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MOHAMED YOUNIS

Editor-in-Chief, Gallup

From Gallup's Editor-in-Chief

Pandemic or not, the global order continues to shift to a multipolar balance of power. In some ways, the global health crisis has sped up that shift, as the global distribution of COVID-19 vaccines by the U.S. and its allies has been troubled — to say the least. Yet in other ways, the pandemic has slowed this shift, as China's explosive economy continues to cool and neither China nor Russia has been able to deploy effective alternative global vaccination programs of their own.

Looking at the data so far in 2021, there are early signs that the image of U.S. leadership is rebounding globally after several years of record-low approval ratings under former President Donald Trump. And the ratings for Germany's leadership show longtime Chancellor Angela Merkel will exit with her country held in the highest esteem we've ever measured. However, the reality is that recent events in Afghanistan for the U.S., and domestic political shifting winds in Germany, have left neither of the two most-recognized global powers in enviable positions going forward.

China and Russia also can continue to expect to struggle to improve their image across much of the larger world; in China's situation, the nation's image continues to be particularly challenged within its own region.

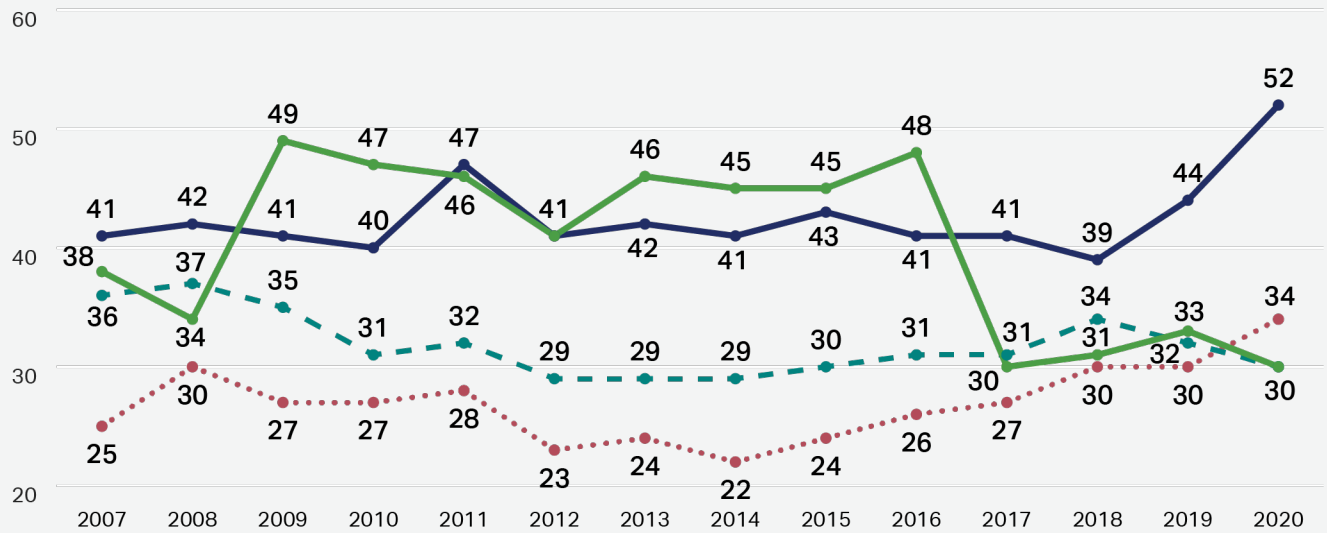
Effective leaders rarely make policy decisions for their nation simply based on public image or in pursuit of soft power. Ultimately, a nation's longer-term interests often determine the parameters within which a leader can act. However, in an ever-more interconnected world, it is more helpful than ever for global powers to inspire the support of people beyond their borders.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Younis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP RATINGS

Median approval (%)

— U.S. — Germany - - - China . . . Russia



SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL

U.S. Image at Record Low as Trump Exits, Rebounding Under Biden

In the first year of Donald Trump's presidency, global approval of U.S. leadership tumbled to a record-low 30%, where it hovered for the next four years, reaching only as high as 33% in 2019. In 2020, Trump's last full year in office, the median approval rating of U.S. leadership across 108 countries and territories was equally as poor as his first — 30%.

Six months into the first year of Joe Biden's presidency, the image of U.S. leadership is largely restored in the world's eyes. As of early August 2021, across 46 countries and territories, median approval of U.S. leadership stood at 49%, matching the record-high rating when former President Barack Obama first took office in 2009.

This rating could change as Gallup completes its 2021 fieldwork in more countries and amid the continuing fallout abroad over the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in late August. However, the substantial gains across so many countries halfway through 2021 make it unlikely that the final rating for Biden's first year in office could retreat to Trump administration levels.

Chancellor Angela Merkel's last full year in office ended differently from Trump's. Germany not only remained the top-rated global power for the fourth year in a row, but it also broke all previous records. In 2020, median approval of Germany's leadership across 108 countries and territories stood at a record-high 52%.

The approval ratings of the U.S., China and Russia continued to cluster together in the lower 30s in 2020. However, Russia for the first time edged out both the U.S. and China, with a median approval rating of 34%. China and the U.S. tied for last place, with median approval ratings of 30%. China's rating in 2020 was not much different from the 32% in 2019 and in line with measures over the past several years.

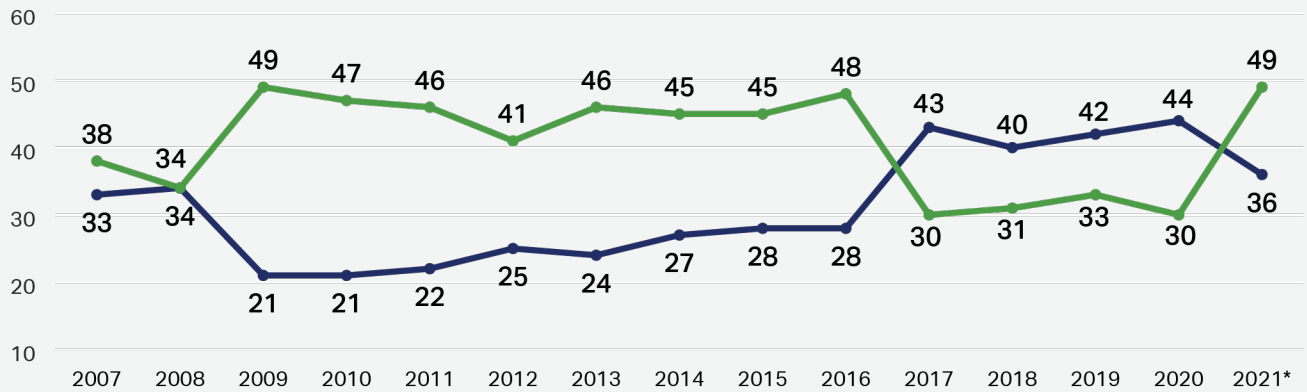
REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Ratings rise as the U.S. reengages with the world, with approval ratings rebounding among key global partners and allies.
- Still, there is room in every region for the U.S. to improve its visibility and image.

GLOBAL APPROVAL OF U.S. LEADERSHIP

Median ratings (%)

— Approve — Disapprove



SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL

* 2021 RATINGS BASED ON 46 COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES

Ratings Rise as U.S. Reengages With the World

The Trump administration claimed a few foreign policy successes in its final year, such as striking a peace deal with the Taliban to bring the then 18-year war in Afghanistan to a close and brokering normalization between Israel and Arab states.

But losses and other missed opportunities to engage with the rest of the world during those four years — particularly during the pandemic — likely overshadowed any potential goodwill and help explain the 30% approval rating at the end of Trump's term.

In the first few hours of his presidency, Biden kept his campaign promises and rejoined the Paris Climate Accord and halted Trump's decision to leave the World Health Organization. And, in his first foreign policy speech as president, Biden vowed to repair U.S. alliances through diplomacy and restore the image of the U.S.

These words and actions likely reassured many longtime U.S. allies and the international community at large and help explain the surge in approval ratings across most of the 46 countries and territories surveyed through the first half of 2021.

However, while the 49% median approval rating for U.S. leadership so far under Biden compares favorably with ratings under Obama, the 36% disapproval rating is also higher than any of those under Obama. This suggests that Biden could be carrying some foreign policy baggage from his years in Congress, or it may reflect some carryover from high disapproval under Trump. Still, disapproval under Biden is seven points lower than the final disapproval rating under Trump — a record-high 44% — and is also lower than China's (42%) in 2020.

Substantial Gains and No Major Losses in Trump-to-Biden Transition

Approval ratings of U.S. leadership increased substantially — by 10 percentage points or more — between 2020 and 2021 in 36 of the 46 countries and territories surveyed through the first half of the year.

Ratings improved the most — by at least 40 points — between 2020 and 2021 among several European allies, including Portugal (52 points), the Netherlands (45 points), Sweden (41 points) and Norway (42 points).

Importantly, the U.S. also regained ground among the countries in the G7, with ratings rising 38 points in Canada, 36 points in Germany, 30 in the United Kingdom, 22 points in Italy, 18 points in France and 11 points in Japan.

Ratings of U.S. leadership headed in a negative direction in just three countries — Russia, Serbia and Benin. Approval ratings in Russia slipped five percentage points and ratings were down four points in both Serbia and Benin.

Ratings Rebound Among Many Key Allies

With these large gains in U.S. leadership approval, ratings in many countries have matched or even surpassed levels during the Obama years, including Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and a host of others. However, the same cannot be said for France, Spain, Italy or the United Kingdom, where approval ratings have not fully rebounded to their previous levels.

U.S. LEADERSHIP RATINGS, 2021 VS. 2016

	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED	APPROVE, 2016
Mali	76%	14%	10%	61%
Philippines	71%	23%	6%	71%
Cameroon	69%	16%	15%	52%
Republic of the Congo	69%	16%	15%	60%
Kenya	67%	23%	10%	71%
Colombia	65%	23%	12%	52%
Portugal	64%	19%	17%	63%
Sierra Leone	64%	7%	29%	52%
Netherlands	63%	35%	2%	59%
Zimbabwe	63%	24%	13%	51%
South Korea	59%	28%	13%	53%
Mauritius	57%	32%	11%	51%
Canada	55%	41%	4%	60%
Norway	54%	42%	4%	55%
Finland	52%	42%	6%	50%
Sweden	52%	41%	7%	43%
Australia	51%	45%	4%	50%
Greece	51%	36%	13%	27%
Poland	50%	33%	17%	48%
Ireland	50%	47%	3%	59%
Malta	50%	32%	18%	54%
Japan	50%	29%	21%	47%
Benin	50%	16%	34%	43%
New Zealand	48%	47%	5%	51%



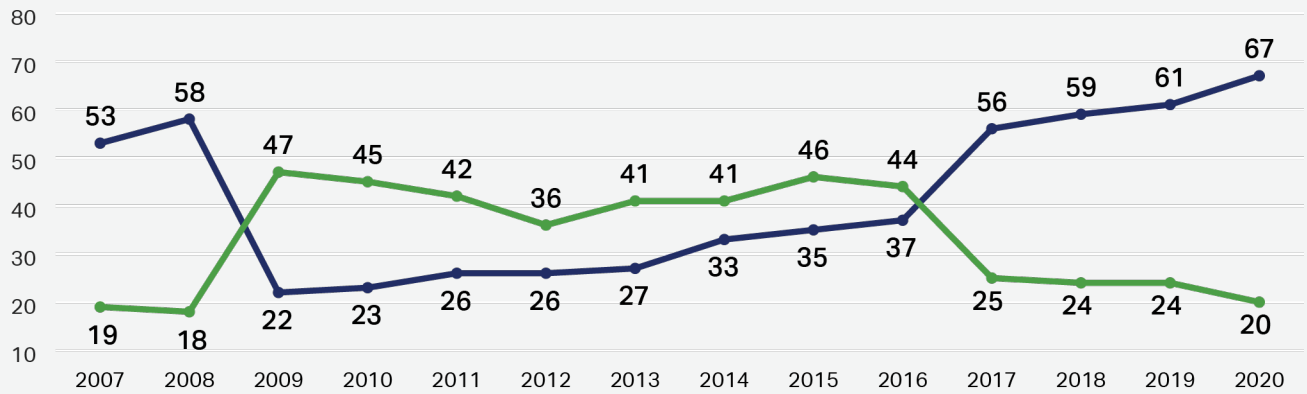
	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED	APPROVE, 2016
Taiwan, Province of China	45%	20%	35%	48%
United Kingdom	45%	52%	3%	59%
Denmark	45%	42%	13%	55%
Bolivia	44%	38%	18%	38%
Romania	44%	20%	36%	59%
Austria	42%	50%	8%	35%
Germany	42%	55%	3%	43%
Spain	41%	53%	5%	53%
Italy	41%	55%	4%	59%
Hungary	41%	26%	33%	52%
Iceland	40%	38%	22%	33%
Bulgaria	40%	35%	25%	30%
Cyprus	38%	33%	29%	33%
Ukraine	37%	30%	33%	32%
Switzerland	37%	58%	5%	43%
France	36%	53%	11%	53%
Estonia	33%	36%	31%	38%
Slovakia	32%	45%	23%	30%
Latvia	29%	33%	38%	29%
Croatia	24%	42%	34%	44%
Serbia	16%	64%	20%	21%
Russia	13%	78%	9%	2%

SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL 2016, 2021

APPROVAL OF U.S. LEADERSHIP IN EUROPE

Median ratings (%)

— Approve — Disapprove



SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL

Europe: U.S. Leadership Nearing Record Low in 2020

A closer look at U.S. leadership ratings at the regional and country level in 2020 — and where they have improved or declined at this point in 2021 — reveals the areas of greatest vulnerability and strength in the years to come.

Europe became disenchanted with U.S. leadership in 2017, with median approval ratings dropping 19 points between former President Barack Obama's last year in office and Trump's first year. The situation only worsened in 2020. The 20% median approval rating was four points lower than in previous years and very near the record low of 18% in the last year of the George W. Bush administration.

U.S. leadership earned majority approval in just two countries or territories in Europe in 2020 — Kosovo (62%) and Albania (56%) — where people typically give the U.S. high ratings year after year. Ratings there are not yet available to see if this trend has continued in 2021.

The image of U.S. leadership in Europe was worst in Iceland, Germany and Austria, where less than 10% of people approved in 2020. In 2021, the climate in these countries has been more favorable, with ratings increasing 36 points in Germany, 35 points in Iceland and 33 points in Austria.



U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL ACROSS EUROPE IN 2020

	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED	APPROVAL, 2021
Kosovo	62%	20%	19%	*
Albania	56%	22%	22%	*
Moldova, Republic of	40%	38%	22%	*
North Macedonia	38%	33%	29%	*
Hungary	35%	30%	36%	41%
Bulgaria	32%	41%	28%	40%
Romania	32%	31%	37%	44%
Poland	30%	46%	24%	50%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	28%	43%	29%	*
Lithuania	28%	28%	44%	*
Malta	26%	57%	17%	50%
Ukraine	24%	35%	41%	37%
Montenegro	23%	30%	47%	*
Czech Republic	22%	41%	37%	*
Croatia	21%	53%	26%	24%
Greece	21%	65%	14%	51%
Finland	20%	76%	4%	52%
Ireland	20%	70%	10%	50%
Serbia	20%	47%	32%	16%
Italy	19%	78%	3%	41%
Slovenia	19%	73%	8%	*
France	18%	75%	7%	36%
Netherlands	18%	78%	4%	63%
Russian Federation	18%	71%	11%	13%
Latvia	17%	60%	23%	29%
Spain	17%	79%	4%	41%
Estonia	15%	60%	25%	33%
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	15%	75%	10%	45%
Denmark	14%	76%	9%	45%
Slovakia	13%	71%	17%	32%
Belgium	12%	80%	8%	*
Norway	12%	85%	2%	54%
Portugal	12%	68%	20%	64%
Sweden	11%	82%	8%	52%
Switzerland	10%	79%	11%	37%
Austria	9%	85%	6%	42%
Germany	6%	89%	5%	42%
Iceland	5%	81%	14%	40%

SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL 2020

* 2021 DATA NOT YET AVAILABLE

EUROPE

DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE JOB PERFORMANCE OF THE LEADERSHIP OF ...

	Germany	U.S.	China	Russia
Approve	62%	20%	19%	19%
Disapprove	18%	67%	58%	59%
Don't Know/Refused	17%	17%	22%	19%

MEDIAN APPROVAL

SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL 2020

* MEDIANS MAY NOT SUM TO 100% DUE TO ROUNDING

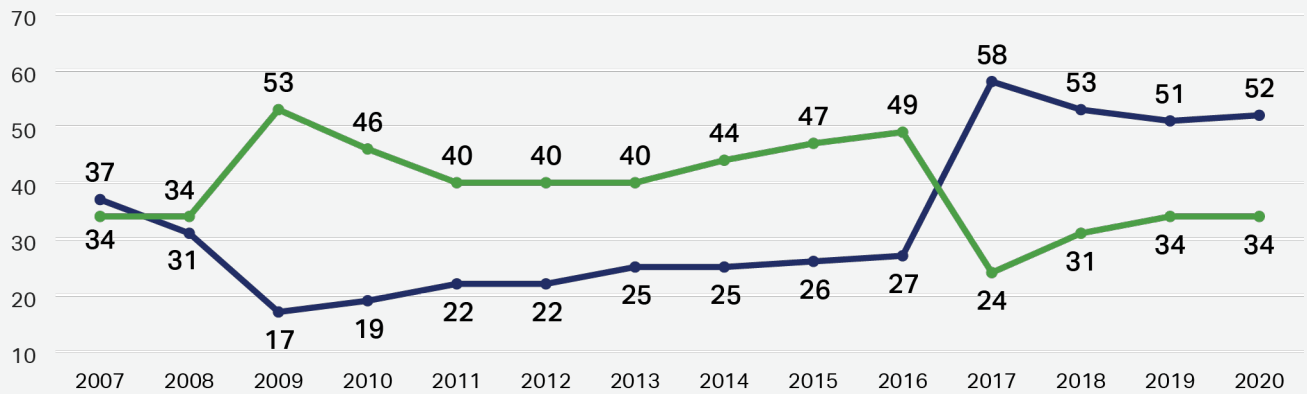
Germany Solidly Led in Europe

Of the four countries, Germany's leadership continued to be the most popular in Europe, with a record-high median approval of 62% in 2020. China, Russia and the U.S. have all lost favor in Europe in recent years, and in 2020, they were all on equal footing, with approval ratings of around 20%.

U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL IN THE AMERICAS

Median ratings (%)

— Approve — Disapprove



SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL

Americas: U.S. Leadership Image Stagnated in 2020

In 2017, views of U.S. leadership were the worst in the world in the Americas, with median approval at 24%. The situation improved in the following years but stalled at a median approval rating of 34% in 2020.

U.S. leadership earned majority approval in just two countries or territories in the Americas in 2020 — the Dominican Republic (66%) and El Salvador (56%). Ratings in these countries are not yet available to see if this trend continued in 2021.

The image of U.S. leadership in the Americas was worst in neighboring Canada (17%) and Chile (16%) in 2020. While new data for Chile are not yet available, Canadians are far more approving of U.S. leadership in 2021, with ratings rising 38 points to 55%.



U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL ACROSS THE AMERICAS IN 2020

	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED	APPROVAL, 2021
Dominican Republic	66%	25%	9%	*
El Salvador	56%	34%	11%	*
Nicaragua	45%	33%	21%	*
Ecuador	43%	45%	12%	*
Colombia	42%	53%	5%	65%
Brazil	40%	52%	7%	*
Paraguay	39%	21%	40%	*
Venezuela	39%	51%	10%	*
Peru	34%	57%	9%	*
Bolivia	30%	59%	12%	44%
Costa Rica	30%	50%	20%	*
Jamaica	30%	38%	32%	*
Mexico	26%	62%	12%	*
Uruguay	26%	65%	10%	*
Argentina	24%	58%	18%	*
Canada	17%	82%	1%	55%
Chile	16%	73%	11%	*

SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL 2020

* 2021 DATA NOT YET AVAILABLE

AMERICAS

DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE JOB PERFORMANCE OF THE LEADERSHIP OF ...

	Germany	Russia	U.S.	China
Approve	50%	41%	34%	32%
Disapprove	22%	30%	52%	48%
Don't Know/Refused	29%	25%	11%	19%

MEDIAN APPROVAL

SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL 2020

* MEDIANS MAY NOT SUM TO 100% DUE TO ROUNDING

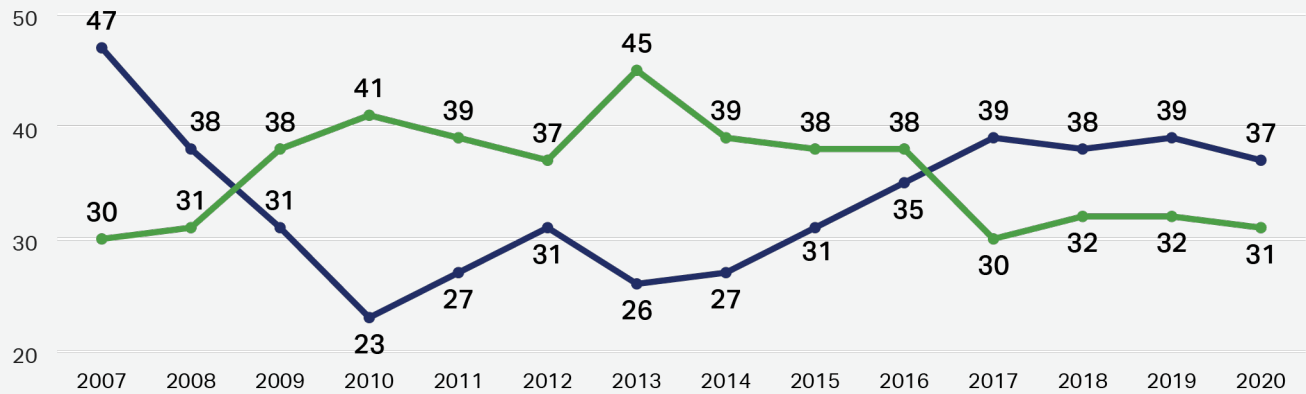
Germany Emerged as Leader in Americas

While Germany and the U.S. had previously been vying for the top spot in the Americas, Germany's leadership safely led the other countries in 2020, with a median approval rating of 50% in 2020. Russia earned higher ratings than China or the U.S., with a median approval rating of 41%. The U.S. and China earned similar, and far lower, approval ratings of 34% and 32%, respectively.

U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL IN ASIA

Median ratings (%)

— Approve — Disapprove



SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL

Asia: U.S. Leadership Image Still Mired at Record Lows

Ratings of U.S. leadership in Asia in 2017 slumped to record lows not seen since the Bush administration and stayed there for the course of the Trump administration. The median rating of 31% in 2020 was mostly unchanged from previous years.

Majorities in six Asian countries approved of U.S. leadership in 2020. These included Myanmar (69%), Georgia (61%), Nepal (58%), the Philippines (55%), Israel (54%) and Mongolia (52%). While 2021 data are not yet available in most of these countries, ratings in the Philippines have soared even higher, rising 16 points.

The image of U.S. leadership in Asia was worst in Iran (6%) — where approval is always low — and Laos (4%), where 88% of people had no opinion of U.S. leadership in 2020.

Ratings of U.S. leadership are showing signs of improvement in several Asian countries and territories in 2021, including South Korea, where ratings have increased 29 points, Australia and New Zealand, which both have seen ratings jump 22 points, and Taiwan, where ratings have risen 17 points.



U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL ACROSS ASIA IN 2020

	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED	APPROVAL, 2021
Myanmar	69%	10%	21%	*
Georgia	61%	29%	10%	*
Nepal	58%	24%	19%	*
Philippines	55%	35%	10%	71%
Israel	54%	30%	16%	*
Mongolia	52%	30%	18%	*
Sri Lanka	44%	34%	22%	*
Japan	39%	38%	22%	50%
India	38%	34%	27%	*
Kazakhstan	38%	25%	37%	*
Iraq	35%	50%	16%	*
Kyrgyzstan	34%	30%	37%	*
Cambodia	32%	7%	61%	*
Bangladesh	31%	23%	46%	*
Hong Kong, S.A.R. of China	31%	66%	3%	*
Lebanon	31%	45%	23%	*
Indonesia	30%	44%	26%	*
South Korea	30%	59%	11%	59%
Australia	29%	66%	5%	51%
Thailand	29%	44%	26%	*
Taiwan, Province of China	28%	50%	22%	45%
Malaysia	27%	40%	34%	*
New Zealand	26%	65%	8%	48%
Pakistan	25%	55%	20%	*
Uzbekistan	24%	35%	40%	*
Vietnam	21%	6%	73%	*
Cyprus	19%	59%	22%	38%
Turkey	13%	75%	12%	*
Iran	6%	84%	10%	*
Lao People's Democratic Republic	4%	8%	88%	*

SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL 2020

* 2021 DATA NOT YET AVAILABLE

ASIA

DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE JOB PERFORMANCE OF THE LEADERSHIP OF ...

	Germany	U.S.	Russia	China
Approve	42%	31%	31%	28%
Disapprove	21%	37%	35%	42%
Don't Know/Refused	32%	22%	29%	23%

MEDIAN APPROVAL

SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL 2020

* MEDIANS MAY NOT SUM TO 100% DUE TO ROUNDING

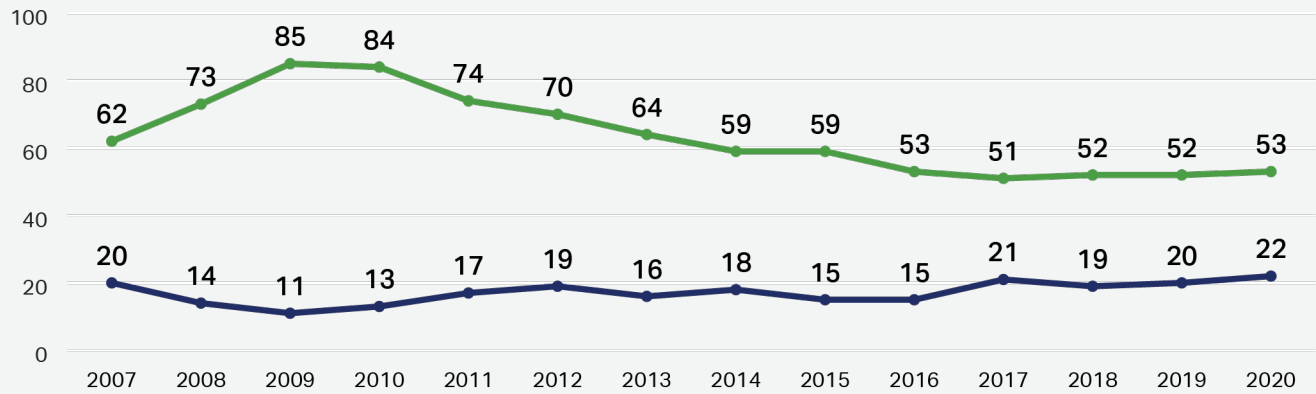
Germany Continued to Lead in Asia

Germany's leadership safely led the other countries in 2020, with a median approval rating of 42%. The U.S. (31%), Russia (31%) and China (28%) were on similar footing as they have been in the past, with China drifting slightly lower in 2020.

U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL IN AFRICA

Median ratings (%)

— Approve — Disapprove



SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL

Africa: Bright Spot for U.S. Leadership

As it has since 2007, the image of the U.S. remained strongest worldwide in Africa in 2020. Bolstered by majority approval in 13 sub-Saharan African countries, median approval of U.S. leadership stood at 53% in 2020 — in line with ratings since 2016. Among the countries surveyed again in 2021, only Kenya and Mali saw substantial increases, with ratings rising 14 and 17 points, respectively. Ratings in Cameroon, Mauritius and Congo also increased but did not change substantially. Ratings dropped in Benin, but by fewer than 10 points.

As in the past, ratings were worst in North Africa in 2020, with fewer than one in five Tunisians (19%) giving the U.S. a favorable approval rating. Ratings are not yet available to see if this trend continued in 2021.



U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL ACROSS AFRICA IN 2020

	APPROVE	DISAPPROVE	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED	APPROVAL, 2021
Guinea	83%	5%	12%	*
Republic of the Congo	67%	15%	19%	69%
Cote d'Ivoire	64%	12%	25%	*
Burkina Faso	62%	15%	22%	*
Cameroon	62%	22%	16%	69%
Gabon	62%	21%	18%	*
Mali	59%	14%	27%	76%
Nigeria	59%	10%	31%	*
Zambia	56%	21%	22%	*
Benin	54%	6%	40%	50%
Ghana	54%	15%	31%	*
Kenya	53%	32%	15%	67%
Uganda	53%	23%	25%	*
Mauritius	50%	40%	10%	57%
Zimbabwe	50%	21%	29%	63%
South Africa	41%	35%	24%	*
Tanzania	36%	30%	34%	*
Namibia	34%	49%	17%	*
Senegal	32%	27%	41%	*
Algeria	27%	48%	25%	*
Ethiopia	25%	34%	41%	*
Morocco	21%	41%	38%	*
Tunisia	19%	57%	25%	*

SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL 2020

* 2021 DATA NOT YET AVAILABLE

AFRICA

DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE JOB PERFORMANCE OF THE LEADERSHIP OF ...

	U.S.	Germany	China	Russia
Approve	53%	49%	47%	39%
Disapprove	22%	15%	21%	23%
Don't Know/Refused	25%	31%	25%	31%

MEDIAN APPROVAL

SOURCE: GALLUP WORLD POLL 2020

* MEDIANS MAY NOT SUM TO 100% DUE TO ROUNDING

U.S. Edged Out Other Countries for Top Spot

While China and the U.S. were evenly matched in 2019, in 2020, the U.S. edged out the other countries, earning the highest approval ratings. The 53% approval rating of the U.S. topped Germany (49%) and China (47%), while Russia trailed at 39%.

Implications Beyond 2021

With the Trump administration in the rearview, Biden's early efforts to restore alliances and respect for the U.S. on the world stage appeared to be paying off in the first six months of his presidency. But what happens in the next six months — and in the aftermath of the quick U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan — may truly set the tone and position the U.S. for the rest of his presidency.



Methodology

Results for the 2020 approval ratings are based on nationally representative, probability-based samples among the adult populations, aged 15 and older, in 108 to 109 countries and areas throughout 2020.

In most countries/areas, surveys were conducted over mobile and landline telephones; some in-person interviews were conducted in Republic of the Congo, India, Mali, Pakistan and Senegal.

For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error ranges from ± 1.1 to ± 5.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For more details on the 2020 fieldwork: <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/328745/gallup-learning-polling-world-pandemic.aspx>

Results for the 2021 approval ratings are based on nationally representative, probability-based samples among the adult populations, aged 15 and older, in 46 countries and areas surveyed between April and August 2021. Surveys were conducted either through telephone or face-to-face interviews.

For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error ranges from ± 2.8 to ± 5.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

The margin of error reflects the influence of data weighting. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

For complete methodology and specific survey dates, please review [Gallup's Country Dataset](#) details.

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