

As Hu Jin Tao, Obama Prepare to Meet, World Public Gives China, US Low Marks on Climate Change

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[Questionnaire with Findings, Methodology \(PDF\)](#)



With President Barack Obama on his way to meet his Chinese counterpart in Beijing for talks on global climate change and a range of other issues, a poll by WorldPublicOpinion.org shows that publics in more than half of 20 nations disapprove of the way China and the United States are dealing with global warming.

(Photos: Pete Souza/White House Photo, Office of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom)

The poll asked respondents to grade China and the US on several dimensions. China gets poor marks for how it handles human rights--on average 52% say China does not respect human rights while just 36% say it does. The US does better, with 50% saying it is respectful and 38% it is not.

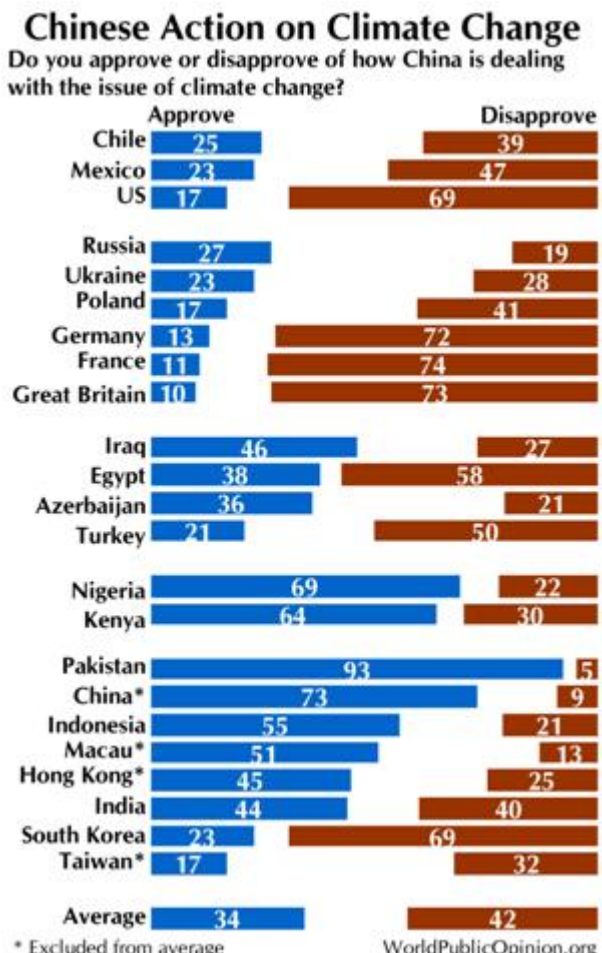
People around the world regard both superpowers as cooperative, but they also see both countries, especially the US, as using the threat of military force to coerce other nations.

Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao are expected to focus on climate change, economic concerns, and nuclear issues related to Iran and North Korea when they meet Nov. 16 and 17. The climate change question is of particular importance in the run-up to December's conference in Copenhagen, where 192 countries will attempt to conclude a new treaty on climate change. All eyes will be on China, the world's leading emitter of greenhouse gases, and the United States, which long held that distinction.

The WPO poll, conducted during April and May, finds that people in 11 nations disapprove of how [China] is "dealing with the issue of climate change." Clear majorities in six nations -- France (74%), Britain (73%), Germany (72%), the United States (69%), South Korea (69%), and Egypt (58%) -- are disapproving, along with pluralities in five other nations. Only in Pakistan (93%), Nigeria (69%), Kenya (64%), and Indonesia (55%) do majorities approve.

Likewise, majorities in six nations disapprove of the US handling of global warming--Egypt (68%), Britain (65%), France (62%), Pakistan 62%), Turkey (56%), and Germany (56%) --, as do pluralities in five. Nigeria, Kenya, South Korea, India and Indonesia are the only countries where majorities express approval.

Across the 20 nations polled, approval of China's record on climate change is somewhat lower than for the US. On average, 34% approve of China

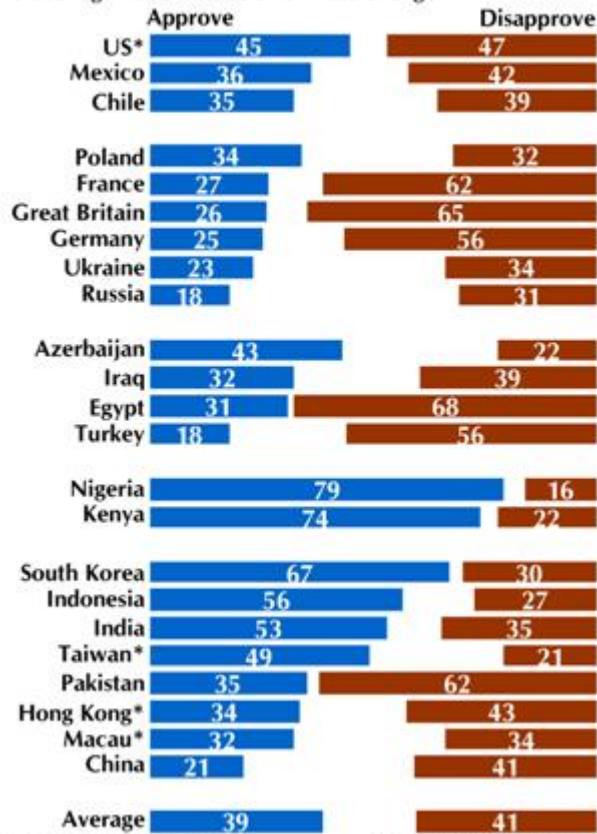


(42% disapprove) while 39% approve of the US (41% disapprove).

WorldPublicOpinion.org conducted the poll of 20,349 respondents in 20 nations that comprise 63 percent of the world's population. This includes most of the largest nations--China, India, the United States, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Russia--as well as Mexico, Chile, Germany, Great Britain, France, Poland, Ukraine, Kenya, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, and South Korea. Polling was also conducted in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau. Not all questions were asked to all nations. The margins of error range from +/-3 to 4 percentage points. The surveys were conducted across the different nations between April 4 and July 9, 2009.

US Action on Climate Change

Do you approve or disapprove of how the United States is dealing with the issue of climate change?



WorldPublicOpinion.org, a collaborative project involving research centers from around the world, is managed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland.

Throughout the poll, some groups of countries consistently favored one superpower and were critical of the other. Most notably, people in most Muslim countries gave China positive ratings and the US negative ratings. Among European countries, the US tended to rate high and China low. Kenya and Nigeria hold consistently positive views of the two superpowers, and Turkey has consistently negative views of both.

China and the United States are both seen as cooperative. Asked "if you think each is or is not generally cooperative with other countries," an average of 59% responded positively with regard to the US, and 53% for China.

On a nation-by-nation basis, the US is judged cooperative by 15 nations and not cooperative by four nations. China is seen as cooperative by eleven nations and uncooperative by seven.

At the same time many nations see these big powers as using "the threat of military force to gain advantages." This is especially true of the US: all nations polled, including the US itself, sees the US this way--on average 77%.

Views of China are less sharp: on average 46% say China does the same, while 41% say it does not. Ten nations say China uses military threats, eight say it

* Excluded from average

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does not. Among its neighbors majorities see China as threatening in South Korea (75%), and India (54%) and views are divided in Indonesia.

An area in which people around the world judge China considerably more harshly than the United States is respect for human rights. Majorities in nine countries say China does not respect human rights -- especially France (88%), Germany (88%), South Korea (87%), the US (86%), Britain (86%), and Poland (80%). However, seven, say China does respect human rights: especially Pakistan (91%), Nigeria (77%), and Kenya (67%).

The United States respects human rights in the view of 12 nations, especially. Majorities who disagreed were found in 6 nations, especially the Muslim nations of Pakistan (79%), Turkey (70%), Egypt (68%), and Iraq (60%), but also Mexico (61%).

Asked overall whether China or the US "is playing a mainly positive or negative role in the world" views are mixed. On average the split is dead even for the US, with 40% of respondents overall seeing a positive role and an identical number seeing a negative one. The overall positive response for China is higher, 44%, but still short of a majority, while 34% respond negatively.

Only in Kenya, Nigeria and South Korea do clear majorities say that both China and the US play a positive role in the world. A Majority in Turkey sees both superpowers playing negative roles.

Despite tense relations, Taiwanese views of China are not as negative one might expect. Large majorities believe China uses the threat of military force to gain advantages (70%) and does not respect human rights (76%). However slightly more than half (51%) say that China is playing a mostly positive role in the world. The same number agrees that China is mostly cooperative with other countries in the international arena.

Publics in China's special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau have very favorable views of Chinese policies. Overwhelmingly majorities agree that China is playing a mainly positive role in the world (81% Hong Kong, 81% Macau) and that China usually cooperates with other countries (85% Hong Kong, 89% Macau). Roughly two-thirds of both publics reject any notion that China uses its military power to intimidate other countries (68% Hong Kong, 69% Macau). A slight majority in Macau (51%) and a plurality in Hong Kong (45%) support China's actions in combating climate change.

The exception is on human rights. A large majority in Hong Kong (62%) say China is not respectful of human rights while views in Macau are mixed with many declining to answer.

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