

February 21, 2007

## Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, N. Korea, China Viewed as World Hot Spots

Americans have unfavorable views of these countries, but view them as vitally important

by Frank Newport and Joseph Carroll

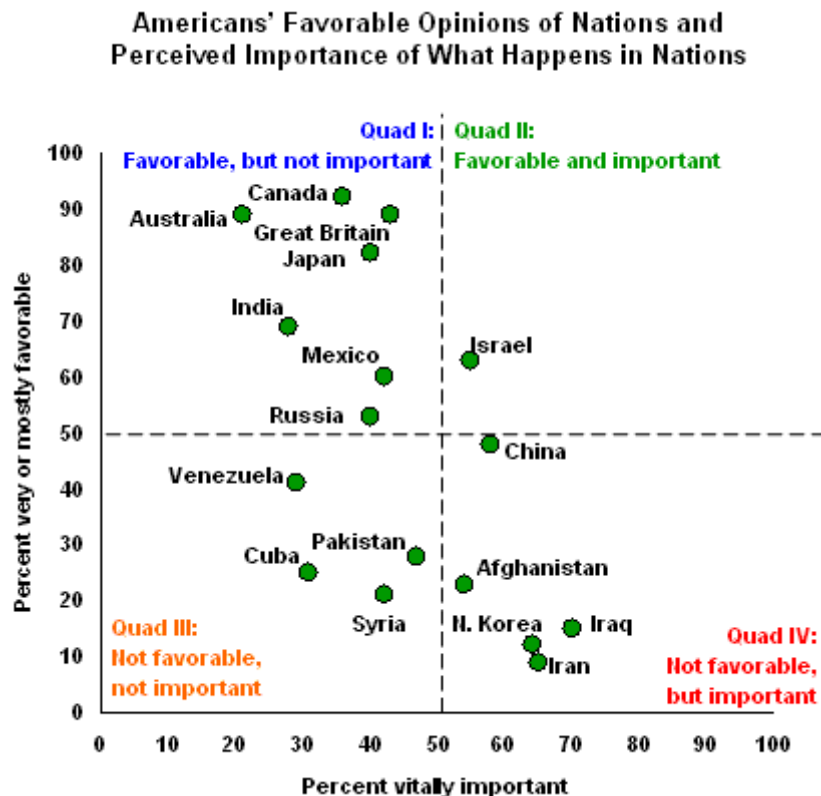
### GALLUP NEWS SERVICE

PRINCETON, NJ -- Surveying the geopolitical landscape of the world, Americans identify five countries as world hot spots. These are nations that a majority of Americans view unfavorably and deem what happens in each "vitally important" to U.S. interests. These five world hot spots are Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Afghanistan, and China. A majority of Americans also view Venezuela, Pakistan, Cuba, and Syria unfavorably, but do not consider what happens in these countries to be of vital importance to the United States. Americans remain most favorable toward countries that share the English language with the United States -- Canada, Australia, and Great Britain. Other countries that a majority of Americans view favorably include India, Mexico, Israel, and Russia.

### Importance vs. Favorability of Nations

Gallup's Feb. 1-4 World Affairs poll included the annual update on Americans' ratings of various countries around the world, and asked Americans to rate the overall importance to the United States of what happens in most of these nations.

The results of these two questions have been plotted on the accompanying graph. The public's perception of the importance to the United States of what happens in each nation is displayed along the horizontal axis, and the public's favorable rating of each country is displayed on the vertical axis. (Detailed data on both dimensions represented on the graph are shown and discussed later in this story.)



The intersection of these two dimensions allows the creation of four quadrants, based on dividing each dimension along the 50% line.

**Quadrant IV:** This is arguably the most important quadrant, containing what can be called *world hot spots*: countries that most Americans rate negatively, but that a majority of Americans see as important to the United States.

This quadrant contains five countries: Afghanistan, China, North Korea, Iran, and Iraq. These are the countries that presumably worry the American public most. The United States is currently involved in armed conflict in two of the countries.

**Quadrant I:** This quadrant contains countries that Americans view as *low-pertinence friends*. These are countries that a majority of Americans view favorably, but about which less than half of Americans say "what happens there" is vitally important to the United States.

Seven countries meet these criteria: Canada, Australia, Great Britain, Japan, India, Mexico, and Russia.

**Quadrant II:** *Vital friend* -- is the one country, Israel, that a majority of Americans feel favorably toward and say that what happens there is vitally important to the United States.

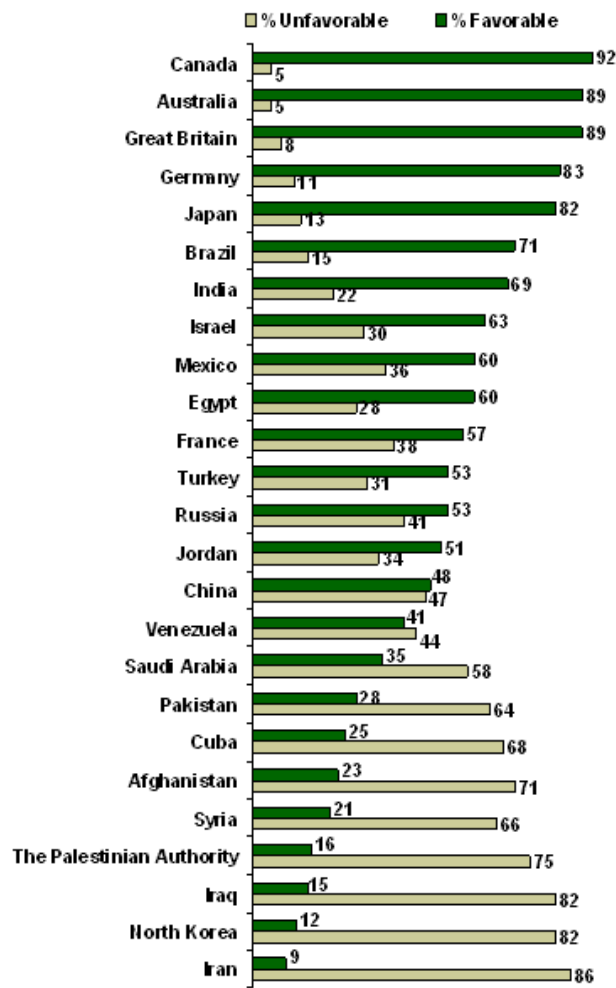
**Quadrant III:** contains *less relevant enemies* -- countries that most Americans do not view favorably and that the majority of Americans do not think are vitally important in terms of events there affecting the United States.

There are four countries in this quadrant: Venezuela, Pakistan, Cuba, and Syria.

### **Favorability of Nations**

Gallup's latest update of the public's favorability toward countries shows that roughly 9 in 10 Americans have a very or mostly favorable opinion of Canada, Australia, and Great Britain. Americans are most negative in their views of Iran (9% favorable rating), North Korea, Iraq, and the Palestinian Authority. The full results to this question are presented in the accompanying graph.

### Americans' Overall Opinion of 25 Nations



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The detailed trend data on these favorability ratings are found at the end of this story. There have been several changes over time in these ratings worth noting.

Iraq continues to be viewed unfavorably by Americans, as it has been since the inception of these ratings, although there have been some changes since 2003. Few Americans (between 3% and 9%) rated Iraq favorably from 1991 through mid-March 2003, before the start of the war in Iraq. After the war started, Americans' views of Iraq improved, but not by much. The high point for Iraq in the eyes of Americans, a 29% rating, came in 2005. Since that time, views of Iraq have deteriorated, dropping to 21% last year and 15% this year.

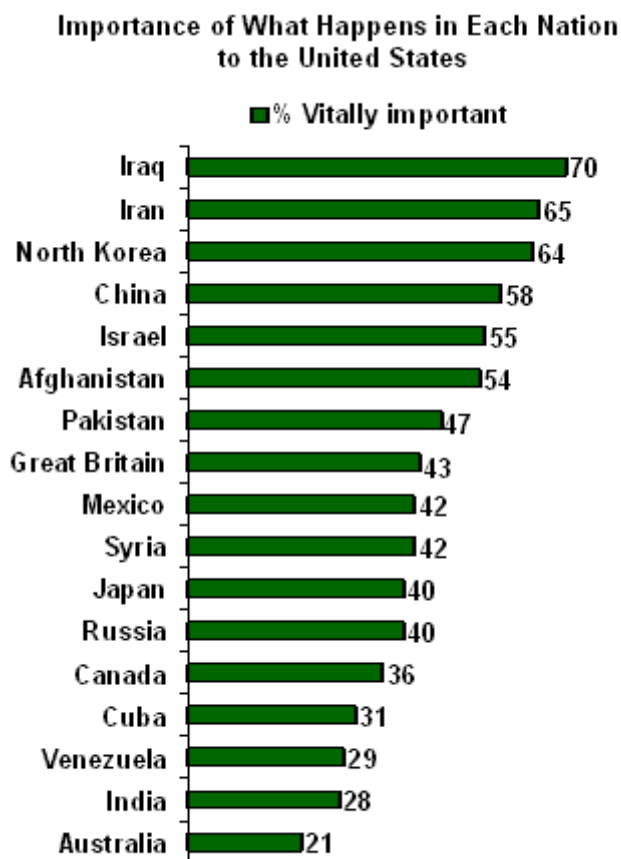
Americans' ratings of Afghanistan, the other country in which the United States has been involved militarily since the Iraq war began, are now similar to where they were in 2003. Twenty-three percent of Americans have a favorable opinion of Afghanistan, compared to 25% in February 2003. In 2005, favorable ratings of Afghanistan rose to 40%.

Ratings of France are now at their highest level since the start of the Iraq war. Americans' views of France fell precipitously at that time, when the French government expressed strong opposition to U.S. military action in Iraq. Fifty-seven percent of Americans now say they have a favorable opinion of France, up three points from last year. Still, Americans' ratings of France have not returned to the consistently higher prewar levels in the 70% range.

Ratings of Germany also dropped in 2003 as the Iraq war began (Germany also refused to participate in the Iraq invasion), but have now returned to prewar levels.

### Perceived Importance of Nations

The poll question measuring the importance of each nation to the United States was phrased as follows: "Next, how important do you think what happens in each of the following countries is to the United States today -- would you say it is vitally important, important but not vital, not too important, or not at all important?"



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Americans are most likely to say what happens in Iraq is vitally important to the United States, with 70% expressing this point of view. A majority of Americans also say what happens in Iran, North Korea, China, Israel, and Afghanistan is vitally important. The public is least likely to say events in the following countries are vitally important to the United States: Australia, India, Venezuela, Cuba, and Canada.

### Survey Methods

Results are based on telephone interviews with 1,007 national adults, aged 18 and older, conducted Feb. 1-4, 2007. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is  $\pm 3$  percentage points. 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.

## A. Afghanistan

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	3	20	45	26	6
2006 Feb 6-9	3	24	42	23	8
2005 Feb 7-10	6	34	37	17	6
2004 Feb 9-12	4	24	39	26	7
2003 Feb 3-6	2	23	40	26	9
2002 Feb 1-4	4	22	34	34	6

## B. Australia

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	44	45	3	2	6
2004 Feb 9-12	39	49	5	2	5
2001 Feb 1-4	43	42	4	4	7

## C. Brazil

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	11	60	12	3	14
2004 Feb 9-12	11	55	18	3	13
2001 Feb 1-4	13	56	12	5	14
1999 Feb 8-9	10	49	13	4	24

## D. Canada

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	43	49	4	1	2
2006 Feb 6-9	40	49	6	3	2
2005 Feb 7-10	38	48	8	2	4
2004 Feb 9-12	36	51	7	4	2
2003 Feb 3-6	43	46	6	1	4
2002 Feb 4-6	49	43	4	1	3
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	51	39	4	3	3
1999 Feb 8-9	43	47	2	1	7
1996 Mar 8-10	47	42	5	*	6
1992 Feb 6-9	40	51	4	1	4
1991 Mar 14-17	48	43	2	1	6
1989 Aug 10-13	49	44	1	1	5
1989 Feb 28-Mar 2	45	47	2	1	2
1987 Nov 6-Dec 4	51	42	2	1	4

\* Less than 0.5%

## E. China

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	7	41	32	15	6
2006 Feb 6-9	4	40	35	14	6
2005 Feb 7-10	5	42	35	12	6
2004 Feb 9-12	6	35	38	16	5
2003 Feb 3-6	6	39	34	12	9
2002 Feb 4-6	6	38	37	12	7
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	5	40	31	17	7
2000 Nov 13-15	5	31	39	18	7
2000 Mar 17-19	6	29	40	16	9
2000 Jan 25-26	4	29	33	18	16
1999 May 7-9	5	33	38	18	6
1999 Mar 12-14 ^	2	32	39	20	7
1999 Feb 8-9	8	31	34	16	11
1998 Jul 7-8	6	38	36	11	9
1998 Jun 22-23	5	34	42	9	10
1997 Jun 26-29	5	28	36	14	17
1996 Mar 8-10	6	33	35	16	10
1994 Feb 26-28	4	36	38	15	7
1991 Mar 14-17	5	30	35	18	12
1989 Aug 10-13	5	29	32	22	12
1989 Feb 28-Mar 2	12	60	10	3	15
1985 Feb 22-Mar 3	5	33	35	16	11
1979 Sep	18	46	18	7	10

## F. Cuba

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	3	22	45	23	7
2006 Feb 6-9	3	18	51	20	7
2005 Feb 7-10	3	25	46	19	7
2004 Feb 9-12	3	25	44	23	5
2003 Feb 3-6	4	24	42	21	9
2002 Feb 4-6	4	27	41	20	8
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	4	23	41	27	5
1999 May 7-9	4	20	45	24	7
1999 Mar 19-21	4	28	48	13	7
1996 Mar 8-10 ^	2	8	40	41	9

## G. Egypt

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	8	52	23	5	11
2006 Feb 6-9	8	50	22	5	14
2005 Feb 7-10	8	56	22	4	10
2004 Feb 9-12	7	51	25	7	10

2003 Feb 3-6	6	50	20	5	19
2002 Feb 4-6	7	47	29	5	12
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	11	54	19	4	12
1996 Mar 8-10	10	48	19	5	17
1991 Aug 8-11	9	54	15	5	17
1991 Mar 14-17	11	55	14	3	17
1991 Jan 30-Feb 2	10	56	12	3	19

## H. France

	<b>Very favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly unfavor- able</b>	<b>Very unfavor- able</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	14	43	27	11	5
2006 Feb 6-9	12	42	28	12	7
2005 Feb 7-10	12	39	30	13	6
2004 Feb 9-12	10	37	31	18	4
2003 Mar 14-15 ^	6	28	25	39	2
2003 Feb 3-6	13	46	23	10	8
2002 Feb 4-6	23	56	13	3	5
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	22	55	12	5	6
1999 Feb 8-9	17	54	14	4	11
1996 Mar 8-10	15	55	16	4	11
1991 Mar 14-17	18	61	9	3	9
1991 Jan 30-Feb 2	17	57	11	4	11

## I. Germany

	<b>Very favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly unfavor- able</b>	<b>Very unfavor- able</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	19	64	8	3	6
2006 Feb 6-9	17	62	11	4	6
2005 Feb 7-10	17	56	18	4	5
2004 Feb 9-12	13	56	19	7	5
2003 Mar 14-15 ^	8	41	30	14	7
2003 Feb 3-6	12	59	16	5	8
2002 Feb 4-6	22	61	8	3	6
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	20	55	9	7	9
2000 Nov 13-15	16	61	11	5	7
1999 Nov 4-7	11	66	13	5	5
1999 Feb 8-9	18	61	7	4	10
1996 Mar 8-10	17	58	13	3	9
1993 Jun 29-30	10	53	19	9	9
1992 Feb 6-9	17	57	14	6	6
1991 Mar 14-17	16	62	11	3	8

**J. Great Britain**

	<b>Very favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly unfavor- able</b>	<b>Very unfavor- able</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
2007 Feb 1-4	45	44	5	3	4
2006 Feb 6-9	46	42	5	3	4
2005 Feb 7-10	48	43	3	1	5
2004 Feb 9-12	40	47	7	3	3
2003 Mar 14-15 ^	43	43	6	3	5
2003 Feb 3-6	45	44	4	2	5
2002 Feb 4-6	48	42	5	2	3
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	41	44	6	3	6
2000 Nov 13-15	27	55	7	3	8
1999 May 7-9	37	52	5	3	3
1999 Feb 8-9	34	50	4	3	9
1996 Mar 8-10	30	51	8	2	9
1991 Mar 14-17	49	40	4	1	6
1991 Jan 30-Feb 2	45	45	3	1	6
1989 Feb 28-Mar 2	29	57	4	3	7

**K. India**

	<b>Very favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly unfavor- able</b>	<b>Very unfavor- able</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
2007 Feb 1-4	12	57	16	6	9
2006 Feb 6-9	10	56	16	7	11
2005 Feb 7-10	10	65	15	3	7
2004 Feb 9-12	8	53	23	6	10
2002 Feb 4-6	7	49	25	8	11
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	8	50	24	6	12
2000 Mar 17-19	7	40	30	8	15

**L. Iran**

	<b>Very favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly unfavor- able</b>	<b>Very unfavor- able</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
2007 Feb 1-4	1	8	38	48	5
2006 Feb 6-9	1	6	40	46	6
2005 Feb 7-10	1	11	49	33	6
2004 Feb 9-12	3	14	46	31	6
2003 Mar 14-15 ^	2	11	48	31	8
2003 Feb 3-6	2	11	48	29	10
2002 Feb 4-6	2	9	46	38	5
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	2	10	45	38	5
1996 Mar 8-10	1	5	38	46	10
1991 Aug 8-11	1	12	44	35	9
1991 Mar 14-17	3	11	41	35	10
1991 Jan 30-Feb 2	2	11	39	40	8

1989 Aug 10-13	1	4	27	62	6
1989 Feb 28-Mar 2	1	4	27	62	6

## M. Iraq

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	3	12	41	41	3
2006 Feb 6-9	3	18	39	36	5
2005 Feb 7-10	4	25	38	28	5
2004 Feb 9-12	4	17	39	35	5
2003 Mar 14-15 ^	3	2	25	68	2
2003 Feb 3-6	1	4	33	57	5
2002 Feb 4-6	2	4	39	49	6
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	2	7	34	51	6
2000 Nov 13-15	2	4	35	53	6
1999 May 7-9	1	4	38	53	4
1999 Feb 8-9	2	5	27	60	6
1996 Mar 8-10	1	5	34	52	8
1992 Feb 6-9	1	3	30	62	4
1991 Aug 8-11	1	6	32	54	7
1991 Mar 14-17	2	5	26	62	5
1991 Jan 30-Feb 2	*	3	17	73	7

\* Less than 0.5%

## N. Israel

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	22	41	22	8	7
2006 Feb 6-9	21	47	18	5	9
2005 Feb 7-10	19	50	20	5	6
2004 Feb 9-12	14	45	25	10	6
2003 Feb 3-6	22	42	23	6	7
2002 Feb 4-6	16	42	25	10	7
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	18	45	20	12	5
2000 Mar 17-19	16	46	20	8	10
2000 Jan 25-26	11	43	21	7	18
1999 May 7-9	15	53	19	6	7
1999 Feb 8-9	18	48	16	7	11
1996 Mar 8-10	17	45	18	11	9
1992 Feb 6-9	12	36	27	16	9
1991 Nov 21-14	11	36	26	11	16
1991 Sep 26-29	11	45	25	9	10
1991 Aug 8-11	15	47	19	6	12
1991 Mar 14-17	20	49	16	7	8
1991 Jan 30-Feb 2	28	51	10	3	8
1989 Aug 10-13	11	34	29	16	10
1989 Feb 28-Mar 2	8	41	25	13	13

**O. Japan**

	<b>Very favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly unfavor- able</b>	<b>Very unfavor- able</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
2007 Feb 1-4	24	58	10	3	5
2006 Feb 6-9	20	61	9	4	5
2005 Feb 7-10	22	59	9	5	5
2004 Feb 9-12	19	56	14	6	5
2003 Feb 3-6	18	59	10	5	8
2002 Feb 4-6	17	62	12	4	5
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	17	56	14	7	6
2000 Nov 13-15	13	57	17	5	8
1999 May 7-9	14	61	15	5	5
1999 Feb 8-9	15	54	16	5	10
1996 Mar 8-10	12	53	18	7	10
1995 Nov 6-8	4	42	34	11	9
1994 Jun 11-12	6	40	32	12	10
1994 Feb 26-28	7	47	28	14	4
1993 Jun 29-30	7	41	30	16	6
1992 Feb 6-9	9	38	28	22	3
1991 Nov 21-24	7	41	29	12	11
1991 Mar 14-17	10	55	19	7	9
1991 Jan 30-Feb 2	11	51	21	9	8
1989 Aug 10-13	10	48	23	10	9
1989 Feb 28-Mar 2	12	57	16	7	8

**P. Jordan**

	<b>Very favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly unfavor- able</b>	<b>Very unfavor- able</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
2007 Feb 1-4	6	45	27	7	15
2005 Feb 7-10	6	48	27	5	14
1999 Feb 8-9	16	48	13	4	19
1991 Aug 8-11	3	27	36	14	18
1991 Mar 14-17	4	18	42	21	16

**Q. Mexico**

	<b>Very favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly unfavor- able</b>	<b>Very unfavor- able</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
2007 Feb 1-4	13	47	26	10	4
2006 Feb 6-9	14	50	24	8	5
2005 Feb 7-10	15	59	16	5	5
2004 Feb 9-12	13	55	20	7	5
2003 Feb 3-6	13	61	16	4	6
2002 Feb 4-6	16	56	17	5	6
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	17	50	17	9	7
1999 Feb 8-9	12	43	26	8	11
1996 Mar 8-10	11	46	23	9	11
1993 Jun 29-30	7	36	35	14	8
1991 Mar 14-17	12	53	18	4	13
1989 Feb 28-Mar 2	7	55	21	6	11

## R. North Korea

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	2	10	33	49	6
2006 Feb 6-9	2	8	38	43	8
2005 Feb 7-10	1	12	38	42	7
2004 Feb 9-12	2	10	42	41	5
2003 Mar 14-15 ^	2	6	33	53	6
2003 Feb 3-6	1	11	38	42	8
2002 Feb 4-6	3	20	38	27	12
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	3	28	37	22	10
2000 Nov 13-15	3	23	41	22	11

## S. Pakistan

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	2	26	45	19	8
2006 Feb 6-9	2	28	43	16	11
2005 Feb 7-10	4	37	40	9	10
2004 Feb 9-12	3	25	42	22	8
2003 Feb 3-6	2	24	42	20	12
2002 Feb 4-6	4	26	42	21	7
2000 Mar 17-19	2	19	39	20	20

## T. The Palestinian Authority

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	2	14	46	29	9
2006 Feb 6-9	1	10	49	29	10
2005 Feb 7-10	3	24	43	19	11
2004 Feb 9-12	2	13	44	32	9
2003 Feb 3-6	1	12	44	29	14
2002 Feb 4-6	3	11	44	32	10
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	4	18	39	24	15
2000 Jan 25-26	3	18	36	16	27

## U. Russia

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	6	47	32	9	6

2006 Feb 6-9	5	53	27	8	7
2005 Feb 7-10	6	55	27	6	6
2004 Feb 9-12	7	52	26	9	6
2003 Mar 14-15 ^	4	37	40	12	7
2003 Feb 3-6	6	57	20	6	11
2002 Feb 4-6	11	55	20	7	7
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	6	46	27	15	6
2000 Nov 13-15	5	35	39	14	7
2000 Mar 17-19	5	35	39	12	9
1999 Nov 4-7	4	34	44	14	4
1999 May 7-9	4	42	36	13	5
1999 Apr 13-14	3	30	45	14	8
1999 Feb 8-9	6	38	34	10	12
1997 Nov 21-23	7	49	29	7	8
1996 Mar 8-10	6	46	29	10	9
1995 Apr 21-24	5	44	32	12	7
1994 Feb 26-28	8	48	28	11	5
1992 Feb 6-9 †	12	45	20	13	10
1991 Nov 21-24 †	7	45	24	12	12
1991 Aug 23-25 †	9	51	22	9	9
1991 Aug 8-11 †	11	55	19	6	9
1991 Mar 14-17 †	6	44	32	10	8
1991 Jan 30-Feb 2 †	8	49	26	9	8
1990 Sep 10-11 †	7	51	23	9	10
1990 May 17-20 †	7	48	24	8	13
1990 Aug 10-13 †	8	43	27	13	9
1989 Feb 28-Mar 2 †	7	55	20	9	9

† 1989-1992 WORDING: Soviet Union

## V. Saudi Arabia

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	4	31	40	18	7
2006 Feb 6-9	3	28	44	18	7
2005 Feb 7-10	3	33	42	16	6
2004 Feb 9-12	3	25	47	19	6
2003 Feb 3-6	3	27	41	20	9
2002 Feb 4-6	4	23	42	22	9
2001 Feb 1-4 ^	7	40	28	18	7
1991 Aug 8-11	11	45	21	12	11

## W. Syria

	Very favor- able	Mostly favor- able	Mostly unfavor- able	Very unfavor- able	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2007 Feb 1-4	2	19	44	22	13
2005 Feb 7-10	2	23	41	19	15
2000 Jan 25-26	2	18	32	12	36
1991 Aug 8-11	2	22	37	15	25

**X. Turkey**

			<b>Very favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly unfavor- able</b>	<b>Very unfavor- able</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2007	Feb 1-4	5%	48	25	6	15	
2003	Feb 3-6	8%	55	15	5	17	

**Y. Venezuela**

			<b>Very favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly favor- able</b>	<b>Mostly unfavor- able</b>	<b>Very unfavor- able</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2007	Feb 1-4	6%	35	25	19	14	