



## Global Views of the US

### EUROPE BACKGROUNDER

**Great Britain:** A majority (57%) continues to see US influence in the world as mainly negative, while just 33 percent sees US influence as mainly positive—down slightly from 36 percent in 2006. Britons have significantly negative views of US handling of foreign policy issues, with an overwhelming majority disapproving of US actions on the war on Iraq (81%), as well as its treatment of detainees at Guantanamo and other prisons (76%), the Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon (70%), and Iran’s nuclear program (64%). Issues receiving lower levels of disapproval are the US approach to global warming (79%) and the handling of North Korea’s nuclear weapons program (55%). More than 7 in 10 Britons (72%) sees the US military presence in the Middle East as “provoking more conflict than it prevents;” just 14 percent believe that the US is a “stabilizing force” in the region.

**Germany:** German views of US influence have worsened significantly over the last year, with negative attitudes increasing from 65 to 74 percent. Only 16 percent of respondents say they have a mostly positive view of US influence in the world, down from 21 percent. Negative attitudes about the US are also reflected in German views of US handling the war in Iraq, with an overwhelming 88 percent disapproving of the US approach to this issue. Germans also judge the United States harshly on its handling of the treatment of detainees at Guantanamo (89% disapprove), global warming (84% disapprove) and the Israel-Hezbollah war (74% disapprove). Significant majorities disapprove of the approach to Iran’s nuclear program (64%), as well as to North Korea’s nuclear situation (56%). Nearly three in four Germans (73%) believes the US is a destabilizing force in the Middle East, with just 17 percent saying the US military presence is a stabilizing element.

**France:** French views of the United States remain quite negative, showing little change over the previous year after sharply worsening from 2005 to 2006. Seven in ten (69%) say the US is having a mainly negative influence in the world, only slightly greater than the 65 percent who held this view in 2006. Only one in four (24%) has a mainly positive view of the US. The French view US actions in foreign policy even more negatively: 92 percent disapprove of US handling of the war in Iraq, 86 percent disapprove on global warming, 82 percent criticize the treatment of detainees at Guantanamo, and 81 percent disapprove of US actions in the Israel-Hezbollah war. Attitudes about the US approach to the two nuclear situations are slightly less negative, but large majorities still disapprove of US handling of Iran’s nuclear program (77%) and North Korea’s nuclear weapons (67%). Eighty percent of respondents in France see the US military presence as provoking more conflict than it prevents in the Middle East; fewer than one in ten (9%) see it as a “stabilizing force.”

**Russia:** Russians have become somewhat more negative about US influence in the world over the past year, increasing from 52 to 59 the percent that believe the US has a mostly negative influence in the world. Attitudes about US foreign policy are not quite as negative in Russia as many other countries, with the exception of a large majority disapproving of the US handling of the war in Iraq (82%). Significant majorities still disapprove of US actions in the Israel-Hezbollah war (64%), Iran's nuclear program (64%), and US treatment of detainees at Guantanamo (57%). Only a plurality (36%) disapproves of the US approach to global warming, and about one quarter (26%) of Russians approve of the US on this issue. Russians clearly view the US military presence in the Middle East as a disruptive force; nearly three in four (72%) say that it provokes more conflict than it prevents, and just 7 percent say it is a stabilizing force.

**Italy:** Italian views of the United States influence on the world are relatively moderate with a plurality (47%) holding a negative view and just one in three (35%) having a positive view of US influence in the world—essentially unchanged from a year ago. However Italians are quite critical of the US handling of the war in Iraq (81%), the treatment of detainees at Guantanamo and other prisons (82%), and the US approach to global warming (74%). Italians express disapproval of US actions in the Israel-Hezbollah war (70%), and US handling of the nuclear situations with Iran (60%) and North Korea (58%). A large majority of Italians (69%) says the US military presence in the Middle East is provoking more conflict than it prevents, and less than one in five (17%) agrees that it is a stabilizing force.

**Portugal:** A majority of Portuguese (55%) sees the US influence in the world as mainly negative, while just 29 percent believes it is mainly positive. Disapproval of US foreign policy is widespread in Portugal, with very large majorities disapproving of US treatment of detainees at Guantanamo (84%), the handling of the Iraq war (83%), global warming (79%), and the Israel-Hezbollah conflict (72%). The Portuguese also tend to view US handling of rising nuclear tensions negatively, with 57 percent disapproving of the situation with Iran and 51 percent disapproving of the situation with North Korea. More than three in four (77%) in Portugal see the US military presence in the Middle East as instigating more conflict than it prevents, and just 15 percent see the US as a stabilizing force in the region.

**Poland:** The Polish, long the European public to express the most positive feelings toward the United States, have turned sharply cooler though a plurality is still positive. The number holding a positive view of the US has dropped from 62 to 38 percent and negative views from Poland also increased significantly, up from 15 to 24 percent. Attitudes about US foreign policy are less negative in Poland than in Western European nations, though majorities still disapprove of US treatment of detainees at Guantanamo (61%) and the handling of the Iraq war (52%). More Poles than not also express disapproval about the US approach to the Israel-Hezbollah war (40% disapprove) and the issue of global warming (31% disapprove). However, attitudes about the US handling of North Korea's nuclear program are more positive, with 39 percent approving of the US on this issue. On the issue of US military presence in the Middle East, a majority of

Poles (56%) believes it provokes more conflict than it prevents, with just 16 percent seeing it as a stabilizing force.

**Hungary:** Hungarians are divided on the effect of the United States in the world, with 29 percent seeing US influence as positive and 31 mainly negative, while the largest percentage (40%) declined to offer a concrete view. However, attitudes about specific US foreign policies are predominantly negative, as large majorities disapprove of the US handling of the war in Iraq (70%) and the treatment of detainees at Guantanamo (69%). Hungarians also are critical of the US approach to the Israel-Hezbollah conflict (57% disapprove), Iran's nuclear program (55%), global warming (53%), and the North Korean nuclear situation (50%). Like other European publics, Hungarians clearly see the US military presence in the Middle East as a disruptive force, with 58 percent saying it provokes more conflict than it prevents and just 13 percent seeing it as a stabilizing force.

For more information on this poll, please see the Questionnaire/Methodology:  
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