

World Publics Reject US Role as the World Leader

Majorities Still Want US to Do Its Share in Multilateral Efforts, Not Withdraw from International Affairs

Mixed Views on US Overseas Bases

A multinational poll finds that 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.

But the survey also finds that majorities in most countries want the United States to participate in international efforts to address world problems. 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.

This is the fourth in a series of reports based on a worldwide poll about key international issues conducted by The Chicago Council on Global Affairs and WorldPublicOpinion.org, in cooperation with polling organizations around the world.

The larger study includes polls in China, India, the United States, Indonesia, Russia, France, Thailand, Ukraine, Poland, Iran, Mexico, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, Argentina, Peru, Israel and Armenia—plus the Palestinian territories.

The publics polled represent about 56 percent of the world's population. Not all questions were asked in all countries.

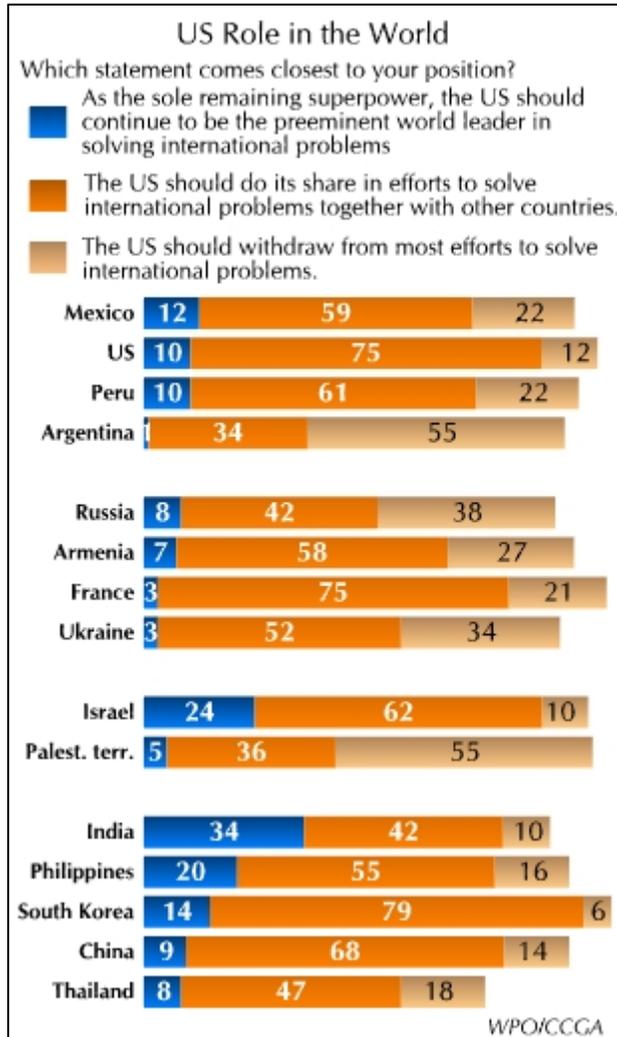
Steven Kull, editor of WorldPublicOpinion.org notes that this poll reinforces the conclusions of [other recent global surveys](#), which have found that the United States' image abroad is bad and growing worse. But he added that it goes further, exploring what kind of role the international community would like the United States to play in the world.

“This survey shows that despite the negative views of US foreign policy, publics around the world do not want the United States to disengage from international affairs, but rather to participate in a more cooperative and multilateral fashion,” Kull said.

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 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 ten 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%).

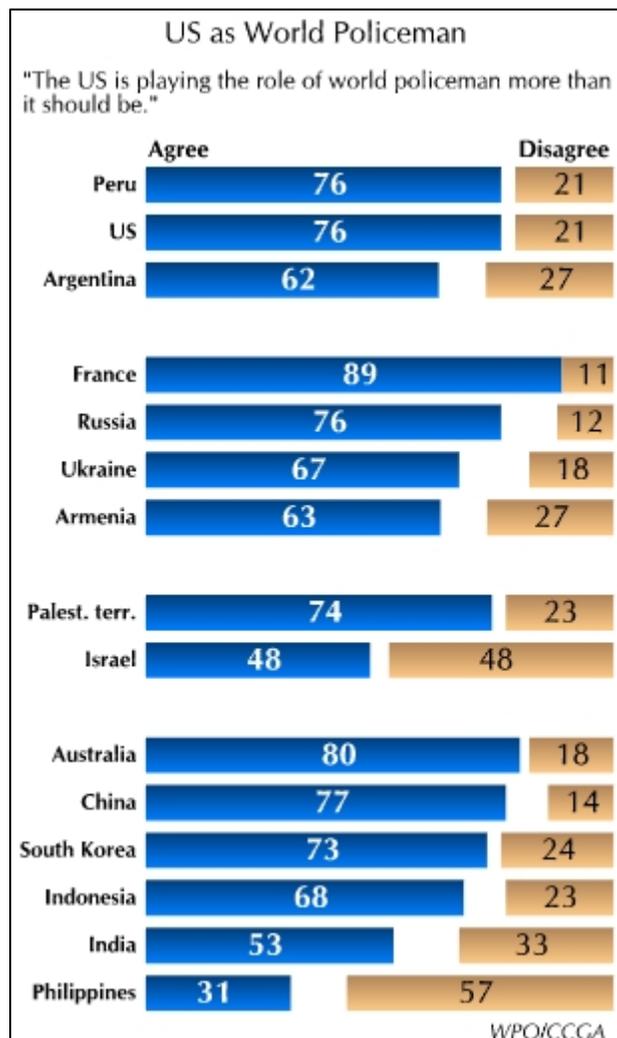
United States as World Policeman

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%).

The US public is also among those most convinced that 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 does a majority disagree with the idea that the United States tends to take on the role of international enforcer more than it should: the Philippines. 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 forty-eight 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 which 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 ten Peruvians (80%) also think the US cannot be trusted (23% not at all).

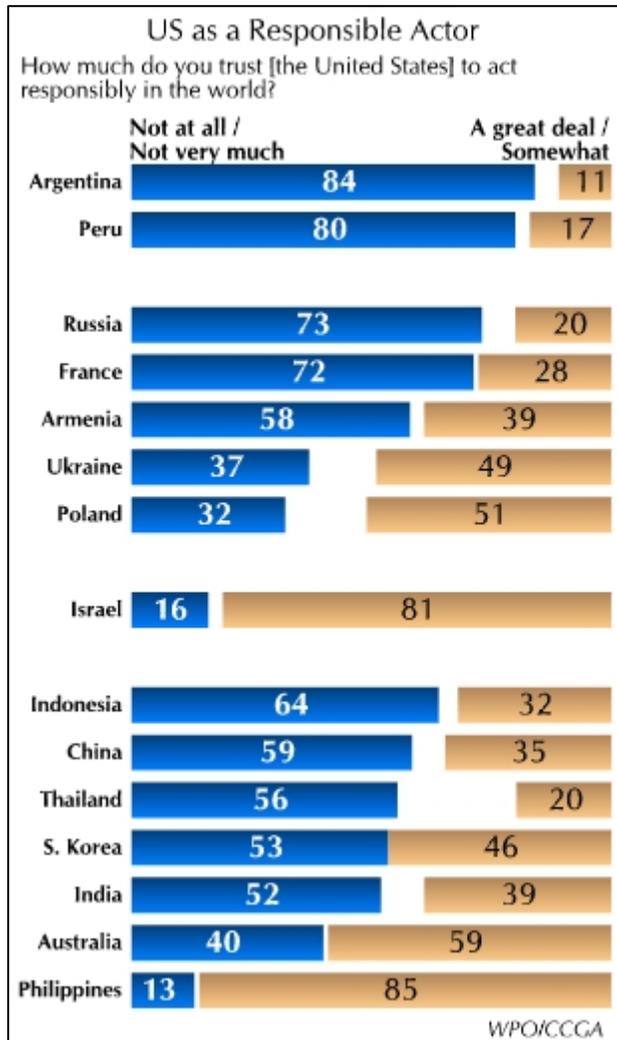
Most Russian and French respondents agree. Nearly three-quarters of Russians (73%) express little trust and a third (31%) says the United States cannot be trusted at all. The French are almost equally skeptical: 72 percent do not trust the United States to behave responsibly, including 30 percent who 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 (50%) 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 ten 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 interest 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.

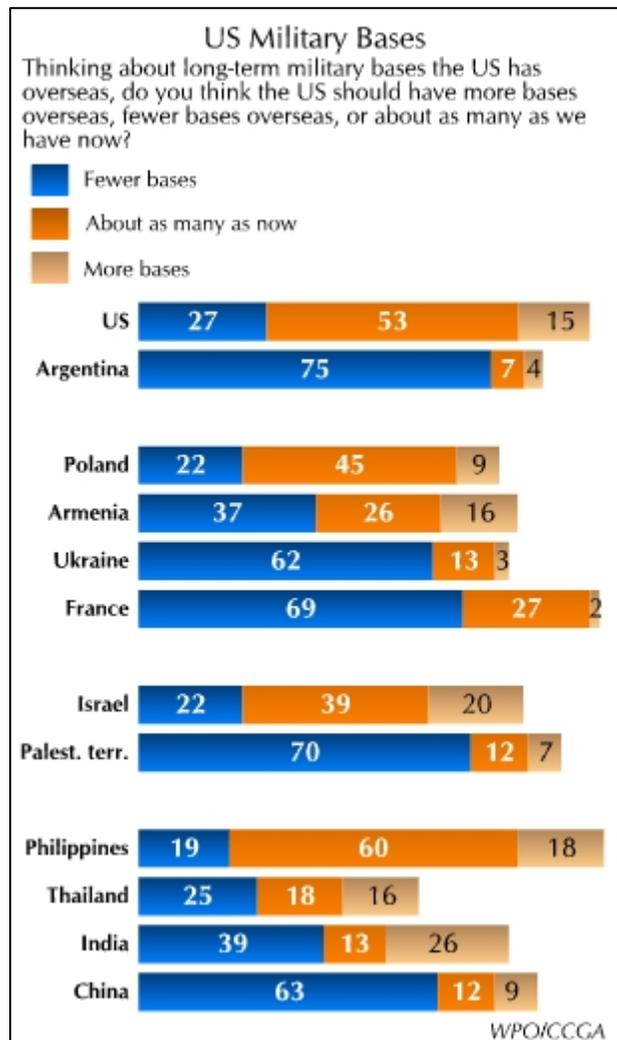
Thais support it by a margin of 34 percent to 25 percent, with 41 percent not answering.

Of the twelve publics polled, Argentines are those most in favor of shutting down US bases overseas (75%). Palestinians and the French are next with seven in ten (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 thinks 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.

Some Improvement in Bilateral Relations

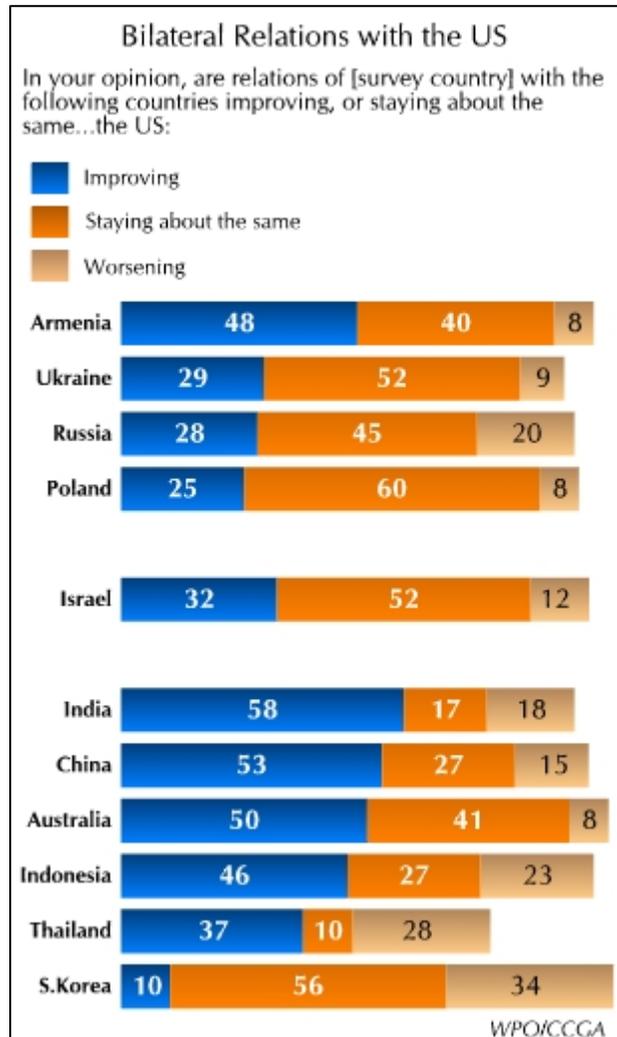
Also contrary to the largely negative views of the United States’ role in the world is the perception in some countries—including some that are highly critical of the United States—that bilateral relations with the United States are improving. Eleven countries were asked whether relations of their country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

Six of the eleven 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%).

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.

“The publics in many countries differentiate between their negative views of the US international role and their perceptions of bilateral relations, which are seen as improving in a significant number of countries, even some that are highly critical of the United States,” said Christopher Whitney, executive director for studies at The Chicago Council on Global Affairs.



Views of the United States: Results by Country

Americas

ARGENTINA

Graciela Romer y Asociados, December 2006

Argentines are among the most negative about US leadership in the world and very large majorities believe that the United States needs to reduce its involvement in international affairs and the number of military bases it maintains overseas. Argentina is one of only two countries where a majority (55%) believes that “the US should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems.” In Argentina, contrary to the prevalent view in other countries, only one third (34%) believes that the United States should “do its share in efforts to solve international problems” with other countries. Just one percent believes the United States should continue to be the “preeminent world leader.” Sixty-two percent in Argentina agree with the statement that “the US is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be,” with just 27 percent disagreeing. An overwhelming majority (84%) does not trust the United States to act responsibly in the world, including 69 percent who do not trust it at all, more than any other public polled. Just 11 percent say they trust the United States to act responsibly. Asked about what the United States should do about the number of military bases it maintains overseas, three-quarters (75%) in Argentina believe that it should have fewer than it does now, again the largest number out of any country polled.

MEXICO

Center for Economic Research and Teaching (CIDE)/Mexican Council of Foreign Relations (COMEXI), July 2006

Most Mexicans feel that the United States needs to adopt a more cooperative approach in addressing world problems, rather than continuing to act as the dominant world leader. Given three statements, very few (12%) support the idea that it “should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems.” A significant majority (59%) agrees most that the “US should do its share in efforts to solve international problems together with other countries.” A small number (22%) feels “The US should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems.”

PERU

Grupo de Opinión Pública, November 2006

Peruvians reject the idea that the United States should remain the preeminent world leader and have very little confidence that it will act responsibly in the world. Given three statements about how the United States should approach its role in the world, a majority of Peruvians (61%) believe that the US “should do its share in efforts to solve international problems together with other countries.” Only a small number (22%) want the United States to “withdraw from most efforts” to address international issues, and even fewer (10%) think it should remain the dominant leader. More than three in four

Peruvians (76%) agree that the United States is taking on the role of “world policeman” more than it should be, while just 21 percent disagree. Asked whether they trust the United States to act responsibly in world affairs, Peruvians demonstrate one of the lowest levels of confidence among the 15 countries asked. Four in five (80%) respondents say they do not trust the US to act responsibly very much (57%) or at all (23%), while just 17 percent say they have some (7%) or a great deal of trust (10%) in the United States.

UNITED STATES

Chicago Council on Global Affairs, July 2006

Americans also reject the idea that the United States should be the preeminent world leader and feel that it too often plays the role of world policeman. Most Americans (75%) believe the United States should do its share to solve world problems together with other countries. Very few support the idea that the United States should either withdraw from most international efforts (12%) or remain the preeminent world leader (10%) in solving international problems. The United States is also among the countries most convinced that “United States is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be” (76%). Only 21 percent disagree. Nearly the same number (75%) rejects the idea that the United States has an obligation to fulfill the role of world policeman and “fight violations of international law and aggression wherever they occur.” Only 22 percent believe the United States has this responsibility. However a majority of Americans feel the United States should either maintain its current number of overseas bases (53%) or increase them (15%). Twenty-seven percent think the United States should reduce its military presence and have fewer bases in foreign countries.

Europe

ARMENIA

Armenian Center for National and International Studies, December 2006

Armenians tend to see the United States as playing too large a role in world affairs and would prefer that it work more cooperatively with other countries. Given three options about how the United States should handle its superpower status, very few (7%) believe it should continue to be the dominant world leader. The most common view among Armenians (58%) is that the “US should do its share in efforts to solve international problems together with other countries.” Just 27 percent say the United States should withdraw from most international efforts. Sixty-three percent agree with the statement that “the United States is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be,” while 27 percent take the opposite view. Seven in 10 Armenians (70%) also disagree that the United States “has the responsibility” to play the role of world policeman and “fight violations of international law and aggression wherever they occur.” Armenians are quite skeptical about whether the United States acts responsibly in the world: 58 percent say they do not trust the United States to act responsibly, while 39 percent say they do. Feelings about the US military presence abroad are somewhat mixed: 37 percent of respondents believe the US should decrease the number of bases it has overseas, the most common view among Armenians, 26 percent say it should keep about the same number it

has now, and just 16 percent believe the number of bases should be increased. One in five (20%) declined to respond. Armenians tend to think their relations with the United States are getting better: significant numbers say Armenian-US relations are improving (48%) or staying about the same (40%), while just 8 percent believe they are getting worse.

FRANCE

Efficiency 3, March 2007

The French are among the publics most convinced that the United States should not continue to be the preeminent world leader and a large majority believes the United States should reduce its overseas military presence. Very few (3%) say that the United States should continue to be the preeminent world leader, but only 21 percent believe that “the US should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems.” Three-quarters (75%) of French respondents instead feel the United States should “do its share in efforts to solve international problems with other countries.” Nearly nine in 10 (89%) agree that the “United States is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be,” the largest majority out of any public polled. Confidence that the United States acts responsibly is also very low in France: only 28 percent say they trust the United States “somewhat” or a “great deal” while 72 percent say they trust the US to do so only a little (42%) or not at all (30%). Asked about the United States’ overseas military presence, the French are among the publics with the largest majority saying it should be reduced. Nearly seven in 10 (69%) say that the United States should have fewer military bases overseas, while about one quarter (27%) believes the number should remain the same. Very few (2%) feel it should be increased.

POLAND

CBOS, September 2006

Poles are exceptionally positive about the United States. They tend to trust the United States to act responsibly in the world and believe it should maintain its overseas military presence, but do not feel that it takes Poland’s interests into account when making foreign policy. A slight majority (51%) of Poles say they trust the United States to act responsibly in the world (44% somewhat, 7% a great deal), while 32 percent say they either do not trust the United States very much (22%) or at all (10%). When asked about the number of US military bases overseas, a majority (54%) says that the United States should keep “about as many as it has now” (45%) or increase them (9%). Just 22 percent feels the United States should have fewer bases. However, more than three-quarters (76%) of Poles feel the United States does not consider Poland’s interests in its foreign policy decisions (57% not very much, 19% not at all), and just 11 percent feel that it does. A majority of Poles see their country’s relationship with the United States as stable: three in five (60%) say US-Poland relations are “staying about the same,” while one-quarter (25%) believes they are improving and only 8 percent thinks they are getting worse.

RUSSIA

Levada Center, September 2006

Russians strongly reject US leadership in the world but are divided about what they want the United States to do. Most believe the United States plays the role of world policeman more than it should and do not trust it to act responsibly or to take Russia's interests into account when making foreign policy. Given three options about the US role in the world, only eight percent of Russian respondents feel the United States should continue to be the preeminent leader in the world. The rest are divided between those who believe the United States should "work together with other countries" (42%) and those who think it should "withdraw from most efforts" to solve international problems (38%). More than three-quarters (76%) of Russian respondents believe the United States is playing the role of world policeman "more than it should be," while just 12 percent take the opposite view. Russians also lack confidence that the United States acts responsibly in the world: 73 percent say that either they do not trust the United States very much (42%) that they do not trust it at all (31%). Only 20 percent say they trust the United States somewhat (17%) or a great deal (3%). Similarly, when asked whether the United States considers Russia's interests in making its foreign policy, two-thirds of Russians (66%) say the United States does not take their interests into account very much (33%) or at all (33%). Only one quarter (26%) thinks the United States considers Russia's interests. Asked how they view US-Russian relations, a plurality sees them as staying about the same (45%), while nearly a third (28%) says they are improving. One in five (20%) says they are getting worse.

UKRAINE

Kiev International Institute of Sociology, September 2006

Ukrainians overwhelmingly reject the idea that the United States should continue to be the world's preeminent leader, think that it plays the role of world policeman more than it should and that it should decrease its overseas military presence. Nonetheless, they tend to trust the United States to act responsibly. Only 3 percent agree that the United States should be the preeminent world leader. A slight majority (52%) of Ukrainians feel the United States should "do its share" to address world problems "together with other countries," while another third (32%) prefers that it withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems. Asked whether the United States is acting as world policeman "more than it should be," two-third of Ukrainians (67%) agree that it is, while just 18 percent disagree. Furthermore, nearly seven in 10 (69%) say that the United States does not have the responsibility to act as world policeman and "fight violations of international law and aggression wherever they occur." Only 17 percent take the opposite view. A significant majority (62%) feels that the United States should reduce the number of military bases it has overseas, while 13 percent feel that this number should be maintained and 3 percent say it should be increased. However, Ukrainians tend to trust the United States to act responsibly in the world: 49 percent say they trust the United States at least somewhat (31%) or a great deal (18%), while 37 percent say they do not trust it very much (24%) or at all (13%). Sixty-three percent are skeptical that the United States considers Ukraine's interests in its foreign policy decisions, while just 26 percent

feel that it takes them into account. Nonetheless, very few Ukrainians (9%) say their country's relations with the United States are getting worse. A slight majority of Ukrainians (52%) think relations with the United States are staying about the same and 29 percent say they are improving.

Asia/Pacific

AUSTRALIA

Lowy Institute, July 2006

Most Australians believe that the United States acts as a world policeman more often than it should but a majority also feels that the United States can be trusted to act responsibly in the world. Four in five Australians (80%) think the United States plays the role of world policeman more than it should, one of the highest percentages among the 15 publics polled on this question. Furthermore, seven in 10 Australians reject the idea that the United States "has the responsibility" to undertake this role and "fight violations of international law and aggression wherever they occur." However, nearly three out of five (59%) Australian respondents trust the United States to act responsibly in the world (41% somewhat, 18% a great deal), though a significant number (40%) do not trust the United States very much (21%) or at all (19%). Asked how they feel about Australia's relationship with the United States, half (50%) say it is improving, while 41 percent say it remains unchanged. Only 8 percent believe relations are worsening between the two countries.

CHINA

Chicago Council on Global Affairs, July 2006

Not surprisingly China's public rejects the idea that the United States should continue to be the preeminent world leader, thinks it plays the role of world policeman more than it should, and wants it to reduce its overseas military presence. But few Chinese respondents want the United States to disengage from the world. Only 9 percent want the United States to play the role of world leader, but only 14 percent want it to withdraw from world affairs. Nearly seven in 10 of Chinese respondents (68%) believe the US "should do its share" with other countries in solving international problems. More than three-quarters (77%) agree that the United States acts as "world policeman" more than it should among the largest numbers out of all countries polled, while 61 percent reject the idea that "the US has the responsibility to play the role of world policeman." A considerable majority (63%) of Chinese also believe the US should reduce its overseas military presence—very few believe that the number of American military bases should stay the same (12%) or be increased (9%). Chinese respondents also express doubt that the United States will act responsibly in the world: 59 percent say that they do not trust the United States to do so, while just 35 percent say they do. Asked how much the United States takes the interests of China into account when making foreign policy decisions, nearly the same number (58%) say it does not, while 36 percent say it does. However, a clear majority (53%) of Chinese believe their country's relations with the US

are improving. About one quarter (27%) feel bilateral relations are staying about the same, while just 15 percent say they are getting worse.

INDIA

Chicago Council on Global Affairs, July 2006

The Indian public has the largest minority saying that the United States should act as the leader in world affairs and a slight majority believes the United States has the responsibility to play the role of world policeman. Nonetheless, a plurality feels the United States should cooperate with other countries and majorities think it plays the role of world policeman more than it should and distrust US leaders to act responsibly in world affairs. One in three Indians (34%) say that the United States should be the preeminent world leader, but more (42%) say that it should work “together with other countries” to solve international problems. Just 10 percent think the United States should withdraw from most international efforts. While a modest majority of Indians (53%) believe the United States “has the responsibility to play the role of ‘world policeman.’” The same percentage (53%) agrees that the United States is playing the role of world policeman “more than it should be.” Indians have somewhat mixed views about US overseas military bases. Thirty-nine percent feel the United States should have fewer bases; while approximately the same number think it should keep the same number (13%) or have more (26%). Indians also tend to think the United States cannot be trusted. A narrow majority (52%) says they do not trust the United States to “act responsibly in the world” (not very much 25%, not at all 27%), while 39 percent say they trust the United States somewhat (22%) or a great deal (17%). Indians are divided over whether the United States considers their country’s interests when making foreign policy decisions: 44 percent say that it does, while 46 percent say it does not. Asked about India’s relations with the United States, a significant majority (58%) say they are improving, more than in any of the other 10 countries polled. Smaller numbers see India-US relations as worsening (18%) or staying about the same (17%).

INDONESIA

Lowy Institute, July 2006

Indonesians generally agree that the United States acts as world policeman more than it should and most do not trust it to act responsibly in the world. Sixty-eight percent agree the United States acts as world policeman too often and similar numbers (69%) say the United States does not have the responsibility to play such a role. A majority of Indonesians do not trust the United States to act responsibly in the world. About two-thirds (64%) say they do not trust the United States very much (48%) or at all (16%) while one-third (32%) says they trust the United States to act responsibly somewhat (26%) or a great deal (6%). Despite Indonesians’ largely negative views of the US role in the world, they tend to think relations with the US are improving (46%). Only 27 percent believe they are staying about the same and 23 percent believe they are getting worse.

PHILIPPINES

Social Weather Stations, November 2006

Those polled in the Philippines stand out for their relatively positive attitudes toward United States. They tend to trust the United States to act responsibly in the world, believe it should enforce international law and want it to keep its current number of overseas military bases. Filipinos are the only public out of 15 polled that tend *not* to think the United States is “playing the role of world policeman more than it should be.” Fifty-seven percent of Filipinos disagreed with this statement, while only 31 percent agreed. Filipinos also display the highest levels of confidence that United States can be trusted to act responsibly: 85 percent say they believe the United States can be trusted a great deal (48%) or somewhat (37%). Only 13 percent say the United States cannot be trusted. Although the Philippine government forced the United States to close its bases there in the 1990s, only a small minority of the public (19%) thinks the United States should decrease its military presence overseas. A majority of Filipinos (78%) believe the United States should either keep its current number of overseas military bases (60%) or increase them (18%). But only 20 percent of Philippine respondents agree that the United States should “continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems” and only 16 percent say it should withdraw. Like most of the other countries polled, a majority of Filipinos (55%) believe the United States should do its share in resolving international problems.

SOUTH KOREA

East Asia Institute, July 2006

South Koreans overwhelmingly reject the idea that the United States should continue as the world’s preeminent leader and they are somewhat doubtful they can trust the United States to act responsibly in global affairs. Given three options about how the United States should handle global issues, only 14 percent prefer the idea that the United States “should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems.” Even fewer (6%) say it “should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems.” Instead, nearly four out of five (79%) South Koreans feel the US should “do its share in efforts to solve international problems together with other countries.” Asked whether the United States plays the role of “world policeman” more often than it should, three-quarters (73%) of South Koreans agree. Similarly, most South Koreans (60%) reject the idea that the US “has the responsibility” to play the role of world policeman, although 39 percent feel that it does. A modest majority (53%) says they do not trust the United States to act responsibly in the world (42% not very much, 11% not at all). But nearly half (46%) say they trust the United States either somewhat (37%) or a great deal (9%). A majority of South Koreans (56%) see their country’s relations with the United States as “staying about the same,” although one-third (34%) says they are getting worse, higher percentage than in the other countries polled. Just 10 percent believe relations are improving.

THAILAND

ABAC Poll Research Center, September 2006

Thais tend to believe the United States should adopt a more cooperative approach in world affairs, though many do not trust the United States to act responsibly. Asked about the United States' global role, the most common view among Thais (47%) is that the United States should do its share along with other countries. Only 18 percent think it should withdraw from most efforts and very few (8%) say it should continue to be the preeminent world leader. However, 27 percent chose not to answer. A majority of Thais (56%) say they do not trust the United States to act responsibly in the world, including 32 percent who do not trust it "at all." Twenty percent say they trust the United States somewhat (9%) or a great deal (11%), though large numbers (25%) decline to give an opinion. Nearly half (49%) say the United States fails to take their country's interests into account very much (30%) or at all (19%) when making foreign policy. Twenty-three percent disagree and, again, large numbers do not respond (28%). Consistent with these feelings, Thais also tend to be uncertain about whether the United States should maintain or change the number of overseas military bases it has: 41 percent decline to answer. Twenty-five percent say the United States should have fewer overseas bases; 18 percent about the same number and 16 percent more. Asked about Thailand's relations with the United States, the most common view is that they are improving (37%), although significant numbers (28%) believe they are getting worse. Only 10 percent say relations are staying about the same, while 25 percent decline to answer.

Middle East

ISRAEL

Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research / Evens Program for Conflict Resolution and Mediation, November 2006

Israelis are unique in that they trust the United States to act responsibly in the world, believe it takes Israel's interests into account, and think it should maintain its current number of overseas military bases. Nonetheless, only one quarter of Israelis (24%) say the United States should "continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems." Like most other publics, a majority (62%) thinks it should instead "do its share" with other countries in solving international problems. Only 10 percent would like it to withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems." Asked whether the United States is "playing the role of world policeman more than it should be," Israelis are evenly divided (48% agree, 48% disagree). Israelis express very high confidence that the United States will act responsibly in the world: 81 percent say they trust the United States to do so a great deal (56%) or somewhat (25%); just 16 percent say they do not trust the United States to act responsibly. An overwhelming majority of Israelis (82%) also say they believe the United States considers Israel's interests in making foreign policy (including 57 percent who say it does so "a great deal"). Israel is the only country out of seven polled where a majority believes the United States takes their interests into account. A majority of Israelis (59%) believe the United States should either maintain or increase its overseas bases: 39 percent want it to keep

the current number and 20 percent think there should be more. Twenty-two percent think the number should be decreased. A slight majority of Israelis (52%) believes that relations with the United States are staying about the same, while one-third (32%) believes they are improving and just 12 percent say they are getting worse.

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

Palestinian Center for Public Opinion, October 2006

Palestinians are one of only two publics (along with Argentines) that tend to believe the United States should disengage from world affairs. A majority of Palestinians also say that the United States should have fewer military bases overseas. Asked about the United States' role in the world, a majority of Palestinians (55%) say that it should "withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems." About one-third (36%) says the United States should "do its share" with other countries to solve problems. Only a small percentage (5%) thinks the United States should "continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems." Nearly three-quarters (74%) say the United States is playing the role of world policeman more than it should, while the same proportion (76%) rejects the idea that the United States "has the responsibility" to act as a policeman and "fight violations of international law and aggression wherever they occur." Consistent with their view that the United States should reduce its international efforts, 70 percent of Palestinians say that the United States should have fewer military bases overseas. Only 12 percent say it should keep about the same number of overseas bases and just 7 percent say it should establish more bases.