

Poll of Western and Asian Publics Finds Criticism of Chinese Policy on Tibet

March 18, 2008

[Methodology statement \(PDF\)](#)



A poll of three western and three Asian countries finds widespread criticism of Chinese policies toward Tibet. This critical view is held by large majorities in all three western countries--the United States (74%), France (75%) and Britain (63%).

Protesters led by Buddhist monks in the town of Xiahe, Tibet on March 14, 2008 (MARK RALSTON/AFP/Getty Images)

Views are more varied among the Asian countries. An overwhelming 84 percent of South Koreans are critical, as is a modest majority of Indonesians (54%, with only 12% endorsing China's position). However among Indians views are nearly evenly divided, with 37 percent siding with critics, 33 percent siding with China and 31 percent not taking a position.

These findings are from a poll conducted by WorldPublicOpinion.org, a project of research centers from around the world, managed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland. Polling was conducted in France, Great Britain, India, Indonesia, South Korea and the United States, before the recent protests and violence in Tibet.

Respondents were presented the issue by hearing a description of both the position of critics of China's policy on Tibet and the position of China. They were told that:

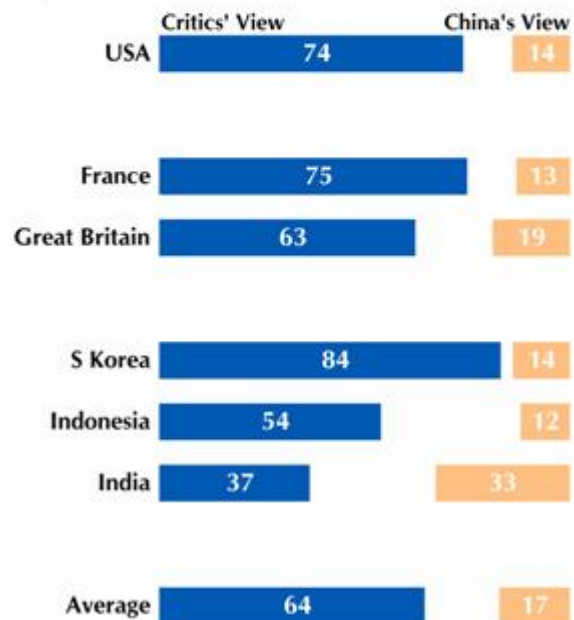
"Critics of China say that it should allow Tibet to have autonomy, to preserve its traditional culture and to allow the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet.

China's Policy on Tibet

Critics of China say that it should allow Tibet to have autonomy, to preserve its traditional culture and to allow the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet.

China says that Tibet has long been part of China, that Tibet has benefited from modernization, and that the Dalai Lama should not be allowed to return because he aims to split Tibet from China.

Is your view closer to the critics' view or China's view?



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On average across all six countries, 64 percent said their view was closer to the critics of China, while seventeen percent said their views were closer to those of China.

Steven Kull, director of the WorldPublicOpinion.org comments, "While China's image in the world is generally moderately positive, it appears that China's image is being harmed by its policies on Tibet. The recent violence in Tibet may mean that China will face increasing criticism."

In India, views of China's Tibet policy varied significantly by region. Those nearer to Tibet, in the country's northern and eastern regions, are much more critical of China than were Indians elsewhere. In the east fifty-seven percent are critical of China (compared to 33% favoring China's view) and in the north where the Dalai Lama is currently in residence 44 percent are critical (compared to 16%). However in the west a 54 percent majority favors China's view with just 17 percent being critical. In the south a plurality of 36 percent is critical (compared to 29%).

In nearly every country polled, criticism of China is higher among those with greater education. The one exception is India, where attitudes vary little with greater education. On average across all six countries, a bare majority of 52 percent is critical of China among those with less than a high school education, rising progressively to 78 percent critical among college graduates.

Younger people (age 18-29) are a bit less likely than average to side with critics of China (59%) while those aged 45-59 are most likely to do so (71%).

The poll of 4,774 respondents was conducted January 18 through February 29. The margin of error for each country ranged from 3.1 to 4.1 percent.