

WORLD PUBLIC OPINION

2007

Globalization and Trade
Climate Change
Genocide and Darfur
Future of the United Nations
US Leadership
Rise of China

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WorldPublicOpinion.org is a project of the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland

PARTNER RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS

ABAC Poll Research Center, Assumption University *Bangkok, Thailand*

Armenian Center for National and International Studies *Yerevan, Armenia*

CBOS *Warsaw, Poland*

CIDE / Mexican Council on Foreign Relations *Mexico City, Mexico*

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Introduction

It has become a platitude that we now live in a globalizing world. The increasing flow of information, goods, and people across national boundaries has made the nations of the world increasingly interconnected. This increasing interconnection presents challenges as well as opportunities.

A key challenge is for people to understand the perspectives of people in other nations: seeing how they differ and how they converge. Relations between governments may dominate the news but public opinion plays a significant role in influencing the nature and direction of these relationships. While this influence is greater in some countries than in others, its presence can be found in all nations. Government leaders arise from the broader culture in which they live. Understanding this context better can provide insight into the behavior of governments.

Polling in regions throughout the world may also reveal common ground on urgent international issues. It is in everybody's interest that nations find shared norms upon which to build effective international agreements and institutions.

We are still in the early stages of measuring world public opinion and understanding its significance for the policy process. Only recently has the infrastructure been in place to conduct international polling. This study is therefore breaking new ground in the effort to gain understanding and discover commonalities in public opinion around the world.

The present study of world public opinion has been undertaken in this light. Included in the study are 18 nations plus the Palestinian territories. Together these nations represent approximately 56 percent of the world population.

This study is a joint effort of The Chicago Council on Global Affairs (formerly The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations), WorldPublicOpinion.org and participating research centers around the world. The Chicago Council has conducted periodic surveys of the American public on international issues since 1974. WorldPublicOpinion.org, a project of the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, regularly conducts polls around the world.

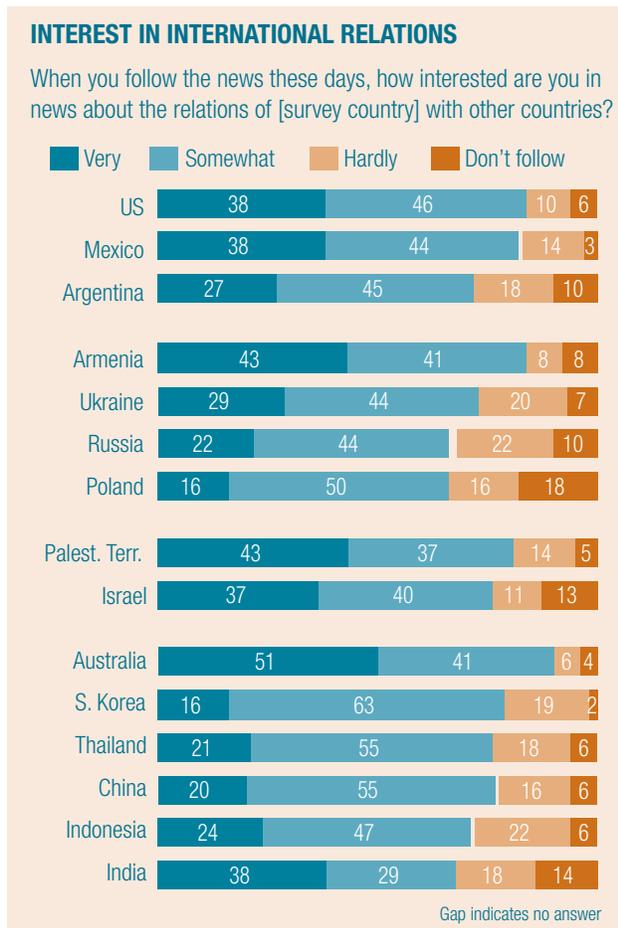
The current study evolved out of The Chicago Council's 2006 survey on the rise of China and India and its impact on the international order, undertaken in partnership with the Asia Society. This survey included polling by The Chicago Council in China, India, and the United States, together with parallel surveys undertaken in South Korea (by the East Asia Institute), and Australia (by the Lowy Institute). WorldPublicOpinion.org took the lead in recruiting other centers around the world to participate in a supplemental survey that asked many of the same questions as the 2006 Chicago Council survey. WorldPublicOpinion.org managed this additional survey and oversaw the production of this report.

A total of 21,890 people were interviewed between July 2006 and March 2007. Each center decided which questions to include in their respective surveys. Thus not all questions were asked in every country.

Please see the Appendix for additional information about the methodology, fielding dates and contact information for the various research partners.

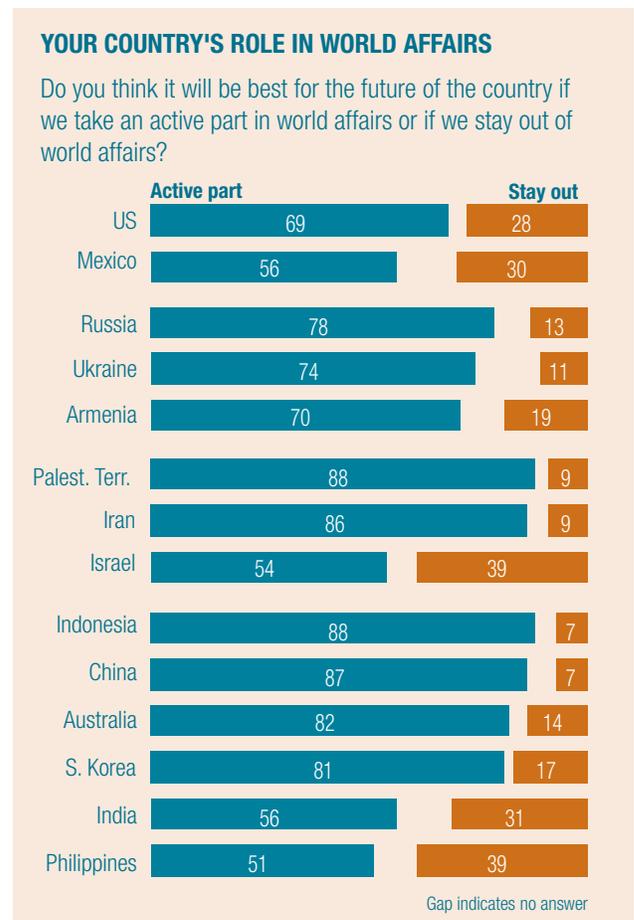
Naturally the question arises as to how significant these findings are. Do people around the world even have opinions on these issues, some of which are fairly complex? Do they care about them?

One of the first questions we asked was how interested people are in “news about the relations” of their country “with other countries.” As shown below, in all 15 of the publics that answered this question, at least two out of three respondents said they were somewhat



or very interested. In most of them, at least eight in 10 said they were interested.

Another indicator of public interest is whether people think their country should play an active role in world affairs. When asked whether “it will be best for the future of the country if we take an active part in world affairs or if we stay out of world affairs,” majorities in all 14 publics said that it would be best to take an active part. In most countries, at least seven in 10 took this position.



This study also includes analysis of variations in responses by subgroups. In general we found that views vary only slightly according to demographic differences such as gender and age. There are some modest variations, however, according to individuals’ level of attention to news, education, and income. These are also the most politically relevant groups: people who pay attention to

news and have higher education and income are those most likely to influence the political process.

While some might assume that those who are better informed and more educated would hold different opinions than the “masses,” they instead tend to agree with the dominant view. In fact, within the better informed group the dominant view is accepted by a larger majority than within the population as a whole. This suggests that if people were to scrutinize these issues more closely, the dominant view would more than likely become more pronounced.

Key Findings

Globalization and Trade

- Majorities around the world have a largely positive view of globalization and believe that international trade benefits national economies, companies, and consumers.
- Many are concerned that trade harms the environment and threatens jobs.
- Large majorities, even in developing countries, favor including environmental and labor standards in trade agreements.

Climate Change

- There is widespread agreement that climate change is a pressing problem that poses a significant threat.
- Views are divided on whether global warming requires urgent, costly measures or more modest, low-cost efforts.
- Publics agree that developed countries should provide aid to developing countries if they agree to limit their greenhouse gas emissions.

Genocide and Darfur

- Publics around the world say the United Nations has the right and even the responsibility to protect people from genocide and other severe human rights abuses even if this means acting against the will of the victims’ government.
- Large numbers are open to UN intervention in

Darfur, but many seem to be uninformed about the situation in western Sudan.

- Support for contributing troops to an international peacekeeping operation in Darfur is relatively low in most countries, but high in France and the United States.

Future of the United Nations

- Large majorities approve of strengthening the United Nations by giving it the power to have its own standing peacekeeping force, regulate the international arms trade and investigate human rights abuses.
- Most publics believe the UN Security Council should have the right to authorize military force to address a range of problems, including aggression, terrorism, and genocide.
- Publics show more modest support for accepting UN decisions that go against their own country’s preferences, though majorities still favor this in most countries polled.

US Leadership

- Publics around the world reject the idea that the United States should continue to be the preeminent world leader and prefer that it play a more cooperative role.
- Most believe that the US plays the role of world policeman more than it should.
- Views are divided about whether the United States should reduce the number of its overseas military bases.

Rise of China

- Majorities around the world believe that the Chinese economy will someday grow to be as large as the US economy.
- In no country do majorities feel that it would be mostly negative for China to catch up with the United States.
- World publics do not trust China to act responsibly in the world any more than they trust the United States to do so and distinctly less than they trust Japan.

Globalization and Trade

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Majorities around the world believe economic globalization and international trade benefit national economies, companies, and consumers. But many think trade harms the environment and threatens jobs and they want to mitigate these effects with environmental and labor standards.

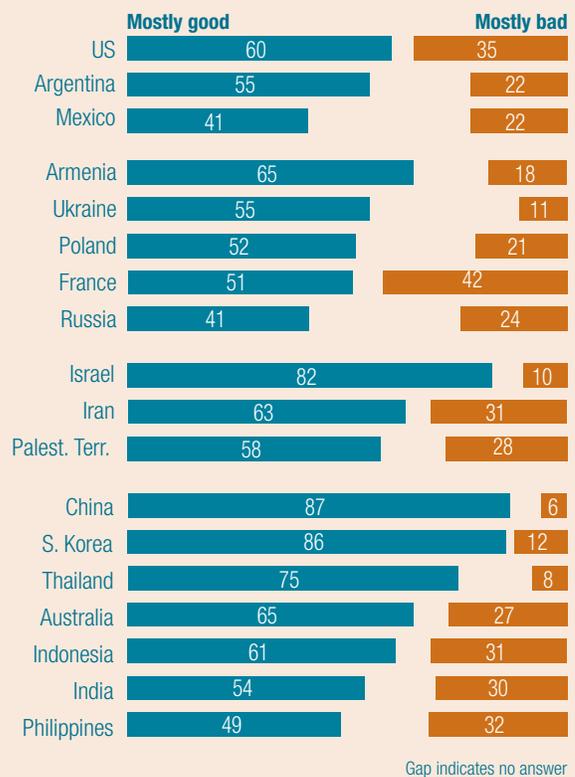
Support for globalization is remarkably strong throughout the world. Seventeen countries plus the Palestinian territories were asked if “globalization, especially increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is mostly good or mostly bad” for their country. In every case positive answers outweigh negative ones.

The highest levels of support are found in countries with export-oriented economies: China (87%), South Korea (86%) and Israel (82%). Positive answers fall below 50 percent in only three countries, though such responses outweigh negative replies by wide margins. The greatest skepticism about globalization is found in Mexico (41% good, 22% bad), Russia (41% good, 24% bad) and the Philippines (49% good, 32% bad). In the United States, 60 percent think globalization is mostly good and 35 percent call it mostly bad.

There is an even stronger consensus around international trade’s positive impact on national economies. Respondents in 14 countries were asked whether trade was good or bad for their economy. In all of them, majorities reply that it is good. The highest levels of approval are in China (88%), Israel (88%), South Korea (79%), and Thailand (79%). The

VIEWS OF GLOBALIZATION

Do you believe that globalization, especially the increasing connections of our economy with others around the world, is mostly good or mostly bad for [survey country]?

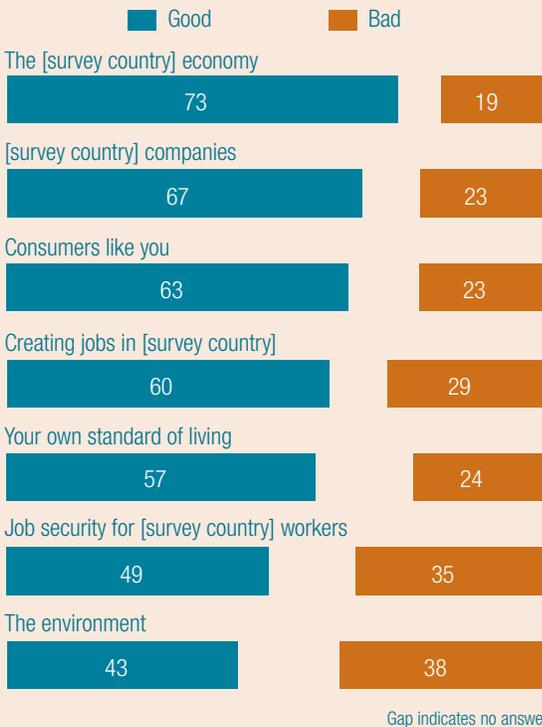


highest negative views, though still held by minorities, are found in the United States (42%), France (34%), Mexico (27%) and India (27%).

Majorities say trade benefits their country’s companies in all the countries asked. Israelis (86%), Chinese (78%) and South Koreans (78%) again top the list

EFFECTS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Overall, do you think international trade is good or bad for:
Averages of 13-14 countries



of those saying trade is “good” for their country’s companies. The highest percentages of negative replies are found in the United States (45%), France (43%) and Russia (34%).

Most of those polled also believe trade benefits consumers. Majorities (ranging from 56 percent to 77 percent) express positive views in all but one country, Argentina, where 46 percent think trade is good for consumers (31% bad). A majority of the French are also positive (61%), though France has the largest percentage expressing negative views (38%). A strong majority of Americans also believes trade is good for consumers (70%).

Attitudes about whether trade is good or bad for “your own standard of living” follow a similar pattern. Majorities in all but three countries express positive views. Once again, the most enthusiastic are the Israelis (74%) and the Chinese (73%). Americans are also positive (64%). The three exceptions are: Argentina (good 42%, bad 30%), Russia (good 45%, bad 19%), and France (good 50%, bad 44%).

Those polled in seven countries believe strongly that “promoting economic growth” should be an important foreign policy goal for their country. Overwhelming majorities say this should be on their government’s agenda in South Korea (98%—79% very), Australia (96%—65% very), the United States (96%—62% very), Armenia (92%—73% very), China (89%—64% very), Thailand (84%—64% very) and India (81%—54% very).

Five publics were also asked whether protecting their country’s business interests abroad should be on their government’s foreign policy agenda. All agree overwhelmingly that this is an important goal: South Korea (96%—65% very), Mexico (93%—73% very), Armenia (92%—72% very), China (85%—53% very) and Thailand (84%—63% very).

Trade and the Environment

Respondents around the world express concern about the effect of trade on the environment. In four countries, the idea that trade is bad for the environment is the most common view: France (66% bad, 29% good), the United States (49% bad, 45% good), Argentina (46% bad, 27% good), and Russia (44% bad, 25% good). Opinion is divided in Armenia (36% bad, 37% good), Mexico (41% bad, 41% good), and South Korea (49% bad, 47% good).

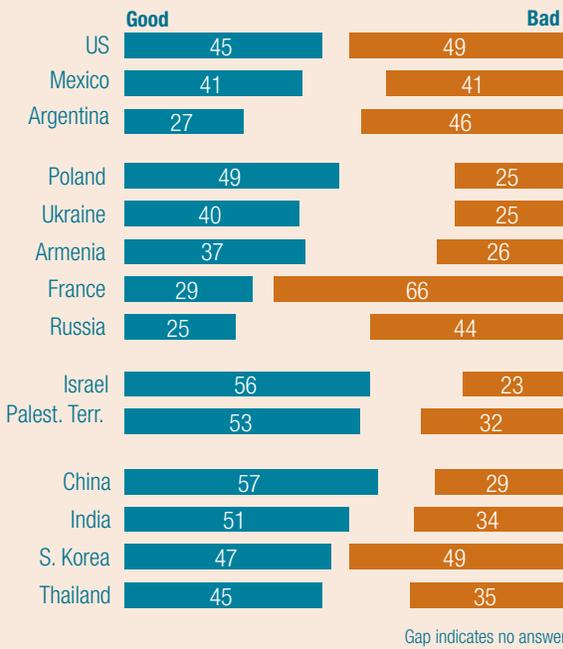
In none of the countries polled do large majorities believe trade helps the environment. Those most optimistic about trade’s environmental impact are the Chinese (57%), Israelis (56%) and Palestinians (53%).

There are several reasons why people may think that trade harms the environment. Some may believe that it stimulates growth and consumption, resulting in more factories and cars and ultimately more pollution. Others may assume that by opening domestic markets to foreign goods, trade allows companies to evade environmental laws by moving to countries with more lax regulations.

One way to mitigate the potentially negative impact of trade on the environment is to require minimum

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Overall, do you think international trade is good or bad for... the environment:



environmental standards as part of trade agreements. Critics say, however, that including environmental standards in trade agreements hurts the developing world by raising costs and discouraging investment.

Nonetheless, the publics in developing as well as developed nations show strong support for such standards. Large majorities in all 10 countries asked—ranging between 60 percent and 93 percent—say that trade agreements should include “minimum standards for protection of the environment.” Those in favor include two of the world’s largest developing economies: China and India. The Chinese favor environmental protections by 85 percent to 8 percent and the Indians endorse them by 60 percent to 28 percent.

Trade and Labor

There is significant concern about the effect of trade on employment, especially in more developed countries. Eighty percent of French respondents believe trade has a negative impact on job security in

their country and 73 percent think it is also bad for the creation of jobs there. In the United States, 67 percent consider trade harmful for US workers’ job security and 60 percent call it detrimental for job creation. In Argentina and South Korea, respondents are divided about whether trade helps preserve jobs, though they tend to say trade is good for creating jobs.

In the other countries polled, majorities view trade as positive for job creation while majorities or pluralities think it is good for job security. Israelis, Mexicans and Thais are those most positive that trade helps create jobs (74% each). The largest majority saying trade is good for job security is in China (65%) while Indians (49% good, 37% bad) and Russians (43% good, 32% bad) are among the more skeptical.

Anxiety about trade’s impact on labor is also expressed in a question about foreign policy goals. Respondents in seven countries were asked to judge the importance of possible foreign policy goals, including “protecting the jobs” of their country’s workers. In all seven countries, majorities gave this goal the top rating of “very important:” Armenia (84%), Australia (83%), the United States (76%), China (71%), South Korea (68%), Thailand (66%), and India (54%).

Competition from Asian countries is a concern in six out of eight countries asked. An overwhelming 94 percent of Mexicans consider this an important threat to Mexico’s “vital interest in the next ten years,” and more than three-fourths (77%) say it is not only an important but also a “critical” threat. Large majorities agree in the United States (87%—critical 24%), Australia (85%—critical 35%), South Korea (82%—critical 23%), India (70%—critical 33%) and China (68%—critical 25%). However, only pluralities consider Asian competition an important threat in Israel (49% to 32%) and Armenia (47% to 40%).

Five countries were asked whether economic competition from “low wage countries” was a threat to their interests. Four out of five say that it is, with the US respondents the most concerned (87%—critical 32%), followed by Australians (83%—critical 35%),

South Koreans (79%—critical 29%) and Israelis (59%—critical 26%). The lowest wage country among those asked—Armenia—is somewhat divided about whether this is a concern: 43 percent say that it is an important threat and 40 percent say that it is not.

Concerns about the effect of trade on jobs has prompted labor leaders in developed countries to insist that trade agreements include labor standards that would require signatory governments to comply with international labor standards, such as prohibiting child labor and allowing workers to form labor unions. They argue that such standards would prevent a “race to the bottom” as companies move to countries without minimal worker protections in search of lower costs.

As in the case of environmental standards, those opposed say that adding labor protections to trade agreements would hurt developed countries by raising costs and discouraging investment.

Respondents in developed countries, not surprisingly, overwhelmingly support including labor standards in international trade agreements. Nine out of 10 respondents in the United States (93%), Israel (91%), Argentina (89%), and Poland (88%) as companies.

But adding labor protections to trade agreements also receives strong support in many less developed countries that are known for low-cost labor markets. In China, 84 percent favor them as do majorities in Mexico (67%), India (56%) and the Philippines (55%).

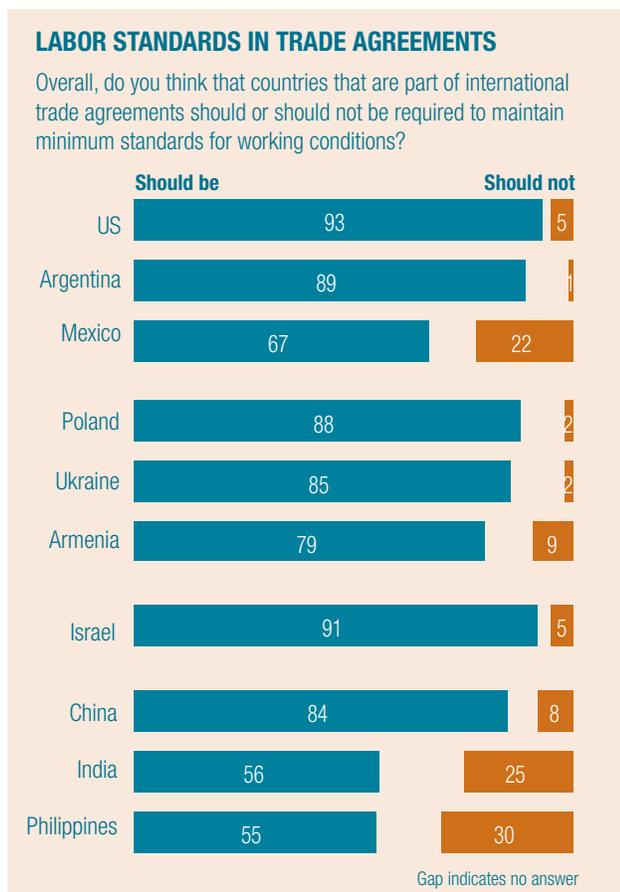
This is contrary to the widespread assumption that laborers in developing countries would oppose the imposition of higher standards because they desire the competitive advantages derived from lower labor costs. It is possible that the requirement of higher standards is attractive because it generates outside pressure to improve working conditions in their countries.

Complying with WTO Rulings

While respondents around the world tend to support international trade as an engine of economic growth, they are less enthusiastic about the World Trade Organization (WTO), which was founded in 1995 to enforce trade rules and resolve disputes among member states. Most countries lean toward compliance with adverse rulings by the WTO, but there is substantial variation.

After being told that the WTO was “established to rule on disputes over trade treaties,” respondents in eight countries were asked: “If another country files a complaint with the World Trade Organization and it rules against [survey country], as a general rule, should [survey country] comply with that decision or not?”

The US public, despite its reservations about international trade, shows the highest support for obeying WTO decisions. Seventy-three percent of Americans endorse compliance. This is a slight increase from a Chicago Council poll in 2004, when 69 percent favored compliance. American views about compliance with WTO decisions are consistent with the support they have shown in this and other polls for strengthening multilateral institutions.



Majorities in two other countries also endorse compliance with WTO rulings: China (58%) and Mexico (53%). Mexican support is up 5 points since a Chicago Council/CIDE poll in 2004.

Modest pluralities favor obeying WTO decisions in three countries. These include India (37% yes, 29% no), Thailand (34% yes, 17% no) and Ukraine (40% yes, 12% no). In all three countries substantial minorities say “it depends” or “not sure.”

South Korea is the only country where a majority opposes complying with adverse WTO decisions (52% no, 37% yes). But while opposition to compliance has remained unchanged since a Chicago Council/EAI poll in 2004 (52%), support has dropped 11 points from 48 percent. South Koreans have suffered adverse WTO rulings regarding their ship building and computer chip industries in recent years. The WTO has also forced South Korea to open up its market to rice imports.

Armenians tend to oppose compliance (35% no, 26% yes), though many Armenians (38%) are uncertain, saying it depends or don't know. Filipinos are divided (48% yes, 49% no).

Variations by Subgroup

Interest in news: Positive attitudes toward globalization and trade increase with interest in international news. The belief that globalization is mostly positive rises from an average of 40 percent, among those who do not follow the news, to 66 percent, among those who are very interested.

Positive attitudes toward international trade are also enhanced with interest in international news. Large majorities of the respondents who are very interested in international news believe that international trade is good for the economy of their country (77%), for the companies headquartered in their country (71%), for consumers like them (68%), for creating jobs in their country (66%), for job security for their country's workers (55%), and for their own living standards (63%). While majorities or pluralities of those who do not follow international news also hold these views,

their support for international trade is on average 19 percentage points lower than among those who are very interested in international news. Negative attitudes are a bit higher in this group.

Overwhelming majorities of people who are very interested in international news believe that countries that are part of international trade agreements should be required to maintain minimum standards for working conditions (81%) and protection of the environment (85%). Support for these measures, however, declines with lower interest in news: 59 percent of those who do not follow the news say governments should be required to maintain standards for working conditions and 61 percent say that they should be required to implement environmental protections.

Education: Views of globalization and international trade tend to be a bit more positive among those with higher education. On average, this belief increases by 7-9 percentage points among those with high levels of education compared to those with low levels. This margin is smaller when it comes to trade's effect on their standard of living. Concerns about the effect of international trade on the environment are more pronounced among people with higher levels of education. While a plurality of those with low education believe international trade is mostly good for the environment, people with high levels of education are divided.

Income: The majorities holding positive views of globalization and trade are approximately 10 points higher among those with higher incomes, a margin that also holds true when they are asked about their own standard of living. Though this is not a majority position, those with higher income are a bit more likely to say that international trade is bad for the environment and bad for the job security of their country's workers.

Age: The only substantial variation by age is that older people are more likely to believe that protecting jobs in their country should be a very important foreign policy objective. The majority believing this among older respondents is 9 points more than among younger people.

Climate Change

- There is widespread agreement that climate change is a pressing problem that poses a significant threat.
- Views are divided on whether global warming requires urgent, costly measures or more modest, low-cost efforts.
- Publics agree that developed countries should provide aid to developing countries if they agree to limit their greenhouse gas emissions.

The study finds widespread international agreement that climate change is a pressing problem. This majority, however, divides over whether the problem of global warming is urgent enough to require immediate, costly measures or whether more modest efforts are sufficient.

Thirteen countries were asked whether steps should be taken to address climate change and majorities in all but one of them favored action. The largest majorities in favor of measures to combat global warming are found in France (98%) and Australia (92%).

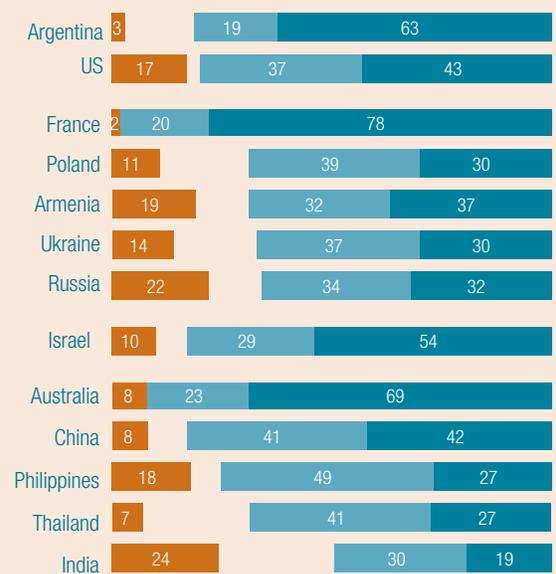
China and Israel are the next most likely (83% both) to favor such measures. Eighty percent of respondents in the United States—the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gases—also support taking such measures. The lowest level of support for taking steps to address the problem is found in India, nonetheless nearly half (49%) favor taking action while just 24 percent oppose it (26% do not answer).

In no country (out of 13 asked) does more than one in four endorse the statement, “Until we are sure that global warming is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs.” The countries with the highest percentages in favor of delaying any action are India (24%), Russia (22%) and Armenia (19%). The countries with the lowest are France (2%), Argentina (3%) and Thailand (7%).

A separate question, asked in 10 countries, allowed respondents to evaluate the threat posed by “global warming” in the next 10 years. Strong majorities in all of the countries say such climate change is an important threat with only small minorities calling it unimportant.

VIEWS OF GLOBAL WARMING

- Until we are sure that it is really a problem, we should not take any steps that would have economic costs
- Should be addressed, but its effects will be gradual, so we can deal with the problem gradually by taking steps that are low in cost
- A serious and pressing problem. We should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs

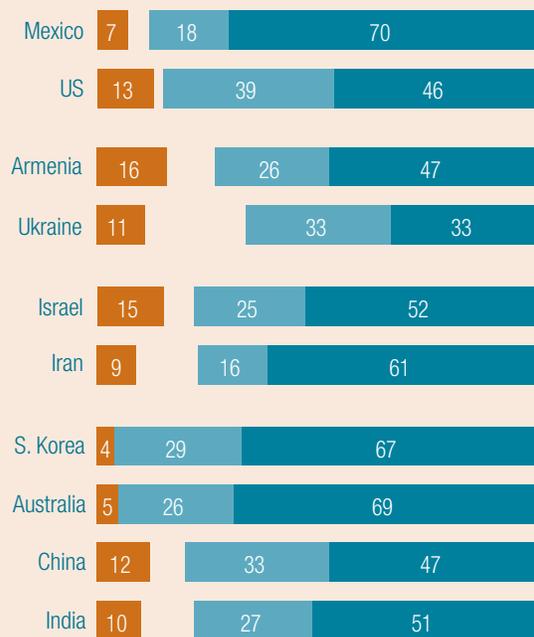


Gap indicates no answer

THREAT ASSESSMENT: GLOBAL WARMING

Please select whether you see global warming as...

- Not an important threat at all
- An important but not critical threat
- A critical threat



Gap indicates no answer

The highest percentages of climate change skeptics are found in Armenia (16%) and Israel (15%).

While majorities in all countries agree that the threat posed by global warming is at least important, there is less agreement over whether it is “critical.” Majorities call it critical in Mexico (70%), Australia (69%), South Korea (67%), Iran (61%), Israel (52%), and India (51%). Pluralities agree in Armenia (47%), China (47%) and the United States (46%). Ukraine is the only country divided about whether the problem is critical (33%) or “important but not critical” (33%).

Differences over How Much to Spend

There is general agreement in 13 countries, as discussed above, that steps must be taken to address the problem of global warming, though there are differences over how much should be spent.

In six countries, the most common view is: “Global warming is a serious and pressing problem. We should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs.” These include: France (78%), Australia (69%), Argentina (63%), Israel (54%), the United States (43%), and Armenia (37%).

In another five countries, the most commonly held opinion is: “The problem of global warming should be addressed, but its effects will be gradual, so we can deal with the problem gradually by taking steps that are low in cost.” The countries endorsing a go-slow, low-cost approach are the Philippines (49%), Thailand (41%), Poland (39%), Ukraine (37%) and India (30%).

In two countries, the public is evenly divided between those who favor less expensive measures and those who believe the problem merits action involving significant cost: China (low costs 41%, significant costs 42%) and Russia (low costs 34%, significant costs 32%).

In Peru, only those who indicated they were informed about climate change—39 percent of the total sample—were asked whether steps should be taken to address the problem. Among these respondents, 92 percent favor action, including 69 percent who favor taking steps even if they involve significant costs.

Support for Developing Nations

Some governments, such as China’s and India’s, have argued that developing countries should not be obliged to limit greenhouse gas emissions as they struggle to catch up with the highly industrialized economies of Western Europe and the United States. The developing world, such countries say, releases far less CO₂ and other greenhouse gasses per capita than do industrialized nations, whose cumulative emissions over the past century have caused the current problem.

Some have proposed that an equitable approach would be for developed nations to provide aid to developing nations if they would agree to impose some limits on their emissions. Publics in five developing countries were asked, “If the developed countries are willing

to provide substantial aid, do you think the less-developed countries should make a commitment to limit their greenhouse gas emissions?” In all of five countries, majorities or pluralities say they should.

Most significantly, this includes a very large 79 percent majority of Chinese respondents and nearly half of those polled in India (48% agree, 29% disagree, 23% no answer). Majorities in Argentina (68%) and Armenia (63%) also concur. Results in Thailand are similar to those in India: about half of Thai respondents (49%) agree and only 9 percent disagree, though large numbers (43%) are uncertain.

China, India, Argentina, Armenia and Thailand are among the 169 countries that have ratified or accepted the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. They are not, however, considered industrialized countries under the treaty, which means they are not legally obliged to cut back emissions of CO₂ or other pollutants.

The survey also asked respondents in three developed countries whether developed countries should provide “substantial aid” to less-developed countries that “make a commitment to limit their greenhouse gas emissions.” Respondents in all three show a high level of support for providing such assistance: 64 percent of Americans, 84 percent of Poles, and 72 percent of Ukrainians.

The United States, Poland and Ukraine are all considered Annex 1 or industrialized countries under the Kyoto accord, which means they are obligated to reduce emissions. Poland and Ukraine have both ratified the Kyoto Protocol; the United States has signed but refused to ratify it.

General Concern about Global Environment

The survey also finds that world publics are very concerned about the global environment in general. Seven countries were asked to rate the importance of a number of foreign policy goals, including “improving the global environment.” Overwhelming majorities in all seven countries rate improving the

global environment as at least an “important” goal and majorities call it a “very important” one: Australia, 99 percent (very 88%); South Korea, 96 percent (very 60%); the United States, 93 percent (very 54%); Armenia, 86 percent (very 54%); China, 85 percent (very 54%); Thailand, 83 percent (very 61%); and India, 79 percent (very 51%).

Respondents were also asked whether participants in “international trade agreements should or should not be required to maintain minimum standards for protection of the environment.” In all 10 countries where this question was asked, very large majorities believe such standards should be required while in one country views are divided. Those in favor of standards include developing countries, whose governments have sometimes resisted environmental regulations, arguing that implementing such costly rules would put their economies at a competitive disadvantage.

In Asia, the Chinese support environmental standards by an overwhelming 85 percent. Seven in 10 Thais (69%) also favor such standards as do six in 10 Indians (60%).

In Latin America, an overwhelming majority of Argentines (90%) say such standards should be required. There is also strong support in Mexico (76%), where the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has required the government to enact certain environmental measures. In Eastern Europe, environmental measures are favored in Poland (90%), Ukraine (88%) and Armenia (82%), all of which suffer from severe air and water pollution as well as deforestation dating from the Soviet era.

Support for environmental standards is also strong among the relatively wealthy publics of Israel (93%) and the United States (91%).

Variations by Subgroup

Interest in news: Concern about global warming or climate change is enhanced by higher levels of interest in international news. On average, a solid majority

(60%) of individuals who are very interested in international news view global warming as a critical threat and strongly (64%) believe that improving the global environment should be a very important foreign policy objective of their country. In contrast, only pluralities of respondents who do not follow the news think that globalization is a critical threat (42%) or that their country should make improving the global environment a very important foreign policy objective (47%).

Those who are very interested in the news are more likely to favor taking high-cost steps to address global warming (41%). However, those with lower levels of interest are more likely to decline to answer. Just looking at those who do answer, attitudes about taking high cost steps do not vary according to interest in the news.

Support for measures to encourage less developed countries to limit their greenhouse gas emissions also rise with higher interest in news. Among developed countries, a strong majority (76%) of respondents who are very interested in international news believe that if the less-developed countries make a commitment to limit their greenhouse gas emissions, developed

countries should provide them with substantial aid. Support for such a measure declines with lower interest in international news, with 61 percent of those who do not follow the news expressing support for the idea.

Likewise, when respondents from developing countries were asked, “If the developed countries are willing to provide substantial aid, do you think the less-developed countries should make a commitment to limit their greenhouse gas emissions?” 68 percent of those who are very interested in the news respond affirmatively as compared to 38 percent of those who do not follow international news.

Education: The percentage of those with higher education who believe global warming poses a critical threat to their country’s vital interests is 6 points higher than among groups with less education. In developed countries, those with higher levels of education are more likely (on average 11 points more) to approve of providing substantial aid to less developed countries if they commit to limiting their greenhouse gas emissions.

Other demographic variations on questions of climate change were not substantial.

Genocide and Darfur

- **Publics around the world say the United Nations has the right and even the responsibility to protect people from genocide and other severe human rights abuses even if this means acting against the will of the victims' government.**
- **Large numbers are open to UN intervention in Darfur, but many seem to be uninformed about the situation in western Sudan.**
- **Support for contributing troops to an international peacekeeping operation in Darfur is relatively low in most countries, but high in France and the United States.**

Publics around the world say the United Nations has the responsibility to protect people from genocide and other severe human rights abuses even if this means acting against the will of their own government.

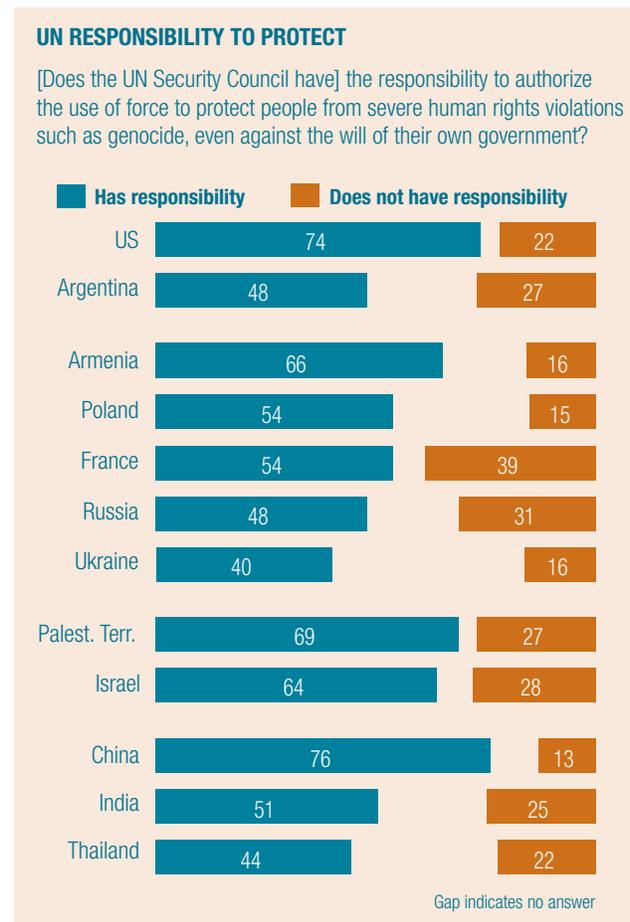
Large numbers are open to UN intervention in Darfur, where Arab militias linked to the Sudanese government are accused of massacring the civilian population. But many seem to be uninformed about the situation in western Sudan and declined to answer.

Support for action to halt genocide is consistent with the final document endorsed by the 2005 United Nations World Summit, which recognized that the world body has a “responsibility to protect” vulnerable populations from “genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” should national authorities fail to do so.

UN Security Council Action

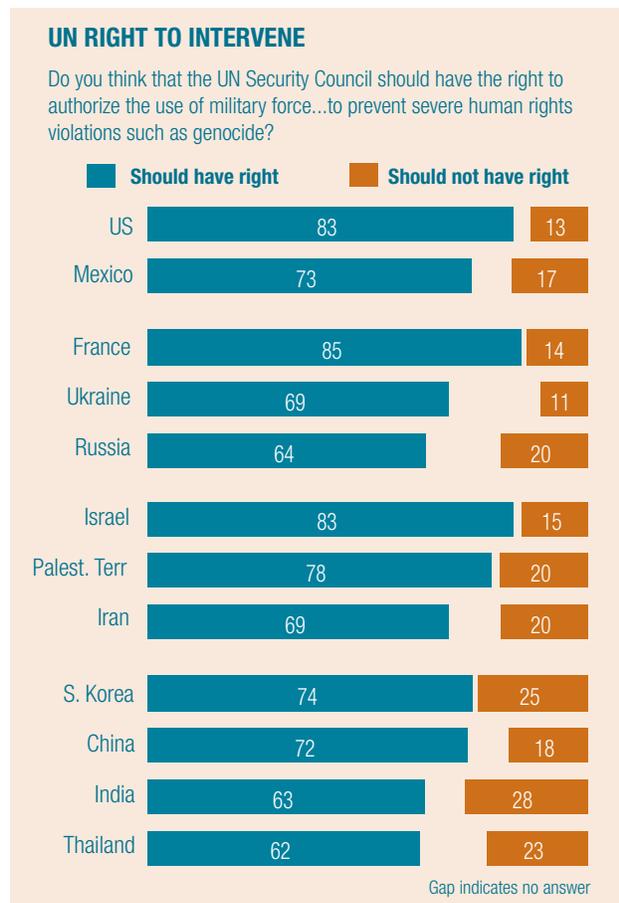
Respondents in 12 countries were asked whether the UN Security Council “has the responsibility to authorize the use of military force to protect people from severe human rights violations, such as genocide, even against the will” of the government committing such abuses. They were reminded that some say the UN Security Council does not have such a responsibility.

Nonetheless, the most common response in all 12 countries polled—a majority in eight countries and a plurality in four—is that the UN Security Council has a responsibility to authorize the use of military force in such cases.



The Chinese public shows the highest level of support for the idea that the United Nations has a responsibility to intervene (76%), followed by Americans (74%), Palestinians (69%) and Israelis (64%). The lowest levels of support are among Ukrainians (40%), Thais (44%), Russians (48%), and Argentines (48%). But the proportions in these four countries that say the UN Security Council does not have such a responsibility range between only 16 to 31 percent.

There is an even stronger consensus that the UN Security Council should have the “right” to authorize the use of military force in such cases. Among the 12 countries asked this question, large majorities say the Security Council should have such a right.



The highest percentages holding this view are in France (85%), Israel (83%), the United States (83%),

the Palestinian territories (78%), and South Korea (74%). The lowest levels of support—in India (63%), Thailand (62%), and Russia (64%)—are still quite high. Support is also strong in China (72%). Those who disagree range between 11 percent and 28 percent.

Thus, in all 15 countries asked one or both of these questions, the most common view is that the UN Security Council has the right and/or the responsibility to authorize military action to stop severe violations of human rights.

A 2005 survey of eight African countries by the international polling firm GlobeScan found similarly high levels of support for the United Nations having such authority. Majorities in seven countries and a plurality in one said the United Nations should have the right to intervene to stop human rights abuses such as genocide.

Support was strongest in Ghana (80%), Kenya (75%), Nigeria (66%), Tanzania (66%), Zimbabwe (65%), and Cameroon (64%). Angolans (55%) and South Africans (47%) showed the weakest support. Opposition to UN intervention was less than 20 percent in most countries, reaching its highest level in Angola (37%).

Darfur

In the 10 countries asked specifically about international intervention in Darfur, most of those who answer indicate that they are open to UN action to stop the killing. In all countries the most common response is that the Security Council has at least the right to authorize intervention in Darfur and many say it has the responsibility to act. In no country does more than one in five say that the Security Council does not have the right to act. However, the large numbers not answering suggests many are uninformed about the conflict in Sudan.

Support for UN action is highest in France where 84 percent say the Security Council has either the “responsibility” to authorize intervention in Darfur (55%) or the “right” (29%) to do so. Close behind is the United States where 83 percent say the Security Council has either the “responsibility” (48%) or the “right” (35%) to intervene. Israelis (77%) are the next most likely to favor UN action with 46 percent saying it has the responsibility to act and 31 percent saying it has the right to do so.

Majorities in India and China also believe the United Nations has the responsibility and/or right to act. About six in 10 Indians (59%) say the Security Council either can (30%) or should (29%) act to stop the violence in Darfur. About the same proportion of Chinese (58%) agree, including 38 percent who say it has the right and 20 percent who say it has the responsibility to do so.

In five countries, large percentages declined to answer questions about Darfur (ranging from 43 to 54%), which suggests that many are unaware of what is happening there. But among those who did respond, the percentage saying that the United Nations has the right and/or the responsibility to act far outweighs that of those who say it does not have the right: Argentina, 37 percent to 19 percent; Armenia, 44 percent to 9 percent; Poland, 46 percent to 8 percent; Thailand, 34 percent to 12 percent; Ukraine, 32 percent to 16 percent.

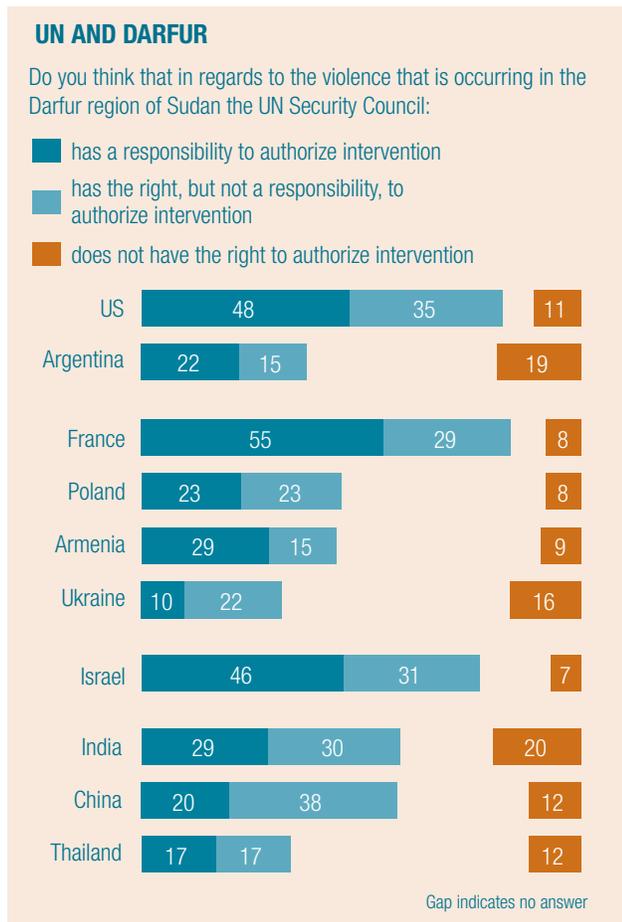
Respondents in seven countries were also asked whether they thought their country should contribute troops to “an international peacekeeping force to stop the killing in Darfur.” Support for contributing troops to a peacekeeping operation in Darfur is relatively low in most countries with the exception of France and the United States.

A very large majority of the French (84%) support contributing troops to a peacekeeping force in Darfur. Among Americans, 65 percent approve the idea and just 28 percent are opposed. Thais are divided (35% favor, 37% oppose).

The other four countries lean against participating in such a force: Armenia (27% favor, 45% oppose), Israel (39% favor, 52% oppose), Poland (28% favor, 42% oppose), and Ukraine (13% favor 56% oppose).

The 2005 GlobeScan poll of eight African nations found widespread openness to the idea of multilateral military intervention in the event of a conflict “like Darfur.” Across the eight countries, an average of just 13 percent would oppose intervention in such a case. Fifty-seven percent favored some form of intervention including 30 percent who favored intervention by the United Nations, 22 percent intervention by the African Union, and 5 percent by “rich countries.”

As in other regions, awareness of the situation in Darfur was fairly low among Africans. On average across all eight countries, just 36 percent said they had



heard or read a great deal or a fair amount about “the conflict in the Sudan region called Darfur.”

Variations by Subgroup

Interest in news: Support for allowing the UN to authorize the use of military force to prevent severe human right violations increases with interest in international news. On average, an overwhelming majority (78%) of those who are very interested in international news believe that the UN Security Council should have the right to authorize the use of military force to prevent severe human rights violations such as genocide, compared to 53 percent of those who do not follow the news.

Likewise, while a solid majority (65%) of those who are very interested in international news believe that the UN Security Council has the responsibility to authorize the use of military force when there are severe human rights violations, only 36 percent of those who do not follow the news believe that the UN has this responsibility. However, even among those who do not follow the news, this position is held by a plurality (only 22% oppose the idea). Increasing numbers do not answer at lower levels of interest.

The gap between those who are interested in international news and those who are not gets even wider when asked whether they would favor or oppose contributing troops from their own country to an international peacekeeping force to stop the killing in Darfur. While respondents who are very

interested in international news are divided, with 42 percent favoring and 40 percent opposing the idea, a plurality (41%) of people who do not follow the news oppose sending their country’s troops as part of a peacekeeping force in Darfur (22% favor).

Education: Support for the belief that the UN Security Council should have the right to authorize the use of military force to prevent severe human rights violations rises with education. Those who are highly educated are 8 points more likely to hold this view. Individuals with high levels of education are also more likely (by 7 points) to think that the UN Security Council has the responsibility to authorize intervention in response to the violence in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Income: The belief that the UN Security Council has the responsibility to authorize intervention to stop the violence in the Darfur region of Sudan is higher by 7 points on average among those with higher income. Support for contributing to an international peacekeeping force in Darfur is also substantially enhanced with higher income. While low income respondents are divided on the use of their country’s troops as part of an international peacekeeping force to stop the killings in Darfur, with 40 percent in favor and 40 percent opposed, a majority (54%) of high income individuals support contributing troops to such a force.

Gender: Males are more likely—by 8 percentage points—to favor sending their country’s troops to Darfur as part of an international peacekeeping force.

Future of the United Nations

- Large majorities approve of strengthening the United Nations by giving it the power to have its own standing peacekeeping force, regulate the international arms trade and investigate human rights abuses.
- Most publics believe the UN Security Council should have the right to authorize military force to address a range of problems, including aggression, terrorism, and genocide.
- Publics show more modest support for accepting UN decisions that go against their own country’s preferences, though majorities still favor this in most of those polled.

While leaders of nation states may be wary of giving the United Nations more power it is clear that publics around the world are comfortable with the idea of a stronger United Nations that is a key vehicle for conflict resolution and international cooperation on a wide variety of pressing problems.

Publics around the world favor dramatic steps to strengthen the United Nations, including giving it the power to have its own standing peacekeeping force, to regulate the international arms trade and to investigate human rights abuses.

Large majorities believe the United Nations Security Council should have the right to authorize military force to prevent nuclear proliferation, genocide and terrorism. However support is not as robust among the publics polled for accepting UN decisions that go against their countries’ preferences.

The idea of “having a standing UN peacekeeping force selected, trained and commanded by the United Nations” gets support from majorities in 12 of the 14 countries asked (64% on average). Peru is the most enthusiastic (77%), followed by Armenia (75%), France (74%), Thailand (73%), and the United States

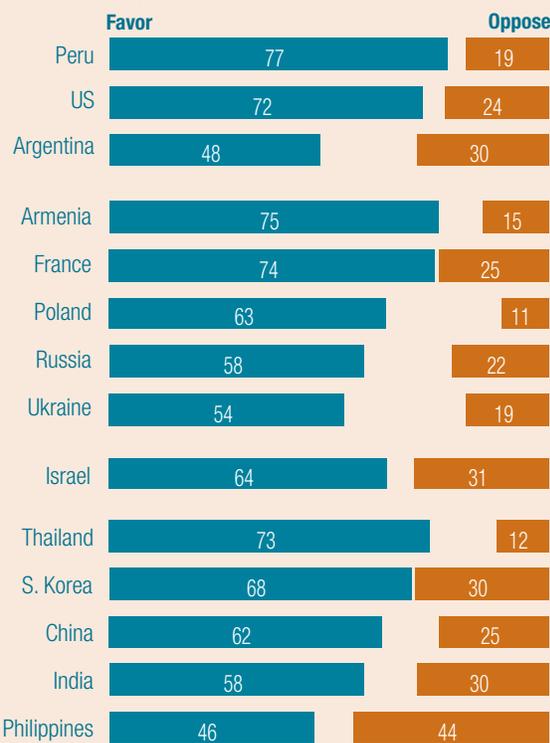
(72%). Argentines support such a force by margin of 48 percent to 30 percent. In none of the countries polled do most respondents oppose this idea, though views are divided in the Philippines.

Support for “giving the UN the power to regulate the international arms trade” is also supported by majorities or pluralities in 12 of the 14 countries (55%



STANDING UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE

"Having a standing UN peacekeeping force selected, trained, and commanded by the United Nations"



Gap indicates no answer

on average). France shows the greatest support (77%), followed by South Korea (75%), Israel (60%) and the United States (60%). Only two publics tend to reject the idea: Filipinos (58% negative) and Argentines (42% negative, 36% positive).

Giving the UN authority “to investigate violations of human rights” receives very high levels of support (64% overall). Overwhelming majorities favor this idea in France (92%), the United States (75%), Peru (75%), and South Korea (74%). The only exceptions are Argentina, where a plurality supports such investigations (46% to 29%) and the Philippines where the public is divided.

Publics show lower, but still substantial, support for “giving the UN the authority to fund its activities by imposing a small tax on such things as the international sale of arms or oil” (on average 46% in

favor and 37% opposed). Nine countries favor this idea, led by France (70%), China (55%), South Korea (53%), and Israel (52%). Four countries oppose it, including majorities in the Philippines (56%), and Peru (55%), and pluralities in the United States (50% to 45%) and Argentina (42% to 32%). Russians are divided.

Use of Military Force

The poll also finds support for giving the UN Security Council the right to authorize the use of military force to address a wide range of problems. Support is strongest for collective military action to defend countries from outside aggression, to prevent governments from supporting terrorist groups and to protect people from genocide. There is also support, though more modest, for such action to prevent nuclear proliferation and reverse the overthrow of a democratic government.

Not surprisingly, using military force to “defend a country that has been attacked” is the most popular. This is consistent with the original conception of the United Nations as a collective security organization. In all 10 countries polled, large majorities, ranging from 84 percent in France to 66 percent in India, believe the Security Council should have this right. Three out of four respondents (74%) on average support this right across all countries polled.

Also popular is giving the Security Council the right to authorize the use of military force “to stop a country from supporting terrorist groups.” In all 10 publics polled, clear majorities favor this. Palestinians and South Koreans are the least supportive (61%) while the most supportive are the Israelis (85%) and the French (84%). Average support for this idea is 71 percent.

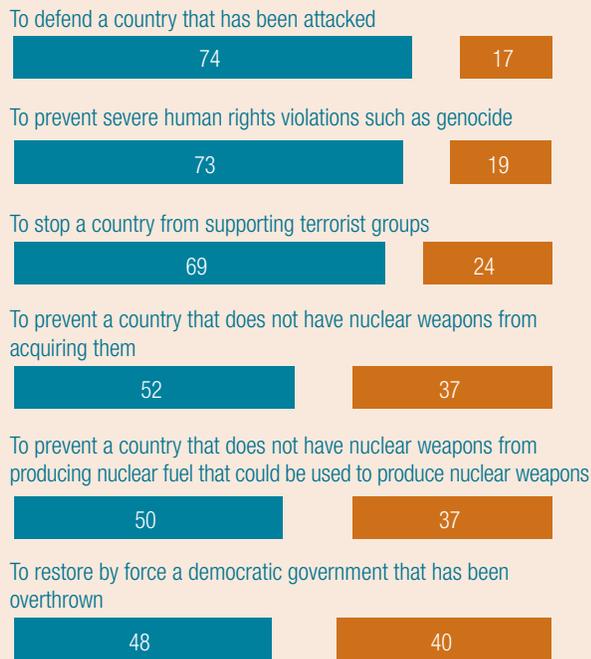
There is also modest support for using collective force to achieve the more controversial objective of stopping nuclear proliferation. These results are particularly relevant to a conflict unfolding on the world stage today: Iran’s decision to continue enriching uranium in defiance of the UN Security Council.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL AUTHORIZING FORCE

Averages of 10-12 Countries

Do you think that the UN Security Council should or should not have the right to authorize the use of military force for each of the following purposes:

■ Should ■ Should not



When asked whether the Security Council should have the right to authorize the use of military force in order “to prevent a country that does not have nuclear weapons from acquiring them,” the most common view in eight out of 11 publics is that it “should” have this right, including majorities in Mexico (70%), Israel (62%), the United States (62%) and Russia (55%). Only in the Palestinian territories (59%) and South Korea (55%) do majorities say the Security Council “should not” have the right to prevent a country from acquiring nuclear weapons. The French are divided. Average support is 53 percent.

Stopping Nuclear Proliferation

More specifically, respondents were asked whether the Security Council should have the right to authorize the use of force to “prevent a country that does not

have nuclear weapons from producing nuclear fuel that could be used to produce nuclear weapons.” Once again the most common answer in seven of the 10 publics polled is that the Security Council “should” have this right. Support is highest in Thailand (59%), United States (57%), and Israel (54%). Again, the exceptions are those polled in the Palestinian territories (57% say no) and South Korea (56% say no). The French, again, are divided. On average, half of the respondents polled across all countries (50%) support this right and 37 percent are opposed.

Although support for UN action on nuclear proliferation was somewhat modest compared to other issues, the spread of nuclear weapons is nonetheless seen as a potential threat in all nine countries asked. Nearly all Americans (96%) polled consider the “possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers” to be a threat to US interests in the next ten years and 69 percent see it as a “critical threat.” Strong majorities agree in Australia (93%—68% critical), Mexico (92%—75% critical), South Korea (90%—50% critical), Israel (89%—72% critical), Armenia (83%—62% critical), India (81%—54% critical) and Ukraine (76%—45% critical).

China was the least concerned, though a strong 70 percent of respondents say proliferation is at least an important threat and among these 27 percent see it as critical.

Similarly strong majorities believe that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons should be an important foreign policy goal for their country. US respondents are again nearly unanimous that this should be considered an important goal (96%—74% very) as are most Australians (96%—82% very) and South Koreans (94%—56% very), Mexicans (88%—65% very), Chinese (85%—52% very), Armenians (82%—58% very), Indians (81%—56% very) and Thais (77%—57% very).

Thirteen countries were asked specifically about whether the international community should act to control the development of nuclear fuel, a question

relevant to the current controversy over Iran's nuclear program.

After being told that “in the past, the international community has agreed that all countries have the right to produce nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes,” respondents were asked whether certain countries should “not be allowed to develop nuclear fuel out of concern they will use it to develop nuclear weapons.” Majorities or pluralities in 12 of the 13 countries asked consider this to be a “good idea.”

Not surprisingly, Israel has the largest majority in favor of such a policy (69%), followed by the United States (66%). Interestingly, despite their governments' reluctance to embrace UN Security Council sanctions against Iran for developing nuclear fuel, the publics of Russia (59%) and China (57%) also think this is a good idea. Majorities in France (56%) and Peru (56%) agree as do pluralities in India (49% to 36%) and in Argentina (48% to 29%). The only public that tends to think this is a bad idea is in the Palestinian territories: 57 percent say restricting access to nuclear fuel is a bad idea.

Restoring Democracy

The poll finds relatively modest levels of support for giving the Security Council the right to authorize the use of force “to restore by force a democratic government that has been overthrown.” Out of 10 publics polled, majorities in six and pluralities in one favor the idea. Support is highest in the Palestinian territories (67%), while more modest majorities favor it in Israel (58%), the United States (57%) and Mexico (54%). A majority of South Koreans (65%) and a plurality of the Chinese (45%) say the Security Council “should not” have this right. Russian respondents are divided (35% favor, 37% oppose). On average, 49 percent of those polled support giving the UN this right and 40 percent are opposed.

Nonetheless, majorities in all six countries polled agree that helping to bring democracy to other nations should be an important foreign policy goal for their government. Australians are the most enthusiastic (82%), followed

by South Koreans (77%), Mexicans (75%), Americans (74%), Thais (73%) and Indians (70%).

Preventing Genocide

Publics show very strong support for allowing the UN Security Council to use military force to “prevent severe human rights violations such as genocide.” Very large majorities in all 12 countries polled on this issue agree that the Security Council should have the right to use force in such cases. The lowest levels of support are in Thailand (62%) and India (63%), and the highest are in France (85%), Israel (83%) and the United States (83%). Average support across the publics polled is 74 percent.

This poll probed further about whether the Security Council has not just the right but the responsibility to intervene militarily to protect people from severe human rights abuses. “Some people say that the Security Council has the responsibility to authorize the use of military force to protect people from severe human rights violations such as genocide, even against the will of their own government,” respondents were told. “Others say that the Security Council does not have such a responsibility.”

The idea that the Security Council has this responsibility is the most common view in all 12 of the publics polled and the majority view in eight of them. Interestingly the Chinese (76%) show the strongest support for this idea, followed by Americans (74%) and Palestinians (69%). In four countries, only pluralities agree: Ukrainians (40%), Thais (44%), Russians (48%), and Argentines (48%). In no country, do more than four in 10 say that the UN does not have a responsibility to act against genocide. On average 57 percent say the UN has this responsibility.

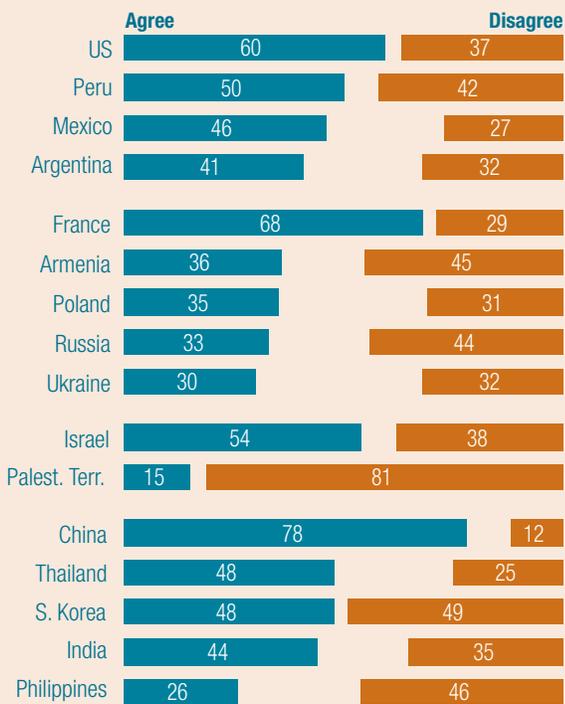
Accepting UN Decisions

While most respondents support strengthening the United Nations, there is less enthusiasm about submitting to possibly adverse UN decisions.

Respondents were asked whether their country should be “more willing to make decisions within the United Nations” when dealing with international problems, even if this means that their country “will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice.” Ten of the 16 publics asked say that their country should do so, but only four of these are a clear majority, while six are pluralities. Four are opposed and two are divided. On average 45 percent say their country should do so, while 38 percent say it should not and 17 percent did not answer.

MAKING DECISIONS WITHIN THE UN

“When dealing with international problems, [survey country] should be more willing to make decisions within the United Nations even if this means that [survey country] will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice.”



Not surprisingly the three countries most ready to accept UN decisions are also permanent members of the UN Security Council: China (78%), France (68%), and the United States (60%). The public in Russia, also a member, tends to be opposed to abiding by such decisions by 44 percent to 33 percent, however.

Israel, surprisingly, is another country where there is strong support for making decisions within the United Nations. Fifty-four percent of Israelis agree that their leaders should abide by such decisions even if they disagree. This is striking given the extent to which opponents of Israel have used the United Nations as a platform for criticism of the Jewish state.

In sharp contrast, the Palestinians are the only public polled with a majority opposed to accepting such collective decisions. A large 81 percent majority of Palestinians say their government should not go along with policies they oppose. This is also striking given that Palestinian leaders have used UN resolutions as a basis for legitimating their demands for statehood.

Pluralities favor accepting UN decisions in Peru (50% to 42%), Thailand (48% to 25%), Mexico (46% to 27%), India (44% to 35%), Argentina (41% to 32%), and Poland (35% to 31%). In two countries, pluralities are opposed: Armenia (45% to 36%), Philippines (46% to 26%). Views are divided in South Korea (48% agree, 49% disagree) and Ukraine (30% agree, 32% disagree and 38% do not answer).

General Attitudes toward the UN

The survey also explored more general attitudes toward the United Nations and other international institutions. The UN and its affiliated agencies tend to be viewed favorably, though these questions were asked in only seven or eight publics.

Respondents in eight countries were asked whether a series of objectives should be considered important foreign policy goals for their governments. Majorities in all eight consider “strengthening the United Nations” to be either a “very” or “somewhat” important foreign policy goal (ranging from 79% in the United States and Thailand to 91% in Australia). Majorities in Australia (64%), Mexico (56%) and China (51%) consider this “very important.” Only marginal numbers say making the United Nations stronger is “not important.” This opinion is strongest in the United States, though still expressed by less than one in five

(19%), while 40 percent of Americans say it is a very important goal and 39 percent a somewhat important goal.

Respondents in eight countries rated their sentiments toward the United Nations on a 100-degree “feeling thermometer,” where one hundred means very warm or favorable, zero means very cold or unfavorable, and fifty means neither warm nor cold.

Mexicans express on average the warmest feelings toward the United Nations (mean temperature 80 degrees) followed by the Chinese (75 degrees), Armenians (72 degrees), Thais (71 degrees), South Koreans (70 degrees), Indians (63 degrees) and Palestinians (58 degrees). American sentiments toward the UN are the coolest among the eight publics surveyed: their mean thermometer reading is 55 degrees.

The World Health Organization (WHO), the UN agency that addresses global health issues, tends to receive even warmer ratings. Three Asian countries show the most favorable feelings toward the WHO: Thailand (81 degrees), China (80 degrees) and South Korea (74 degrees). The warm feelings expressed in Asia may reflect the WHO’s work there in preventing the spread of avian flu. Armenians also tend to feel warmly toward this agency (75 degrees) as do Palestinians (65 degrees). Americans (59 degrees) and Indians (58 degrees) are relatively lukewarm.

Attitudes toward the World Court, the United Nation’s judicial organ, are a bit cooler. Chinese sentiments are warmest (70 degrees) followed by Thais (66 degrees), South Koreans (63 degrees), Armenians (61 degrees) and Indians (54 degrees). Americans are relatively cooler (46 degrees). But the least enthusiastic about this international court are the Palestinians: their mean thermometer reading is a chilly 32 degrees.

Variations by Subgroup

Interest in news: While majorities or pluralities of individuals with all levels of interest in international

news favor a variety of measures aimed at strengthening the UN, positive attitudes toward these measures substantially increase on average with higher levels of interest in international news.

Majorities of respondents who are very interested in international news favor giving the UN the power to regulate the international arms trade (62%), having a standing peacekeeping force selected, trained and commanded by the United Nations (70%), giving the UN the power to fund its activities by imposing a small tax on such things as the international sale of arms or oil (51%), and giving the UN the authority to go into countries in order to investigate violations of human rights (69%).

These support levels drop significantly with lower interest in news: only pluralities, ranging from 34 percent to 45 percent, of those who do not follow the news favor these measures. At lower levels of interest, the numbers not answering increases dramatically.

Support for the UN Security Council having the right to authorize military force increases with interest in news. For the various situations where the UN Security Council might authorize military force, support is higher by 15 percent to 25 percent among those who are very interested in the news compared to those who do not follow the news. However, at least a plurality of those who do not follow the news also think the UN Security Council should have the right to authorize the use of force in every situation mentioned.

Willingness to make more decisions through the United Nations, even if this means accepting undesirable outcomes, rises 21 points with interest in the news. Among those who do not follow the news and responded to the question, a slight plurality is even opposed.

Education: Support for a strong United Nations is enhanced with education. Highly educated respondents are more likely (by 14 points) to support giving the UN the power to regulate international

arms trade as compared to those with lower education and to go into countries in order to investigate violations of human rights (by 11 points). The belief that the UN Security council should have the right to authorize the use of military force to prevent severe human rights violations such as genocide is 8 points higher among this group.

Income: While a plurality of those with low incomes think that the UN Security Council should have the right to authorize the use of military force to restore

by force a democratic government that has been overthrown, a plurality of those with higher incomes disagree.

Age: Support for strengthening the United Nations tends to increase modestly with age. The strongest example is that older people are more likely (7 points) to say that strengthening the United Nations should be a very important foreign policy objective of their country

US Leadership

- **Publics around the world reject the idea that the United States should continue to be the preeminent world leader and prefer that it play a more cooperative role.**
- **Most believe that the US plays the role of world policeman more than it should.**
- **Views are divided about whether the United States should reduce the number of its overseas military bases.**

Publics around the world reject the idea that the United States should play the role of preeminent world leader. Most publics say the United States plays the role of world policeman more than it should, fails to take their country's interests into account and cannot be trusted to act responsibly.

These findings are consistent with a number of recent global surveys, which have found that the United States' image abroad is bad and getting worse. But this new poll goes further, exploring what kind of role the international community would like the United States to play in the world.

The survey finds that majorities in most countries want the United States to participate in international efforts to address world problems but in a more cooperative and multilateral fashion.

Views are divided about whether the United States should reduce the number of military bases it has overseas. Moreover, many publics think their country's relations with the United States are improving.

Americans largely agree with the rest of the world: most do not think the United States should remain the world's preeminent leader and prefer that it play a more cooperative role. They also believe United States plays the role of world policeman more than it should.

The United States' Role in the World

Majorities in all 15 of the publics polled about the United States' role in the world reject the idea that "as the sole remaining superpower, the US should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems." However, majorities in only two publics (Argentina and the Palestinian territories) say that the United States "should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems." The preferred view in all of the other cases is that the United States "should do its share in efforts to solve international problems together with other countries."

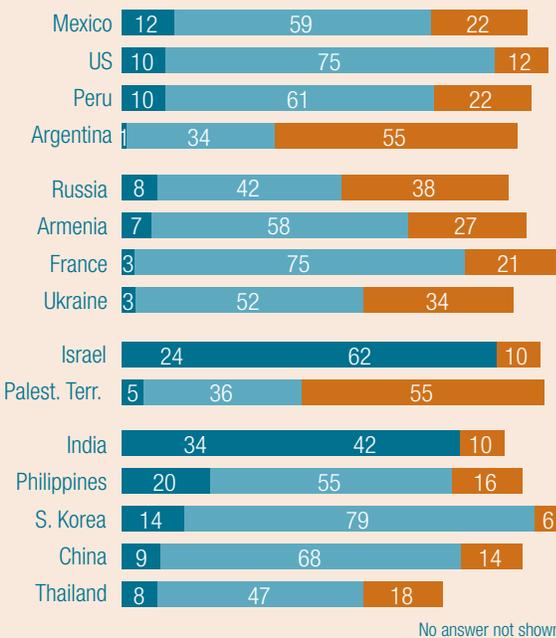
In Asia, large majorities embrace the idea that the United States should play a cooperative role in South Korea (79%) and China (68%). A majority of Filipinos (55%) and a plurality of Indians (42%) also take this view, but they are among the few publics with substantial numbers saying the United States should play the role of the preeminent world leader: 20 percent in the Philippines and 34 percent in India. Thais are also relatively reluctant to support a cooperative role (47%), but very few endorse a preeminent role (8%) or disengagement (18%), while 27 percent declined to answer.

In Europe, the French are those most emphatic in their support for a cooperative role (75%), followed by Armenia (58%). A majority of Ukrainians (52%) also support this position, but an unusually high

US ROLE IN THE WORLD

Which statement comes closest to your position?

- As the sole remaining superpower, the US should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems.
- The US should do its share in efforts to solve international problems together with other countries.
- The US should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems.



number (34%) supports US disengagement. In Russia, a plurality (42%) favors a cooperative role, but this is barely more than the percentage (38%) that favors disengagement.

In Latin America, about six in 10 Peruvians (61%) and Mexicans (59%) believe the United States should cooperate with other countries to solve international problems. However, as mentioned above, Argentines are one of only two publics favoring US withdrawal from international efforts with 55 percent taking this position and 34 percent in favor of cooperation.

In the Middle East, Israelis and Palestinians differ sharply. A majority of Palestinians favor US disengagement (55%) while more than a third (36%) prefers cooperation. Israelis are more in line with most other publics in that 62 percent favor US cooperation,

but they also show the second highest level of support (after India) for the US taking the role of preeminent leader (24%).

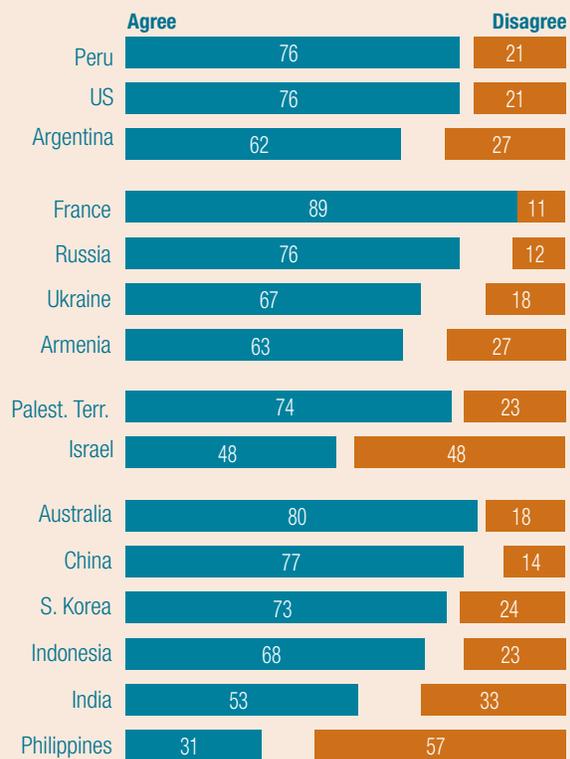
Americans match the French in their support for the United States doing its share together with other nations (75%), with small numbers favoring a preeminent role (10%) or isolationism (12%).

United States as World Policeman

Majorities in 13 out of 15 publics polled say the United States is “playing the role of world policeman more than it should be.” This is the sentiment of about three-quarters or more of those polled in: France (89%), Australia (80%), China (77%), Russia (76%), Peru (76%), the Palestinian territories (74%) and South Korea (73%).

US AS WORLD POLICEMAN

"The US is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be."



Gap indicates no answer

The US public is also among those most convinced that the United States too often plays the role of world policeman. Seventy-six percent of Americans agree that their country is overdoing such activities.

In only one country, the Philippines, does a majority disagree with the idea that the United States tends to take on the role of international enforcer more than it should. Fifty-seven percent of Filipinos reject the idea that the United States plays a police role too often, while only a third (31%) agrees that it does.

Israelis, who are the United States' closest allies in the Middle East, are divided over whether the United States plays the global policeman role too often. Forty-eight percent of Israelis agree and 48 percent disagree.

The five other countries where majorities believe the United States is too often acting as world policeman are: Indonesia (68%), Ukraine (67%), Armenia (63%), Argentina (62%) and India (53%). In India, a country that has been among the most positive about the United States in recent years, a third (33%) disagrees.

The survey also asks respondents in nine countries whether the United States has the “responsibility to play the role of ‘world policeman,’ that is to fight violations of international law and aggression wherever they occur.” Majorities in eight of the nine countries say the United States does not have the responsibility to fight aggression and enforce international law. The exception is India, where a slight majority (53%) says the US does have this responsibility while a third (35%) says it does not.

Palestinians (76%) are the most likely of the publics surveyed to answer that the United States does not have such a responsibility. The next most likely are Americans themselves. Three-quarters of Americans (75%) reject the idea that their country has a duty to enforce international law.

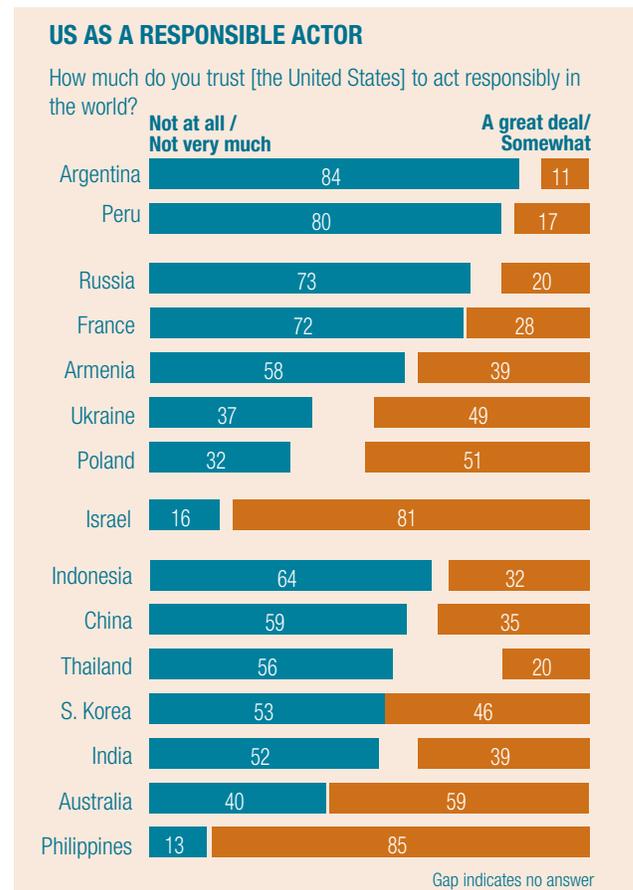
Strong majorities of Armenians (70%), Australians (70%), Indonesians (69%), and Ukrainians (69%) also agree that the United States does not have this responsibility.

The United States' greatest economic and military rival in Asia—China—and one of its closest allies—South Korea—are equally likely to reject the idea that the US government has a duty to enforce international law. Sixty-one percent of Chinese and 60 percent of South Koreans answer no. South Koreans are only somewhat more likely to say yes (39%) than the Chinese (30%).

Trust in the United States to Act Responsibly

In 10 out of 15 countries, the most common view is that the United States cannot be trusted to “act responsibly in the world.” Respondents were allowed to choose whether the United States could be trusted “a great deal,” “somewhat,” “not very much” or “not at all.”

Two Latin American countries show the least trust in the United States. An overwhelming 84 percent



of Argentines answer that they have little confidence in the United States, including 69 percent who think the United States cannot be trusted at all. Eight in 10 Peruvians (80%) also think the US cannot be trusted (23% not at all).

Most Russian and French respondents agree. Nearly three-quarters of Russians (73%) express little trust, including a third (31%) that says the United States cannot be trusted at all. The French are almost equally skeptical: 72 percent do not trust the United States to behave responsibly, including 30 percent who do not trust it at all.

Also among those who believe the United States generally cannot be trusted are: Indonesians (64%), Armenians (59%), Chinese (59%), Thais (56%) and South Koreans (53%). Half of Indian respondents (52%) also express little or no confidence.

In four countries, majorities or pluralities say the United States can be at least somewhat trusted to act responsibly. Filipinos (85%) are the most willing to trust the United States and half of them think the United States can be trusted a great deal (48%). Eight in 10 Israelis (81%) also believe this. They are also the most willing to say the United States can be trusted a great deal (56%). Australians (59%) also tend to trust the United States (18% a great deal).

In two eastern European countries, about half believe the United States can be trusted: 51 percent in Poland—though most of these (44%) think the United States can only be trusted somewhat—and 49 percent in Ukraine, 31 percent of whom answer somewhat. About a third of Poles (32%) and Ukrainians (37%) say the United States cannot be trusted and large numbers are uncertain (17% and 24% respectively).

US Willingness to Consider Other Interests

Of the seven countries polled on this question, five believe the United States does not take their interests into account when making foreign policy decisions. Only in Israel does a large majority believe that the

United States takes their interests into account. Indians are divided. In the other five countries, majorities or pluralities answer “not very much” or “not at all” when asked whether the United States takes their interests into account.

Three former Soviet-bloc countries are the most likely to think that the United States fails to consider their concerns. Although Poles tend to have fairly positive views of the United States, three-quarters (76%) think that the United States does not take their interests into account very much (57%) or does not do so at all (19%).

Two-thirds of Russians (66%) also think the United States ignores their interests, including a third who think it ignores them entirely (33%). Ukrainian feelings are similar: 63 percent say the United States tends not to take their interests into account, including 38 percent who say it does not take them into account at all.

In Asia, the most common view in two countries (China and Thailand) is that their interests are not considered by the United States when making foreign policy decisions. A majority of Chinese (58%) believe this, of whom 23 percent say the US does not do so at all. A plurality of Thais (49%) say the United States does not take their interests into account (30% not very much, 19% not at all) compared to 23 percent who believe it does (15% somewhat, 8% a great deal).

However, Indians are divided. Forty-six percent say the United States does not take their interests into account (23% not at all), while 44 percent say that it does take their interests into account (24% somewhat, 20% a great deal).

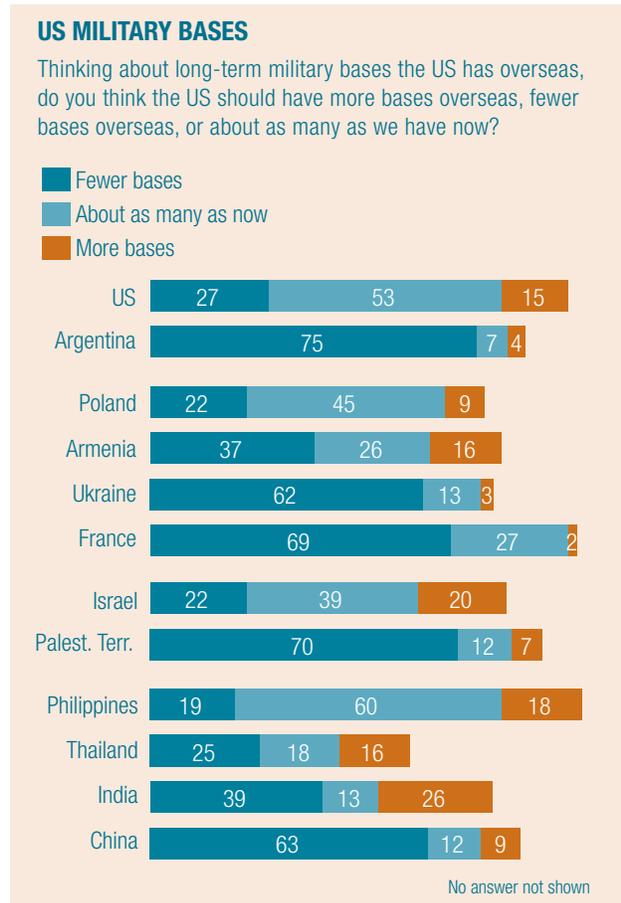
The Israelis stand out as the only country where a strong majority (57%) says that the United States takes their interests into account a great deal while an additional 25 percent say that it does so somewhat. Thus a remarkable total of 82 percent of Israelis say that the United States takes their interests into account. A mere 14 percent disagree.

US Overseas Military Bases

Despite the widespread belief that the United States should not be the world’s preeminent leader and that it plays the role of world policeman more than it should, countries express mixed views about whether the United States should reduce its military presence around the world. Nonetheless, very few support increasing the number of bases.

Twelve publics were asked whether the United States should have more, fewer or the same number of long-term bases overseas. In six of them, including the US public, majorities or pluralities think the United States should maintain or increase the number of bases it maintains overseas. In five countries, majorities call for reductions. One country—India, again—is divided.

Those most in favor of the United States at least



maintaining its overseas military presence are Filipinos, Americans, Israelis and Poles. Those most likely to support a decreased presence are Argentines, Palestinians, the French and the Chinese.

Filipinos—whose government forced the United States to shut down its last base on Philippine territory 15 years ago—are the most likely to say that the United States should maintain its long-term overseas military presence. Nearly four in five respondents in the Philippines (78%) say the United States should either keep “about as many” bases as now (60%) or add more bases (18%).

Sixty-eight percent of Americans think the United States should either keep as many bases as now (53%) or add bases (15%). Only 27 percent say the United States should have fewer bases.

A majority of Israelis (59%) believe the United States should maintain a strong military presence overseas. Of these, 39 percent say the United States should keep its current number of bases and 20 percent say it should have more.

Respondents in Poland—one of the United States’ staunchest allies in Europe—also believe the United States should keep as many or more military bases overseas as it has today (54%). Most of these (45%) believe the United States should maintain the same number of bases and 9 percent believe there should be more.

Pluralities in Armenia and Thailand favor keeping or increasing US overseas bases over decreasing them. Armenians are in favor of maintaining the US military presence abroad by a margin of 42 percent to 37 percent. Thais support it by a margin of 34 percent to 25 percent, with 41 percent not answering.

Of the 12 publics polled, Argentines are those most in favor of shutting down US bases overseas (75%). Palestinians and the French are next with seven in 10 (70% and 69% respectively) saying the United States should reduce its military presence abroad.

A majority of Chinese—an emerging military and economic power in Asia—also think the United States should have fewer bases. Three in five (63%) say it should reduce its overseas presence.

A majority of Ukrainians (62%) think that the United States should have fewer bases while 13 percent say it should keep the current number. Only 3 percent think it needs more and 22 percent are unsure.

Indians are evenly divided between those who say the United States should increase or maintain its bases overseas and those who believe it should decrease them. Thirty nine percent believe the US needs more (26%) or the same number (13%) and 39 percent say it should have fewer. About a fifth of Indian respondents (22%) are unsure.

US Military Presence in East Asia

Asians are divided about whether the US military presence is beneficial or harmful to their region. The United States has approximately 75,000 troops in East Asia and the Pacific, most of which are located in Japan and South Korea. It also maintains a fleet of ships and submarines in the area.

Five Asian countries (China, India, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand) and the United States were asked specifically about the issue of US forces in East Asia.

While a majority of Chinese believe the United States should reduce its troop levels, Filipinos and South Koreans tend to think their numbers should be increased and Indians are split on the issue. Nonetheless, majorities in China, South Korea and India all agree that the US military presence in East Asia could be a threat to their country's "vital interests" in the next ten years.

Asked whether the US military presence in East Asia should be increased, decreased or maintained, nearly two-thirds of Chinese respondents (64%) say it should be reduced. Only 15 percent believe the United States

should maintain the presence it currently has in East Asia; 9 percent say it should be increased and 12 percent are not sure or declined to answer.

In contrast, most South Koreans—despite anti-US protests in the capital city of Seoul—believe the United States should either maintain or increase its forces in the region. About three-quarters of respondents in South Korea (74%) say the US military presence in the region should either grow (59%) or remain the same (15%). Only quarter (24%) say the United States should ratchet down its forces.

The Philippines, unlike South Korea, has forced the US military to withdraw from its territory. But the Philippine public leans toward increasing the Americans' military presence in the region. By a margin of 46 percent to 36 percent, respondents in the Philippines say US forces should be increased in East Asia rather than decreased. Only 3 percent say the United States should maintain its current presence.

Indians are divided about whether or not US troops should be withdrawn from East Asia. About two in five (43%) say US troops in the region should be increased (30%) or maintained at present levels (13%). But nearly as many say their numbers should be decreased (38%).

A majority of Americans themselves (57%) think the United States military should maintain its current levels in Asia, though a sizeable minority says such forces should be cut back (30%). Less than one in ten (8%) think the forces should be augmented.

Three Asian countries (China, Thailand and India) were asked about the effect the US military presence had on East Asian stability. A majority of Chinese (56%) say US forces are decreasing regional stability. Eighteen percent say US forces increase stability and 8 percent say they have no effect. A relatively high 18 percent are not sure.

Thai respondents tend to say the US presence enhances stability (25%) rather than decreases it (16%). A fifth (19%) says US forces stationed in East Asia do neither.

However, a very large proportion of respondents decline to answer (40%).

Indians are evenly divided over whether US forces decrease (33%) or increase (31%) stability in East Asia. Sixteen percent say neither and 20 percent decline to answer.

Despite their differences over the current impact of US forces in the region, the Chinese and South Koreans agree that the US military represents a potential threat to their national interests. Most Indians also see the American military presence as possibly menacing.

Seven in 10 Chinese respondents (71%) say the US military presence in Asia could put their country’s “vital interests” at risk in the next decade, including 38 percent who call it a “critical” threat and 33 percent who say it is “important but not critical.” Indians are as likely as the Chinese to say that the US military presence could jeopardize their interests in the next ten years. Seven in 10 Indians (72%) agree that this is a threat, including 42 percent who say it is a critical threat.

Although a majority of South Koreans, as discussed above, favor increasing the US military presence in Asia, they still see such forces as a potential threat in the relatively near future. Nearly two-thirds of South Koreans (67%) say the US military presence is a threat, though few see it as a critical threat (12%).

Some Improvement in Bilateral Relations

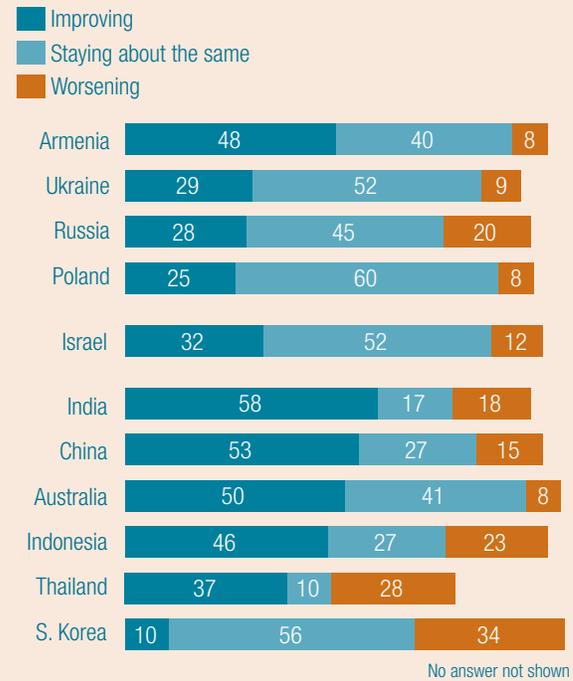
Contrary to the largely negative views of the United States’ role in the world is the perception in some countries—including some that are highly critical of the United States—that bilateral relations with the United States are improving. Eleven countries were asked whether relations of their country with the United States were “improving, worsening, or staying about the same.”

Six of the 11 countries say their relations with the United States show signs of improvement, including

majorities in India (58%) and China (53%) and pluralities in Australia (50%), Armenia (48%), Indonesia (46%) and Thailand (37%).

BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE US

In your opinion, are relations of [survey country] with the following countries improving, or staying about the same...the US:



In the remaining five countries, majorities or pluralities say relations with the United States are staying about the same: 60 percent in Poland, 56 percent in South Korea, 52 percent in Israel, 52 percent in the Ukraine, and 45 percent in Russia.

In no country does even a plurality think relations are getting worse. South Korea has the largest minority saying that relations with the United States are worsening (34%), followed by Thailand (28%) and Indonesia (23%). Among the other eight countries, only 8 percent to 20 percent feel this way.

Variations by Subgroup

Interest in news: Opposition to the idea that the US should play the role of “world policeman” increases

sharply with interest in the news. A majority of people who are very interested in international news do not think that the United States has the responsibility to play this role (65%) and, in fact, think that the US is currently playing that role more than it should (73%), while only a plurality of those who do not follow international news hold these opinions (48% and 48% respectively).

Rejection of the US playing the role of the preeminent world leader is unaffected by interest in news, but support for a cooperative role for the US increases with interest in news. At the same time, however, people who are very interested in international news are more likely to think that their country's relationship with the United States is improving.

Education: Among those with higher education, the majority that supports a cooperative role for the United

States is 10 points higher than among those with low education. Those with low education are more inclined to believe the US should withdraw from international affairs.

Opposition to long-term US military bases throughout the world also increases with higher education. A plurality (50%) of respondents with high education think that the US should decrease its long-term military bases abroad. In contrast, only a plurality (41%) of respondents with low education levels hold the same opinion.

Income: Majorities in all income categories favor the United States doing its share in efforts to solve international problems together with other countries, as opposed to leading or withdrawing from international affairs. These majorities become larger as income rises.

Rise of China

- Majorities around the world believe that the Chinese economy will someday grow to be as large as the US economy.
- In no country do majorities feel that it would be mostly negative for China to catch up with the United States.
- World publics do not trust China to act responsibly in the world any more than they trust the United States to do so and distinctly less than they trust Japan.

Majorities around the world believe that China will catch up with the United States economically. It’s a prospect that leaves most of those polled—even Americans—unperturbed.

In most countries polled, majorities or pluralities believe the Chinese economy will grow to be as large as the US economy. In no country do most people think this would be mostly negative. Majorities in every country polled believe this is either a good thing or equally positive and negative.

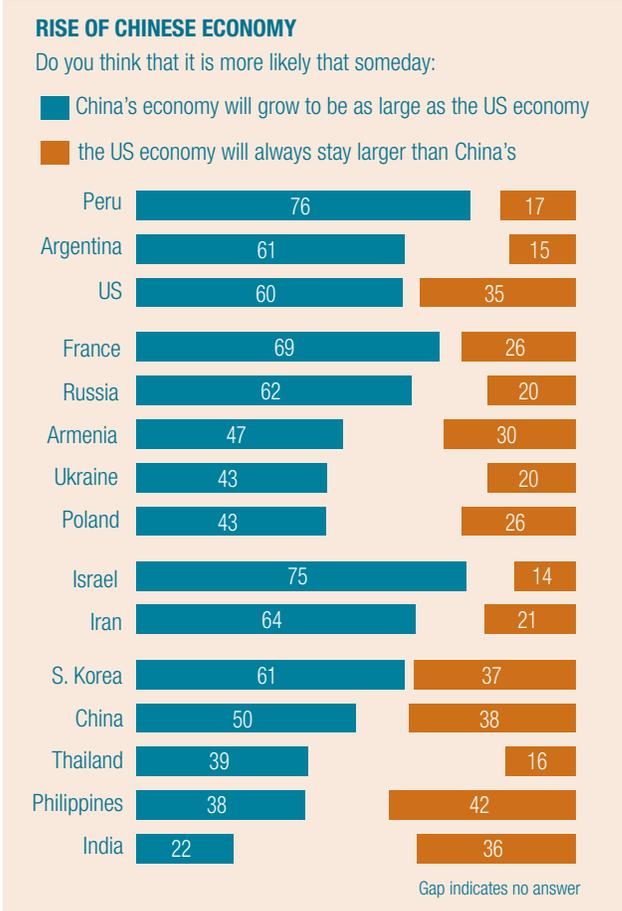
This sanguine reaction to what is potentially a tectonic shift in world economic power is not because China is widely trusted. World publics do not trust China any more than they trust the United States and distinctly less than they trust Japan.

Bullish on China

Of the 15 countries asked whether it was “likely that someday China’s economy will grow to be as large as the US economy,” majorities agreed in eight and pluralities in five.

The Chinese themselves are among the more skeptical countries. Only 50 percent say that their economy will catch up to the US economy. That is considerably less than the percentage of Americans who believe China’s economy will grow to be as large as theirs (60%).

It’s also less than those polled in Peru (76%), Israel (75%), France (69%), Iran (64%), Russia (62%),



Argentina and South Korea (both 61%). The percentage of Chinese respondents who believe their country will catch up with the United States is even lower than the average of respondents in all 15 countries surveyed (54%).

In only two countries do those believing “the US economy will always stay larger than China’s” outnumber those who think China will catch up. Filipinos say the US economy will remain larger by a margin of 42 percent to 38 percent. Indians also tend to believe this by 36 percent to 22 percent, though even larger numbers refuse to answer (42%).

China’s Rise Neither Good nor Bad

Asked how they would feel if China were to catch up with the United States, publics show little concern. In no country among the 13 asked does even a plurality say that this would be mostly negative. The most common view is that this would be equally positive and negative, with slightly more saying that it would be positive than saying it would be negative.

The highest level of concern is in the United States, where one in three is worried. But a majority of Americans (54%) say instead that China’s economic rise would be “neither positive nor negative” while another one in 10 (9%) say it would be mostly positive.

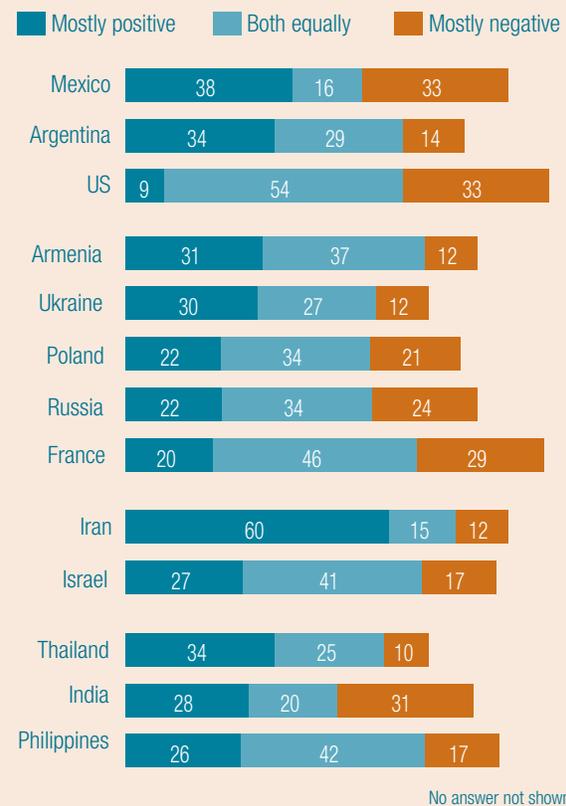
This idea that China’s rise would be equally positive and negative is also the most common view in France (46%), the Philippines (42%), and Israel (41%). However in France, those who believe this would be mostly negative outnumber those who say it would be positive by 29 percent to 20 percent. In the Philippines, the reverse is true: More say this would be positive (26%) than negative (17%). Even in Israel—which looks to the United States for support—more say it would be positive (27%) than negative (17%).

In Russia—which may view China as both a rival and a counterweight to the United States—negative and positive views about China’s rise are almost equally balanced. Thirty-four percent say it would be equally positive and negative, while almost exactly the same numbers say it would be positive (22%) as negative (24%).

Reactions in Poland and India—both of which tend to have fairly positive views of the United States—are similarly balanced. Poles are indifferent overall, with 22 percent calling China’s rise positive, 21 percent

EFFECT OF CHINA’S RISE

If China’s economy were to grow to be as large as the US economy, do you think that would be:



negative and 34 percent both equally. In India, negative and positive views are also roughly equal (31% and 28%, respectively) though fewer say it is equally negative and positive (20%).

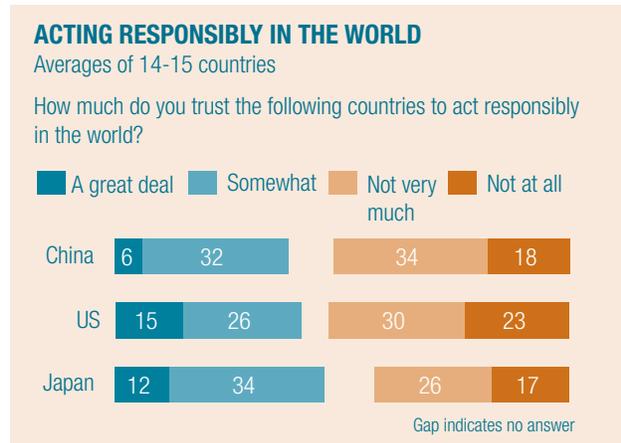
Only in Iran does a majority (60%) say that it would be mostly positive for China to catch up. Their favorable outlook may stem in part from heavy Chinese investment in Iranian oil as well as Iranian desires to have a counterweight to American power. But the view that this would be positive is also the most common response in Mexico (38%), Argentina (34%), Thailand (34%), and Ukraine (30%).

On average across all countries polled, the most common response is that seeing China catch up with the United States would be equally positive and negative (32%), though those who think it would be mostly positive (29%) outweigh those who think it would be negative (20%).

China and the US: Equally Distrusted

The world’s seemingly sanguine view of Chinese possible economic ascendance does not mean most publics think they can trust Chinese leaders.

Ten out of 15 publics polled say they do not trust China “to act responsibly in the world.” On average, those who say they cannot trust China “at all” or “very much” outnumber those who say they can trust it “somewhat” or “a great deal” by 52 percent to 38 percent (10 percent do not answer).



Attitudes toward China in this respect are similar to attitudes toward the United States, which is also distrusted in 10 out of 15 publics polled. Those who distrust the United States outnumber those who trust it by 53 percent to 41 percent (6 percent do not answer).

But this does not mean that people simply do not trust major powers. There is substantially more confidence in Japan, which is trusted to act responsibly in 10 out of 16 countries. On average, the margin is slightly in favor of trusting Japan by 46 percent to 43 percent (11 percent do not answer).

Those most likely to distrust China are the French. Three out of four French respondents (76%) say they feel that China can either not be trusted at all (33%) or not very much (43%). That’s even more than the French who distrust the United States (72%). Peruvians are also strongly inclined to distrust China (70%) as are Argentines (65%) and South Koreans (61%).

Thais (59%), Americans (58%) and Russians (56%) are about equally doubtful that China can be trusted to act responsibly. In Thailand (53%) and the United States (60%), majorities also say that China does not take their country’s interests into account when making foreign policy. A plurality agrees in Russia (47% to 42%).

Pluralities tend to think China cannot be trusted in India (49% to 42%), Israel (47% to 42%) and in Poland (47% to 28%), though large numbers of Poles are not sure (25%). Israelis (61%) and Poles (69%) also say Chinese foreign policy does not take their interests into account. Indians lean toward this opinion (46% to 43%).

Those most likely to believe China can be trusted include three of its Asian/Pacific neighbors: Australia (59%), Indonesia (59%) and the Philippines (57%). Trade between all four countries and China is growing rapidly. Australia and the ASEAN countries (which include Indonesia and the Philippines) are negotiating free trade agreements with China. Ukrainians also tend to trust China (46% to 29%) even though they do not think that it takes their interests into account in foreign policy decisions (62%).

The countries that do not trust China tend not to trust the United States either. Two South American countries —Argentina (84%) and Peru (80%)— are the most distrustful of the United States. Russia is next with 73 percent saying the United States cannot be trusted. Two-thirds of Russians (66%) also say that US foreign policy does not take Russian interests into account. Most French respondents also say the United States cannot be trusted (72%).

Indonesia is an exception to the rule that countries tend to distrust both powers. Although Indonesians trust China, they do not trust the United States (64%). Armenia is another: Armenians are divided about China but distrustful of the United States (58%).

Majorities in China (59%), Thailand (56%), South Korea (53%) and India (52%) also regard the United States with suspicion. A majority of the Chinese (58%) say that the United States does not take their interests into account when making foreign policy, as

do pluralities in Thailand (49% to 23%, with 28% not sure) and India (46% to 44%).

A slim majority of Poles (51%) trust the United States to act responsibly even though a far larger one (76%) says that US foreign policy does not take their interests into account. Ukrainians also tend to trust the United States (49% to 37%) although they do not think it considers their interests (63%). Four out of five Israelis both trust the United States (81%) and believe it takes their interests into account (82%).

In contrast, the other great Asian economy—Japan—gets a considerably more positive reaction from world publics. Majorities or pluralities in 10 of the countries polled say that it can be trusted to act responsibly, led by Indonesia (76%), Australia (72%), the United States (71%) and the Philippines (67%). A majority of the French (59%) also trust Japan.

On the other hand, the United States is the only country out of eight asked where a majority believes that Japan takes its interests into account when making foreign policy decisions.

Majorities in six countries say Japan cannot be trusted, led by two countries invaded by Japan during World War II: South Korea (81%) and China (79%). Peruvians (60%) are also leery of Japan as are Thais (60%), Argentines (52%) and Russians (51%).

Asian/Pacific Views of International Influence

Publics in Asia and the Pacific see China's influence in the world as high, though not as high as the United States'. But they believe that China already wields nearly as much or more influence as the United States does in Asia.

Ten countries were asked to rate the world influence of the United States, China and Japan on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 indicated the most influence. All 10 publics ranked the United States' influence as higher than China's. But China is close behind and on a par with Japan.

South Korea gives US influence a high 8.5, China a 6.7 and Japan a 6.5. Thai opinion is similar: the United States rates an 8.3 while China and Japan get

the same score of 6.9. Indians rate US international influence slightly lower (7.3), though still higher than either Japan (6.2) or China (6), while Australians give the United States a 6.1, just slightly above either Japan (5.7) or China (5.5).

Only Indonesia believes Japan's influence surpasses both China's and the United States'. Indonesia gives all three rather modest rankings: 6.9 for Japan, 6.4 for the United States and 6.3 for China.

China gives itself a 7.8, less than the 8.6 it gives to the United States but considerably above the 6.7 it gives to Japan. Americans give their country an 8.5 and rate the world influence of China and Japan as equal (6.4 both).

Four Asian/Pacific countries generally see China as already wielding nearly as much or more influence in Asia as the United States does. Australians and the Chinese themselves see China as more influential than the United States, though Indians and Indonesians see it as slightly less so.

China, India, Australia and Indonesia were asked to rate the influence in Asia of China, the United States and Japan on the same 0-10 scale.

The Chinese gave both themselves and the United States a score of 8, the highest scores given by any country, while giving Japan a 6.8. Australians think Chinese influence in Asia rates a 7.5, higher than that given by Australians to the United States or to the Japanese (6.6 for both).

Indians place China's influence in Asia at 5.9, below Japan's (6.2) and well below the United States, (7.1). Indonesians give China a 7, less than the United States' 7.5 and Japan's 7.3

Relations Seen as Improving or Stable

While most publics express distrust of China and the United States, views are mixed about whether their bilateral relations are now moving in a positive or negative direction. Asked whether their relations with the United States or with China are improving, getting worse or staying the same, six out of 11 countries polled

tend to say they are getting better in both cases, while the other five say they are staying the same.

Australia is the only country with a majority (59%) saying relations with China are on the upswing, though this is also the predominant view in India (50%), Indonesia (49%), Thailand (48%), Russia (44%) and Israel (40%). In the other countries, the most common view is that their country's ties with China are stable: Ukraine (58%), Poland (52%), Armenia (49%), South Korea (47%) and the United States (47%).

Majorities in Asia's two most populous countries—India (58%) and China (53%)—see relations with the United States as getting better. This opinion is shared by pluralities in Australia (50%), Armenia (48%), Indonesia (46%) and Thailand (37%). The others say relations are stable: Poland (60%), South Korea (56%), Israel (52%), Ukraine (52%) and Russia (45%).

Free Trade More Popular in Asia than in US

Asian countries are more open to free trade agreements with each other and with the United States than Americans are. Majorities in Thailand favor agreements with China (61%) or Japan (63%). Koreans also tend to look favorably on such accords, especially with China. Two-thirds would like such an agreement with China (66%) and a plurality of 50 percent (vs. 46% against) would like one with Japan. Pluralities in India also would like free trade with China (44% to 25%) and with Japan (48% to 26%).

All four Asian countries polled support free-trade agreements with the United States. China has the largest majority in favor of such a pact: 66 percent say they would like a free trade agreement with the United States and only 19 percent say they would not. Three out of five Thais (60%) would also like an accord with the United States, as would a majority of Indians (55%) and South Koreans (54%).

In contrast, Americans themselves are somewhat leery of lowering their tariff barriers to Chinese or Japanese

goods even in exchange for reciprocal action in favor of US goods. US respondents lean slightly in favor of free trade with their close ally Japan (47% to 43%) but a majority opposes such an agreement with China (56%).

Variations by Subgroup

Interest in news: The perception that China's economy is likely to catch up with the US economy is enhanced with higher levels of interest in international news. While a majority (54%) of those who are very interested in international news think that someday China's economy will grow to be as large as the US economy, only 32 percent of those who do not follow the news think that China will eventually catch up to the United States (though still a plurality).

Attitudes about the prospect of China catching up with the United States shift with attention to news. While views are mixed at all levels of interest in the news, those very interested lean slightly toward a positive view while those who do not follow the news lean slightly toward a negative view.

Those more interested in international news are likely to perceive that their country's relations with China are improving: on average those very interested are 19 percentage points more likely to have this perception than those who do not follow the news.

Education: The belief that China will eventually catch up to the United States increases quite significantly—on average 13 points—with higher levels of education. Concern about this prospect also increases. While those with low education are more likely to say that China's catching up would be positive than negative (31% to 23%), those with high levels of education lean toward saying that it would be negative (33% to 23%).

Highly educated people are more likely (by 7 points on average) to say they do not trust China to act responsibly in the world. But they are nonetheless also more likely (by 12 points) to think that their country's relations with China are improving.