

KNOWLEDGE PUBLIC

Facets of American Leadership

A Meta-Analysis of Public Opinion

Commissioned by the Stanley Foundation

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Introduction

Leadership manifests itself in many forms: a team captain commanding top performance, a visionary inspiring action, a mediator building consensus, a manager organizing subordinates, a ruler dictating conduct, and so on. Americans expect the United States to be an influential world leader, but do Americans aspire to a particular model of world leadership?

Americans are increasingly uncertain of U.S. leadership. They are dissatisfied with the nation's plummeting world image, in part because they recognize international goodwill and moral authority are critical to building necessary relationships to address global challenges. The continuing occupation of Iraq has not only undermined the nation's global image, it has also caused Americans to become disillusioned with military intervention. Public confidence in American problem solving is at a 20 year low.

However, *style* of leadership may be as important to American perceptions as *substance* of leadership. Though dissatisfaction with the nation's policy in Iraq is certainly driving Americans' perceptions, the current *approach* to international relations also concerns them. Recent research suggests Americans are weary of toughness and swagger. They are ready for a new approach.

Survey research consistently demonstrates Americans prefer shared leadership to "going it alone." They recognize allies may not always agree, and the United States may not always get its own way. Communication and cooperation are essential qualities of strong leaders, they assert.

However, "shared leadership" is not the same as "shared power." While most Americans advocate shared leadership in global problem solving, most also want to maintain sole superpower status, particularly military superpower status.

The following analysis of existing public opinion provides several hypotheses for new approaches to framing American leadership. However, uncovering the subtleties of public understanding of leadership and developing new opportunities for communicating leadership are likely to require further investigation.

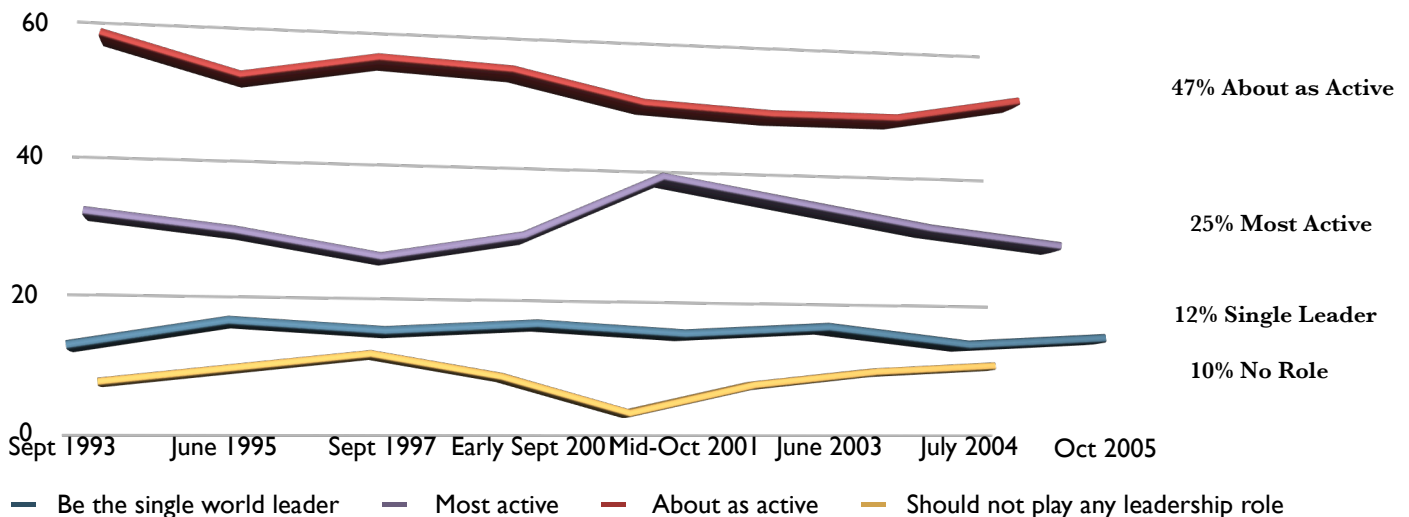
Leader and Leadership

Do Americans want to be THE world leader, or do they desire a more modest leadership role? Certainly, research suggests Americans aspire to shared leadership rather than world sovereignty. At the same time, most Americans want to maintain sole superpower status. Quantitative research is typically limited in its ability to tease out the nuances of public thinking, but it seems Americans want to maintain leading power and influence, but do not want to dictate to the rest of the world or take sole responsibility for addressing global problems.

Americans want and expect to play a leading role in world affairs, but they want to share leadership rather than act as the sole world leader. Only 12% of Americans want the United States to be the *single* world leader, while just 10% believe the United States should not play *any* leadership role at all. The vast majority of Americans (74%) fall in the middle, believing the United States should play a *shared* leadership role. One-quarter (25%) want the United States to be the most active nation in a shared leadership situation, while nearly half (47%) believe the United States should be “about as active as other leading nations” (PSRA/Pew Oct. 2005). This response has been fairly consistent for several years, except for a rise and corresponding fall in the “most active” response and a short-lived drop in responding “no leadership role” right after September 2001:

United States World Leadership Role (PSRA/Pew Oct. 2005)

What kind of leadership role should the U.S. play in the world - the single world leader, or should it play a shared leadership role, or shouldn't it play any leadership role? (If “Shared”) Should the U.S. be the most active of the leading nations, or should it be about as active as other leading nations?



About This Series

This is the third in a series of meta-analyses based on research undertaken by Public Knowledge for the U.S. in the World Initiative of the New America Foundation (www.usintheworld.org).

#1. “How Are Americans Making Sense of Security?” commissioned by U.S. in the World

#2. “Team Player, Not Lone Ranger” commissioned by the Stanley Foundation (www.stanleyfoundation.org)

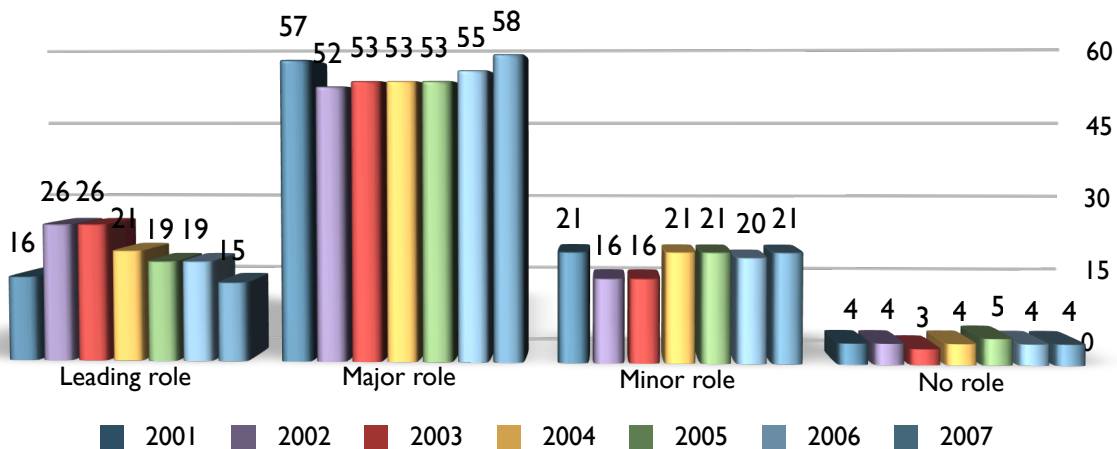
#3. “Facets of American Leadership” commissioned by the Stanley Foundation (www.stanleyfoundation.org)

#4. “Principle Versus Practice” - commissioned by the Human Rights Center of the University of California Berkeley (www.hrcberkeley.org)

After the events of September 11th, 2001, there was a surge in support for the United States playing the leading role in world affairs, but interest has waned over time and has now fallen to pre-September 11th levels. According to Gallup trends, a majority has consistently stated the United States should play a major role in world affairs (58%). What has changed in recent years is the percentage wanting the U.S. to play the leading role. Currently, only 15% of Americans want the United States to play the leading role in world affairs, down from a high of 26% as recently as 2003 (Gallup trend, February 2007 most recent).

United States World Leadership Role (Gallup Trend)

Do you think the U.S. should take the leading role in world affairs, take a major role, but not the leading role, take a minor role, (or) take no role at all in world affairs?

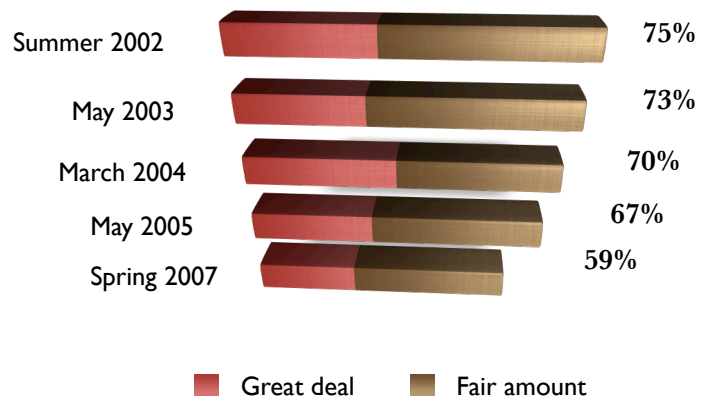


According to survey respondents, the United States government does not act in accordance with the precepts of shared leadership. Americans are increasingly likely to believe the United States does not take others’ interests into account. While a majority believes the United States takes into account the interests of other countries around the world, this percentage has declined dramatically in recent years.

Though Americans stress a shared leadership approach, they want and expect to maintain significant influence and a leading role in world affairs. Fully 84% say it is desirable “that the United States exert strong leadership in world affairs” (53% “very desirable,” a gain of 10 percentage points from 2006) (TNS 2007). On a scale of 0-10 with “0” meaning “not at all influential” and “10” meaning “extremely influential,” Americans currently rate the United States 8.5 in terms of world influence. As they look to the future, Americans believe the nation’s influence will decline slightly in 10 years (8.0 on the same 10-point scale). Americans want the United States to continue to be influential (8.2 on the same 10-point scale) (KN 2006).

U.S. Takes Into Account Others’ Interests (PSRA/Pew May 2007)

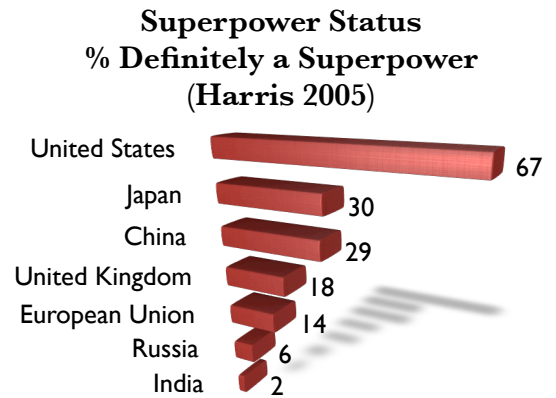
In making international policy decisions, to what extent do you think the United States takes into account the interests of other countries around the world?



“Shared leadership” is not the same as “shared power.” While most Americans advocate shared leadership, most also want to maintain sole superpower status.

Of a number of influential powers, the United States is the only one that is “definitely a superpower” according to a majority of Americans (67%). Far fewer perceive any other nation to be a superpower (Harris 2005).

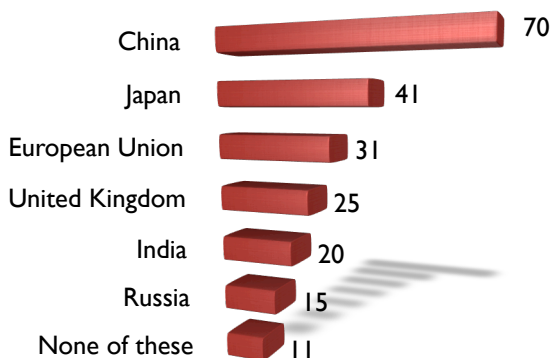
Furthermore, half (50%) say U.S. policies should “try to keep it so America is the only military superpower” while 35% say it would “be acceptable if China, another country or the European Union became as militarily powerful as the U.S.” (PSRA/Pew Oct. 2005). (This figure is somewhat conservative, since support for maintaining superpower status was higher at different points a few months prior to this reading. Response to this question may be influenced by slight changes in question wording and context.)



Most expect other nations to compete for superpower status in the next 50 years. When they consider the nation’s influence in the future, a plurality (40%) believes the U.S. will continue to be the world’s “leading power in the next 50 years.” However, a majority expects competition from other nations: 39% say “another nation will become as powerful as the U.S.” and 16% think the United States will be surpassed in power (KN 2004). Specifically, 70% expect China to become a superpower in the next 10 years, while 41% expect Japan and 31% expect the European Union to become superpowers. However, most do not expect any of these nations to be stronger than the United States within 10 years – 46% say no country will be stronger than the United States within the next 10 years. However, the most likely candidate to become stronger than the United States is China, according to 42% of Americans (Harris 2005).

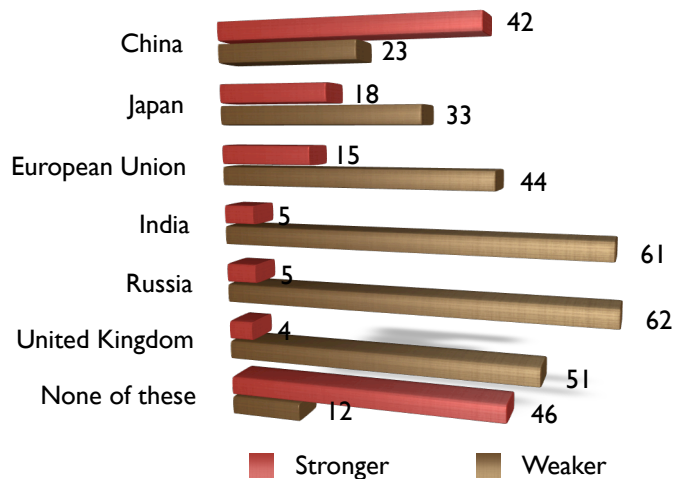
American willingness to share the world stage depends upon which actors would share power. The public seems more open to a stronger European Union than to a stronger China. Americans value ties with Western Europe. Fully 84% say it is important for the partnership

Future Superpowers (Harris 2005)



Compare with U.S. in 10 Years (Harris 2005)

In 10 years, which countries or regions will be stronger than the U.S.?



between the U.S. and Western Europe to be as close as it has been in the past (PSRA/Pew Oct. 2005). Similarly, two-thirds (66%) side with the view, “the partnership between the U.S. and Western Europe should remain as close as it has been,” while 28% choose the competing view, “the U.S. should take a more independent approach to security and diplomatic affairs than it has in the past” (PSRA/Pew May 2005).

Since Americans respect and value Europe, most Americans support a stronger role for Europe in world affairs. Three-quarters (73%) say it is desirable “that the European union exert strong leadership in world affairs” (TNS 2007). A plurality (47%) believes “the E.U. should become a superpower like the U.S.” while 36% say “The U.S. should remain the only superpower” and 8% say no country should be a superpower (TNS 2005).

Americans are generally uncomfortable with China’s growing influence, particularly China’s increasing military strength. Opinion of China is currently mixed, with 42% of Americans stating they have a favorable opinion of China, and 39% saying they have an unfavorable opinion. Opinion is similarly mixed concerning the impact of China’s growing economy, with 45% reporting it is a “bad thing for our country” and 41% saying it is a “good thing” (PSRA/Pew May 2007). However, when asked to choose between two opposing views, a majority (54%) sees China as “a threat to our jobs and economic security” rather than “an opportunity for new markets and investment” (36%) (TNS 2007). Military competition makes Americans particularly uncomfortable, with 68% saying China’s growing military power is a “bad thing for our country” (PSRA/Pew May 2007).

A majority (52%) believes China’s emergence as a world power would be a major threat to the wellbeing of the United States. While only 16% characterize China as an adversary, 45% see China as a serious problem (PSRA/Pew Oct. 2005). Though many feel threatened by China, a plurality (47%) believes China will not replace the United States as the world’s leading superpower while 43% believe it will – 11% believe it will replace the U.S. in the next 10 years, 22% in the next 20 years, and 10% in the next 50 years (PSRA/Pew May 2006).

Sources of Leadership

While surveys have given significant attention to the question of America’s role in the world and the importance of leadership, relatively few questions have been devoted to defining the source of leadership. What does it mean to be a “world leader” and how does a country achieve world leadership status? Existing survey research concerning leadership, power and superiority suggests three central sources for world leadership – moral authority, military power and economic power. However, surveys are rather blunt instruments that are not typically well suited for teasing out nuances in understanding. Just because surveys emphasize these three areas does not mean the public defines leadership in the same way. There could be other elements or qualities that are more influential in public understanding of leadership.

Americans believe the United States is a superior nation that is a force for good in the world, though they worry the nation’s moral authority has declined. Most know the United States leads the world militarily and they want to maintain military leadership, though they have become less enamored with military interventions since the failings of the occupation of Iraq. Most assert economic power is more important than military might, however survey respondents appear less concerned about economic rivals than

about military rivals. Taken together, worries about these three sources of world leadership -- the nation's declining image, the failure of military interventions, and economic insecurity -- have resulted in a public that is less confident of its ability to solve problems, and, perhaps, less sure of its ability to lead effectively.

Moral Authority

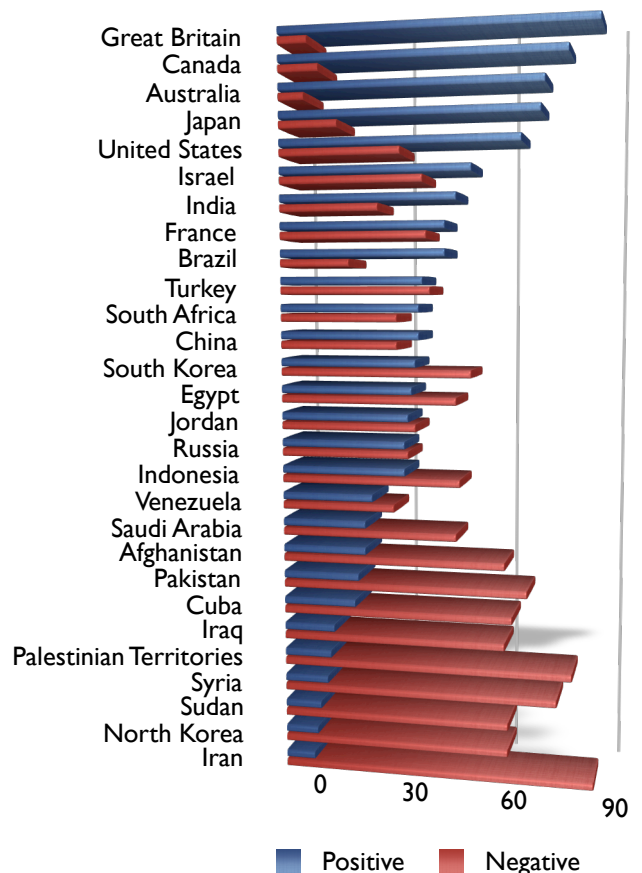
American moral authority is crucial to the nation's ability to influence and lead. The United States is a force for good and the spread of U.S. ideas and customs is a positive influence on the world, according to Americans. Americans express concern that the nation's moral authority has declined, which could limit U.S. leadership.

The public believes America is a force for good in the world. Nearly all (91%) believe "American power is a force for good in the world," with one-third (32%) reporting that is "always" the case (Penn). When asked to side with one of two views, 65% agree (49% strongly agree), "America's power is generally a force for good in the world" while only 32% side with the opposing view, "America's power generally does more harm than good when we act abroad" (GQR).

A majority believes the American culture is superior to others, and nearly 4 in 10 say the U.S. is an exceptional nation with a unique destiny. A majority (55%) agrees with the statement "Our people are not perfect, but our culture is superior to others" (PSRA/Pew May 2007). When faced with two opposing statements, most Americans become more modest in their views, though a significant percentage continue to feel superior. More than half (58%) sides with the view, "It is a dangerous illusion to believe America is superior to other nations; we should not be attempting to reshape other nations in light of our values." However, a significant percentage (36%) sides with the alternative statement, "America is an exceptional nation with superior political institutions and ideals and a unique destiny to shape the world" (Penn).

Though Americans believe the United States is generally a force for good, they are currently less confident the U.S. is playing a positive role in the world. Many believe America's moral authority has declined, and some other nations are viewed as playing a more positive role in world affairs than the United States. Three quarters (73%) side with the view, "America's moral authority in the world has declined significantly making it much harder to persuade our allies to work with us." Just 20% side with the alternative view, "Our allies and people around the world still see America as the indispensable nation and they are more than willing to follow our lead on the key issues facing the world" (Marttila). Furthermore, while 67% believe "it's good that American ideas and

Rating of Role in World Affairs (Marttila)



customs are spreading around the world” this percentage has dropped 12 percentage points since 2002 (PSRA/Pew May 2007). Finally, Americans rate several other nations as having a more positive role in world affairs than the United States, specifically Great Britain (85%), Canada (77%), Australia (71%) and Japan (70%) (Marttila).

The American Can-Do spirit has been diminished. The percentage agreeing with the statement, “As Americans we can always find a way to solve our problems and get what we want” is at a low point, with just 58% agreeing – the lowest measure in 20 years and 16 percentage points lower than in 2002 (PSRA/Pew Jan. 2007).

Military Power

Most Americans know the United States is the world’s foremost military power, and most are willing to spend to maintain that status. At the same time, Americans have become somewhat disillusioned with military solutions and they support expanding the peacekeeping roles of international institutions like the United Nations and NATO. While they do not want to relinquish military leadership, it may be that the continuing occupation of Iraq causes Americans to question whether this type of intervention results in forfeiting moral leadership.

Most survey respondents estimate the United States leads the world militarily, and they clearly want to continue the status quo. Sixty percent (60%) say the United States is number one in the world militarily, while 39% believe it is one of several leading military powers. Just as many (61%) assert it is important for the United States to be number one in the world militarily, while 38% think it is not that important as long as the United States is among the leading military powers. Other than an increase in support for number one status in the months right after 9/11, this response has remained relatively constant since 1993 (Gallup).

With the exception of China, most Americans are not concerned about other nations gaining military strength. A majority (52%) is “extremely” or “very concerned” that China may become militarily stronger in 10 years. Level of concern for other countries is far lower: Russia (21% concerned), India (18%), Japan (16%), the European Union (9%), and the United Kingdom (5%) (Harris 2005).

Americans are willing to expend substantial resources to maintain military power. When considering military expenditures, a majority (57%) wants to spend at least as much as all potential enemies combined – 31% want to spend as much as all of its potential enemies combined, 16% want to spend twice as much, and 10% want to spend three times as much. One-third (33%) supports spending a bit more than the nation’s most powerful potential enemy (KN/PIPA).

At the same time, support for military strength as the cornerstone of American security is at a low point. A majority of Americans no longer believes, “The best way to ensure peace is through military strength” (only 49% agree, the lowest rating since Pew started tracking this perception in May 1987). In comparison, at the start of the build-up to the War in Iraq, in August 2002, 62% agreed (PSRA/Pew Jan. 2007). In addition, a plurality (43%) feels the United States is spending too much for national defense and military purposes – the highest percentage Gallup has measured since the early 1990s and 26 points higher than one year before the U.S. invasion of Iraq (Gallup, Feb. 2007).

Though they want to maintain military authority, Americans also support strengthening the United Nation's military capability and expanding reliance on NATO.

Majorities favor steps to strengthen the United Nations' military authority and agree with a number of statements expressing the value and importance of NATO. As noted in "Team Player, Not Lone Ranger," (Public Knowledge) Americans want more reliance on international institutions in part because they offer an ability to work in concert with other nations while reducing global reliance on the United States.

Steps to Strengthen the United Nations % Favor (Knowledge Networks 2006)	
Giving the U.N. the authority to go into countries in order to investigate violations of human rights	75%
Creating an international marshals service that could arrest leaders responsible for genocide	75%
Having a standing U.N. peacekeeping force selected, trained and commanded by the United Nations	72%
Giving the U.N. the power to regulate the international arms trade	60%
Giving the U.N. the power to fund its activities by imposing a small tax on such things as the international sale of arms or oil	45%

Views of NATO and Military Power % Agree (TNS 2005)	
NATO can help the United States share its military burden.	75%
NATO allows democratic countries to act together.	73%
Economic power is more important in world affairs than military power.	66%
The U.S. is stretched too thin, Europe should have its own defense alliance separate from the U.S.	66%
NATO approval makes military action legitimate.	53%

How can one reconcile support for continued military authority in the world with willingness to strengthen the military power of international institutions and historically low confidence in military strength? One possible answer is American frustration with how the nation's moral authority has been compromised by recent military interventions.

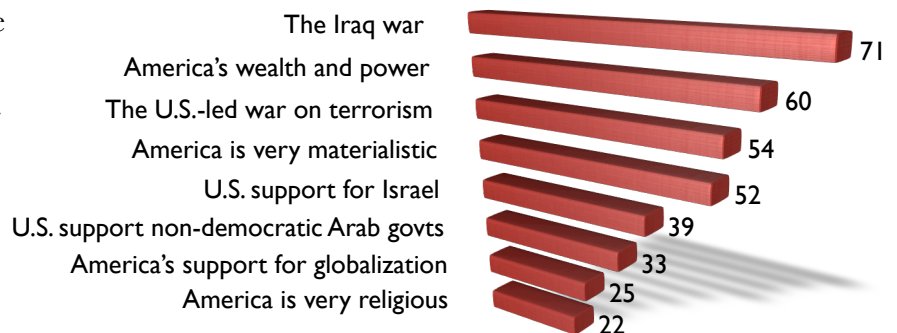
Three-quarters of Americans (73%) side with the statement, "The United States should balance our military might with moral authority. During the Cold War, the U.S. was a beacon of democracy and freedom throughout the world." Meanwhile, just 20% side with the alternative statement, "America will never be more secure if we obsess about our image in the world. The U.S. is in a unique and dangerous position because our enemy is different than any we have ever faced" (Marttila).

Clearly, the Iraq War has weakened American support for military intervention and increased American concern about the nation's global image.

Two-thirds of Americans (66%) agree, "The experience of the Iraq war should make nations more cautious about using military force to deal with rogue states" (KN 2006). Further, most Americans believe the occupation of Iraq has undermined the image of the United States around the world. Of a series of reasons to explain people's negative opinion of the United States, the Iraq War tops the list.

Why World Citizens are Unhappy with U.S.

% of Americans Saying "Major Reason"
(PSRA/Pew Oct. 2005)



Economic Power

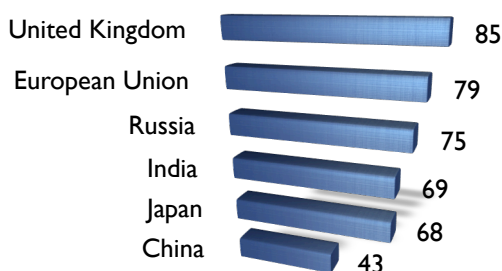
Survey research has given relatively little attention to role of economic power as a source of world leadership. While most assert economic power is more important than military might, survey respondents are less concerned about economic rivals than about military rivals. In fact, there are some indications Americans believe it is in the nation's best interest to encourage economic growth in other nations.

Economic power has more to do with a country's power and influence in the world than military strength, according to survey respondents. Nearly three-quarters (71%) agree, "Economic power is more important in world affairs than military power" (TNS 2007). Asked to choose which is more important, 66% assert a country's economic strength is more important in determining a country's overall power and influence in the world, while 27% say military strength is more important (Harris 2002).

Though Americans clearly want to maintain military authority in the world, they seem less concerned about economic rivals. Few are concerned that other leading nations will become economically stronger in the next 10 years. Even China, the economy that worries the most Americans, is a concern for just 35% of survey respondents. At the same time, China is deemed by a majority of respondents as having a negative effect on the U.S. economy. No other country is viewed as having a negative effect, and many Americans say the U.K. and Japan will have a positive effect on the U.S. economy.

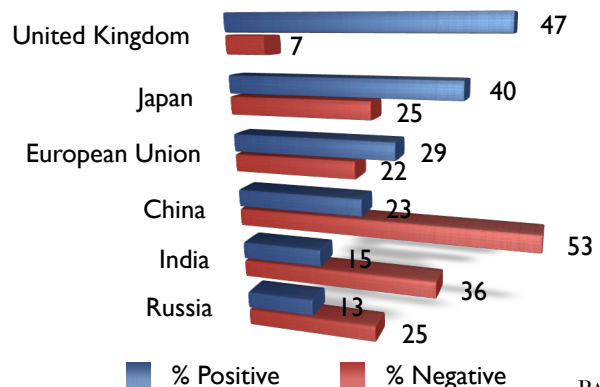
Concern about Growing Economic Strength
(Harris 2005)

% "Somewhat" or "Not at All Concerned"



Effect on U.S. Economy
(Harris 2005)

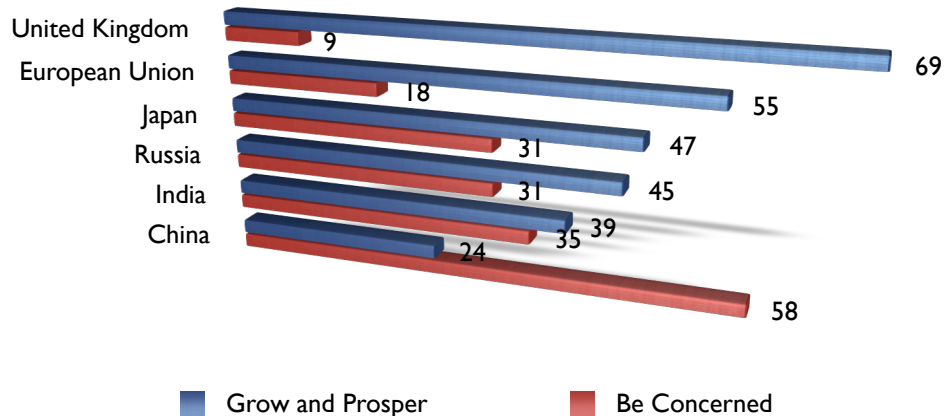
% Positive, % Negative effect on U.S. economy



Rather than guard against economic rivals, many Americans believe it is in the national interest to help some national economies grow and prosper. Majorities want to encourage the economies of the U.K. and E.U., and significant percentages want to support Japan and Russia. Just one country, China, causes a majority of Americans to be concerned about economic competition.

U.S. Interests (Harris 2005)

Would it be in the best interest of the U.S. if we encouraged these economies to grow and prosper, or should we be concerned about them?



Perceptions of the effect of U.S. economic power are less clear, largely because few appropriate questions have been asked. For the few questions that exist, opinions are conflicting. On the one hand, Americans are proud of U.S. innovation and technological leadership. Fully 88% are “proud of our country’s technological and scientific advances.” Far fewer, however, support promoting U.S. business practices. A slim majority (55%) believes “the U.S. should be promoting American business practices around the world,” representing a decline of 8 percentage points since 2002. Finally, Americans are not sure that U.S. economic policies are beneficial to impoverished populations. Slightly more believe United States policies increase the gap between rich and poor countries (38%), rather than lessen the gap (23%), or have no effect (26%) (PSRA/Pew May 2007).

Qualities of Leadership

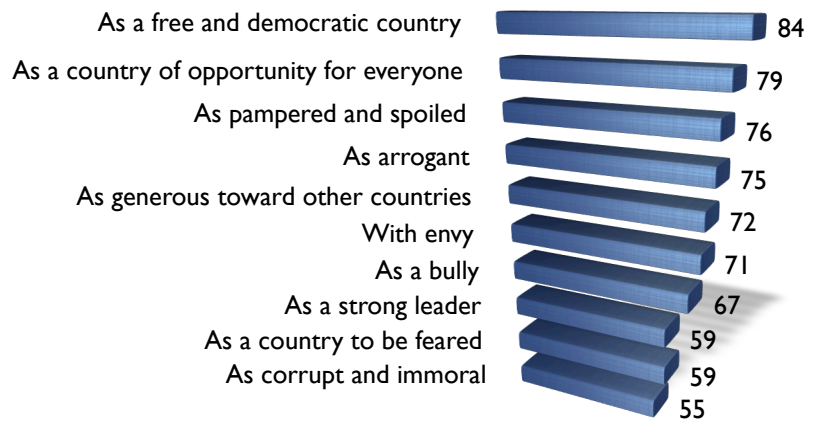
Americans are highly critical of U.S. leadership and are concerned about the nation’s declining global image. It may be that Americans’ concerns are as related to style of leadership as substance of leadership. As they consider the qualities of strong leaders, Americans highlight the importance of communications, cooperation and honesty, over toughness and bullying.

The United States is failing in leading the world toward peace and prosperity, according to survey respondents. Three-quarters (73%) of Americans are critical of the job “the United States is doing these days as a leader in creating a more peaceful and prosperous world” with 34% grading the U.S. job performance as “poor” and 39% “fair” (Public Agenda). Seventy percent (70%) believe America’s leadership role in the world is “off on the wrong track” (Marttila).

Furthermore, citizens of the world hold negative perceptions of the United States, according to the public. Two-thirds (68%) believe the rest of the world views the United States negatively (34% very negatively). While very high percentages report that the world continues to attribute a number of positive qualities to the United States, such as democracy, equal opportunity, and generosity, majorities believe the world also sees the U.S. as spoiled, arrogant, bullying and corrupt. Just as many say the U.S. is viewed as “a strong leader” as it is viewed as “a country to be feared” (Public Agenda).

World Perceptions of U.S. (Public Agenda)

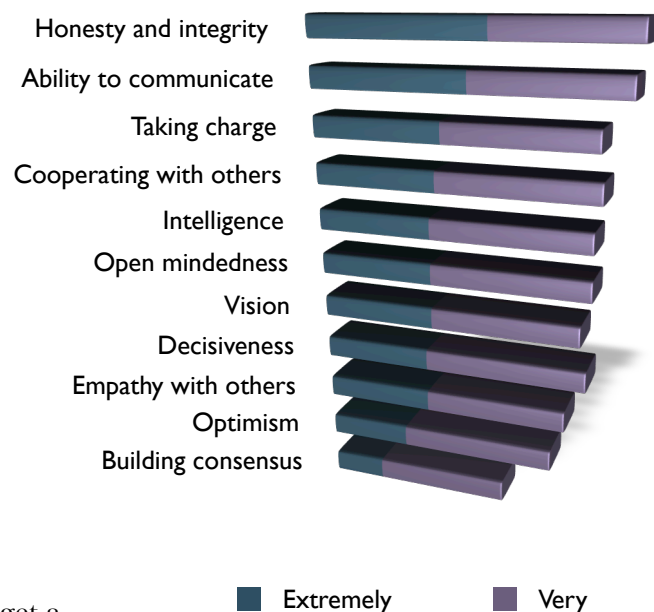
% of Americans Saying World Citizens Describe the U.S.



As they consider the traits of good leadership, Americans overwhelmingly note that good leaders are honest, have an ability to communicate, and can take charge but also cooperate with others. Survey respondents highlight the importance of honesty, communications skills, intelligence, open mindedness, vision and so on as they consider the qualities that make for good leadership generally (not foreign affairs narrowly). They are equally likely to prioritize “taking charge” and “cooperating with others” which indicates that most Americans see the two approaches as compatible.

Traits Associated with Good Leadership (TSC)

% Extremely Important, % Very Important



Interestingly, the fewest respondents rated consensus building as important. It is unclear from this research if “building consensus” ranks low because people see it as unimportant or unachievable, or if its low ranking is due to some other factor. That “taking charge” and “cooperating with others” rates highly while “building consensus” does not, suggests that Americans view leadership as having the ability to get a group of people to work together, even if they do not completely agree.

Effective communications emerges not only as an important quality of leadership generally, it also frequently emerges as an important quality of leadership in foreign affairs. For example, while some members of the media have portrayed talking with enemies as controversial, high percentages of Americans consistently support keeping the lines of communications open with our enemies rather than putting preconditions on talks. Fully 82% say the U.S. should be

willing to talk with countries that are acting in opposition to our desires: “Be willing to talk with such countries because isolating them often provokes them to increase the behavior the U.S. opposes.” According to respondents, communications increases the likelihood of finding mutually agreeable solutions. Fully 84% say the U.S. should “talk to such countries because communication increases the chance of finding a mutually agreeable solution” (KN/WPO Nov. 2006).

There are indications that “toughness” is not the quality Americans currently desire in global affairs.

Americans have become highly critical of the Bush Administration’s approach to foreign policy and they worry the Administration’s actions are leading to even more insecurity.

Nearly 8 in 10 (78%) feel the way the Bush Administration has been conducting U.S. foreign policy has, on balance, decreased goodwill toward the U.S. and most (60%) think the way the Bush Administration has been conducting U.S. foreign policy has, on balance, increased the likelihood of terrorist attacks against the U.S. (KN/PIPA 2006).

At the center of Americans’ critique is a concern that the U.S. is too quick to rely on force rather than other methods of influence. Three-quarters (76%) agree, “The U.S. is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be” (KN 2004). Furthermore, two-thirds (65%) say the Bush Administration is too quick to get the military involved, a response that has increased 6 percentage points since 2004 (KN/PIPA 2006).

Survey respondents have reversed position and now believe that decreasing our military presence will reduce threats against the U.S. In a reversal from 2002, a plurality believes the threat of terror attack will be lessened if we decrease our military presence overseas. A plurality (45%) states, “decreasing America’s military presence overseas” would “have a greater effect in reducing the threat of terrorist attacks on the United States,” while 32% say increasing America’s military presence overseas would have a greater effect. This is a reversal since before the war in Iraq in August 2002 when 48% felt increasing military presence would have a greater effect than decreasing it (29%) (PSRA/Pew Aug. 2006).

While partisan perceptions are not necessarily relevant to views of world leadership, comparisons in how people prioritize their concerns about the parties’ actions on foreign policy provide further indication that “toughness” is not currently a key quality of leadership. More respondents are concerned about Republicans being too quick to use military force and too stubborn to negotiate, than they are worried about Democrats being unwilling to use military force and not being tough enough. More people criticize the Republicans for being “too quick to use military force when diplomacy is called for instead” (+34 points more likely to say this describes Republicans) than criticize Democrats for being “unwilling to use military force, even when it’s necessary to protect America” (+23 points more likely to say this describes Democrats). Furthermore, more people criticize Republicans for being “too stubborn about refusing to negotiate with countries that don’t like us” (+22 points) than criticize Democrats for not being “tough enough to do what is needed to protect America” (+13 points) (Penn).

Conclusions and Questions for Further Research

- ◆ Americans want to maintain leading power and influence, but also desire shared leadership with other nations. Quantitative research does not provide insight into the subtleties in interpretations of “leader,” and “leadership” and how that relates to “superpower.” What role, exactly, do Americans want to play, and what does that mean for global problem solving? How can we expect American notions of leadership to change as they consider competition for superpower status? Is it possible to separate “leader” from “power” in American discourse?
- ◆ Based on the kinds of questions posed in survey research, moral authority, military power and economic power seem to be relevant sources of world leadership. However, surveys are not typically well suited for teasing out nuances in understanding. Does the public define leadership with the same three sources of leadership? How would the public define leadership if not limited to multiple choices responses in a survey? What is the foundation of American leadership according to the public? How does declining moral authority and increasing dissatisfaction with military intervention influence American notions of world leadership?
- ◆ Style of leadership may be as important as substance of leadership. Though they are clearly frustrated with the course of the Iraq occupation, Americans are also highly critical of the Bush Administration’s approach to global affairs. They highlight the importance of communications, cooperation and honesty, over toughness and bullying. However, existing survey research does not provide clarity about the parameters of leadership Americans desire. How do Americans balance their competing desires for taking charge and cooperating with others? Cooperation is valued, but consensus building is not; does this mean that Americans value teamwork but do not expect agreement, or that they see the mark of a good leader as one who can persuade disparate interests to work together? Is the solution smart and effective leadership, compelling and commanding leadership, influencing and persuading leadership, or something else? Are Americans looking to be a global team captain, a visionary, or a negotiator

Works Cited

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About the Author

Meg Bostrom, President of Public Knowledge LLC, is a veteran communications strategist with a unique perspective resulting from her rich and varied experiences as communicator, public opinion analyst, advertising agency executive, and political consultant. With degrees in both communications and public opinion research, Bostrom's work is grounded in a cross-disciplinary focus.

She started her career as a political pollster: Senior Analyst at Greenberg Lake, Vice President at Mellman Lazarus Lake. Desiring a better understanding of how communications is developed and implemented, Bostrom joined the ad agency Trahan, Burden and Charles, as Executive Vice President of Strategic Planning.

With practical communications experience added to her background in research, Bostrom launched Public Knowledge in 1998 to bring her personal passion for social issues to bear on specific communications challenges. Bostrom has researched public opinion and developed communications strategies for a variety of social issues, including: foreign policy, the environment, global warming, children's issues, education, health care, rural policy, taxes, the economy, government, civic engagement, race/ethnicity, and the working poor, among many others.