

As a half-Russian teenager, I'm prone to occasional inquiries as to whether I adhere to Marxism or if I've hacked into someone's computer recently (I can safely say "no" to both). Yet no one ever asks my views on "Russian aggression." Few wonder if I have family across the Atlantic that could be just as affected by American actions as we purportedly are by Kremlin meddling. People seldom consider how my views on geopolitical happenings are affected by having two places I call home, nor do they seem to care.

For a nation inarguably forged and sustained by immigrants and their descendants, so little attention is given to the concerns of those with roots in the places our country interacts with, especially nations we stand at political odds with. A great deal of discussion from candidates and experts alike surrounds foreign policy, but commentary from ordinary Americans with global ties is seldom broadcasted. Where are the *real* voices of the children of Iranian, North Korean, or Chinese immigrants? Of Dreamers and their parents? Of the descendants of Afghans and Saudi Arabians? Of immigrants themselves?

Perhaps we don't hear their voices because the American population assumes that whatever foreign policy initiative the current administration undertakes is over our heads or completely suitable. Maybe we believe that no matter how loudly we protest, we will have no impact on the way our government conducts itself as an actor on the global stage. It's likewise possible that it stems from the stubborn notion that we ought to isolate ourselves from world happenings, that if we stay out of international affairs, we become immune to whatever befalls the rest of the planet.

The collective voice of the American people who fall into international categories is a dual-edged political sword: it's both an educational tool and an indicator of the direction important parts of the population want to see U.S. foreign policy go. Highlighting their sentiments reminds us that when casting votes for our leaders, we can't limit ourselves to thinking nationally; we must consider how we and our family, friends, and peers, have they ties abroad or not, will be affected by global occurrences, from trade wars to pandemics. It additionally sends a clear message to the heads of our government that we're capable of thinking beyond borders, and expect them to be able to do the same in office.

We must prime our minds, be we journalists or not, to ask people, regardless of heritage, about how they feel about our place in the world. We must do more than merely hear candidates, professionals, and the like lambast the countries the government dictates we are at odds with or detail an international situation from the perspective of a bystander. Whether it's through a TV screen, headline, tweet, or everyday conversation, we must actively seek the voices of those with multiple homelands, whose life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness depend on what happens here, there, and in between.