

World View of US Role Goes From Bad to Worse

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[Questionnaire/Methodology](#)



The global view of the United States' role in world affairs has significantly deteriorated over the last year according to a BBC World Service poll of more than 26,000 people across 25 different countries.

President Bush announces his new Iraq strategy on 11 January 2007 (Eric Draper/White House photo)

As the United States government prepares to send a further 21,500 troops to Iraq, the survey reveals that three in four (73%) disapprove of how the US government has dealt with Iraq.

The poll shows that in the 18 countries that were previously polled, the average percentage saying that the United States is having a mainly positive influence in the world has dropped seven points from a year ago--from 36 percent to 29 percent--after having already dropped four points the year before. Across all 25 countries polled, one citizen in two (49%) now says the US is playing a mainly negative role in the world.

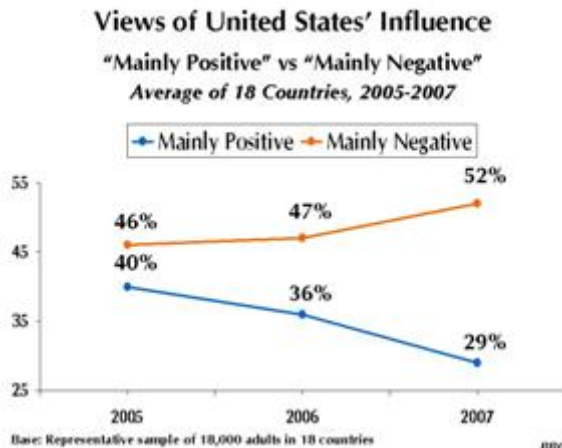
Over two-thirds (68%) believe the US military presence in the Middle East provokes more conflict than it prevents and only 17 percent believes US troops there are a stabilizing force.

The poll shows that world citizens disapprove of the way the US government has handled all six of the foreign policy areas explored. After the Iraq war (73% disapproval), majorities across the 25 countries also disapprove of US handling of Guantanamo detainees (67%), the Israeli-Hezbollah war (65%), Iran's nuclear program (60%), global warming (56%), and North Korea's nuclear program (54%).

Steven Kull, director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes comments, "According to world public opinion, these days the US government hardly seems to be able to do anything right."

The survey of 26,381 respondents across 25 countries was conducted for the BBC World Service by the international polling firm GlobeScan together with the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland. GlobeScan coordinated fieldwork during November 2006 to January 2007 (mainly following the US mid-term elections).

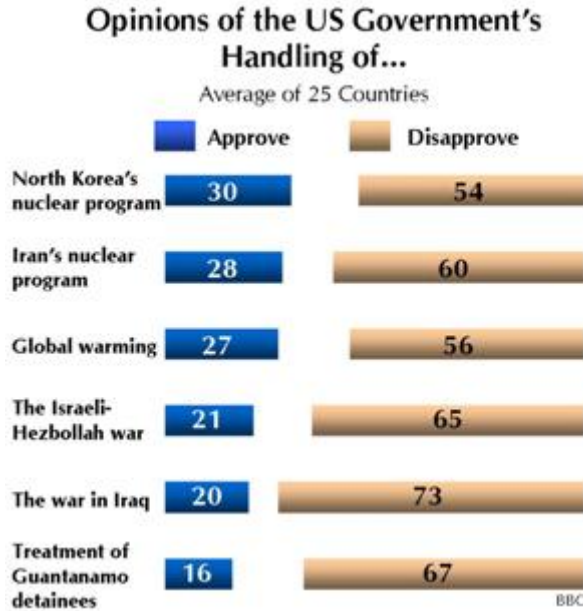
GlobeScan president Doug Miller comments, "The US Administration's recent decision to send more troops to Iraq is at odds with global public opinion that thinks the US military presence in the region provokes more conflict than it prevents. This policy is likely to further hurt America's image."



BBC 1/07 Among the 25 countries polled, the most

common view in 18 of them is that the United States is having a mainly negative influence, in five the most common view is that the US is having a positive influence, and in two views are evenly divided. The most positive countries are Nigeria (72% mainly positive) and the Philippines (72%), while the most negative countries are Germany (74% mainly negative) and Indonesia (71%).

Some of the sharpest drops in positive ratings over the last year came from four countries that have tended to be quite positive about the United States. Poland's positive ratings dropped 24 points from 62 percent a year ago to 38 percent. The Philippines dropped 13 points from a very high 85 percent to a still-high 72 percent. India fell from 44 percent to 30 percent. Indonesia plunged 19 points--40 percent to 21 percent positive--perhaps due to the waning of the positive effect of the American aid to Indonesian tsunami victims.



Asked about specific foreign policy areas, in most of the 25 countries the most common view was disapproval of how the US was handling the situation, including how the US is handling the situation in Iraq (21 countries disapproving), detainees in Guantanamo and other prisons (22 countries), the war between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon (20 countries), Iran's nuclear program (20 countries), North Korea's nuclear program (19 countries), and global warming or climate change (19 countries).

The US military presence in the Middle East is exceedingly unpopular. In 23 of 25 countries the most common view is that it "provokes more conflict than it prevents." While in only one country (Nigeria) is the most common view that the US presence is stabilizing.

Interestingly the American public also seems to have serious doubts about US foreign policy. Majorities disapprove of how the US is handling the war in Iraq (57%) and global warming or climate change (54%), while pluralities disapprove of US treatment of detainees in Guantanamo and other prisons (50%) and its handling of Iran's nuclear program (50%). Views are divided on US handling of the war in Lebanon. The one area that receives plurality endorsement is the US handling of North Korea's nuclear weapons program (50%). A majority of 53 percent of Americans say that the US military presence in the Middle East "provokes more conflict than it prevents," with just 33 percent saying that it is a stabilizing force.

Opinions on the US Military Presence in the Middle East

Average of 25 Countries



BBC 1/07 More broadly, a majority of Americans (57%) say that the US is having a mainly positive influence in the world. This is down from 63 percent a year ago and 71 percent two years ago.

In total 26,381 citizens in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, South Korea, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and the United States were interviewed between 3 November 2006 and 9 January 2007. Polling was conducted for the BBC World Service by the international polling firm GlobeScan and its research partners in each country. In 10 of the 25 countries, the sample was limited to major urban areas. The margin of error per country ranges from +/-2.5 to 4 percent. For more details, please see the [Questionnaire/Methodology](#).