



**BBC World Service**



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### **Global Views of United States Improve While Other Countries Decline**

*Global views of the United States have improved markedly over the last year while views of many countries have become more negative, according to the latest BBC World Service poll across 28 countries. For the first time since the BBC started tracking in 2005, views of the United States' influence in the world are now more positive than negative on average.*

*The survey, conducted by GlobeScan/PIPA among more than 29,000 adults, asked respondents to say whether they considered the influence of different countries in the world to be mostly positive or mostly negative. It found that the United States is viewed positively on balance in 20 of 28 countries, with an average of 46 per cent now saying it has a mostly positive influence in the world, while 34 per cent say it has a negative influence.*

*Compared to a year earlier, negative ratings of the United States have dropped a striking nine points on average across the countries surveyed both years, while positive ratings are up a more modest four points. Ratings of the influence of many other countries, meanwhile, have declined over the past year. On average, positive ratings of the United Kingdom and Japan are down three points, Canada down six points, and the European Union down four points. Ratings of the United Kingdom's influence in the world declined significantly in 11 countries and rose in only three. (See notes in the BBC or GlobeScan web sites for details of how these tracking averages have been calculated.)*

*Germany is the most favourably viewed nation (an average of 59% positive), followed by Japan (53%), the United Kingdom (52%), Canada (51%), and France (49%). The European Union is viewed positively by 53 per cent. In contrast, Iran is the least favourably viewed nation (15%), followed by Pakistan (16%), North Korea (17%), Israel (19%), and Russia (30%).*

*GlobeScan Chairman Doug Miller comments: "People around the world today view the United States more positively than at any time since the second Iraq war. While still well below that of countries like Germany and the UK, the global standing of the US is clearly on the rise again."*

*After a year it appears the 'Obama effect' is real. Its influence on people's views worldwide, though, is to soften the negative aspects of the United States' image, while positive aspects are not yet coming into strong focus."*

Dan Lund, MUND Group President notes: "The highly negative view in Mexico of US influence needs to be put in the context of incredible expectations and perceived needs on the part of Mexico. The views are particular to the history and geography of Mexico, and have to do with current economic problems and the dynamics of drug violence. No other country studied in this survey operates in these circumstances."



Questions about the image of another country can be dramatically revealing about the country in which the questions are asked, though not in some sort of obvious definitive way. The answers to the questions form the basis for further research, including interviews in a qualitative format.

For example, the attitude of Mexicans toward the United States is profoundly ambiguous, conditioned by history and geography. As we look over past studies we find elements of anger, admiration, envy, plans of opportunity, fantasies of some kind of cultural “reconquista”<sup>1</sup> -- but on balance, engaged and generally positive.

Our use of these questions in the surveys of the past decade shows that Mexican respondents are wary of soft positives, “boosterist” kind of evaluations of other countries. With a high number of “depends, neither positive nor negative, don’t know, Mexicans are generally reticent. The responses summarized below with regard to Canada and the European Union illustrates this dynamic.

The low positives and high negatives with regarding to the US are another matter.

**M1A** Please tell me if you think each of the following countries are having a mainly positive or mainly negative influence in the world:

	<b>United States</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>European Union</b>
01 Mainly positive	13	37	42
02 Mainly negative	49	21	15
03/4/5 Depends, Neutral, Don’t Know	38	42	43

Because our study was done with a telephone survey format, it was relatively easy to call back a number of the original respondents and put the questions to them again. We called 263 of the 500 interviewed in the survey, and found a nearly identical correspondence with their evaluations now and in the late fall of last year. With regard to those who expressed a negative view of the US we asked a series of follow-up questions to illuminate the responses.

We found echoes (sometimes explicitly citing one or more government officials) of widely circulated news stories in Mexico citing authorities here in their own negative opinions of the US:

- ▶ Blaming the US society’s drug demand as the original problem for drug violence and organized crime in Mexico: 77 of the 131 respondents who were negative in 2009 and still negative now.
- ▶ Blaming the US for the economic crisis: 102 of the 131 respondents who were negative and still are (obviously some of the respondents cite more than one reason for being negative on the US).
- ▶ Blaming the US for being the origin of the A H1N1 virus: 22 of the 131 respondents who were negative and still are now.

<sup>1</sup> The “re-conquest” is usually articulated as the result of the growing demographic weight of Mexicans and Hispanics in the United States, integrated into US culture, markets and politics – particularly in the US Southwest, though with regard to other regions as well.



## Long-Term Tracking

Of the 28 nations surveyed in this year's poll, 14 are countries that have been surveyed each year since the poll began in its current form in early 2005. Looking only at these countries illustrates how opinion has shifted over time.

The most striking trend can be seen in views of the United States. Perceptions of the United States in these tracking countries deteriorated sharply in the middle years of this decade. In 2005, 38 per cent of those in tracking countries thought that United States' influence was positive, but this dropped sharply to just over a quarter (28%) by 2007.

It has since recovered this lost ground and this year 40 per cent see United States' influence in the world as mostly positive.

At the same time, views of China in these long-term tracking countries have continued to decline sharply. In 2005, a little less than half (49%) considered that Chinese influence in the world was mostly positive, but this fell to 39 per cent in 2006 and to 34 per cent in 2009, before remaining steady this year.

In contrast, ratings of India have been more stable, rising from 35 per cent to 42 per cent between 2006 and 2007 and slipping back only slightly to 40 per cent last year and this.

Trends for other countries are less clear-cut. Positive ratings of the United Kingdom in long-term tracking countries dropped from 51 per cent to 46 per cent between 2005 and 2006 before increasing to 55 per cent in 2009—but they have fallen off this year and now stand at 51 per cent.

## Detailed Findings

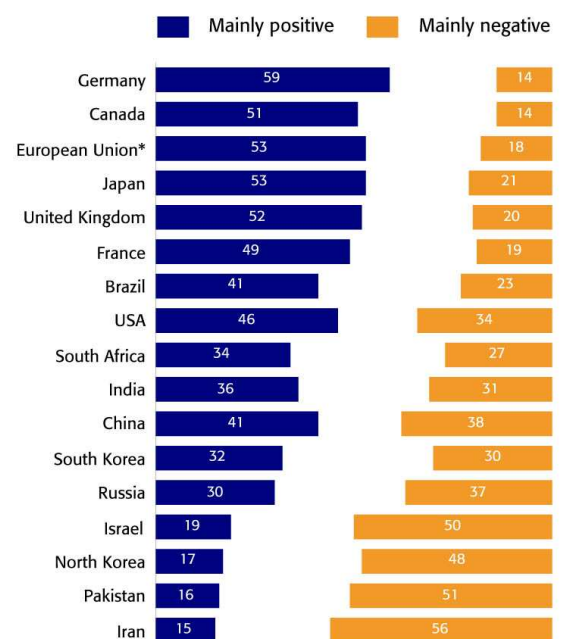
While positive views of the United States increased in most countries polled, the most significant increases were in Germany (up from 18% in 2009 to 39% this year), in Russia (up from 7% to 25%), in Portugal (up from 43% to 57%) and in Chile (up from 42% to 55%) with negative perceptions also falling significantly.

The only countries where perceptions of the United States became more negative overall were Turkey (where the proportion with positive perceptions of the United States fell from 21 per cent to 13 per cent and negative perceptions increased from 63 to 70 per cent), and in India (where positive perceptions dipped from 43 per cent to 39 per cent and negative views increased from 20 to 28 per cent).

The only two countries to have majorities with negative views of the United States are Turkey (70%) and Pakistan (52%). Russia is also quite negative (50%).

Views of Different Countries' Influence

Average of 27 Countries, 2010



The white space in this chart represents "Depends," "Neither/neutral," and "DK/NA."  
 Asked of half of sample  
 Note: Each aggregated rating excludes the target country's rating of itself.  
 \*Average of 28 countries



**Backgrounder: Country-by-Country Results<sup>2</sup>**

**The United States**

Views of the USA are now positive in most countries around the world for the first time since tracking began. Nineteen countries give US influence positive ratings, while six lean negative and two are divided. In the 27 country average, 46 per cent view US influence positively and 34 per cent view it negatively.

This represents a substantial improvement over 2009. Among countries polled in both 2009 and 2010, positive views have increased four points and negative views have decreased nine points. In 2009, 12 countries had negative views, with six expressing positive views and two divided.

Movements have been especially marked in Europe. While a majority of Spaniards (56%) had a negative view, this has dropped 23 points so that views now lean positive (40% positive, 33% negative).

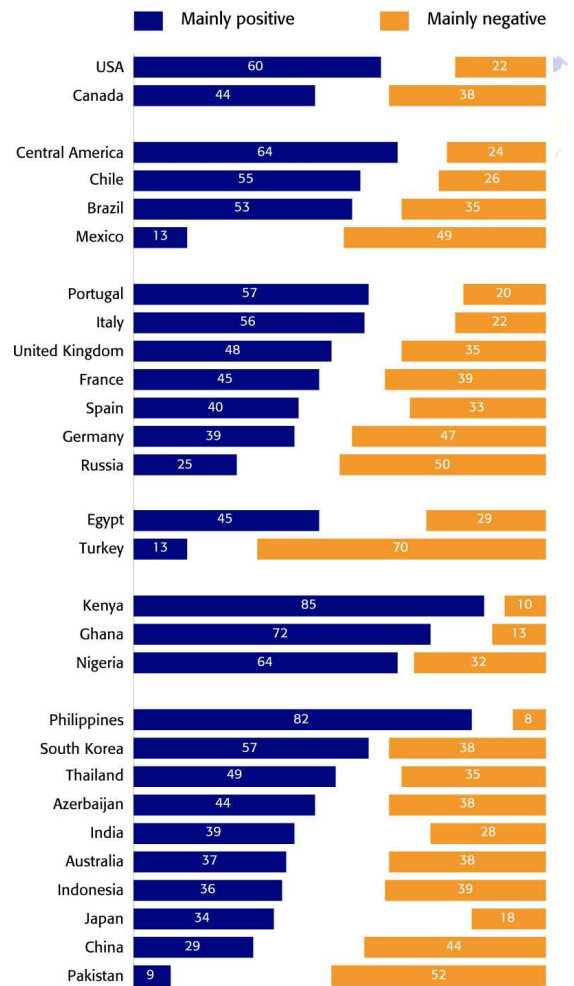
Similarly while France had a majority negative view last year (53%) this has dropped 14 points; now the French lean positive (45% to 39%).

The United Kingdom has gone from leaning negative (41% positive, 45% negative) to leaning positive (48% to 35%).

Other allies have shifted as well. In Canada, formerly a negative majority, views now lean favourable as positive attitudes have risen by six points (now 44%, up from 38%) and negative attitudes have fallen by 17 points (now 38%, down from 55%). Japan, which was divided in 2009, now leans positive as favourable views have grown by six points (now 34%, up from 28%) and unfavourable views have declined by 11 points (now 18%, down from 29%).

In Chile, which was divided in 2009, a majority (55%) now holds positive views on US influence, up 13 points. Egypt, which leaned negative last year (40% to 48%), now leans positive (45% to 29%). Only two countries have a majority with a negative view. Turkey has 70 per cent with an unfavourable view—up seven points from last year. Pakistan has 52 per cent with a negative perspective and just 9 per cent with a positive one. Four countries continue to have a negative view: Russia (50%), Mexico (49%), Germany (47%), and China (44%). However, negative views have dropped in Russia (15 points), Germany (18 points), China (14 points), and Mexico (5 points). Besides Turkey, views also worsened in India. India still leans positive (39% to 28%). African countries and the Philippines, which have generally been very positive toward US influence, remain stable in these views. Large majorities are still favourable in Kenya (85%), the Philippines (82%), Ghana (72%), and Nigeria (64%).

Views of United States' Influence  
 By Country, 2010



The white space in this chart represents "Depends," "Neither/neutral," and "DK/NA." Asked of half of sample

<sup>2</sup> These summaries provide an overview of how nations are viewed by other countries. They do not reflect a country's view of itself.



**Canada**

Canada, while being the fourth most positively evaluated nation, has seen its favourable ratings decline overall. Among countries polled in 2009 and 2010, the average positive rating has dropped by six points.

Twenty-four countries say Canada has a positive influence in world affairs and three countries lean toward saying its influence is negative.

In the 2010 average of 27 countries, 51 per cent are favourable and 14 per cent are unfavourable.

Favourable positions have weakened in some of Canada's closest friends including the USA by 15 points (now 67%, down from 82%), and the United Kingdom by 12 points (now 62%, down from 74%).

Drops in positive ratings were elsewhere as well. China had a remarkable 21-point drop in positive views (now 54%, down from 75%).

And there were significant drops in Portugal by 12 points (now 59%, down from 71%),

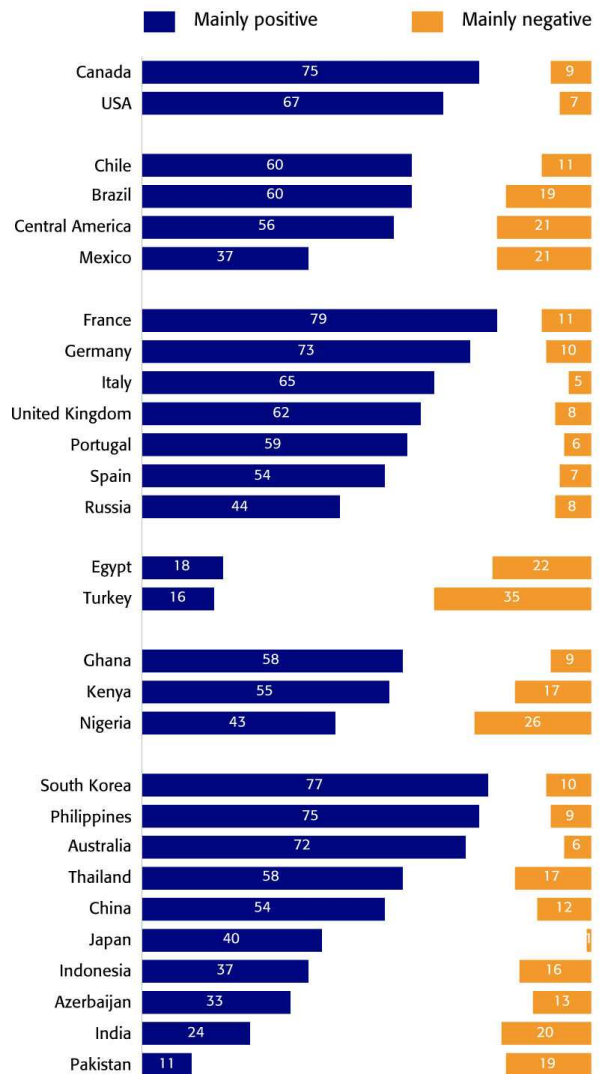
Nigeria by 12 points (now 43%, down from 55%), in Spain by ten points (now 54%, down from 64%), in Italy by nine points (now 65%, down from 74%), in Egypt by eight points (now 18%, down from 26%), and in the Philippines by eight points (now 75%, down from 83%).

Despite widespread erosion in positive views, only three countries lean toward a negative rating and none of them by a majority: Turkey (35% negative, 16% positive), Egypt (22% negative, 18% positive), and Pakistan (19% negative, 11% positive).

On the other hand attitudes toward Canada have improved in Germany, Russia, and even in Turkey. In each of the first two countries, positive ratings have increased substantially:

in Germany by nine points (now 73%, up from 64%)  
 and in Russia by eight points (now 44%, up from 36%).  
 In Turkey, negative ratings have dropped by 14 points (now 35%, down from 49%).

Views of Canada's Influence  
 By Country, 2010



The white space in this chart represents "Depends," "Neither/neutral," and "DK/NA." Asked of half of sample



## The European Union

The European Union continues to receive positive evaluations from nearly every country polled; however, these views have receded in several countries. Among the 22 countries surveyed outside the European Union, 19 offer positive ratings, two offer negative ratings, and one is divided. All the European Union members are quite positive.

On average, in the 22 countries polled outside the European Union, 49 per cent call its influence positive and 19 per cent call it negative. On average among tracking countries, though, there has been a four point drop in positive views.

Outside the Union, favourable ratings have fallen in: Canada, by 16 points (now 57%, down from 73%); the USA, by 12 points (now 50%, down from 62%); India, by 13 points (now 23%, down from 36%); China, by 16 points (now 41%, down from 57%); the Philippines, by 11 points (now 54%, down from 65%); and Australia, by ten points (now 55%, down from 65%).

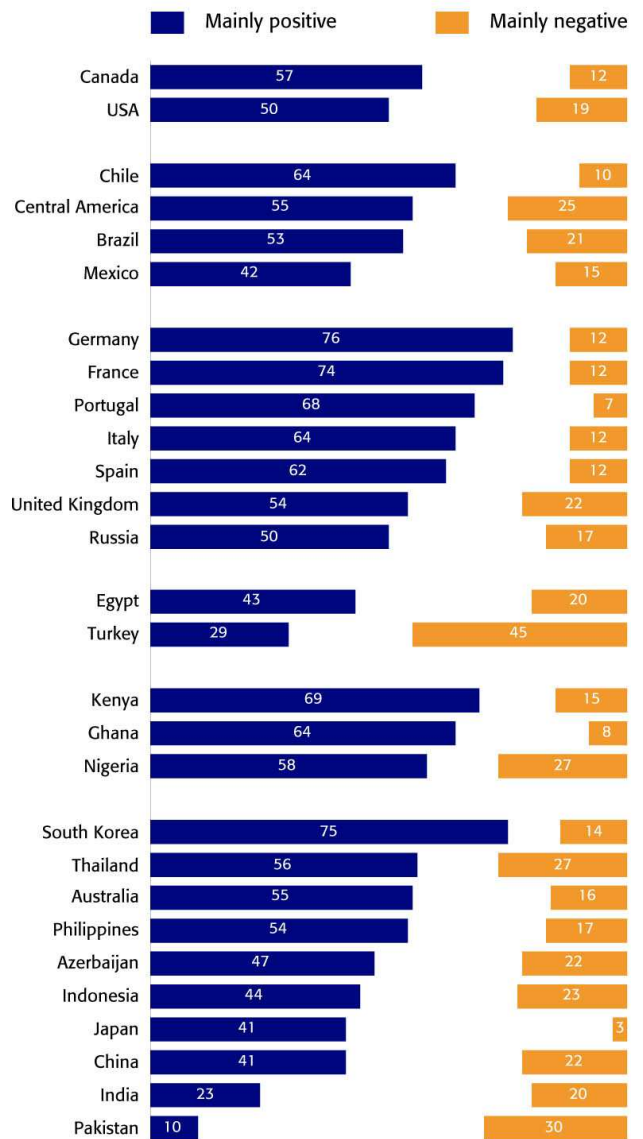
Views of the European Union have improved in Russia, Egypt, and Indonesia. Among Russians, positive views have increased by 19 points (now 50%, up from 31%), and by seven points among Indonesians (now 44%, from 37%). Egyptians' negative ratings have dropped by 15 points (now 20%, down from 35%).

Turkey, the only country that leaned negative on the European Union's influence in 2009, is joined in this view by Pakistan, which was polled for the first time in 2010. Turkey's views are 29 per cent positive, 45 per cent negative. Pakistan's views are 10 per cent positive, 30 per cent negative.



Within the Union, views have cooled in several of the six member countries polled. In Spain, positive views have decreased by 14 points (62%, down from 76%). Similarly, favourable ratings also have dropped in Italy (now 64% from 72%). In Germany where views are still very positive, negative views have nonetheless risen by seven points (12%, up from 5%). The United Kingdom bucks the trend, as negative views have fallen by six points (22%, down from 28%).

Views of European Union's Influence  
 By Country, 2010



The white space in this chart represents "Depends," "Neither/neutral," and "DK/NA." Asked of half of sample

Research in Global Demographics  
Tehuantepec 55 Bis Col. Roma Sur  
Mexico 06760 D.F.  
Tel. +52 (55) 5584 3020; 5584 2470  
e-mail: mund@mundgroup.com  
Website: www.mundgroup.com

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Dan Lund for the MUND Group  
Participating in the BBC World Service/GlobeScan Projects

Mexico City  
Mexico



*In total 29,977 citizens in 28 countries, were interviewed face-to-face or by telephone between 30 November 2009 and 16 February 2010. Nations were rated by half samples in all countries polled. Polling was conducted for BBC World Service by the international polling firm GlobeScan and its research partners in each country. In ten of the 28 countries, the sample was limited to major urban areas. The margin of error per country ranges from +/-2.1 to 6.9 per cent, 19 times out of 20.*

*For more details, please visit [www.GlobeScan.com](http://www.GlobeScan.com) or [www.WorldPublicOpinion.org](http://www.WorldPublicOpinion.org) as well as the GlobeScan Insights blog at <http://globescaninsights.blogspot.com>.*

