings across the continent. He joined the BBC in 2013 and has covered the US Supreme Court, Congress, the technology sector and Texas state politics; https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-61280069 \_Amber

The Republican party is widely expected to win back at least one chamber of Congress in the mid-term elections later this year. But its leaders have been reluctant to say what it would do with that power — and that could mean trouble in the not-so-long run.

Some Republican 2024 presidential hopefuls have each released multi-point policy agendas that they may try to build a campaign around. But those in the Republican congressional leadership seem to believe that the path to power will be smoother if they keep the details of their agenda intentionally vague. It keeps their party united and gives Democrats less of a target to attack.

For the seventh time in 22 years, control of at least one chamber of the US Congress appears poised to switch to the opposing party, and this time, it's the Republicans who have the upper hand.

According to polls, a plurality of Americans plan to vote for Republican congressional candidates - a good sign of impending success. And they only need to flip a handful of seats to take control.

In 2022, the Republicans look like they will be taking the playbook from a more recent mid-term. In 2014, they took control of the Senate with a campaign that primarily featured attacks on then-President Obama and warnings about the domestic threat posed by Ebola virus and Islamic State militants.

This year, the Republican Party leadership seems to have settled on a similar path. That means focusing its messaging on dissatisfaction with President Joe Biden and the Democrats, rather than advancing a particular governing agenda.

#### Why Republicans Are Favored to Win The House,

[Nate Silver](https://fivethirtyeight.com/contributors/nate-silver/) JUN. 30, 2022

Republicans are substantial favorites to take over the U.S. House of Representatives following this November’s midterm elections, but the U.S. Senate is much more competitive, according to [FiveThirtyEight’s 2022 midterm election forecast](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2022-election-forecast/), which launched today. Democrats are also favored to hang on to the governorships in a trio of swing states in the Rust Belt — Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan — although they are significant underdogs to win high-profile gubernatorial races in Georgia and Texas against Republican incumbents.

The split diagnosis reflects the difference between macro- and micro-level conditions. The national environment is quite poor for Democrats. Of course, this is typical for the president’s party, which has lost seats in the House in [all but two of the past 21 midterm elections](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/data/seats-congress-gainedlost-the-presidents-party-mid-term-elections). But Democrats are also saddled with [an unpopular President Biden](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/biden-approval-rating/) and a series of challenges for the country, including inflation levels that haven’t been seen in decades, the lingering effects of the still-ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and [fraying trust in civic institutions](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/democratic-values-are-still-under-attack-even-without-trump-in-the-white-house/) — caused, in part, by [Republican efforts to overturn the results of the 2022 election](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/06/28/us/jan-6-hearing-today).

Democrats, as a [predominantly urban party](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-republicans-in-blue-cities-are-increasingly-outliers/), also face a longstanding problem in the Senate, where every state has equal representation regardless of its population, resulting in a [substantial built-in bias toward white, rural states](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-senates-rural-skew-makes-it-very-hard-for-democrats-to-win-the-supreme-court/). And although Democrats are [very slightly better off following the redistricting process in the House](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/redistricting-2022-maps/) than they were under the 2020 maps, there are still more Republican-leaning seats than Democratic-leaning ones.

True, the political environment is dynamic. The Supreme Court’s [decision last week to overturn Roe v. Wade](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/roe-v-wade-defined-an-era-the-supreme-court-just-started-a-new-one/) is too recent to be fully reflected in polls, but there are reasons to think it will help Democrats. Roe, which granted the constitutional right to abortion,[was a popular precedent](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2022/06/24/roe-v-wade-overturned-despite-public-opinion/), and Democratic voters are [more likely than Republican ones](https://thehill.com/homenews/3537982-democrats-more-likely-to-vote-in-midterms-after-abortion-ruling-poll/) to say the decision will encourage them to vote at the midterms.

Moreover, in striking down Roe and [other popular laws](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/04/20/amid-a-series-of-mass-shootings-in-the-u-s-gun-policy-remains-deeply-divisive/) like [restrictions against the concealed carry of firearms](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/what-the-supreme-courts-gun-ruling-means-for-gun-control/), the Supreme Court has in some ways undermined one of the traditional reasons that the president’s party tends to lose seats at the midterms. Typically, voters like some degree of balance: They do not want one party to have unfettered control of all levers of government. But the Supreme Court, with its 6-3 conservative majority, is a reminder of how much power Republicans have even if they don’t control the White House.

The insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 can also serve as a reminder to voters about what might happen if the Electoral College certification process takes place in 2024 amid Republican control of both chambers of Congress.[1](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-republicans-are-favored-to-win-the-house-but-not-the-senate/#fn-1) Democrats have [had trouble getting the public to treat threats to democracy as a high priority](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/americans-are-moving-on-from-jan-6-even-if-congress-hasnt/), but polls do show that the [public is sympathetic to the Democrats’ case](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2022/06/23/what-are-americans-thinking-about-the-january-6-hearings/), especially after the recent congressional hearings on the events of Jan. 6.

So, this is not a typical, low-stakes midterm election. On the contrary, there are strong forces tugging at each side of the rope, some of which are potentially of existential importance.

But Democrats’ majorities in both chambers of Congress are narrow, the historical precedent toward the president’s party losing seats is strong, and polls so far — such as the [generic congressional ballot](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/generic-ballot/), which asks voters which party they would support in an election — suggest that voters slightly prefer Republican control of Congress.

Or at least that’s the story in the House, where there are dozens of competitive races and candidates are relatively anonymous. There, big-picture factors tend to prevail. An unusually weak Republican candidate in one district might be counteracted by a strong one in another, for example.

In the Senate and gubernatorial races, by contrast, individual factors can matter more. And the GOP has nominated — or is poised to nominate — candidates who might significantly underperform a “generic” Republican based on dsome combination of [inexperience](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/11/19/pennsylvania-republicans-dr-oz-senate-bid-523023), [personal scandals](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/16/us/politics/herschel-walker-children.html) or [having articulated unpopular conservative positions](https://www.businessinsider.com/arizona-gop-senate-candidate-masters-privatizing-social-security-2022-6). This is not a new problem for Republicans: underqualified or fringy candidates have [cost them seats in the Senate in other recent cycles](https://www.politico.com/story/2012/08/akin-legitimate-rape-victims-dont-get-pregnant-079864).

So let’s briefly run through the model’s forecast for House, Senate and gubernatorial races. Then I’ll describe some changes to the model since 2020 — which are modest this year but reflect how congressional races are changing in an increasingly polarized political environment.

**The House**

Republicans have [an 87 percent chance of taking over the House](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2022-election-forecast/house), according to the Deluxe version of our model. That’s far from certain, but Democrats are fighting the odds: Their 13 percent chances are equivalent to tossing a coin and having it come up tails three times in a row.

That’s not to say House control will be a matter of luck, exactly. A change in the political environment could have ripple effects. For instance, sometimes one party wins nearly all the toss-up races, as [Republicans did in 2020](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-house.html). However, even if Democrats were to win all 13 races that our model currently designates as “toss-ups” (meaning that no party has more than a 60 percent chance of winning), plus hold on to all the seats in which they’re favored, they would still wind up with only 208 seats, 10 short of the number they need for a majority.

Instead, Democrats will also have to win some seats where Republican candidates are currently favored, and that requires the national political environment in November to be more favorable for Democrats than our model is currently expecting.

On the one hand, the task isn’t *that* daunting for Democrats. Our model calculates that Democrats would be favored to keep the House if they win the House popular vote — or lose it by less than 0.7 percentage points — something that Democrats did in both 2018 and 2020.

Moreover, Democrats are down by only about 2 points in our [current average of generic-ballot polls](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/generic-ballot/). Given the inherent error in polling, and how much time there is between now and November, it isn’t hard to turn a 2-point deficit in the polls into a 1-point win.

However, in important ways, that 2-point deficit understates the degree of trouble that Democrats are in. One reason is because many of those polls are conducted among registered voters rather than likely voters, and the electorate that turns out in November is likely to be more Republican than the broader universe of all registered voters. Historically, the patterns in midterm elections are that: 1) Republicans turn out more than Democrats, and 2) voters for whichever party doesn’t control the presidency are more enthusiastic and turn out more. In 2018, those factors canceled one another out. Democrats, not controlling the presidency, were the more enthusiastic party, helping to neutralize the Republicans’ historical turnout advantage. This year, though, they both work in the favor of Republicans.

Thus, the model adjusts those registered-voter polls based on its estimate of what likely-voter polls would show, and when it does that, the Republicans’ generic-ballot lead is really more like 4 points than 2 points. I should note that this adjustment is not rigid in the model. Although the model uses historical turnout patterns as its baseline assumption, it will override that based on polls. In other words, if polls come out showing Democrats holding their own among likely voters — such as because of increased Democratic enthusiasm in the wake of Roe being overturned — the model will adjust to reflect that. Put another way, a very strong turnout would give Democrats a fighting chance of keeping the House.

But also, the generic ballot isn’t the only input that the model considers, and some of the other factors look worse for Democrats than the generic ballot does. Based on the historical tendency for the president’s party to lose seats in the midterms and Biden’s poor approval rating, for instance, the situation is more likely to get worse for Democrats than better. The model also evaluates factors such as polling and fundraising data in individual races.

Overall, the Deluxe forecast expects Democrats to eventually lose the popular vote for the House by closer to 6 points, about the margin that they lost it by in [2014](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_United_States_House_of_Representatives_elections). And it expects Republicans to wind up with 237 seats in an average outcome, a gain of 24 seats from the 213 they had at the start of the current Congress.[2](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-republicans-are-favored-to-win-the-house-but-not-the-senate/#fn-2)

#### Midterms are not looking hopeful for Dems

**Gallup 6/14** [Gallup, Inc., 6-14-2022, "Usual Midterm Indicators Very Unfavorable for Democrats," Gallup, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/393626/usual-midterm-indicators-unfavorable-democrats.aspx>] JV and LW

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- With less than five months to go before voters elect all members of the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate, the current Democratic congressional majority is facing an extremely unfavorable election environment. The party of the president typically loses U.S. House seats in midterm elections -- an average of 23 since 1974. **However, 2022 is not shaping up to be an average year.** Rather, as of May, Gallup finds presidential job approval and three other key national mood indicators well below the historical averages measured in past midterm election years. On their own, those numbers would all predict a greater-than-average loss of seats for the Democratic Party this fall. **Gallup's latest data, from a May 2-22 survey, finds 41% of Americans**[**approving of the job President Joe Biden is doing**](https://news.gallup.com/poll/393038/satisfaction-dips-biden-approval-steady.aspx)**, 18% approving of the job Congress is doing, 16% satisfied with the way things are going in the U.S., and a 32-percentage-point deficit in positive (14%) versus negative (46%) ratings of current economic conditions**. Each of those metrics is at least 10 points lower than the historical average at the time of past midterm elections, and most are on pace to be the worst of such readings. The following sections of this report discuss how each of these four polling indicators, as well as party affiliation, has related to midterm election outcomes historically. Midterm elections are widely seen as a referendum on the incumbent president, and this is justified by the high correspondence between overall job approval and seat loss for the president's party. Given this, congressional seat losses for unpopular presidents' parties have been above average historically, [averaging 37 since 1946](https://news.gallup.com/poll/242093/midterm-seat-loss-averages-unpopular-presidents.aspx)**. Biden's current 41% approval rating puts him in the lower tier of all prior presidents' job approval ratings taken just before past midterm elections. Biden currently has the same approval rating that Donald Trump did at the time of the 2018 elections, when the GOP lost 40 House seats, and similar to Ronald Reagan's 42% in October 1982, before the Republicans lost 26 seats.** Only one president, George W. Bush, had a lower rating than Biden does today, and his 38% rating in November 2006 was associated with a 30-seat loss. Biden's fellow Democrats Bill Clinton and Barack Obama lost an even larger number of House seats in 1994 and 2010, respectively, with slightly higher approval ratings than Biden has now. Those steeper losses reflect the relatively large number of House seats held by Democrats going into those elections in addition to the president's unpopularity. The Democratic Party lost fewer seats in Obama's second midterm in 2014 when Obama was no more popular than in his first midterm four years earlier, but Democrats were defending fewer seats. In the few elections where the president's party has gained seats (1998 and 2002) or lost a small number of seats (1986 and 1990), the incumbent president has been broadly popular, with approval ratings well above 50%. The exception was 1974, with Gerald Ford's 54% job approval more reflective of his honeymoon period in the months after he took office following Richard Nixon's resignation in August of that year. The GOP's 43-seat loss was likely tied to Nixon's unpopularity (24% approval in his last rating) stemming from the Watergate scandal that led to his resignation. While Biden's job approval rating could improve by November, putting his party in a less precarious position, he would be bucking the trend for second-year presidents. Historically, presidents' job approval ratings have [rarely improved](https://news.gallup.com/poll/391973/biden-job-approval-stuck-low-40s.aspx) in the last few months before their first midterms. Democrats currently hold 220 seats in the House, just two above the number needed for a majority, and far fewer than the 250-plus they held before the Republican wave elections of 1994 and 2010. This relatively low seat exposure could help to check Democratic losses, as occurred in 2014. The 18% of Americans who approve of the job Congress is doing would be the lowest Gallup has measured in a midterm election if it holds at that level through the fall. However, it would not be much lower than the 20% to 21% approval ratings for Congress at the time of the past three midterm elections. Americans' view of the job Congress is doing is also broadly predictive of how the president's party -- if not also the majority party in Congress -- will perform in the midterms. In 1994, 2010 and 2018 -- all years when Congress' approval rating was between 21% and 23% and the president's party was in the majority -- the incumbent party lost between 40 and 63 House seats. In 2014, even with approval of Congress at 20%, the Democratic Party lost only 13 seats -- again explained by Democrats' weak starting position that year when House Republicans were in the majority. In years when congressional approval was significantly higher, the president's party suffered minimal losses or even gained seats. Americans' satisfaction with the way things are going in the U.S. is also on pace to be the worst it has been in a midterm election year. The 16% currently satisfied is six points lower than the prior midterm low -- 22% in 2010. Satisfaction relates to midterm House seat loss in a similar way as the job approval variables, with greater losses tending to happen in elections when satisfaction is low -- such as in 1982 (24%), 1994 (30%) and 2010 (22%) -- and more minimal losses or gains for the president's party in years when satisfaction is high, including 1986 (58%), 1998 (60%) and 2002 (48%). Gallup has a shorter history of measuring Americans' perceptions of current U.S. economic conditions, dating back to the early 1990s. Since that time, Americans' views of the economy during midterm election years have only ever been similarly bad as now once before -- in 2010, when net ratings of economic conditions were -31. Economic ratings tend to be less strongly related to midterm election outcomes than other mood indicators are, though views of the economy certainly influence how Americans rate the job that political leaders are doing and whether they are satisfied with the way things are going in the country. Positive evaluations of the economy in 2006 and 2018 were not enough to overcome weak job approval ratings for Presidents Bush and Trump, respectively, and for Congress, suggesting political leaders were being evaluated on factors besides the economy. But even if the economy is less correlated with midterm election outcomes, the fact that Americans view it negatively this year is just one more issue that does not reflect favorably on the governing Democratic Party. Vote choices in elections are strongly tied to a voter's political leanings. Party affiliation has been a good indicator of midterm election outcomes in the past because it either related to the partisanship of the electorate or was a harbinger of **how** people would vote. On average over the past three months, Americans have been equally likely to identify politically as Republicans or say they are independents who lean toward the Republican Party (45%) as to identify as Democrats or to lean Democratic (45%). While the parties appear, then, to be on equal footing heading into the midterms, the figures are generally a better sign for the Republican Party than the Democratic Party for two key reasons: First, historically, Democrats usually have an advantage on this measure of party affiliation. For example, in [2021](https://news.gallup.com/poll/388781/political-party-preferences-shifted-greatly-during-2021.aspx), Democrats had a three-point advantage (though the numbers varied greatly over the course of the year), which is typical. Second, Republican voters usually turn out at higher rates than Democratic voters do. If usual turnout patterns hold, and partisanship among all national adults is even, then the electorate will have more Republican identifiers and leaners than Democratic ones. There were also even splits in party affiliation in 1994, 2002, 2010, 2014 and 2018 election years, and all but one were good years for Republican candidates. The major exception was 2018, a year in which the parties were fairly evenly matched but Democrats did better in the elections, perhaps because of Trump's unpopularity and the [unusually high turnout](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/11/19/18103110/2018-midterm-elections-turnout?utm_source=link_newsv9&utm_campaign=item_393626&utm_medium=copy) that year. By contrast, in years when the Democratic Party had sizable advantages on party identification, like in 1998 and 2006, Democrats picked up seats in Congress. At the same time, the relatively slim majority enjoyed by House Democrats should shield the party from losses in the upper range of what's possible when presidential approval is in the low 40s and less than a quarter of Americans are satisfied with the state of the nation. While it is unclear whether policy issues can eclipse presidential performance or the national mood as midterm election voting factors, **Democrats may benefit politically from the Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade and Republican opposition to gun control measures in the wake of a series of mass shootings.** Recent Gallup data suggest abortion will be [a more important voting factor](https://news.gallup.com/poll/393263/abortion-poised-bigger-voting-issue-past.aspx) this year than it usually is in U.S. elections, more so among those who support rather than oppose legalized abortion. Also, even before the mass shootings, the majority of Americans expressed dissatisfaction with [U.S. gun laws](https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/393092/americans-recent-attitudes-toward-guns.aspx) and favored enacting stricter laws. On the other hand, further increases in gas prices or renewed focus on the border crisis could compound Democrats' problems in November. **Regardless of what issues might drive voter behavior, unless Americans' opinions of the job Biden is doing and the state of the nation improve over the next five months, the Democratic Party may face a situation similar to 1994 and 2010 when it suffered major losses in its presidents' first midterms but regrouped in time to win the presidential election two years later.**

#### Republicans Are Favored to Win The House,

ABC news

[Nate Silver](https://fivethirtyeight.com/contributors/nate-silver/) JUN. 30, 2022 (founder and editor in chief of FiveThirtyEight and the author of “The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail — But Some Don’t.”) <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-republicans-are-favored-to-win-the-house-but-not-the-senate/> AC

Republicans are substantial favorites to take over the U.S. House of Representatives following this November’s midterm elections, but the U.S. Senate is much more competitive, according to [FiveThirtyEight’s 2022 midterm election forecast](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2022-election-forecast/), which launched today. Democrats are also favored to hang on to the governorships in a trio of swing states in the Rust Belt — Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan — although they are significant underdogs to win high-profile gubernatorial races in Georgia and Texas against Republican incumbents.

The split diagnosis reflects the difference between macro- and micro-level conditions. The national environment is quite poor for Democrats. Of course, this is typical for the president’s party, which has lost seats in the House in [all but two of the past 21 midterm elections](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/data/seats-congress-gainedlost-the-presidents-party-mid-term-elections). But Democrats are also saddled with [an unpopular President Biden](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/biden-approval-rating/) and a series of challenges for the country, including inflation levels that haven’t been seen in decades, the lingering effects of the still-ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and [fraying trust in civic institutions](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/democratic-values-are-still-under-attack-even-without-trump-in-the-white-house/) — caused, in part, by [Republican efforts to overturn the results of the 2022 election](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/06/28/us/jan-6-hearing-today). Democrats, as a [predominantly urban party](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-republicans-in-blue-cities-are-increasingly-outliers/), also face a longstanding problem in the Senate, where every state has equal representation regardless of its population, resulting in a [substantial built-in bias toward white, rural states](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-senates-rural-skew-makes-it-very-hard-for-democrats-to-win-the-supreme-court/). And although Democrats are [very slightly better off following the redistricting process in the House](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/redistricting-2022-maps/) than they were under the 2020 maps, there are still more Republican-leaning seats than Democratic-leaning ones. True, the political environment is dynamic. The Supreme Court’s [decision last week to overturn Roe v. Wade](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/roe-v-wade-defined-an-era-the-supreme-court-just-started-a-new-one/) is too recent to be fully reflected in polls, but there are reasons to think it will help Democrats. Roe, which granted the constitutional right to abortion,[was a popular precedent](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2022/06/24/roe-v-wade-overturned-despite-public-opinion/), and Democratic voters are [more likely than Republican ones](https://thehill.com/homenews/3537982-democrats-more-likely-to-vote-in-midterms-after-abortion-ruling-poll/) to say the decision will encourage them to vote at the midterms. Moreover, in striking down Roe and [other popular laws](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/04/20/amid-a-series-of-mass-shootings-in-the-u-s-gun-policy-remains-deeply-divisive/) like [restrictions against the concealed carry of firearms](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/what-the-supreme-courts-gun-ruling-means-for-gun-control/), the Supreme Court has in some ways undermined one of the traditional reasons that the president’s party tends to lose seats at the midterms. Typically, voters like some degree of balance: They do not want one party to have unfettered control of all levers of government. But the Supreme Court, with its 6-3 conservative majority, is a reminder of how much power Republicans have even if they don’t control the White House. The insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 can also serve as a reminder to voters about what might happen if the Electoral College certification process takes place in 2024 amid Republican control of both chambers of Congress.[1](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-republicans-are-favored-to-win-the-house-but-not-the-senate/#fn-1) Democrats have [had trouble getting the public to treat threats to democracy as a high priority](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/americans-are-moving-on-from-jan-6-even-if-congress-hasnt/), but polls do show that the [public is sympathetic to the Democrats’ case](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2022/06/23/what-are-americans-thinking-about-the-january-6-hearings/), especially after the recent congressional hearings on the events of Jan. 6. So, this is not a typical, low-stakes midterm election. On the contrary, there are strong forces tugging at each side of the rope, some of which are potentially of existential importance. But Democrats’ majorities in both chambers of Congress are narrow, the historical precedent toward the president’s party losing seats is strong, and polls so far — such as the [generic congressional ballot](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/generic-ballot/), which asks voters which party they would support in an election — suggest that voters slightly prefer Republican control of Congress. Or at least that’s the story in the House, where there are dozens of competitive races and candidates are relatively anonymous. There, big-picture factors tend to prevail. An unusually weak Republican candidate in one district might be counteracted by a strong one in another, for example. In the Senate and gubernatorial races, by contrast, individual factors can matter more. And the GOP has nominated — or is poised to nominate — candidates who might significantly underperform a “generic” Republican based on dsome combination of [inexperience](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/11/19/pennsylvania-republicans-dr-oz-senate-bid-523023), [personal scandals](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/16/us/politics/herschel-walker-children.html) or [having articulated unpopular conservative positions](https://www.businessinsider.com/arizona-gop-senate-candidate-masters-privatizing-social-security-2022-6). This is not a new problem for Republicans: underqualified or fringy candidates have [cost them seats in the Senate in other recent cycles](https://www.politico.com/story/2012/08/akin-legitimate-rape-victims-dont-get-pregnant-079864). So let’s briefly run through the model’s forecast for House, Senate and gubernatorial races. Then I’ll describe some changes to the model since 2020 — which are modest this year but reflect how congressional races are changing in an increasingly polarized political environment. **The House** Republicans have [an 87 percent chance of taking over the House](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2022-election-forecast/house), according to the Deluxe version of our model. That’s far from certain, but Democrats are fighting the odds: Their 13 percent chances are equivalent to tossing a coin and having it come up tails three times in a row. That’s not to say House control will be a matter of luck, exactly. A change in the political environment could have ripple effects. For instance, sometimes one party wins nearly all the toss-up races, as [Republicans did in 2020](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-house.html). However, even if Democrats were to win all 13 races that our model currently designates as “toss-ups” (meaning that no party has more than a 60 percent chance of winning), plus hold on to all the seats in which they’re favored, they would still wind up with only 208 seats, 10 short of the number they need for a majority. Instead, Democrats will also have to win some seats where Republican candidates are currently favored, and that requires the national political environment in November to be more favorable for Democrats than our model is currently expecting. On the one hand, the task isn’t *that* daunting for Democrats. Our model calculates that Democrats would be favored to keep the House if they win the House popular vote — or lose it by less than 0.7 percentage points — something that Democrats did in both 2018 and 2020. Moreover, Democrats are down by only about 2 points in our [current average of generic-ballot polls](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/generic-ballot/). Given the inherent error in polling, and how much time there is between now and November, it isn’t hard to turn a 2-point deficit in the polls into a 1-point win. However, in important ways, that 2-point deficit understates the degree of trouble that Democrats are in. One reason is because many of those polls are conducted among registered voters rather than likely voters, and the electorate that turns out in November is likely to be more Republican than the broader universe of all registered voters. Historically, the patterns in midterm elections are that: 1) Republicans turn out more than Democrats, and 2) voters for whichever party doesn’t control the presidency are more enthusiastic and turn out more. In 2018, those factors canceled one another out. Democrats, not controlling the presidency, were the more enthusiastic party, helping to neutralize the Republicans’ historical turnout advantage. This year, though, they both work in the favor of Republicans. Thus, the model adjusts those registered-voter polls based on its estimate of what likely-voter polls would show, and when it does that, the Republicans’ generic-ballot lead is really more like 4 points than 2 points. I should note that this adjustment is not rigid in the model. Although the model uses historical turnout patterns as its baseline assumption, it will override that based on polls. In other words, if polls come out showing Democrats holding their own among likely voters — such as because of increased Democratic enthusiasm in the wake of Roe being overturned — the model will adjust to reflect that. Put another way, a very strong turnout would give Democrats a fighting chance of keeping the House. But also, the generic ballot isn’t the only input that the model considers, and some of the other factors look worse for Democrats than the generic ballot does. Based on the historical tendency for the president’s party to lose seats in the midterms and Biden’s poor approval rating, for instance, the situation is more likely to get worse for Democrats than better. The model also evaluates factors such as polling and fundraising data in individual races. Overall, the Deluxe forecast expects Democrats to eventually lose the popular vote for the House by closer to 6 points, about the margin that they lost it by in [2014](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_United_States_House_of_Representatives_elections). And it expects Republicans to wind up with 237 seats in an average outcome, a gain of 24 seats from the 213 they had at the start of the current Congress.[2](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-republicans-are-favored-to-win-the-house-but-not-the-senate/#fn-2)

#### Republicans are hoping to add to their success of 2020, and history indicates they will

[Sotomayor](https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/marianna-sotomayor/) and [Balz](https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/dan-balz/) May 16, 2022. Marianna Sotomayor and Dan Balz (George Washington University, BA in political communications; George Washington University, MA in strategic communications) “The Washington Post https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/interactive/2022/house-control-midterms-2022/

When House Democrats are askedhow they feel about their chances to keepthe majority, the answer often isa sigh or a groan. As the party in the White House, the historical odds have not been in Democrats’ favor — and that was before President Biden’s approval ratings took a tumble, inflation permeated the economy, and a war broke out in Ukraine. “The problem is not the voters,” he added. “The problem is us.” Republicans need a net gain of just five seats to retake the House majority. The Cook Report with Amy Walter’s [list](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/house-race-ratings?itid=lk_inline_enhanced-template) of competitive races includes 26 Democratic-held seats as either toss-up races or favoring Republicans. House editor Dave Wasserman predicts that number will jump after New Hampshire and New York complete their redistricting processes. By contrast, only nine Republican-held seats are toss-ups or leaning to the Democrats. Republicans have tried tolearn the lessons of the2018 midterms, when a Democratic “blue wave” of primarily first-time female candidates [washed away](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/midterm-elections-democrats-flip-house-as-gop-expands-senate-majority/2018/11/07/94d62430-e27d-11e8-8f5f-a55347f48762_story.html?itid=lk_inline_enhanced-template) their House majority thanks to high turnout by suburban women rebelling against President Donald Trump and his party’s effortsto repeal the Affordable Care Act. In 2020, Republicans flipped 15 Democratic-held seats, including 11 with female candidates, by [recruiting](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/house-republicans-women-election/2020/12/07/0563e418-367c-11eb-8d38-6aea1adb3839_story.html?itid=lk_inline_enhanced-template) female candidates and by labeling their Democraticopponentsas far-left “socialists” who wanted to “defund the police” and favored open borders. Republicans hope to replicate that success this year by focusing on inflation and [pointing](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/03/23/grassley-crime/?itid=lk_inline_enhanced-template) to the rise in crime across the United States as evidence Democrats cannot handle law and order. House Republican leaders have tried to support candidates who better reflect the districts they seek torepresent, like Hispanics in Texas’s [Rio Grande Valley](https://www.washingtonpost.com/elections/2022/03/02/texas-republicans-latinos/?itid=lk_inline_enhanced-template). Vulnerable Democrats have also been instructed by party leadersto confront attacks like “socialism” and “defund the police” head on, even though doing somay alienateliberals. Asked about being [labeled](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/05/07/midterm-democrats-abortion/?itid=lk_inline_enhanced-template) an extremist by Republicans, Wild said: “I think people identify me as Susan Wild, who is our representative who does this and that and the other. It’s going to be harder for the GOP to tag me as just being a Pelosi puppet or that she’s part of the Biden administration that’s screwing up everything.” Knowing that they could lose the majority this year, Democrats spent the past yearurgently trying to pass Biden’s agenda. While they were able to inject trillions into the economy to combat the pandemic and rebuildinfrastructure, Democratic infighting came to define the [failure](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/02/18/biden-build-back-better-where/?itid=lk_inline_enhanced-template) of “Build Back Better” at a time when voters are sick of political toxicity. Republicans are trying to frame Democrats as the party of fiscal irresponsibility, arguing that the coronavirus aid package was a source for inflation. Republicans also plan to hammer Democrats for stripping parents of their ability to decide when their children return to school and allowing criminals and drugs to seep across the border. Danna Garcia Cisneros takes notes during her third-grade class at Samuel W. Tucker Elementary in Alexandria, Va. Part of the Republican strategy this midterm is to hammer Democrats for stripping parents of their ability to decide when their kids return to school. (Amanda Andrade-Rhoades for The Washington Post) “The number one question every American is asking is can we afford it? Can we afford their policies where the gas prices rise, where home prices rise, where your rent rises?” House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said in[debuting](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/03/25/house-gop-is-test-driving-new-campaign-slogan/?itid=lk_inline_enhanced-template) his party’sslogan. “The real answer is we cannot afford it.” The National Republican Campaign Committee is bullish aboutflipping five Democratic-heldseats: Reps. Tom O’Halleran (Ariz.), Jared Golden (Maine), Marcy Kaptur (Ohio), Cindy Axne (Iowa) and Malinowski. In total, the NRCC is [targeting](https://www.nrcc.org/2022/03/30/nrcc-continues-to-expand-offensive-map-following-redistricting-developments/?itid=lk_inline_enhanced-template) about 70 Democratic seats, including 12 districts that Trump won in 2020, a number that could increase when all states complete redistricting. While 33 seats are indistricts Biden carried by over 10 points, Republicans believe that they could win in those areas with high voter turnout. Independent analysts are skeptical.

#### Democrats expected to lose big.

**Roche 7/7** [Darragh Roche, 7-7-2022, "Democrats' worst case scenario for the midterms," Newsweek, <https://www.newsweek.com/democrats-worst-case-scenario-midterms-joe-biden-republicans-1722543>]   LW and JV

Democrats are widely expected to suffer defeats in the upcoming 2022 midterm elections, with Republicans aiming to retake the House of Representatives and the Senate. The serving president's party usually performs poorly during midterms and while it seems likely President Joe Biden will see major losses this November, it's not clear just how bad things will be for the Democrats. Polls suggest the Democrats are on course for disappointment and that the party could potentially lose control of both chambers of Congress and see newly empowered Republican majorities stymying Biden's agenda in the run up to the next presidential election. A GOP gain in either chamber would hamstring the Biden administration, but the worst case scenario would see comfortable Republican majorities in both chambers, potentially leading to a slew of investigations and possibly even impeachment of the president. Losing the Senate. Poll tracker FiveThirtyEight's 2022 election forecast rates the Senate as a toss up with 35 seats up for re-election. Fourteen are currently held by Democrats and 21 by Republicans. FiveThirtyEight gives Republicans [have] an 80 percent chance of holding between 47 and 54 seats. If that latter figure is reached, it would represent a major defeat for Biden's party. The Senate is currently divided between 50 Republicans, 48 Democrats and two independents who caucus with the Democrats. Vice President Kamala Harris has had to use her casting vote on a number of occasions and a single Democratic loss in the midterms would hand control to the Republicans. FiveThirtyEight rates the Senate races in Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and Pennsylvania as toss-ups. If Republicans can win all four, it would be a major loss for the Democrats. Three of those seats are held by incumbent Democrats, while Republican Senator Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania is retiring. However, it's highly unlikely that Republicans could gain enough seats in November to secure a 60-vote, filibuster proof majority. This means Democrats are likely to deploy the filibuster if the GOP retakes the chamber. Nonetheless, a Republican-led Senate could hold up Biden's judicial nominees and potentially prevent him filling any vacant seats that might arise on the U.S. Supreme Court, as Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell did in 2016 when he was majority leader. A new poll found that nearly 60 percent of Americans disapprove of the job President Joe Biden is doing as president. Republicans are favored to win the House, according to FiveThirtyEight, while Democrats currently hold 220 seats to Republicans' 210, with five seats vacant. The poll tracker's analysis gives Republicans an 80 percent chance of holding between 215 and 258 seats. If the larger figure proves accurate, that would be a huge gain for the GOP, though it remains an outside possibility. The single worst midterm loss of House seats occurred in 2010 when Democrats lost 63 seats under then President Barack Obama. However, Obama's party retained control of the Senate until the 2014 midterms. It seems likely that Republican gains this year will be more modest but that the GOP will still win the House. That will allow House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy to become speaker for the first time and possibly mean the end of Speaker Nancy Pelosi's political career. FiveThirtyEight's generic congressional ballot shows Republicans with 44.8 percent support to the Democrats' 43.2 percent, as of July 6 - a margin of just 1.7 percent. If Republicans retake the House, recent reporting suggests they will launch a series of investigations into the Biden administration. Those probes could include the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, the business dealings of Hunter Biden and even an investigation into the House Select Committee currently examining the events of January 6, 2021. Republican investigations could dominate the political agenda heading into the 2024 presidential election. Democrats may also be concerned about potential impeachment charges against President Biden, as some Republicans have previously suggested. An impeachment push could center on the withdrawal from Afghanistan or accusations relating to Biden's involvement in his son's business. He has denied any involvement with Hunter Biden's foreign business affairs. If the GOP controls both the House and Senate, investigations could multiply and the possibility of impeachment could be even greater. Losses in the midterms will prove disappointing for Democrats and politically difficult for Biden, but Thomas Gift, founding director of University College London's Centre on U.S. Politics, told Newsweek the president's party may have even bigger problems. "For Democrats, the worst case scenario isn't just that they lose big in November. It's that they lose big—and learn the wrong lessons about why they got beat," Gift said. "There's a certain faction within the Democratic Party that will argue that its looming defeats in the midterms are the result of not leaning hard enough into the progressive agenda. That's not just wrong. It's delusional," he said. Gift said that data showed centrist positions "poll well with American voters. Far-left positions don't." "If Democrats continue to embrace policies that most voters perceive as unacceptably liberal, 2022 will only be the harbinger of more losses in 2024," he said. "The sooner Democrats realize that what earns likes on Twitter doesn't earn votes in swing states, the sooner they'll figure out what it takes to beat the eminently beatable Republican Party," Gift added.

[https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/05/politics/democrats-senate-2022-republicans-hcouse/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/05/politics/democrats-senate-2022-republicans-house/index.html)**Democrats may be able to keep the Senate**

**Enten 7/5** [Analysis By Harry Enten, Cnn, 7-5-2022, "Analysis: Here's why Democrats could keep the Senate," CNN, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/05/politics/democrats-senate-2022-republicans-house/index.html>]

### LINK

#### NATO POPULAR

#### Majority of Americans Support Engagement With NATO

Fagan and Poushter. 2020 MOIRA FAGAN AND JACOB POUSHTER “NATO Seen Favorably Across Member States Many in member countries express reservations about fulfilling Article 5’s collective defense obligations” Pew Research Center. [https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/02/09/nato-seen-favorably-across-member-states/February 9](https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/02/09/nato-seen-favorably-across-member-states/February%209), 2020 LV

NATO is generally seen in a positive light across publics within the alliance, despite lingering tensions between the leaders of individual member countries. A median of 53% across 16 member countries surveyed have a favorable view of the organization, with only 27% expressing a negative view. But opinions of NATO and related issues vary widely across the countries surveyed, especially regarding the obligations of Article 5 of the 70-year-old Washington Treaty, which declares that an attack against one member nation is considered an attack against all members. Positive ratings of NATO among members range from a high of 82% in Poland to 21% in Turkey, with the United States and Germany in the middle at 52% and 57%, respectively. And in the three nonmember states surveyed, Sweden and Ukraine see the alliance positively (63% and 53%, respectively), but only 16% of Russians say the same. A map showing NATO seen favorably in member states, but few in Turkey agree Favorable views of the organization have fluctuated over time among both NATO member and nonmember countries. Since the late 2000s, favorable opinions of NATO are up 10 percentage points or more in Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland. However, positive opinions of NATO are down significantly in Bulgaria, Russia, Germany and France over the past decade, with double-digit percentage point declines in each of these countries. Favorable views of the organization are also down significantly in Spain and the Czech Republic. A chart showing views of NATO have changed in both member countries and among non-NATO members over past decade In addition, across several countries surveyed, favorable views of the organization are related to ideological orientation, with those on the right sharing a more positive view than those on the ideological left. NATO serves as a political and military alliance for its 29 member states spanning Europe and North America. Founded in 1949 to provide collective defense against the Soviet Union, the alliance seeks to balance Russian power and influence, in addition to a host of other operations. A chart showing NATO publics more likely to believe U.S. would defend them from Russian attack than to say their own country should Despite the organization’s largely favorable ratings among member states, there is widespread reluctance to fulfill the collective defense commitment outlined in Article 5 of NATO’s founding treaty. When asked if their country should defend a fellow NATO ally against a potential attack from Russia, a median of 50% across 16 NATO member states say their country should not defend an ally, compared with 38% who say their country should defend an ally against a Russian attack. Publics are more convinced that the U.S. would use military force to defend a NATO ally from Russia. A median of 60% say the U.S. would defend an ally against Russia, while just 29% say the U.S. would not do so. And in most NATO member countries surveyed, publics are more likely to say the U.S. would defend a NATO ally from a Russian attack than say their own country should do the same. In terms of transatlantic relations, some Western European publics prefer a close relationship with the U.S., but many others prefer a close relationship with both the U.S. and Russia. Nevertheless, few want to prioritize their relationship with Russia over their U.S. relations. Ideology also relates to views of potential allies: Those on the right in several countries are more likely than those on the left to prefer a relationship with the U.S. Despite the reservations many have about NATO’s Article 5 commitments, half or more in nearly every country surveyed agree it is sometimes necessary to use military force to maintain order in the world. In most countries surveyed, those who say military force is sometimes necessary are also more likely to agree that their country should use military force to defend a fellow NATO ally. These views have changed significantly over the past decade in some countries. In Ukraine, Russia, Slovakia and Germany, more say military force is sometimes necessary than said the same in 2007. And in Italy, Spain and the Czech Republic, publics have grown less inclined to agree. On the topic of territorial ambitions, when asked if there are parts of neighboring countries that really belong to their country, relatively few surveyed agree. However, among NATO member states, majorities in Hungary, Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria agree that parts of other countries belong to them. In many European countries, those with a favorable view of right-wing populist parties are more likely to support this statement. These are among the key findings from a Pew Research Center survey of 19 countries, including 16 NATO member states, Sweden, Russia and Ukraine. The survey was conducted among 21,029 people from May 13 to Aug. 12, 2019. Throughout this report, German results are occasionally sourced from a series of surveys conducted in Germany by Körber-Stiftung, in partnership with Pew Research Center. NATO viewed favorably across member states, though opinions have shifted over time A chart showing views of NATO Across the 16 NATO member countries surveyed, NATO is generally seen in a positive light. A median of 53% across these countries have a favorable view of the organization, while a median of 27% have an unfavorable opinion. In 13 of these countries, roughly half or more have a positive view of NATO. Among NATO member countries, positive views of the organization range from 82% in Poland to 21% in Turkey. Majorities of people in Poland, Lithuania, Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Italy and Germany rate NATO positively in Europe. Opinions are also relatively positive in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, France, Spain, Hungary and Bulgaria. Canadians and Americans hold positive views of NATO, with 66% in Canada and 52% in the U.S. expressing favorable opinions. In Turkey and Greece, publics are particularly unfavorable toward the alliance: Roughly half or more express a negative opinion. Among the three non-NATO countries surveyed, views of the alliance are mixed. In Sweden and Ukraine, more than half have a favorable view of NATO. But in Russia, 60% have an unfavorable view of the organization, while just 16% view it favorably, the smallest share across all countries surveyed. Views of NATO have fluctuated since Pew Research Center began asking this question in 2007. In non-NATO-member Ukraine, for example, 34% said they had a favorable view of the organization in 2007. In 2019, 53% said the same, an increase of 19 percentage points. Lithuanians and Poles have also grown more favorable toward NATO over the past 10 to 12 years (increases of 18 and 10 points, respectively). Several countries have soured on the alliance over that period. In France, favorable views of NATO dropped from 71% in 2009 to 49% in 2019, a decrease of 22 percentage points. In Germany, favorable views of the organization declined by 16 points, and in Bulgaria favorable views are down by 12 points. In nonmember Russia, positive views have been nearly cut in half: In 2007, 30% had a favorable view of NATO. By 2019, just 16% expressed the same sentiment. A table showing NATO favorability over time In U.S., views of NATO differ among Democrats and Republicans Americans’ views of NATO differ by political party affiliation. Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents have been more likely to have a favorable opinion of NATO than Republicans and Republican-leaning independents across most years. That remained true in 2019, as 61% of Democrats had a positive view of the alliance, compared with 45% of Republicans. A chart showing Democrats consistently more favorable toward NATO than Republicans Both Democratic and Republican views of NATO remained generally stable until 2017, when Democrats grew much more likely to support NATO than their counterparts, a difference that has not changed significantly since. In 2017, 74% of Democrats and 48% of Republicans had a favorable opinion of the alliance, a difference of 26 percentage points. Since 2018, U.S. views of NATO have declined among supporters of both parties. Positive views among Democrats fell 15 points, while views among Republicans dropped 7 points. Those on the right tend to have a more positive view of NATO A chart showing those on the ideological right more favorable toward NATO Ideology is a factor when it comes to views of NATO in several countries. In six countries, those placing themselves on the right side of the ideological spectrum are more favorable toward NATO than those on the left. In Sweden, for example, 79% of those on the ideological right have a positive opinion of NATO, compared with 38% of those on the left, a difference of 41 percentage points. Significant differences between those on the right and the left are also seen in Bulgaria (38 percentage points), the Czech Republic (36 points), Spain (25), Greece (19) and Slovakia (16). Public reluctance on Article 5 obligations across NATO member countries A chart showing publics in NATO countries express reluctance on Article 5 obligations Article 5 of the NATO treaty is “at the very heart of NATO’s founding treaty,” according to the organization. The article states that “an attack against one Ally is considered as an attack against all Allies.” When asked whether their country should or should not use military force to defend a NATO ally from a hypothetical attack by Russia, in only five of the 16 member states surveyed – the Netherlands, the U.S., Canada, the UK and Lithuania – do half or more say that they should use such force. Across the 16 countries, a median of 50% say that their country should not defend a NATO ally in the event of an attack by Russia, while 38% say they should. Larger shares in 10 NATO member countries surveyed say their country should not use force to defend a NATO ally should there be an attack by Russia. This includes majorities in Bulgaria, Italy, Greece, Germany and Spain. In Poland, sentiment is divided. A chart showing changing views on whether their country should intervene in a conflict between Russia and a NATO ally The belief that their country should respond to a hypothetical Russian attack on a NATO ally has become less common over time in a handful of countries. For example, in Italy, only a quarter in 2019 say that their country should defend a NATO ally, down from four-in-ten in 2015. Similar declines over this time period occurred in Poland (-8 percentage points), Spain (-7) and France (-6). However, support for protecting a fellow NATO nation has increased in the UK since 2015 (+6). In eight of the countries polled, men are significantly more likely than women to say that their country should defend a NATO ally. For example, in Germany, 43% of men say that in the case of a Russian attack on a fellow NATO member their country should respond with force, compared with only a quarter of women. Similar double-digit differences occur in Spain, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Poland. Ideology also plays a role in people’s views about coming to an ally’s aid. In six countries, those who place themselves on the right end of the ideological spectrum are more willing to say they should defend a NATO ally than those on the right. This includes double-digit differences between right and left in all six countries: Spain (30 percentage points), the Czech Republic and Slovakia (21 points), Greece (14), and the UK and Italy (both 13 points). A table showing those who agree military force is sometimes necessary are more likely to support defending a NATO ally Views on defending an ally from a potential Russian attack are related to general attitudes toward the use of military force. Across most of the NATO member countries surveyed, those who agree that military force is sometimes necessary to maintain order in the world are more likely to say that they would defend a fellow NATO member from an armed incursion than those who disagree that a military solution is the best choice for keeping order. For example, in Spain, 53% of those who agree that military force is sometimes necessary say they would come to the aid of a NATO ally, versus only 26% of those who disagree with the principle of military force – a 27 percentage point difference. A chart showing people in member states say the U.S. would defend a NATO ally In contrast to skeptical opinions on whether their own country should come to the defense of a NATO ally, people are much more likely to think the U.S. would take military action in response to a Russian attack. A median of 60% across the member countries say the U.S. would use military force to defend a NATO country that was subject to a Russian incursion. Only 29% across these countries believe the U.S. would not defend the country that was attacked. Roughly two-thirds or more in Italy, the UK, Spain, Canada, the Netherlands and Greece say the U.S. would defend a NATO ally. Majorities in Germany, Slovakia, Lithuania and France agree. Poles, on balance, say the U.S. would help out should Russia use military force against a neighboring NATO country, but sentiment is more divided in Turkey, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Since 2015, there has been some change in a few countries on this question. The belief that the U.S. would defend a NATO ally is down 8 percentage points in France but up 7 points in the UK and Spain. These sentiments are also up 6 points in Turkey. In Hungary, views that the U.S. would help out in the event of a Russia attack are down significantly since 2017, falling 16 percentage points. A table showing more in NATO countries say the U.S. would use military force to defend an ally from Russia than say that their country should do the same Young adults in Spain, France, Slovakia, Canada and Germany are more likely to believe the U.S. would defend a NATO ally against a Russian attack. For example, in Spain, 84% of 18- to 29-year-olds say the U.S. would uphold their Article 5 obligations, compared with 68% of those 50 and older. In almost every country surveyed, people are significantly more likely to say the U.S. would defend an ally from a Russia attack than say their own country should take such action. The biggest difference measured is in Italy, where three-quarters say the U.S. would use such military force in such a scenario, compared with only a quarter who say Italy should defend that NATO ally, a 50 percentage point difference. Similar differences are seen in Greece (40 points), Spain (31), Germany (29), Slovakia (25), the UK (18), France (16), Turkey (14) and Canada (13). Many NATO countries in Europe value a close relationship with both the U.S. and Russia A chart showing western Europeans favor close relationship with U.S. over Russia; Central and Eastern Europeans tend to prefer both In nearly every country surveyed, larger shares support close ties with the U.S. than with Russia, with the exceptions of Bulgaria and Slovakia. And in many countries polled, publics tend to volunteer that a close relationship with both the U.S. and Russia is important. Particularly in Western Europe, the share of the public that says a relationship with the U.S. is more important is substantial. For example, in the UK and the Netherlands, about eight-in-ten support ties with the U.S. over Russia or both. And in Sweden, a non-NATO state, 71% support closer ties with the U.S. than with Russia (11%) or both countries (9%). Choosing a close relationship with Russia over the U.S. is considerably less widespread across the countries surveyed. Bulgarians are the most prone to this point of view, but just 28% say a close relationship with Russia is more important for their country. A quarter of Germans say it is important for their country to have a close relationship with Russia, compared with 39% who favor a close relationship with the U.S. Three-in-ten Germans volunteer that a close relationship with both countries would be preferable. A chart showing those on right ideologically more likely to favor close relationship with U.S. Central and Eastern European publics tend to volunteer their preference for a close relationship with both the U.S. and Russia. In Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Bulgaria, roughly half or more say a relationship with both countries is important. And in Italy, Greece, the Czech Republic and Lithuania, about four-in-ten or more say the same. Ideology is linked to views of closer relations with the U.S. In 11 of 14 countries, those on the ideological right are more likely to support a close relationship with the U.S. than those on the left. In the Czech Republic, for example, 40% of those on the right say a close relationship with the U.S. is more important, compared to 15% of those on the left, a difference of 25 percentage points. Hungary is an exception. Hungarians on the left (40%) are almost twice as likely as their counterparts on the right (21%) to support close U.S. relations. Most NATO and non-NATO countries believe military force is sometimes necessary A chart showing across most of Europe and North America, support for military force to maintain order in the world There is widespread support across most of the NATO countries surveyed for the use of military force to maintain order in the world. A median of 57% across 16 member countries agree that military force is sometimes necessary, while a median of 36% disagree. Across most countries surveyed – both members of NATO and those that do not belong to the organization – about half or more support the use of military force to maintain order. And in seven countries (Sweden, the U.S., Canada, the UK, Turkey, Russia and Hungary) seven-in-ten or more hold this view. Germans are more divided, with 47% saying that military force is sometimes necessary and a similar 52% disagreeing with that statement. In Bulgaria, only 38% say military force is sometimes necessary. A table showing views of military force have changed across several countries Support for military force has changed since Pew Research Center asked this question in 2007. For example, in both Ukraine and Russia, two countries engaged in conflict since 2014, publics increasingly say military force is sometimes necessary (by 11 and 9 percentage points, respectively). This opinion has also become more common in Slovakia and Germany. Yet in several European countries, support for military force has waned. This is the case in Italy (a decrease of 21 percentage points), Spain (10 points) and the Czech Republic (9). A chart showing those on the right more likely to say military force can be necessary to maintain order In 12 countries, people on the right of the ideological spectrum are more apt than those on the left to agree that military force can be justified. In Spain, for example, those on the right are about twice as likely to support military force as their counterparts on the left. In the U.S., conservatives are 25 percentage points more likely than liberals to say military force is sometimes needed. Similarly, 91% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say military force is sometimes necessary, while 71% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents agree. Gender also shapes views of military action. Across most of the NATO and non-NATO countries surveyed, men are more likely than women believe in the need for military force. In the Czech Republic, for example, 63% of men say military force is sometimes necessary, compared with 45% of women. And in Ukraine, 71% of men support military force, versus 56% of women. Double-digit gender differences are also present in Germany (14 points), Poland (12), Bulgaria (12), Hungary (11), Italy (11) and Spain (10). Are there parts of neighboring countries that really belong to us? A chart showing Europeans divided over whether parts of neighboring countries belong to them Across NATO and non-NATO countries, there is disagreement over whether parts of neighboring countries really belong to them. A median of 45% across the 16 NATO countries surveyed disagree, while a median of 35% agree (in several countries, the share who did not express an opinion is relatively high). The shares who agree with this statement are highest in Central and Eastern European countries surveyed. About two-thirds of Hungarians (67%) agree that parts of neighboring countries belong to them, including 40% who completely agree. In Turkey, 58% agree that parts of nearby countries belong to them. And in neighboring Greece, 60% say the same. In Western European countries, sentiments tend to run in the opposite direction. In Sweden (82%), the Netherlands (74%), the UK (72%), Germany (62%), Spain (60%) and France (59%), majorities disagree that there are parts of other countries that belong to them. In both the U.S. and Canada, publics overwhelmingly disagree that parts of other countries belong to them (73% and 65%, respectively). However, a quarter of Canadians and roughly one-in-five Americans say the opposite and agree that there are parts of neighboring countries that belong to them. Russians and Ukrainians tend to agree that parts of neighboring countries belong to them (53% and 47%, respectively). A table showing those with a favorable view of right-wing populist parties more likely to say parts of other countries belong to them In Europe, supporters of right-wing populist parties tend to be more likely to say parts of neighboring countries belong to their country. Supporters of right-wing populist parties are more likely to agree with this statement for nearly every European right-wing populist party included in the survey. In Spain, for example, those who have a favorable view of Vox are 27 percentage points more likely to say parts of another country belong to Spain than those who do not have a favorable view of the party. Correction (February 12, 2020): This post has been updated with the proper characterization of NATO’s founding treaty and revised a significant difference in Lithuania. The changes due to these adjustments do not materially change the analysis of the report.

#### **CYBER SECURITY POPULAR**

#### **Across the Political Spectrum, Americans Overwhelmingly View Cyber Security as one of Nation’s Top Threats to Address**

Leffel, Zachary.6/7 Chicago Council on Global Affairs. <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/commentary-and-analysis/blogs/americans-recognize-cyber-threats-are-divided-best-response> June 7, 2022

Over the course of the last year there have been a number of high-profile cyberattacks, including government-sponsored and private attacks on targets within the United States. More recently, Russia has brought the topic of cybersecurity to the forefront by engaging in repeated hacking of Ukrainian government and civilian systems in coordination with their conventional military attack on the country. Americans across the partisan spectrum agree that cyberattacks are a critical threat to the interests of the United States. However, since cyber warfare is a relatively new and rapidly developing concept, there are not yet clear norms determining how it fits into the escalatory ladder of conventional warfare. For their part, the American public seems to view cyberattacks as warranting an in-kind response, but not as cause for launching a conventional military attack. Americans View Cyberattacks as a Top Security Threat. Public opinion polling shows a lack of consensus about where cyberattacks fall within the escalatory ladder of conventional warfare. Over the course of the last year there have been a number of high-profile cyberattacks, including government-sponsored and private attacks on targets within the United States. More recently, Russia has brought the topic of cybersecurity to the forefront by engaging in repeated hacking of Ukrainian government and civilian systems in coordination with their conventional military attack on the country. Over the past decade, international confrontations in cyberspace have increased in both frequency and intensity. In general, public opinion has tracked along with this dynamic. In 2010 just over half of the public (53 percent) saw cyberattacks as a critical threat. In the Council’s March 25–28 survey, that figure rose to 73 percent, making cyberattacks one of the top threats in the eyes of Americans. This position is popular across party lines—held by more than seven in 10 Republicans (77 percent critical threat), Democrats (71 percent), and Independents (73 percent). Along with this widespread concern over cyberattacks, four in five Americans see preventing cyberattacks as a very important US foreign policy goal (83 percent).

According to a Council survey from 2017, concerns about cyberattacks are primarily focused on the possible effects on US infrastructure. Americans expressed more concern about damage to US infrastructure (43 percent) than the theft of personal information (34 percent) or classified government information (22 percent). Both recent events and expert forecasts about cyber vulnerability indicate that these concerns about American infrastructure are likely valid. A May 2021 cyberattack on the Colonial Pipeline resulted in a massive shutdown of gasoline transport on the East Coast of the United States and certainly caught the attention of the American public. According to a poll by YouGov America, 85 percent of Americans were aware of the attack a week later. Fighting Virtual Fire with Fire As international actors’ cyber capabilities evolve, how cyber warfare fits into countries’ traditional foreign policy toolboxes and strategies has remained somewhat of a gray area. Debates surrounding how international law will be applied in cyberspace and whether conventional military attacks are justified responses to cybercrimes are certainly not closed ones, and countries are already developing a range of different approaches. For their part, the American public seems to support most retaliatory measures short of conventional warfare in response to cyberattacks. These include imposing sanctions on countries that have launched cyberattacks (85 percent) as well as conducting retaliatory cyberattacks against governmental computer systems (59 percent). However, Americans are reluctant to escalate cyberwarfare into conventional warfare: only 41 percent support responding to cyberattacks with airstrikes aimed at another country’s military. Public support is also low for retaliatory cyberattacks targeting another country’s civilian infrastructure (35 percent). Across the board, Republicans display higher levels of support for retaliatory actions. Gaps between Republicans and Democrats ranged from eight percentage points on imposing sanctions to 13 points on airstrikes against military targets. "Bar graph" What Does This Mean for Ukraine? The above data on potential responses to cyberattacks are from July 2021, well before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Russia has been linked to multiple cyberattacks against Ukraine’s government infrastructure, and the European Union has recently declared them responsible for an attack on European satellite internet just before the invasion of Ukraine. The war in Ukraine has brought international cyberwarfare squarely into the public focus, and recent polling is beginning to tease out how Americans see cyberwarfare fitting into the broader US response to the invasion. A YouGov survey fielded April 30–May 3 finds that Americans are conflicted about launching cyberattacks on Russia as a response to in the country’s invasion of Ukraine. Just over a third of Americans think that launching cyberattacks is a good idea (38 percent), while another third say it is a bad idea (33 percent), and the final third is unsure (29 percent). The survey found a similar level of support (35 percent) for sending soldiers to Ukraine solely to provide help and not to fight Russian soldiers. A number of other proposed responses to Russian aggression received higher support among the American public. Over six in 10 support sending financial aid (65 percent) and weapons (62 percent) to Ukraine. Policies that fall cleanly into the nonmilitary category, such as imposing economic sanctions on Russia (68 percent) and banning Russian imports (60 percent) are also more popular among the public. These differing levels of support indicate Americans likely view cyberattacks as a significant escalation from nonmilitary support for Ukraine, more on par in severity with putting American troops on Ukrainian soil, but still short of full military engagement. These findings specific to the current situation in Ukraine are difficult to directly compare to the general cyberwarfare questions above because of Russia’s tense relationship with the United States. Responses may suggest an unwillingness by Americans to directly involve the United States in a conflict with a powerful adversary instead of being a statement on the norms of engaging in cyber warfare. As Russia’s war in Ukraine progresses, it may serve to shape the norms and regulation of cyber warfare as a dimension of international conflict.

#### ETHICAL AI POPULAR

#### Americans in favor of Ethical AI safeguards

**Darrell M. West, ‘18** [8-29-2018, "Brookings survey finds divided views on artificial intelligence for warfare, but support rises if adversaries are developing it," Brookings, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2018/08/29/brookings-survey-finds-divided-views-on-artificial-intelligence-for-warfare-but-support-rises-if-adversaries-are-developing-it/]

AI SHOULD BE BASED ON HUMAN VALUES

Sixty-two percent believe that artificial intelligence should be guided by human values, while 21 percent do not and 17 percent are unsure. Men (64 percent) were slightly more likely than women (60 percent) to feel this way. There also are some age differences as 64 percent of those aged 35 to 54 believe that, compared to only 59 percent of those over the age of 65.

WHO SHOULD DECIDE ON AI DEPLOYMENT?

The survey asked who should decide on how AI systems are designed and deployed. Nineteen percent name the general public, followed by 11 percent who say private company leaders, 9 percent who believe legislators should decide, 7 percent who feel software coders should make the decisions, and 4 percent who cite judges. Half of those questioned are unsure who should make these decisions.

Who should decide AI deployment

But there are some small differences by gender and geography. For example, men (14 percent) are more likely than women (8 percent) to want private company leaders to make AI decisions. In addition, those from the Northeast (14 percent) are more likely than those from the Midwest (9 percent) to say they prefer private company leaders.

Who should decide AI deployment

ETHICAL SAFEGUARDS

We asked people about a variety of ethical safeguards. There are strong majorities in favor of each proposal, but the most popular ones are having an AI ethics code (67 percent), having an AI review board (67 percent), having an AI mediation process in case of harm (66 percent), AI training programs (65 percent), having AI audit trails (62 percent), and hiring ethicists (54 percent).

#### Dems want AI solved within the government

Zakrzewski 21, Cat, Cat Zakrzewski is a technology policy reporter, tracking Washington's efforts to regulate Silicon Valley companies. She tracks antitrust, privacy and social media policy, as well as efforts to bring more Americans online, The Technology 202: Democrats introduce legislation prohibiting algorithmic discrimination, May 27, 2021, Washington post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/05/27/technology-202-democrats-introduce-legislation-prohibiting-algorithmic-discrimination/>

There’s a growing push among Democrats in Congress to ensure social networks and other websites aren’t promoting discrimination. Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Rep. Doris Matsui (D-Calif.) will today introduce legislation that prohibits online algorithms from discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, ability and other protected classes. It also aims to create greater transparency about how digital platforms operate by requiring companies to explain in plain language the ways their algorithms work and what kind of information they collect. The bill, called the Algorithmic Justice and Online Platform Transparency Act, would additionally create a task force of various federal agencies, including the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, to probe potential instances of bias in algorithms. “It is time to open up Big Tech’s hood, enact strict prohibitions on harmful algorithms, and center justice for communities who have long been discriminated against online as we work toward platform accountability,” Markey said in a statement to The Technology 202. Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., speaks during a hearing on Capitol Hill. (AP Photo/Andrew Harnik, File) There are growing concerns in Washington about the ways social networks and other tech tools can further entrench racism and sexism and harm society’s most vulnerable. The murder of George Floyd last year sparked heightened awareness of the ways algorithms can be biased or abused to harm minorities and others. Now in control of the White House and Congress, Democrats have used recent hearings with tech executives to highlight these concerns. Markey says as lawmakers think broadly about civil rights measures, they can’t ignore the role of tech companies. He called for other lawmakers to join in the effort to pass the legislation. “As we work to eliminate injustice in our society, we cannot ignore the online ecosystem,” Markey said. Civil rights advocates are pressuring Congress to regulate tech companies, after years of campaigns to make tech giants change their policies to ensure their products aren't harming Black and Brown people. They've been particularly active in pressuring the companies to do more to address hate speech and disinformation about elections. In the aftermath of the 2016 election, researchers found that the Russian influence operation specifically attempted to dampen turnout of Black voters and found that they were targeted with more Facebook ads than any group. The new measure would specifically prohibit algorithmic processes that interfere with individuals’ voting rights. The bill comes as some large tech companies have made changes under pressure to ensure their products and services aren’t abused in sensitive contexts, such as in regards to housing or policing. For instance, as part of a 2019 settlement, Facebook agreed to block advertisers from targeting housing, employment and credit ads based on age, gender and Zip code, which can be used as a proxy for race. But lawmakers have continued to raise concerns about such targeting in other categories, such as financial services. People have repeatedly challenged tech companies’ practices under existing civil rights law, but Markey’s new bill would ensure there are specific rules on the books for digital platforms. Democrats have proposed other measures that take aim at these concerns. Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (D-N.Y.) has proposed changes to Section 230, a key Internet legal shield, to target discriminatory advertising. The legislation comes as lawmakers are increasingly showing an interest in focusing on algorithms and transparency. Following years of debate about how to regulate social media companies, lawmakers from both political parties are now interested in advancing legislation to force greater transparency about the content moderation practices and algorithms that power major tech platforms. The Senate Judiciary Committee recently hosted a hearing on algorithms and amplification, where senators homed in on the ways the design of social networks influences society. Markey and Matsui’s proposal would also require tech companies to publish annual reports detailing their content moderation practices, something some large companies, including Facebook, already do. The companies also would have to maintain detailed records describing their algorithmic process for review by the FTC. Companies generally very closely guard these processes because of privacy and commercial concerns. Certain personal details would be removed from those records to ensure privacy. Our top tabs Lawmakers from both parties blasted Amazon’s planned acquisition of MGM Studios. Lawmakers who lead Capitol Hill's antitrust efforts were among the most vocal. (Chris Delmas/AFP/Getty Images) Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), who chairs the Senate Judiciary Committee’s antitrust subcommittee, called on the Justice Department to investigate the $8.45 billion deal, which she said “has the potential to impact millions of consumers.” The barrage of criticism underscores the increased antitrust scrutiny of the e-commerce giant amid broad backlash against tech giants in Washington. House Judiciary Committee’s antitrust subcommittee chair, Rep. David N. Cicilline (D-R.I.), tweeted that the deal “reinforces what we already know — they are laser-focused on expanding and entrenching their monopoly power. That’s bad for workers, consumers, and small businesses.” Rep. Ken Buck (Colo.), the top Republican on the panel, said he was “deeply concerned” by the deal. Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.), whose congressional district includes Amazon’s corporate headquarters, also criticized the deal and called for Congress to “work quickly to rein in anti-competitive behavior.” Jeff Bezos, Amazon's founder and CEO, owns The Washington Post. Facebook says it will crack down on chronic spreaders of debunked information. Critics say Facebook has been too lenient on the spread of baseless claims. (Jeff Chiu/AP) The company says it will begin reducing the reach of posts made by users who repeatedly share debunked content. The company, which already reduces the reach of individual posts that have been fact-checked, has been criticized for harboring influencers who repeatedly post baseless information, including about the coronavirus and vaccinations. The new policy does have some limitations, however. It will not apply to politicians whose posts are exempt from Facebook's fact-checking policies, CNN correspondent Donie O’Sullivan noted. The company has also begun to allow posts claiming that the coronavirus was man-made, Politico’s Cristiano Lima reports, as the U.S. intelligence community looks into the theory that the source of the virus was a laboratory in Wuhan, China. Google and a national hospital chain agreed to work together to build algorithms with patient records. The goal of the partnership is to develop algorithms that will boost efficiency at hospitals, monitor patients and help doctors. (Robyn Beck/AFP/Getty Images) HCA Healthcare, which has about 2,000 locations nationwide, and Google said the algorithms would boost the efficiency at hospitals, help monitor patients and give doctors insights when making decisions, the Wall Street Journal’s Melanie Evans reports. The deal will further entrench Google in the health-care sector, but raises new privacy and competition concerns. HCA will remove personally identifiable information from the records before they’re shared with Google engineers, according to an HCA executive who spoke with the Journal. But Google's critics are wary of the deal, especially after the privacy concerns with one of Google's previous health-care partnerships. From Buck: Privacy monitor The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other groups called for Biden to issue an executive order on federal use of facial recognition technology. The groups are calling for a “combination of technological safeguards and policy measures” rather than a ban on use of the technology. In their letter to Biden, the groups also called on the administration to boost funding of the National Institute of Standards and Technology’s Facial Recognition Vendor Test, and said Biden should establish a National Artificial Intelligence Advisory Committee as directed by Congress. Google's track record in artificial intelligence and privacy did not inspire confidence in the new partnership on Twitter. From Brian Nord, a researcher at the Fermilab AI Project Office and Cosmic Physics Center:

#### SOLVING MISINFORMATION POPULAR

#### Americans are worried about Russian interference in the upcoming midterm elections

Fitzgerald 22 [4/27/2022] Madeline Fitzgerald is a yearlong reporter with the news team. Originally from Connecticut, she recently graduated from Mount Holyoke College, where she studied politics and philosophy. Her experience includes editing for her college newspaper and interning at TIME Magazine. <https://www.usnews.com/topics/author/madeline-fitzgerald> \_ amber

More than half of Americans are worried about Russian interference in the 2022 midterm elections, according to a new Reuters/Ipsos poll.

The poll released on Tuesday found that 52% of Americans were worried about Russian misinformation on the internet negatively affecting the 2022 midterm elections. The same percentage of Americans also fear that Russia will send illicit financial support to some American politicians.

American fear of Russian interference in elections has been elevated since the 2016 presidential elections, when the Russian organization, the Internet Research Agency, created thousands of fake social media accounts to promote Russian political aims in the elections. In a 2020 Pew survey, three-quarters of Americans said they thought it was somewhat or very likely that Russia or other foreign governments would attempt to influence the 2020 presidential election.

The Reuters/Ipsos poll delved into several other American concerns, regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its impact on Americans. Sixty-nine percent of Americans said they were worried about fuel and gas prices but 8 in 10 said that the United States should not buy oil or gas from Russia during the conflict, even if it causes gas prices to increase. Additionally, more than three quarters of Americans said both that the United States should put further economic sanctions on Russia and send weapons to Ukraine.

American perceptions of how President Joe Biden is handling Russia remain virtually unchanged from last month – 38% of Americans approved of Biden’s handling of the crisis in March and 38% approve in April. A little over three-quarters of Americans said they were more likely to support a candidate who helped Ukraine with military aid. Seventy-eight percent said they were more likely to support a candidate who supports Ukrainian refugees. A similar percentage – 74% of Americans – said they favored the United States taking in refugees.

#### Voters care about avoiding fake news in elections – poll proves that the spread of false information is a key issue to voters in the United States

West ‘18 - Darrell, Vice President and Director - Governance Studies Senior Fellow - Center for Technology Innovation - Douglas Dillon Chair in Governmental Studies, “Brookings survey finds 57 percent say they have seen fake news during 2018 elections and 19 percent believe it has influenced their vote”, 10-23-2018, Brookings, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2018/10/23/brookings-survey-finds-57-percent-say-they-have-seen-fake-news-during-2018-elections-and-19-percent-believe-it-has-influenced-their-vote/ //EddyV

The subject of fake news has sparked considerable discussion over the last two years. Following revelations of foreign government meddling and online disinformation campaigns, there is concern regarding the sources of false information and the possible impact on voters. Political observers worry that U.S. elections are being disrupted and democracy is being undermined. To examine this topic just a few weeks before the 2018 midterm elections, researchers at the Brookings Institution undertook a national poll and asked a series of questions about the prevalence of fake news, shifts since 2016, sources of fake news, and how to combat disinformation campaigns. The survey was an online U.S. national poll undertaken with 2,024 adult internet users between October 14 to 16, 2018. It was overseen by Darrell M. West, vice president of Governance Studies and director of the Center for Technology Innovation at the Brookings Institution and the author of The Future of Work: Robots, AI, and Automation. Responses were weighted using gender, age, and region to match the demographics of the national internet population as estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey. PREVALENCE OF FAKE NEWS AND IMPACT ON VOTE Fifty-seven percent say they have seen fake news during the 2018 elections and 19 percent believe it has influenced how they plan to vote. In addition, 42 percent think there now is more fake news than in 2016. Related A trader watches, as a television displays the news about former U.S. national security adviser Michael Flynn, at the New York Stock Exchange, (NYSE) in New York, U.S., December 1, 2017. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid - RC18062BEA70 How to combat fake news and disinformation Heavy machinery and the American flag are seen before the arrival of U.S. President Donald Trump as he participates in the Foxconn Technology Group groundbreaking ceremony for its LCD manufacturing campus, in Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin, U.S., June 28, 2018. REUTERS/Darren Hauck TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY - RC175D6CD2E0 Brookings survey finds 58% see manufacturing as vital to US economy, but only 17% are very confident in its future An Israeli drone is seen in action over the border between Israel and Gaza during a protest on the Gaza side June 8, 2018. REUTERS/Amir Cohen - RC133A224370 Brookings survey finds divided views on artificial intelligence for warfare, but support rises if adversaries are developing it There are some differences by gender and age. Men (59 percent) are slightly more likely than women (56 percent) to see fake news. Of the age groups, senior citizens (60 percent) are more likely than young people (50 percent) to see fake news. Regarding vote impact, men (23 percent) were more likely than women (16 percent) to say fake news has influenced their vote. Senior citizens (22 percent) are more likely than those aged 35 to 54 (15 percent) to claim fake news has influenced them. Survey results of American adult internet users on attitudes towards fake news WHO GENERATES FAKE NEWS? We asked who they thought generates the most fake news in terms of political party, ideology, and country. Thirty-two percent believe Republicans generate the most fake news, 32 percent cite Democrats, 2 percent name independents, and 34 percent are unsure. In terms of ideology, 33 percent believe liberals generate the most fake news, 30 percent say conservatives, 2 percent name moderates, and 35 percent aren’t sure. Forty-six percent see Russia as the country generating the most fake news, compared to 21 percent who name some other country, 16 percent who cite North Korea, 13 percent say China, and 4 percent claim it is Iran. HOW MUCH OF A THREAT TO DEMOCRACY? Forty-five percent believe fake news is very much a threat to democracy, 28 percent say it is somewhat of a threat, 10 believe it is not very much of a threat, and 17 percent are unsure. BELIEVE TECHNOLOGY FIRMS AND GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO MORE TO PROTECT PEOPLE Sixty percent believe major technology companies should be doing more to protect people from fake news and 56 percent think the U.S. government should be doing more to safeguard people. CHANGE IN INFORMATION ACQUISITION TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM FAKE NEWS Forty-six percent say they have changed the way they get information in order to protect themselves from fake news, 29 percent have not, and 25 percent are unsure. SURVEY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS 1. Have you seen fake news during the 2018 elections? 16% definitely no 8% possibly no 10% possibly yes 47% definitely yes 19% don’t know or no answer 2. Do you think there now is: 8% less fake news 34% about the same amount 42% more fake news than in 2016 16% don’t know or no answer 3. Has fake news influenced how you plan to vote in the 2018 elections? 57% definitely no 10% possibly no 4% possibly yes 15% definitely yes 14% don’t know or no answer 4. Who do you think generates the most fake news? (rotate answers) 32% Republicans 2% Independents 32% Democrats 34% don’t know or no answer 5. Who do you think generates the most fake news? (rotate answers) 30% conservatives 2% moderates 33% liberals 35% don’t know or no answer 6. Of organizations outside the United States, which countries do you think generate the most fake news? (rotate answers) 46% Russia 13% China 4% Iran 16% North Korea 21% some other country 7. How much of a threat to democracy do you think fake news is: 10% not very much 28% somewhat 45% very much 17% don’t know or no answer 8. Do you think major technology companies should be doing more to protect people from fake news? 12% definitely no 7% possibly no 17% possibly yes 43% definitely yes 21% don’t know or no answer 9. Do you think the U.S. government should be doing more to protect people from fake news? 14% definitely no 8% possibly no 15% possibly yes 41% definitely yes 22% don’t know or no answer 10. Have you changed the way you get information in order to protect yourself from fake news? 18% definitely no 11% possibly no 15% possibly yes 31% definitely yes 25% don’t know or no answer Gender: 55.5% male, 44.5% female in sample 47.9% male, 52.1% female in target population Age: 8.4% 18-24, 15.7% 25-34, 17.7% 35-44, 20.2% 45-54, 20.4% 55-64, 17.6% 65+ in sample 13.9% 18-24, 19.4% 25-34, 17.8% 35-44, 18.3% 45-54, 16.4% 55-64, 14.2% 65+ in target population Region: 15.5% Northeast, 26.5% Midwest, 35.4% South, 22.6% West in sample 18.0% Northeast, 22.0% Midwest, 36.4% South, 23.6% West in target population

#### Dems want government action to solve misinfo NOW

Lima 22, Christiano, Cristiano Lima is a business reporter and author of The Washington Post's Technology 202 newsletter, focusing on the intersection of tech, politics and policy, Democrats are calling on LinkedIn to crack down on misinformation, too, April 1, 2022, The Washington post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/04/01/democrats-are-calling-linkedin-crack-down-misinformation-too/

Happy Friday! Feel free to send us pranks or news tips on this April Fools’ Day, but please, specify which is which: cristiano.lima@washpost.com. Below: A major Facebook ranking failure exposes users to harmful posts, and two Amazon union votes are coming down to the wire. First: **Democrats are calling on** LinkedIn to **crack down on misinformation**, too An unexpected tech platform is facing new pressure from Democrats to step up its policies against misinformation: LinkedIn. The Microsoft-owned networking site is the latest major platform added to the Democratic National Committee’s misinformation scorecard, which for years has graded platforms based on their rules against false or misleading content. LinkedIn joins Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, TikTok, Reddit and Snapchat as platforms Democrats are pressing to “take responsibility for information quality on their sites,” according to a forthcoming announcement shared exclusively with The Technology 202. Advertisement The platform is rarely discussed in the same vein as those peers, largely due to its career and business focus. But it’s still a substantial source of news for American adults, and Democratic officials say it deserves scrutiny, particularly when it comes to misinformation. Concerns over tech companies’ content moderation practices are slowly extending to a wider pool of social networking sites, even as larger platforms like Facebook, TikTok, YouTube and Twitter remain the most common targets. The DNC’s rubric rates companies on a number of fronts, including whether their algorithms surfaced “authoritative news” over “highly engaging news,” if they police rules against hate speech and incitement “consistently and comprehensively,” and whether they remove “maliciously manipulated media and deepfakes.” Advertisement In their latest update, the DNC said that while the company fared well against its peers when it came to its misinformation rules, the information they disclose about their policies is lacking. “Our analysis suggests that while the company has strong policies in place to combat misinformation, its lack of transparency makes it difficult to evaluate their effectiveness,” said Timothy Durigan, the top analyst for the DNC’s “Counter Disinformation Program.” LinkedIn spokesperson Greg Snapper said in a statement that the company has "strong policies and [takes] a number of proactive actions to protect against the spread of misinformation," and that the platform will be rolling out "even greater transparency around how we action content that doesn’t belong in our community" in coming weeks. Unlike other platforms that restrict or prohibit specific types of misinformation, such as posts about the covid-19 pandemic, LinkedIn’s policies explicitly tell users not to “share content in a way that you know is, or think may be, misleading or inaccurate.” Advertisement LinkedIn’s rules say that the platform “may prevent you from posting content from sites that are known to produce or contain misinformation.” They also prohibit users from posting “misleading or deceptive information about yourself,” or engaging in “spam or scams.” But the DNC knocked LinkedIn in its report for providing “little transparency into how it ranks content in feeds” and not making “public content or engagement data available to researchers.” LinkedIn holds a unique position among major tech platforms: it’s one of the most widely used social networks in the United States, and yet much like its parent company, Microsoft, it has faced little-to-no scrutiny in recent years from Washington. LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman, who sits on Microsoft’s board, is also one of the Democratic Party’s most prominent megadonors — a relative rarity among prominent tech moguls, who have come under pressure in recent years to remain largely apolitical. Advertisement While the platform is known more for career updates and business news than politics and current events, LinkedIn has faced its fair share of misinformation challenges. In its sweeping report detailing Russian meddling online during the 2016 U.S. elections, the Senate Intelligence Committee wrote that LinkedIn discovered activity on the platform linked to the notorious Kremlin-backed Internet Research Agency during the election cycle. The panel noted that while the activity appeared to be “limited,” LinkedIn is still “a significant target for foreign intelligence services” because its users post “significant personal and professional data in pursuit of networking opportunities.” “This renders the platform a valuable source of information on an array of sensitive intelligence targets — including the identities of government employees, active duty military personnel, cleared defense contractors, and others,” the panel wrote in its 2019 report. Advertisement In 2020, the Wall Street Journal reported that supporters of the QAnon conspiracy theory “are increasingly going public on LinkedIn, expanding their online presence and prompting the professional-networking site to take steps to limit the spread of the community.” (A company spokesperson said at the time that “QAnon misinformation is not tolerated on LinkedIn.”) Later that year, my colleagues Cat Zakrzewski and Rachel Lerman reported that “users shared articles and videos that pushed false claims about the election results” on the site. The scorecard may be a sign that more scrutiny is incoming. Our top tabs Massive Facebook ranking flub exposed users to harmful content for months “A group of Facebook engineers identified a ‘massive ranking failure’ that exposed as much as half of all News Feed views to ‘integrity risks’ over the past six months,” the Verge's Alex Heath reports, citing a report obtained by the publication. Advertisement According to the report: “Instead of suppressing dubious posts reviewed by the company’s network of outside fact-checkers, the News Feed was instead giving the posts distribution, spiking views by as much as 30 percent globally. Unable to find the root cause, the engineers watched the surge subside a few weeks later and then flare up repeatedly until the ranking issue was fixed on March 11th.” The revelations are sure to stoke the ire of lawmakers in Washington, who have long criticized the platform over allegations it amplifies harmful material. Amazon union vote too close to call early on A pair of union elections at Amazon warehouses in Alabama and New York are too close to call after the first day of voting, and their future will hinge on contested and uncounted ballots, my colleagues Rachel Lerman and Gerrit De Vynck report. Advertisement The dead heat so far is “keeping open the potential for a historic turnaround in the efforts to unionize workers at the e-commerce giant,” Rachel and Gerrit report. They added, “If either warehouse votes yes, it would result in the first successful unionization effort at the nation’s second largest private employer and would generate major momentum for the labor movement there.” Amazon did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post. Treasury hits Russia's tech sector in new sanctions The new sanctions “target parts of the Russian technology sector that enable Moscow to acquire technology critical for its military, including one firm that is Russia’s largest microchip producer,” my colleague Jeff Stein reports. The Biden administration has faced growing pressure to ratchet up its economic restrictions against Russia in the wake of its invasion of Ukraine. The White House previously targeted Russia’s central banks and its technology imports, and has banned Russian energy imports. Advertisement “We will continue to target Putin’s war machine with sanctions from every angle, until this senseless war of choice is over,” Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen said in a statement Thursday. Inside the industry Attacking rival, Google says Microsoft’s hold on government security is a problem (NBC) Adults or Sexually Abused Minors? Getting It Right Vexes Facebook (New York Times) Competition watch Four U.S. Senators Cite Microsoft-Activision Deal Concern in FTC Letter (Wall Street Journal) Social media interoperability project Bluesky names first employees (Reuters) Privacy monitor EU parliament committees vote against crypto privacy Some Russian oligarchs are using U.K. data privacy law to sue (Reed Albergotti) Workforce report Amazon hired an influential Democratic pollster to fight Staten Island union drive (CNBC) Before you log off A Ukrainian soldier went in to inspect an abandoned home. He left with a shaggy dog who was missing her owners and in need of a friend. pic.twitter.com/ubYbKNIj4v — CBS News (@CBSNews) March 31, 2022 That’s all for today — thank you so much for joining us! Make sure to tell others to subscribe to The Technology 202 here. Get in touch with tips, feedback or greetings on Twitter or email.

### INTERNAL LINK-Dem Win Bad

#### Conservative Radio falsely claim the Dems will cheat in midterms if they win, may insight Jan 6th V2

**Thompson ’22** [Stuart A. Thompson, 7-5-2022, "On Conservative Radio, Misleading Message Is Clear: ‘Democrats Cheat’," No Publication, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/05/business/media/conservative-radio-democrats-cheat.html]

November’s midterm elections are still months away, but to many conservative commentators, the fix is already in. **Democrats have cheated before, they say**, and they will cheat again. Never mind that the claims are false. In Lafayette, La., Carol Ross, host of “The Ross Report,” questioned how Democrats could win a presidential election again after a tumultuous few years in power. “They’re going to have to cheat again,” she said. “You know that. There will be rampant cheating.” In Greenville, S.C., Charlie James, a host on 106.3 WORD, read from a blog post arguing that “the Democrats are going to lose a majority during the midterm elections unless they’re able to cheat in a massive wide-scale way.” And on WJFN in Virginia, Stephen K. Bannon, the erstwhile adviser to former **President Donald J. Trump** who was indicted for refusing to comply with subpoenas issued by the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 Capitol riot**, summed it up this way: “If Democrats don’t cheat, they don’t win.”** Mr. Trump introduced the nation to a flurry of false claims about widespread voter fraud after his electoral loss in 2020. The extent of his efforts has been outlined extensively in the past couple of weeks during the hearings on the Jan. 6 Capitol riot — including a speech that day in which he falsely said Democrats changed voting laws “because they want to cheat.”Republican politicians and cable outlets like Fox News have carried the torch for Mr. Trump’s conspiracy theories ever since. But the loudest and most consistent booster of these unfounded claims has been talk radio, where conservative hosts reduce the jumble of false voter fraud theories into a two-word mantra: “Democrats cheat.”

False Claims That ‘Democrats Cheat’

On radio shows around the country, hosts have claimed that Democrats cheat to win elections, citing no evidence. Those claims have found new traction as the midterm elections near.

* KFAB-AM 1110 — Omaha “These people are not going to sit by and just accept the big loss. They have the same poll numbers we do. What are they going to do? They're going to cheat.”
* KTRH-AM 740 — Houston “The Democrats will hold on to the House and the Senate and the gubernatorial races, where they'll be able to cheat in the 2024 election. That’s the plan.”
* WZFG-AM 1110 — Fargo, N.D. “Now they’re going to do everything they can to cheat in the election.”
* KEEL-AM 710 — Shreveport, La. “They’re going to get smoked so bad it’s going to be embarrassing, if they can’t cheat. They got to be able to cheat, and the way they got to do that is with mail-in ballots.”
* KTLK-AM 1130 — Minneapolis “So they don't think they're going to be able to cheat to win in the same respects and in the same numbers that they did last time. Because they did last time.”
* WISN-AM 1130 — Milwaukee “Half of following these Democrats around after elections is stomping out their new ways of cheating. No, you can't cheat that way — no, you can't cheat that way.”

Mentions of “Democrats cheating” and similar ideas were raised more than 5,000 times on syndicated radio shows and local broadcasts this year, according to an analysis of data from Critical Mention, a media monitoring service. Similar ideas were mentioned a few hundred times on television shows and podcasts tracked by Critical Mention during the same period.

Radio remains perhaps the most influential conduit for right-wing thought, despite the rise of podcasts and social media. Tens of millions of people nationwide, especially older Americans and blue-collar workers, listen to it regularly.   
Misinformation experts warn that talk **radio channels**, many of which air political commentary 24 hours a day, **receive far too little scrutiny compared with other mass media**. Talk radio is also uniquely difficult to analyze and harder to moderate, because the on-air musings from hosts usually disappear over the airwaves in an instant.

#### Accusations of Rigged Election Fuel Plans to Reinstate Trump as POTUS

**Cole, 7/9** [7-9-2022, "Trump lawyer says he will be reinstated as president if GOP win midterms," Newsweek, https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-lawyer-christina-bobb-rsbn-midterms-republicans-election-2020-1723145]  
Christina Bobb, an attorney who has supported Donald Trump's legal challenge to overturn the 2020 election, has suggested a scenario in which the former president could be reinstated after the midterm elections in November. Bobb told the conservative news outlet the Right Side Broadcasting Network (RSBN) what she thought could happen in states in which there was "evidence that Joe Biden cheated" in the election Trump and his allies have continuously claimed was fraudulent. "They could withdraw their electors, or they could actually decide to award Trump electors, although I would anticipate they will probably just withdraw the electors," she said. "If that happens from three different states, three different resolutions go into Congress," she said it would then be up to Congress to decide "whether they want to accept the resolutions, whether they want to act on them or not." Trump ally Christina Bobb has told RSBN about how the 2020 election result the former president disputes could still be overturned "It is a complex issue that needs to be handled complexly by different state legislators and U.S. Congress, I actually think that it's designed well, because you don't want this to be something that you can quickly easily overturn elections," she said. "It needs to be something that you need many, many elected officials to take action on," and the "majority of three different legislators." "I don't know if this Congress would take action on it, however after 22...there might be, who knows?" she added, referring to the aftermath of the midterm elections in November, which could see Democrats lose seats. Dozens of court cases and recounts state by state have verified Biden's victory, while Trump's own Department of Justice found no evidence of fraud in 2020 after extensive investigations. It comes as drop boxes became the new front for Trump and Republicans pushing unfounded claims of a rigged election. The conservative-controlled Supreme Court in Wisconsin ruled on Friday that absentee ballot drop boxes, which Trump and his allies claim facilitate cheating, can only be placed in election offices and that only a voter can return a vote in person. It spurred Trump to write on his Truth Social account that the court's decision showed "I won the very closely contested (not actually) Wisconsin Presidential race because they used these corrupt and scandal-ridden Scam Boxes." There is no evidence that the vote in Wisconsin, or anywhere else in the U.S. was fraudulent. The new voting restrictions in Wisconsin are expected to impact Democrats more and come amid changes to election rules being pursued by GOP legislatures, most of which are fueled by the claims about the 2020 election.

#### AT: GOP Win=Trump 2024-

#### Republican prevail in midterms won’t be significant in the 2024 election whatsoever – past elections prove . EA

**Schneider 7/10,** Bill, Bill Schneider is an emeritus professor at the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University and author of “Standoff: How America Became Ungovernable”, “Republicans aren’t guaranteed to sweep the midterms, but if they do, here’s what to expect”, 07-10-2022, The Hill, https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/3551419-republicans-arent-guaranteed-to-sweep-the-midterms-but-if-they-do-heres-what-to-expect/ //EddyV

“A week is a long time in politics,” former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson once said. By that standard, four months is an eternity. Everything could change between now and Nov. 8. At least, Democrats better hope so. Because as things now stand, Democrats are likely to lose their slim majority in the House of Representatives. If that happens, President Biden’s agenda will be doomed. One shock has already happened: the Supreme Court’s decision in the Dobbs case last month to overturn Roe v. Wade and thereby end the constitutionally protected status of abortion rights. You can’t take away a right that Americans have had for 50 years without expecting a political backlash. Like what’s happening now. “It’s up to every single one of us to go out day after day after day until November,” Rep. Diana DeGette (D-Colo.) told protesters outside the Supreme Court. What exactly can the voters do this November? They can elect more Democrats to the House and Senate, thereby making it more likely that Congress will give statutory protection to abortion rights. As long as the filibuster is in place, however, such a measure is likely to go nowhere in the Senate. The prospect of either party gaining a 60-vote (and thereby filibuster-proof) Senate majority seems remote. And Democrats may want the filibuster in place if they lose their single-vote majority in the Senate this year. Donald Trump is eager to get press attention in order to defend himself from the damaging revelations coming out of the Jan. 6 committee hearings in Congress. Suppose Trump enters the 2024 presidential race before November. It would electrify the 2022 campaign, especially if the Justice Department initiates a criminal investigation of the former president. Democrats would have a powerful issue: “Look at what President Trump did to the Supreme Court. Imagine what he could do if he is reelected with a Republican Congress!” Some Democrats are supporting extremist Republicans in the GOP primaries — on the theory that they would be easy to defeat in November. Those Democrats are missing a crucial fact about political behavior. Democrats now control the White House and both houses of Congress. When voters vote for the opposition party, they are typically not making an ideological statement. They are voting for change. If the demand for change becomes strong enough, many people will vote for the opposition party no matter who the candidate is. Once voters start saying, “We can’t go on like this!” — inflation, gas prices, crime, immigration — even radical opposition candidates will look acceptable. Do Democrats really want to take that risk? Suppose Republicans do enjoy a sweeping victory this year. Will it mean anything for the 2024 presidential race? Not necessarily. Ronald Reagan’s first midterm election in 1982 was a serious setback for the new president and his party. The country was in a deep recession (10.8 percent unemployment) following the hyperinflation of the Carter years. Reaganomics had never worked. **Republicans ended up losing 26 House seats, one Senate seat and seven governors**. Republicans were able to limit their losses by running on the theme “Stay the course!” Voters knew what the course was. Reagan had set it out in his first budget message to Congress in February 1981: “This plan is aimed at reducing the growth in government spending and taxing [and] reforming and eliminating regulations which are unnecessary and unproductive.” At the same time, President Reagan promised to protect “the social safety net.” In fact, Reagan was the first president to use the term “safety net.” Will Biden be able to argue “Stay the course” in 2024? His “Build Back Better” program has never gotten through a nominally Democratic Congress. By 1984, it was “Morning in America.” The economic recovery was underway, unemployment was falling and, most importantly, the inflation rate dropped from 13.6 to 4.3 percent. Reagan was reelected with almost 60 percent of the popular vote. Bill Clinton’s first midterm in 1992 was a catastrophe for his party. It was the year of the “angry white male.” With a net loss of 54 seats, Democrats lost their majority in the House of Representatives for the first time in 40 years. And look at what happened two years later. In 1996, Clinton was easily reelected over Republican Bob Dole. A tough agenda: Biden and AMLO to talk migration, crime, the economy The unintended consequences (and benefits) of high energy costs Barack Obama faced a huge “tea party” uprising in his first midterm in 2010. The backlash to Obamacare brought Republicans a phenomenal gain of 63 House seats — the largest midterm election shift since 1938. What did it mean two years later? Nothing. Obama was reelected over Republican Mitt Romney with 51 percent of the popular vote — the first Democrat to carry a majority of the popular vote twice since FDR. Here’s a prediction: If Republicans win the House this year, they will vote to impeach Biden. For what? They’ll find something. But they won’t convict him because they won’t have anything close to the required two-thirds majority in the Senate. The popular backlash to a spite-driven impeachment will deliver a second term for Biden in 2024.

### IMPACT-Political Violence/Civil War

#### Political Unrest and Fragility cause violence

**Grono 2022**, Nick, Former Deputy President and Chief Operating Officer, Fragile States and Conflict June 22 2022, International Crisis Group, https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/fragile-states-and-conflict

Fragile and failed states have been with us since we've had a state-based international order. But the interest of policymakers in such states took on a new life after 9/11. The events of that day, and subsequent terrorist attacks, made devastatingly clear just how dangerous failed states such as Afghanistan could be, not only to their own people, but to communities around the world. Afghanistan and the neighboring tribal areas of Pakistan continue to demonstrate the threat posed by ungoverned areas to their citizens, their neighbors and the broader international community. Somalia has been a failed state since the nineties, and has recaptured the international community’s attention in recent years – not because of the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in the country, but because it has become a base and haven for pirates preying on international shipping. And an unsuccessful bomber who probably received training in Yemen has been the catalyst for a surge of international interest in that fragile state. So what is a fragile state? There’s now a substantial body of literature on such states. And every academic or agency appears to have their own descriptor – so apart from fragile statues, you also have states that are “weak,” “failing,” “failed,” “collapsed,” “at risk,” “precarious”, “vulnerable” or “recovering”. Some of these are alternate descriptions to “fragile” and some are encompassed within it. Even the term “fragile state” has come under criticism in recent years. Some scholars now consider the term both pejorative and analytically imprecise. They claim that fragility is not an either/or concept but rather exists along a continuum, and that it is highly context-specific and comes in a variety of economic, political, and social forms. But regardless of the specific conceptual formulation, these descriptors and analyses all point to some type of significant state failure or dysfunction. The World Bank provides a good working definition, observing such states “share a common fragility, in two particular respects: State policies and institutions are weak in these countries: making them vulnerable in their capacity to deliver services to their citizens, to control corruption, or to provide for sufficient voice and accountability. They face risks of conflict and political instability.” Predicting conflict in fragile states One consistent theme is the strong correlation between state fragility and conflict. Not all states experiencing conflict are fragile (India is a good example, with a number of internal conflicts, and the conflict in Kashmir), but most of them are; and not all fragile states are experiencing conflict, but almost all of them of them are or recently have. The World Bank identifies 37 fragile situations in 2010 – and all bar a small handful are post conflict or conflict affected. It shouldn’t be surprising that there is such a strong correlation. Many of the indicators for conflict are indicators for state weakness. Low and declining growth are widely recognised indicators for conflict - and low income and weak growth typically translate into lack of state capacity. A lack of state capacity usually results in an inability to mediate between competing interests. Low income also lowers the cost of rebellion, making it more attractive to would-be rebels. And the converse is also true. Conflict invariably has a negative impact on economic growth. Resources directed to conflict are diverted from development. Conflict destroys the infrastructure needed for economic activity. And without security, development efforts are unlikely to take hold and have the desired effects. While **the link between fragility and conflict is** by now **widely accepted** there is certainly no similar consensus about how this link plays out in practice. Much academic work is now devoted to mapping the various causal flows between fragility and conflict. And it’s the kind of academic work that has direct relevance to policymakers, particularly when it comes to prevention and its necessary accompaniment, prediction. Policymakers focus on the linkages in their efforts to obtain early warning of fragile states that may slip into conflict, and in an effort to ensure timely and cost-effective responses. There is no shortage of early warning in this age of proliferating NGOs, instant and widespread internet and satellite communications, and an awareness of the threat posed by failing states. In fact, there may be too much of it – the challenge for policymakers can be to determine which of the barrage of warning they receive is credible, and requires action, and which can be ignored. The related challenge is to tie early warning to effective early action - early action here means policy response by governments and international and regional organisations. Analytical and advocacy NGOs have the luxury, and the frustration, of being able to warn, but not being able to respond. So what kind of early warning do policymakers have access to? Very broadly, there are two types of early warning – qualitative and quantitative warning. The early warning produced by my organization, the International Crisis Group, is a good example of qualitative early warning. The task of our analysts is to find out what is happening and why. They identify the underlying political, social and economic factors creating the conditions for conflict as well as the more immediate causes of tension. Our role is to warn, as early and effectively as possible, those who are able to influence a situation where the risk of new or renewed conflict has reached a dangerous threshold. Crisis Group’s particular value-added in this respect is that all our reporting and analysis is field-based. At last count we had people on the ground from 50 different nationalities, speaking between them 49 different languages. They are steeped in local language and culture, getting dust on their boots, engaged in endless interaction with locals and internationals on the scene, and operating from 9 regional offices and 17 other locations in the field. Crisis Group also produces the monthly CrisisWatch bulletin which summarises developments dur­ing the previous month in some 70 situations of current or potential conflict, assessing for each whether the overall situation has significantly deteriorated, improved, or on balance remained more or less unchanged. This is one of the few examples of very short term early warning in the public domain. The challenge that this kind of qualitative early warning poses for policymakers is that its credibility and hence usability relies to a significant extent on the reputation of the external provider of such analysis. It is difficult, though not impossible, for governments to make big resource allocation decisions (ie whether to intervene to seek to prevent a looming conflict) on the basis of independent, non government, analysis. Of course, governments have their own analysts, but these often they won’t have the expertise, or the institutional freedom, of their non-governmental peers. There are ways to incorporate independent qualitative analysis into governments’ own analysis and planning, but the constraints will usually act to inhibit governments from using such external analysis as the predominant basis for their early response decision making. This is where quantitative early warning comes into the picture. The advantage (in theory) behind quantitative analysis is that it relies on verifiable data, and hence provides an independent and transparent basis for making resource allocation decisions. That’s the theory. The reality is more complex. Quantitative warning, relying as it does on statistical analysis, requires a model of conflict with quantifiable factors that can be measured, compared and analysed. But this conflict modelling is still more of an art than a science, despite rapid advances in the field over the last decade or so. The other challenge with quantitative warning is the timeframe of its predictive ability. It is much better adapted to highlight worrying trends than to identify with great specificity a likely tipping point into violence. Quantitative theories used to be broadly, if simplistically divided into two camps – that of greed versus grievance – with the greed camp holding that economic factors were largely responsible for conflict, and the grievance camp blaming on inequality and political, ethnic and religious grievances. The debate has been refined in recent years - concurrent with big improvements in the data - and now is more usefully characterized as one between feasibility and regime type, with the proponents of the feasibility thesis focusing on the conditions that determine the economic viability of rebellion, whereas the regime type proponents conclude that it is political institutions and not economic conditions that are the most powerful predictor of instability. The doyen on the feasibility side of the debate is Oxford academic Paul Collier. His models have been developed and refined over the years, but the essence of his analysis is that the defining feature of civil war is the emergence and durability of a private rebel army, and under most conditions such organizations are likely to be neither financially nor militarily feasible. Civil war will only occur if a rebel organisation can build and sustain a private army. He and his co-authors go on to argue that “where insurrection is feasible it will occur, with the actual agenda of the rebel movement being indeterminate.” Their research shows that three factors in particular are important in demonstrating feasibility of conflict - namely low per capita income, slow economic growth, and large exports of natural resources. Further variables have been recently added to the model, namely whether a country is under the implicit French security umbrella and the proportion of its population who are males in the age range 15-29, and a weaker variable that mountainous countries are more conflict prone (see “Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War”, Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler and Dominic Rohner, May 2008). Low per capita income points to the incapacity of the state to maintain effective control over its territory. Both low income and slow growth can be interpreted as lowering the recruitment cost of rebel troops, and natural resources can provide rebel organizations with finance. The attractiveness of this theory of conflict is that most of these factors can be quantified. And many civil conflicts over the past couple of decades can be readily explained by it – for example, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Congo, Sudan, Aceh, Niger Delta, and Cote d’Ivoire – but does not provide a robust explanation for all civil conflicts or for the lack of conflict in some states. Collier has more recently looked at the links between democracy, development and conflict. He has argued that income level is the key factor in preventing violence during transitions to democracy. He believes that while the international community often favours promoting democracy as a solution to overcoming violent conflict, democracy also constrains the technical possibilities of government repression, and that this makes rebellion easier. Although the net effect of democracy is therefore ambiguous, he suggests that the higher is income the more likely is it to be favourable. He finds that whereas in rich countries democracy makes countries safer, below an income threshold democracy increases proneness to political violence. The regime type advocates take a different approach. The most sophisticated and sustained research on factors influencing motivation has been done by the Political Instability Task Force (formerly known as the State Failure Task Force), a panel of scholars that has worked since 1994 to collect and analyze data on political regimes and conflict around the world. Its work has focused particularly on regime type and quality. The Task Force’s research postulates that regime type is overwhelmingly the dominant factor behind revolutions, ethnic wars, and adverse regime changes. However, the effect of regime type is not a simple function of the degree of democracy or autocracy. The starting point is that strong autocracies are rarely prone to conflict**. Strong democracies are also not prone to conflict**. It is certain kinds of partial autocracies and partial democracies that are much more vulnerable than other regime types, with the vulnerability depending on the patterns of executive recruitment and political participation under those regimes. A particularly strong contributor to instability is that of factionalism within the political process. The taskforce model has four independent variables: regime type, infant mortality (as a proxy for poverty), a “bad neighborhood” indicator flagging cases with four or more bordering states embroiled in armed civil or ethnic conflict, and the presence or absence of state-led discrimination. They claim for this model an 80% success rate in identifying likely instability within a period of two years. Interesting recent research has also looked at the linkage between climate and conflict. Studies by scholars such as Edward Miguel at Berkeley attempt to establish clear causal links between climate factors and conflict. While most studies claim that poverty (which can be intensified or induced by climate change) has suffered from questions of reverse causality – namely, whether conflict leads to poverty or vice versa - Miguel finds that drops in rainfall in Africa, clearly an exogenous factor not affected by conflict, produce drops in income, increasing the likelihood of conflict the following year by nearly half. He recommends pre-empting violence by targeting foreign aid to shore up incomes in regions where livelihood is affected by rainfall, thereby removing a short term trigger of violence. The latest work in this field has moved beyond precipitation to looking at warming and finds strong historical linkages between civil war and temperature in Africa, with warmer years leading to significant increases in the likelihood of war. One recent research paper suggested a roughly 54% increase in armed conflict incidence by 2030 if current climate model projections are correct. So that is a very quick run through of the current models for predicting conflict and instability. As mentioned earlier, the effectiveness of this type of quantitative analysis depends on the robustness of the models, and the quality of the data – and these are both continuing to evolve. For policymakers seeking to establishes processes in which early response is less ad hoc and more systematic, perhaps the best course of action is to use quantitative analysis to identify a small group of fragile states at risk of violent conflict within a two year timeframe, and then incorporate external qualitative analysis to refine that list and determine the most appropriate intervention. Policy approaches to fragile states Another difference between quantitative and qualitative analysis is that while the former may tell policymakers when to intervene, it doesn’t give them much guidance on how. Good qualitative analysis is much better geared to inform policymakers’ interventions in particular fragile states. So how should policymakers engage with such states? Given the variations between states, their problems, the tools available to interveners, the political will to intervene and all the other permutations, I won’t attempt to set out a menu of policy options here. However there are a number of guidelines that could usefully inform interventions in all fragile states. 1. Understand the problem. This is perhaps a statement of the obvious – but it is salutary to understand how often the obvious is ignored when the international community intervenes. Far too often lessons painfully learned in earlier interventions are forgotten or ignored. There is no checklist of appropriate policies for fragile states. What may have worked in Iraq for instance – such as international support for tribally based militias - is unlikely to work in Afghanistan. In fact in the latter country, the last five years have seen failed incarnations of the same policy on militias – first in the form of arbakai (tribal militias), then the Afghan National Auxiliary Police, then the Afghan Public Protection Force, and now the Coalition appears determined to repeat the failures of those initiatives with its latest effort, the Local Defense Initiative. So perhaps an exhortation to understand the problem is not quite as obvious as it seems. Policies have to be evidence-based. They have to build on a field-based understanding of the history, culture, political dynamics and region. This is where the work of organizations like Crisis Group is so important. We produced field-based policy reports. Our analysts are stationed in or near the countries they cover. They are steeped in an understanding of the country, its culture, politics, and the interests of the key players. They can and do travel around countries much more freely than embassy staff can. They usually have better access too. All of which is reflected in our analysis. 2. Recognise that prevention is better than cure, and that prevention does work. There was an excellent report published in 2005 – the Human Security Report – which documented the trends in conflicts since the Second World War. (The 2009 issue of this report is forthcoming.) Its headline statistic is an encouraging one, and perhaps counterintuitive – namely that there has been a 40% reduction in the number of state-based armed conflicts since the early 1990s. And, while there has been a small uptick in the number of state-based conflicts since 2003, when non-state conflicts are included (i.e. conflicts in which all both parties are non-state actors, such as rebel groups) there has been a continuing decline in the overall number of conflicts since 2003. There has also been a longer term trend decline in battle deaths (ie military personal and civilians killed in fighting.) There were only some 12,000 reported battle deaths in 2005 – less than any year since 1946. Why has there been a decline in conflict, and what lessons can we learn from these trends? The Human Security Report posits a number of causes, such as end of the Cold War leading to a reduction in proxy conflicts, and the growth in the number of democracies. But it attributes much of the reduction to a surge in international conflict prevention and resolution activities in the 1990s, led by a reinvigorated United Nations. Between 1987 and 2008, the number of Special Representatives of the Secretary- General increased six-fold. UN peacekeeping missions – which play a key role in preventing renewed conflict - increased from four in 1990 to 15 currently.[v] The international financial institutions and donor governments and civil society have played a significant role with their efforts to address the root causes of conflict. The key message is that conflict prevention efforts, for all their failings and inadequacies, can make a real difference. There are some examples of where these advances – seen, for example, in the rise in resources devoted to peacekeeping and conflict prevention work among national governments, stronger regional peace and security response mechanisms, the evolution of vibrant civil society engagement in conflict resolution and reconciliation initiatives, and advances at the level of international law – have paid dividends. In some cases, coordinated international engagement has been instrumental in shifting states affected by devastating civil wars onto the fragile road to transition. Countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Nepal continue to face considerable challenges, in economic development, institution building and professionalization of their public services in the wake of devastating civil wars. The painful and long-term task of reconciling societies damaged by war will remain relevant for some years. But these states also managed to execute a transition to post-war recovery that would have seemed inconceivable in the early 2000s. Concerted efforts by regional organisations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), have also played a decisive role in preventing violent outbreak in fragile states and in bringing states back to the fold. We saw some encouraging evidence of the impact of coordinated regional and international engagement in Guinea over the past few months. Effective regional and international actions in response to 2009’s military takeover have been instrumental in encouraging the country’s shift back to civilian rule from January this year. Of course, there is no room for complacency. Climate change, the fallout from the global economic crisis (including falling commodity prices and reduced remittances from diasporas), the aftermath of recent fuel and food price shocks, and a likely fall in the aid and development budgets of rich countries are all likely to increase the likelihood of conflict in fragile states in the coming years. Given this outlook, policymakers need to develop smarter and more cost effective interventions. And that being the case, we need to recognise that prevention is not only more effective than intervention after the bullets have started flying – but (and this should be music to policymakers’ ears) it is also much cheaper. A 2004 study estimated that on average one euro spent on conflict prevention generates over 4 euros in savings to the international community.[vi] As with all such studies, there are a number of heroic assumptions involved - but not so heroic to render the key finding redundant, namely that the cost of properly targeted prevention is a lot less than the cost of conflict. To give some concrete figures, though again, very much context specific: the former UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has estimated that the small preventive military deployment in Macedonia, stopping the slide to war there, cost the British taxpayer £14 million (24 m euros), while fighting the war in Kosovo, by contrast, cost Britain £200 million (350 m euros), and in Bosnia over £1.5 billion (2.6 billion euros). And those are just the military costs, not the costs of reconstruction. 3. Understand the regional context Fragile state policies are generally geared towards individual states, and too often ignore the regional context. But as the experience of Africa and the Balkans and South Asia have amply demonstrated -- conflict and state-failure usually have very strong regional dynamics. Neighboring states can contribute to conflict in a number of ways. The most obvious is by being a party to the conflict. They can be active participants, for instance by being at war with the state in question, but more usually they are indirect participants, preferring to support proxy militias or fund rebel groups. Rwanda and Uganda were both in the Congo. Neighboring states can also provide a safe haven for rebels or spoilers, as Pakistan is doing with the Taliban, and Chad and Sudan are doing for each other’s rebels. They can funnel arms and supplies to governments or rebels (as some 11 countries are alleged to have been doing in Somalia, many of them being neighboring countries); or they can be more subtle in their destabilisation – as one could perhaps characterise Ethiopia’s role in Somalia, as it pulled its troops after its intervention, leaving a security vacuum and likely ensuring Somalia remains a failed state for many years yet. As noted above, the Political Instability Task Force has identified “bad neighborhood” as a statistically significant risk factor for conflict, with bad neighborhood here being defined as four or more bordering states embroiled in armed civil or ethnic conflict. So when it comes to strengthening or rebuilding fragile states, failing to address these regional dynamics will probably consign even the best-designed and most well-intentioned peacekeeping mission or development assistance package to failure as soon as the troops leave or the donor community’s generosity runs dry. 4. Commit the necessary political, financial and security resources The key political resource is a commitment to stay the course. It takes many years to rebuild a state, and premature disengagement can very quickly destroy all the progress and the billions invested in rebuilding. Just look at Timor Leste, where premature disengagement allowed that country to fall back into conflict, with the result that in 2006 it was almost back to where it started after its violent rebirth in 1999. Doubt among Afghans about the international community’s commitment to stay feeds insecurity there, and feeds patronage-based politics, and a willingness to do deals with the insurgent leadership - driven in part by their fear that the internationals will abandon them, as they have done in the past. The sad fact is that the international community isn’t good at staying the course. Too often we adopt a formulaic approach – particularly to those states requiring large scale international intervention. The standard response is a four or five year commitment, in the form of largish peacekeeping missions to back up internationally mediated peace agreements or Security Council resolutions, some DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants) and SSR (security system reform) followed by a rush of indigestible aid dollars, a flurry of institution building, and premature elections – followed too often and too soon by a withdrawal of peacekeeping troops and a drying up of aid money just when it is most needed and the absorptive capacity is able to beginning coping with it. A rush to early elections can be particularly problematic. Holding elections – although good for political show business (and, in post-conflict peacebuilding contexts, much loved as an exit benchmark for governments anxious to meet their commitments and go home) - quite often has nothing much to do with democracy. Crisis Group was one of the first organisations to really make this point loudly and clearly, opposing as we did a rush to an early election in Bosnia in 1996 because we feared this would consolidate ethnic divisions which hadn’t had the chance to be counterbalanced by the development national secular political forces, or at least strong civil society institutions. The recent presidential election in Afghanistan, held when there evidently wasn’t the domestic institutional capacity to manage a credible and legitimate process, is another example. We know that the period of transition to democracy is in many ways one of the most dangerous and fragile of all. This doesn’t mean that we should retreat from democratisation, but that we should rethink our priorities in the way we pursue it. The most important of all things to prioritise is the rule of law – often a very difficult challenge, but essential if democratic institutions are to take root and flourish. When it comes to financial resources – the temptation is to do it on the cheap. This is the ultimate false economy. Conflict imposes horrendous financial costs, not to mention the devastating human toll. And failure to get it right after conflict significantly increases the risk of a return to conflict. It has been estimated (in 2004) that civil war in a low-income country costs that country and its neighbors on average 42 billion euros in direct and indirect costs. That is for a single conflict. To put that figure in perspective, the worldwide aid budget in 2004 was 60 billion euros. So we should properly fund effective prevention, and thereby reduce the costs spent on peacebuilding post-conflict reconstruction. And when we do have to fund peacebuilding, we shouldn’t do it on the cheap – as the likelihood is that this will increase the risk of the country falling back into conflict, thereby requiring yet further expenditure on peacekeeping and stabilisation forces and the follow-up peacebuilding. Finally there are the security resources. A secure environment is a necessary but not sufficient condition to strengthening a fragile state. It’s sobering to realise that rebel groups and militias responsible for terrorizing a country or large parts of it are often very weak and brittle. They often survive and prosper because there are no capable forces to oppose them. When confronted with effective forces, they will often collapse – as happened with the rebels in Sierra Leone (confronted first by the mercenaries of Executive Outcomes, and subsequently routed by a few hundred British special forces); militias in Bunia, DRC (confronted by EU/French forces in Operation Artemis); or rebelling soldiers recently in Timor Leste (confronted by Australian troops and police). More importantly, security guarantees can be critical in deterring future spoilers. The ability to rapidly deploy an effective military force can be sufficient to ensure that the need to deploy will not arise. The commitment can be an over-the-horizon one – as the UK provided to Sierra Leone – but it needs to be real and credible. But sometimes a small security commitment will not be sufficient, and large scale sustained commitments are required. Even then, an effective and timely commitment may repay the investment many fold in terms of the avoidance of future costs. Such commitments are expensive and politically difficult – particularly where there is a likelihood of casualties – but as always the cost of failing has to be weighed against the cost of the commitment. Back in March 2002, when there were some 4,500 NATO peacekeepers stationed in Kabul, Crisis Group called for the peacekeeping force to be expanded to 25,000-30,000 and deployed around the country – a call subject to much criticism and ridicule from some Coalition governments, and NATO itself, as being greatly in excess of what was needed or feasible. Some eight years later, NATO is on track to have 150,000 troops deployed by September 2010. Conclusion Fragile states need lots of security and lots of development if they are to become viable and effective states in future. And it’s important to remember that in a globalised world, it’s not just capital and trade that travel the world **– terrorism and extremism can also be exported, or nurtured in fragile states**, and ill-gotten funds laundered by them. But while that provides an incentive for international engagement, it’s important that it not become the sole justification for engagement. Fragile states inflict untold misery on their citizens and on neighboring countries. When it comes to addressing state fragility we increasingly understand what works and what doesn’t – even if we are a long way from having all the answers yet. We certainly know enough to know that we aren’t doing enough to assist such states. Earlier and better targeted assistance to fragile states would dramatically improve the quality of life for hundreds of millions of people, which makes it a tremendously worthy goal in its own right.

#### The impact of a civil war outweighs all aff impact scenarios – civil war is probable in this context, goes international and effects become widespread

Elshelmani 2015 Arij, a studious author with multiple publications all revolving around unique socio-economic, political, cultural issues, “Why Are Civil Wars so Protracted and Difficult to End?”, 10-20-2015, E-International Relations, https://www.e-ir.info/2015/11/20/why-are-civil-wars-so-protracted-and-difficult-to-end/#:~:text=While%20the%20populations%20of%20warring,large%20number%20of%20civilian%20casualties. //EddyV

As interstate war has become less common, academic attention has shifted to the plethora of armed conflicts occurring within the boundaries of states. These civil wars have proven to be more protracted and difficult to terminate for numerous reasons that vary according to their unique socio-economic, political and cultural contexts. Hence, providing a perfect general theory is problematic. Nevertheless, a number of critical factors that affect the duration of civil wars and their inability to be resolved relative to interstate wars can be distinguished. Firstly, unlike interstate wars, which occur between clearly-defined armies and are generally amenable to compromise, civil wars tend to be low-intensity, existential struggles, making them, therefore, inherently-protracted affairs. Moreover, the decentralized organizational structure of contemporary insurgencies and their tendency to fragment and become engulfed in internecine fighting further undermines attempts at reaching a political settlement. Third, peace is difficult to achieve when, for many actors, war is preferable. Often ignored is the capacity of war to endow belligerents with profits and power. Various cases of “enemies” colluding to prolong violence challenge the common assumption that the ultimate objective of war is victory. Finally, the essay questions what an “end” to civil war implies. Even when one side claims total victory or in the rare cases where peace accords are signed and the war is formally concluded, the transition from large-scale civil violence to peace is not so clear. Collective memories of mutual violence persist into the post-conflict period, and cultures of violence are sustained. If not fully addressed, along with the underlying grievances that originally inspire violence, peace will remain at best fragile, and violence may continue in other forms. In this light, even the success stories of post-accord societies in Latin America and Lebanon appear to be “unfinished” civil wars.[1] The Asymmetric Nature of Civil Wars: Given that interstate wars are generally fought in a series of direct confrontations between professional armies and across defined frontlines, they are relatively quick and decisive. In contrast, intrastate wars are distinguished by the asymmetric distribution of material power among the main parties of the conflict, usually the incumbent government or power and the rebels or insurgents opposing it. The asymmetric nature of internal conflicts forces insurgents to adopt a strategy of guerrilla warfare in which the evasion of the enemy is a matter of survival. To overcome its military weakness, the insurgent force gradually wears down the enemy through hit-and-run tactics. Civil war is thus an inherently-protracted affair. What adds complexity to these wars is that they are almost never wholly internal. In an age of interconnectivity and interdependency, their outcome is often of strategic interest not only to neighboring powers but also to the international community at-large. The role of external intervention in influencing the balance of power between parties and therefore the trajectory of civil wars is critical. When external intervention is balanced between the opposing sides it can increase the duration of war.[2] This was most evident when the Cold War superpowers played out their ideological struggle in the conflict theater of the global South. The weaponry and supplies they provided fueled some of the most ferocious internal conflicts. Similarly, the internationalization of the contemporary Syrian conflict seems to have reconfigured the balance of power towards a prolonged stalemate.[3] Here, negotiation may only be contemplated when both parties reach a “mutually hurting stalemate,”[4] that is, a stage of deadlock when both sides simultaneously perceive continued fighting as offering little returns and mounting costs. However, with external actors distorting the perception of warring parties’ prospects on the battlefield, arriving at this stage may take many years. Limited Space for Compromise Interstate wars may be driven by border disputes; they could be a reaction to some existential threat, an attempt at regional hegemony, or a contest for access to trade routes and resources, to name a few. In theory, all of these factors are amenable to compromise, even if they too can produce long and costly wars. The Persian Gulf War is but one example; after eight years of conflict, Saddam Hussein relinquished his demands for complete control over Shatt-Al Arab and began withdrawing his forces from Iran, effectively bringing the war to a close. Where civil wars are driven by limited aims and objectives, the government can respond with the necessary reforms and negotiate with the aggrieved parties to stifle the conflict. When the objective is to secede, to overthrow the government, or even to radically transform social structures, compromise is improbable if not impossible. Secession is unfeasible for there can only be one government. Such wars are existential struggles with each side framing the conflict in terms of “victory or death.” Unsurprisingly, they take an intensely violent nature. Where belligerents cannot envision a common future of power sharing, incumbents have attempted to delegitimize their opponents by labeling them “terrorists,” “criminals,” or “ foreign agents.” This de-politicization of the opposition is a common feature of civil wars and serves as a serious impediment to their termination through civil means. As long as insurgents are excluded from the political arena, violent force will remain their primary means of communication. In other cases, parties may be willing to compromise on their original political goals and form a united government. However, the vulnerability of disarming and demobilizing entails, given the absence of mutual trust and the lack of a third party entity to monitor and enforce the agreement, can encourage combatants to reject opportunities for a peace settlement.[5] Here, it is the security dilemma, rather than the limited scope of compromise that inhibits the resolution of civil wars.[6] Organizational Structure: Fragmentation and Internal Rivalry A central requirement for any effective peace settlement is the presence of strong, representative leaders at the negotiating table. Interstate wars meet this condition more easily. Governments tend to maintain a unified hierarchical structure, with a strategic apex that exerts a tight reign over its security apparatus. In contrast, contemporary insurgencies are decentralized coalitions, plagued by factionalism and weak command and control.[7] Their propensity for fragmentation is a serious impediment to their resolution, which only becomes more potent as the war goes on and as new sub-groups emerge with their own interests and agendas. As the number of parties to a conflict increases, the prospects for agreement shrink, and, consequently, the duration of the internal war expands.[8] The contemporary experience of Syria is telling. As the war enters its third year, the broad coalition of groups constituting the armed opposition has grown to include thousands of foreign fighters and Salafist groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, who all possess their own unique ideological vision of Syria’s future.[9] These increasingly potent groups, among other factions, refuse to succumb to the influence and control of the Free Syrian Army and its political wing, viewing the latter as an elite grouping of self-interested exiles. The detachment between the political wing of the opposition and those on the battleground is problematic. Any decision made on the negotiating table at the national or international level is of limited value without the consent of those who control the reality on the ground. The Personalization of Civil Wars Though fragmentation can prolong civil wars, strong leadership is not necessarily a panacea. The Syrian civil war, like others, has also been sustained by its deeply personalized nature. The reputation of Bashar Al Assad among loyalists has achieved a “non-negotiable” status, while the opposition has refused to accept anything short of his removal from power. Gaddafi and Milosevic are two examples of leaders who opted for their own political survival over the national interest, manipulating and inflaming existing social divisions to escalate the war and secure their power.[10] Jonas Savimbi appeared to be the main “spoiler” of the Bicesse peace accords, rejecting the outcome of 1992 presidential election and returning the country to a state of war. Indeed, it was only with his death that his successor, Paulo Armindo Lukamba returned UNITA to the negotiating table and large-scale violence subdued.[11] General Michel Awn’s sense of omnipotence drove him to reject numerous invitations to join the post-Ta’ if government, and instead to declare a “war of liberation” against the Syrian military presence that would claim more than a thousand lives.[12] Of course, leaders are not always the all- powerful decision makers who the media portrays, and placing too much emphasis on their character can lend to their demonization. Nonetheless, the role of the individual cannot be completely discredited either. Indeed, breakthroughs in peace negotiations have frequently coincided with changes in the top leadership.[13] A Political Economy Perspective: Entrenched Interests in the Continuation of Violence The amount of material destruction and human suffering a civil war produces is immense. Yet, while the majority of the population may seek its end, a minority can develop an entrenched interest in its continuation. Thus, attempts to explain the longevity of civil wars are only complete with reference to the political and economic incentives they present. As the civil war rages on, the state’s capacity to control all its territories, enforce the law, and provide basic goods and services are eroded. A range of informal actors, from warlords, militias, and gangs, emerges to fill the vacuum, often carving out their own enclaves where they can become the prime source of social administration and coercion as well as the de-facto owners of the area and its resources. In this context of the state collapse, ordinary civilians can become willing participants in violence. For young uneducated and unemployed men and women, joining an armed band may be the only alternative to a life of destitution. Violence becomes a means of subsistence, supplying its members with shelter and food as well as a sense of protection, belonging and status in a society in which family networks and state institutions have disintegrated.[14] State collapse does not imply an inherent descent into anarchy and senseless violence. Rather, an organized war economy based on looting, extortion, and protection rackets forms around the armed groups. Militias originally relying on volunteers to fill their ranks and finance their operations mutate into professional business entities with profitable links to regional and international trading networks. This has been particularly the case after the end of Cold War. With the sudden absence of external patronage, the warring parties to many conflicts in the South still had to look beyond their borders for alternative means of financing their operations. Therefore, even if economic globalization may not cause civil wars, for their roots often lay in cultural, historical and political grievances, one cannot deny its role in empowering violent sub-national actors by sustaining contemporary war economies. [15] As sub-national actors develop their taste for the status, power and profits violence accrues, they may show small interest in capturing a weak state with no means of enforcing its control over its territories and resources. In the current state of conflict there is a sense of familiarity and economic security. Meanwhile, peace represents uncertainty. For a negotiated peace is ultimately based on promises of political and economic inclusion that can easily be betrayed. A popular assumption is that the objective of each of the warring parties is the total defeat of the enemy’s capability.[16] In reality, the state of violent conflict can endow criminal activities with a rare legitimacy, and therefore every effort is made by belligerents to eschew decisive battles.[17] Indeed, governments may form informal alliances with their enemies to exploit unarmed civilians and natural resources. In Sierra Leone, the poor pay and training of government forces and their affiliated irregulars encouraged them to prey on civilians rather than engage in costly combat with the Revolutionary United Front. Demonstrating this, elite figures in the Angolan administration and security forces have been accused of selling weapons to UNITA on multiple occasions.[18] Similarly, an authoritarian government may deliberately prolong the civil war as a means of concentrating its power and destroying all opposition. In the name of combating “terror” and suppressing “rebels,” a government may declare a state of emergency; introduce draconian laws to limit the freedom of expression, assembly, and association; and indefinitely delay elections. The actions of the Algerian government’s in its contest with Islamist insurgents during the 1990s seem to follow this logic. In the series of massacres of the mid and late 1990s, government forces merely watched from a close distance as Islamist guerrillas slaughtered and mutilated civilians for hours.[19] As the war progressed, the population became alienated from the Islamist cause while the government enjoyed an increase in its support. Only by escalating and prolonging the war could Algeria’s military regime entrench its political power. Unfinished Civil Wars: Sustained Cultures of Violence and the Legacy of Atrocities Even where these barriers to negotiated settlement have been overcome and contesting forces have engaged in dialogue and agreed to end all military confrontations, the transition from war to peace has been less than clear. In Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, the ideological violence of their protracted civil wars seems to have been merely substituted with extreme levels of criminal violence.[20] There are many explanations for why “peace” can be difficult to distinguish from war. However, in all cases where the peace process has failed to address the roots of the conflict and to challenge the political structures, social divisions and economic inequalities that gave rise to insurgencies in the first place, violence has been renewed. In the case of Nicaragua and Guatemala, the continued economic marginalization of its youth and the incomplete efforts to reintegrate ex-combatants into civilian life have manifested in the plethora of criminal gangs that dominate urban and increasingly rural areas and threaten the rule of law.[21] The same failure to reintegrate demobilized fighters was a feature of the Dayton and Abouja peace processes.[22] Post- Ta’if Lebanon’s peace is at best described as a fragile one. The incessant paralysis of state institutions, which is to a large extent the product of the accords’ consociational formula, has allowed crime to fester and the country to be consumed by political assassinations and kidnappings. More problematically, it has led citizens to increasingly rely on their own sects for economic and social security.[23] Consequently, the relationship between the various confessional groups in Lebanon is still dominated by a degree of distance, suspicion, and even animosity. Problematically, these social divisions have proven to be easily inflamed by regional developments and external forces as well as local elites.[24] It follows that Post-Ta’if Lebanon is more accurately conceptualized as a prolonged ceasefire, rather than as a consolidated peace as virtually the same socio-economic and political structures that gave rise to the civil war remain intact. In such an environment the threat of renewed large-scale violence is omnipresent. Critical to understanding the fragility of post-conflict societies peace are the legacies of atrocities, which remain unaddressed. While the populations of warring states are separated and secured by their respective borders, civil wars do not offer such sanctuary. By their nature, civil wars occur among and between the people and, therefore, claim large number of civilian casualties. With the objective of controlling the populace, factions resort to coercive and brutal means. When so many civilians are displaced, brutalized and killed, a once unified society becomes a deeply polarized one. Healing the psychological wounds of a protracted civil war to avoid its renewal proves to be a long and challenging process. The consolidation of peace is further endangered by the culture of violence that protracted civil wars can breed and sustain, and which often persists into the post-war period. During the civil war, the barrel of the gun becomes the main means of resolving disputes, making demands, and attaining perceived rights among large swaths of the population. The intensity of battle and the level of atrocities against civilians can erode the social norms that may have regulated the use of violence in the past. In the post-civil war environment, often characterized by a weak security apparatus and criminal justice system, the widespread availability of weapons and weak civil society, and with the collective memories of atrocities still fresh, every incentive is available for an individual to distribute his or her own retributive justice. When violence is not sanctioned and barely condemned it becomes normalized and legitimated. Conclusion This essay has attempted to present a number of structural explanations for the protracted and persistent nature of civil wars relative to interstate conflicts. At the most fundamental level, civil wars’ protracted nature stems from the material asymmetry between the incumbent and the insurgents, their tendency to become internationalized, and the limited space of compromise they involve. The essay has also highlighted the role of their factionalized as well as personalized nature as barriers to a negotiated settlement. Given the immense physical destruction protracted civil wars entail, they are often reduced to irrational and meaningless conflicts. However, such views disregard the economic and political incentives that the continuation of violence presents to both sub-state actors and the state itself. The structural aspects of intrastate conflict present clear barriers to a negotiated settlement, but even in the cases where it has been reached, it has rarely succeeded in putting a decisive end to the war. As long as the root causes of civil war: insecurity, poverty, overpopulation, political exclusion as well as the legacy of atrocities and cultures of violence, are not addressed, violence continues, even if it mutates into different forms and occurs between different parties.

#### Democracy Survived 2020 but Renewed Efforts to Overturn Election Results Lead to Destruction of our Democracy and widespread violence and chaos

Galston and Kamarck -1/4/22

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SECTION 1: IS DEMOCRACY FAILING? We examine this question along two key dimensions: public opinion and institutional performance. THE AMERICAN PUBLIC Based on six high-quality surveys conducted in the last year and a half, support for democracy as the best form of government remains overwhelming and mostly stable across party lines.[3] However, about 1 in 5 Americans have views that make them at least open to, if not outright supportive of, authoritarianism.[4] But there’s an important qualification: Americans distinguish sharply between democracy in principle and in practice. There is near-universal agreement that our system is not working well—in particular, that it is not delivering the results people want. This is troubling because most people value democracy for its fruits, not just its roots.[5] Given that situation, it is not surprising that public support is very high for fundamental change in our political system to make the system work better. There is no party of the status quo in contemporary America: both sides want changes, but they disagree about the direction of change. Unfortunately, about 6 in 10 Americans do not think that the system can change.[6] And because it has not changed despite growing dysfunction, polarization has led to legislative gridlock, which has generated rising support for unfettered executive action to carry out the people’s will. - Center for Effective Public Management Senior Fellow - Governance Studies Democracy means the rule of the people, but Americans do not fully agree about who belongs to the people. Although there are areas of agreement across partisan and ideological lines, some in our nation hold that to be “truly” American, you must believe in God, identify as Christian, and be born in the United States.[7] In a period of increasing immigration and religious pluralism, these divisions can become dangerous. Disagreements about who is truly American are part of a broader cleavage in American culture. 70% of Republicans believe that America’s culture and way of life have changed for the worse since the 1950s, while 63% of Democrats believe that they have changed for the better.[8] Strong majorities of Republicans agree that “Things have changed so much that I often feel like a stranger in my own county,” that “Today, America is in danger of losing its culture and identity,” and that “the American way of life needs to be protected for foreign influences.” Majorities of Democrats reject these propositions. Support for political violence is significant. In February 2021, 39% of Republicans, 31% of Independents, and 17% of Democrats agreed that “if elected leaders will not protect America, the people must do it themselves, even if it requires violent actions.” In November, 30% of Republicans, 17% of Independents, and 11% of Democrats agreed that they might have to resort to violence in order to save our country.”[9] While public support for many of the reforms in federal compromise legislation is strong, there is a divide in the electorate on what they view as the largest problem in our current system.[10] In September, only 36% believed that “rules that make it too difficult for eligible citizens to vote” constituted the largest problem for our elections, compared to 45% who identified “rules that are not strict enough to prevent illegal votes from being cast” as the largest problem. The conclusion we draw from this quick review of public opinion is that if democracy fails in America, it will not be because a majority of Americans is demanding a non-democratic form of government. It will be because an organized, purposeful minority seizes strategic positions within the system and subverts the substance of democracy while retaining its shell—while the majority isn’t well organized, or doesn’t care enough, to resist. As we show in a later section, the possibility that this will occur is far from remote. AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS A second way of considering whether democracy is failing is to look at the institutions of government. Successful democratic systems are not designed for governments composed of ethical men and women who are only interested in the public good. If leaders were always virtuous there would be no need for checks and balances. The Founding Fathers understood this. They designed a system to protect minority points of view, to protect us from leaders inclined to lie, cheat and steal, and (paradoxically) to protect the majority against minorities who are determined to subvert the constitutional order. During the Trump presidency, the formal institutional “guardrails” of democracy—Congress, the federalist system, the Courts, the bureaucracy, and the press—held firm against enormous pressure. At the same time, there is evidence that the informal norms of conduct that shape the operation of these institutions have weakened significantly, making them more vulnerable to future efforts to subvert them.[11] There is no guarantee that our constitutional democracy will survive another sustained—and likely better-organized—assault in the years to come. We begin with the good news about our institutions. Former President Trump did not succeed in materially weakening the powers of the Congress.[12] He did not try to disband Congress, and while he often fought that institution, it fought back. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) had no trouble confronting him, and Democrats brought impeachment charges against him not once but twice. Although speculation was rampant, in the end then-Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) did not block either trial. While former Leader McConnell and allies have been called former President Trump’s lapdogs, on virtually all domestic policy issues they have acted like almost any Republican majority would act, and on foreign policy former Leader McConnell neither stopped nor punished Republican senators who tried to constrain Trump when they thought he was wrong.[13] The American system is a federalist system. The Constitution distributes power between the federal government and the state government, codified in the 10th Amendment to the Constitution. States have repeatedly and successfully exercised their power against former President Trump, especially in two areas, COVID-19 and voting.[14] Despite Mr. Trump’s attempts to pressure the nation’s governors and other state officials into doing what he wanted, he did not inflict lasting damage on the federalist system, and the states are no weaker—perhaps even stronger—than they were before his presidency. Citizens now understand that in a crisis, states are the ones who control things that are important to them like shutdown orders and vaccine distribution. DEMOCRACY In the spring of 2020 then-President Trump, anxious to get past COVID in time for his re-election campaign, was pushing hard for states to open up early. Only a few complied, while many—including some Republican governors—ignored him. Seeing that the governors were not scared of him, Mr. Trump then threatened to withhold medical equipment based on states’ decisions about opening up. He came up against the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the 10th Amendment, which prevents the president from conditioning federal aid on the basis of governors’ acquiescing to a president’s demands.[15] The guardrails between the federal government and the states also held when it came to Mr. Trump’s campaign to reverse the 2020 election results. In Georgia, the Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, a stalwart Republican and Trump supporter, certified election results in spite of personal calls and threats from the president. In Michigan, Republican Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and Republican House Speaker Lee Chatfield did not give in to Trump’s attempts to get them to diverge from the process of choosing electors. One of the hallmarks of failing democracies is a weak judicial system under heavy political control. But under assault from then-President Trump, the judiciary remained independent despite his repeated attempts to win in the courts what he could not win at the ballot box. President Trump-appointed judges often made decisions that thwarted Mr. Trump’s attempts to overturn the results. In fact, after the election Mr. Trump’s team and allies brought 62 lawsuits and won exactly one.[16] (The others he either dropped or lost.) Many of those decisions were handed down by Republican judges.[17] Perhaps former President Trump’s biggest disappointment was the Supreme Court’s decision not to hear election challenges concerning states he claimed he had won.[18] A free press is an essential element of a healthy democracy. Former President Trump spent four years using the bully pulpit of the presidency to mock the press, calling them names and “the enemy of the people” and referring to outlets he does not like as “failing.” He revoked the press credentials of reporters he did not like. (The courts restored them.) Nevertheless, reporters were not afraid to call out his lies. With Mr. Trump out of office for months now, no major news outlets have gone broke. Few are afraid to criticize former President Trump or his supporters. The free press is still fundamentally free (although President Trump undoubtably contributed to some decline in public trust of the media, which in turn weakens its oversight and accountability functions). Its financial and structural problems, most of which are attributable to the challenges of internet age, predated Mr. Trump. Some argue that former President Trump increased distrust in the media but, as polling indicates, the lack of trust in media declined to less than fifty percent in the first decade of the 21st century and has stayed in the low forties in recent years.[19] One final point: democracies often fail when their military sides with anti-democratic insurgents. But in the United States, the tradition of civil control over the armed forces remains strong—especially within the military. After the chaos in Lafayette Park last June, when Mark Milley, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, appeared with then-President Trump in military fatigues, Mr. Milley and other top military leaders went out of their way to reaffirm this tradition, which is drilled into all officers throughout their careers. A military coup is the least likely way for democracy in America to end.[20] SO WHY ARE WE WORRIED? Although scholars and pundits have long chronicled with regret the rise of partisan polarization and the decline of congressional effectiveness, concern about the outright failure of American democracy was rare before the rise of Donald Trump. Never before in American history have we had a candidate, not to mention a president, who disparaged the integrity of the electoral system and who hinted repeatedly during his election that he would not accept the results of the election if he lost. This behavior began during the Republican primaries and continued in advance of the 2016 election, which he won, and the 2020 election, which he lost.[21] It built to a crescendo that exploded on January 6, 2021, when supporters, called to Washington for a “Stop the Steal” rally, marched to the Capitol, attacked law enforcement officers, vandalized offices, and breached the Senate gallery where the electoral college vote was supposed to be taking place. The non-stop attacks on American elections were part of a broader attack on the truth. Any story Mr. Trump and his supporters disliked became “fake news,” creating, slowly but surely, an alternate universe that encompassed everything from the integrity of the election to public health guidelines for the COVID pandemic. The very existence of a sizeable number of citizens who cannot agree on facts is an enormous threat to democracy. As the Yale historian Timothy Snyder points out in his 2018 book, The Road to Unfreedom, authoritarians like Vladimir Putin have no use for truth or for the facts, because they use and disseminate only what will help them achieve and maintain power.[22] As our colleague Jonathan Rauch argues in The Constitution of Knowledge, disinformation and the war on reality have reached “epistemic” proportions.[23] Even though constitutional processes prevailed and Mr. Trump is no longer president, he and his followers continue to weaken American democracy by convincing many Americans to distrust the results of the election. About three-quarters of rank-and-file Republicans believe that there was massive fraud in 2020 and Joe Biden was not legitimately elected president. “A ‘Politico’/Morning Consult survey found that more than one-third of American voters feel the 2020 election should be overturned, including three out of five Republicans.”[24] The aftermath of the 2020 election revealed structural weaknesses in the institutions designed to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process. A focus of concern is the Electoral Count Act of 1887, which was adopted in response to the contested election of 1876. This legislation is so ambiguously drafted that one of former President Trump’s lawyers used it as the basis of a memorandum arguing that former Vice President Pence, whom the Constitution designates as the chair of the meeting at which the Electoral College ballots are counted, had the right to ignore certified slates of electors the states had sent to Washington. If Mr. Pence had yielded to then-President Trump’s pressure to act in this manner, the election would have been thrown into chaos and the Constitution placed in jeopardy.[25] Recently, former President Trump’s assault on the integrity of the 2020 election has taken a new and dangerous turn. Rather than focusing on federal government, his supporters have focused on the obscure world of election machinery. Republican majorities in state legislatures are passing laws making it harder to vote and weakening the ability of election officials to do their jobs. In many states, especially closely contested ones such as Arizona and Georgia, Mr. Trump’s supporters are trying to defeat incumbents who upheld the integrity of the election and replace them with the former President’s supporters.[26] At the local level, death threats are being made against Democratic and Republican election administrators, with up to 30% of election officials surveyed saying they are concerned for their safety.[27] As seasoned election administrators retire or just quit, Mr. Trump supporters are vying for these obscure but pivotal positions. In Michigan, for instance, the Washington Post reports that there is intense focus on the boards charged with certifying the vote at the county level. Republicans who voted against former President Trump’s efforts to alter the vote count are being replaced. And most dangerous of all, some states are considering laws that would bypass the long-established institutions for certifying the vote-count and give partisan legislatures the authority to determine which slate of electors will represent them in the Electoral College. American democracy is thus under assault from the ground up. The most recent systematic attack on state and local election machinery is much more dangerous than the chaotic statements of a disorganized former president. A movement that relied on Mr. Trump’s organizational skills would pose no threat to constitutional institutions. A movement inspired by him with a clear objective and a detailed plan to achieve it would be another matter altogether. The chances that this threat will materialize over the next few years are high and rising. The evidence suggests that Mr. Trump is preparing once again to seek the Republican presidential nomination—and that he will win the nomination if he tries for it. Even if he decides not to do so, the party’s base will insist on a nominee who shares the former president’s outlook and is willing to participate in a plan to win the presidency by subverting the results of state elections if necessary. The consequences could include an extended period of political and social instability, and an outbreak of mass violence.