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Canadians Satisfied with U.S. Relationship

Most Have Positive View of U.S. but Disagree with Americans over Keystone Pipeline

BY *Jacob Poushter*

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About This Report

This report examines public opinion in Canada, including views of the United States, international threats, the Keystone XL pipeline and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). It is based on 1,004 telephone interviews with adults 18 and older conducted from May 4 to 15, 2015. For more details, see survey methodology and topline results.

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Canadians Satisfied with U.S. Relationship

Most Have Positive View of U.S. but Disagree with Americans over Keystone Pipeline

As Canadians head to the polls for a historically close federal election, a new survey finds that people in Canada are generally satisfied with their country's current relationship with the United States. More than half (54%) say that Canada should remain about as close to the U.S. as it has been in recent years, with another 27% saying Canada should be even closer and only 16% saying they should be less close.

Furthermore, 68% of Canadians have a favorable view of their southern neighbor, a figure that has stayed fairly consistent since President Barack Obama took office in 2009. About three-quarters (76%) have confidence in the U.S. president.

But on the contentious issue of the Keystone XL pipeline, which is under ongoing U.S. State Department review, there are differences within Canada as well as between Canadians and Americans. Almost half of Canadians (48%) oppose building the pipeline, while only 42% favor it. In the U.S., however, almost six-in-ten (59%) *approve* of the pipeline, according to a [November 2014](#) Pew Research Center poll.

Within Canada, the greatest backing for the pipeline comes from those who support the incumbent Conservative Party (72%) and in Alberta (65%), where the energy sector [accounts for](#) 22% of the province's gross domestic product and the oil sands region in question is located.

On trade, Canadians and Americans show similar support for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – 52% and 49%, respectively, say it is a good thing for their countries. About three-in-ten in each country say TPP is a bad thing, with the

Canadians Satisfied with Status Quo in U.S. Relationship

In the future, would you like Canada to be ___ to the U.S. than it has been in recent years?

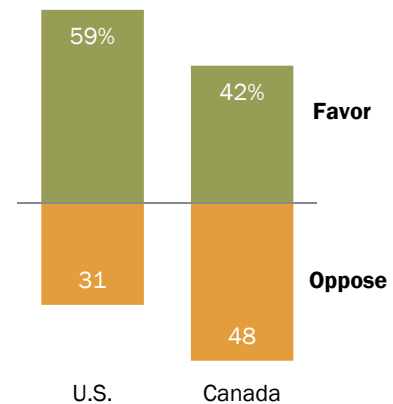


Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q74a.

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Divide on Keystone Pipeline in Canada

Do you ___ building the Keystone XL pipeline that would transport oil from Canada's oil sands region to refineries in the U.S.?



Note: In the U.S., question read "... through the Midwest to refineries in Texas?" U.S. data from November 2014 Pew Research Center survey.

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q21.

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rest undecided. Just this week, the U.S. and 11 other Pacific Rim nations, including Canada, [agreed to the deal](#) at a meeting in Atlanta.

Canada's second-largest trading partner after the U.S. is China, but between the two, Canadians overwhelmingly favor the U.S. Only 39% of Canadians have a favorable view of China, and 73% say it is more important to have stronger ties with the U.S. than with China. In addition, an overwhelming majority in Canada says that China does not respect the personal freedoms of its people (86%), while 54% say the U.S. *does* respect human rights.

Despite these findings, more Canadians think that China, not the U.S., is the world's leading economic power, and many say China will either eventually replace the U.S. as the world's leading superpower or has already done so.

When thinking about international threats, Canadians are most concerned about the militant group ISIS, but also express concern about global climate change and Iran's nuclear program.

These are among the main findings of a Pew Research Center survey conducted among a nationally representative sample of 1,004 Canadians reached by telephone from May 4 to 15, 2015.

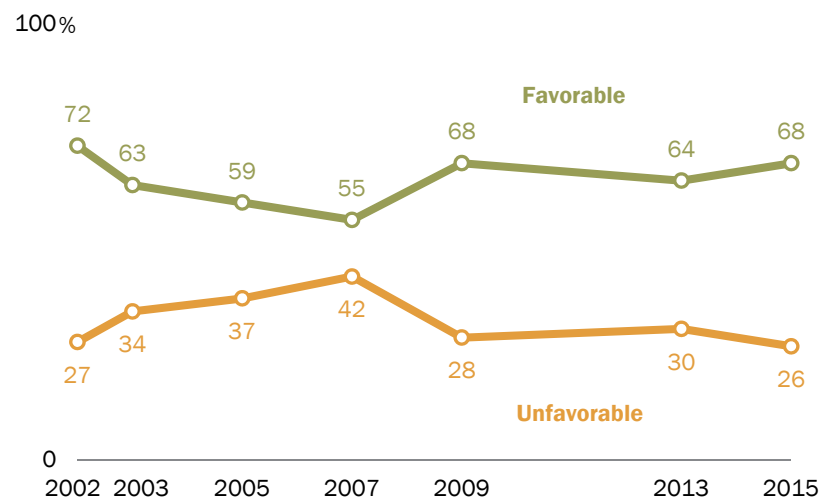
Majority of Canadians Have a Positive View of the U.S.

By a healthy margin, people in Canada have a positive view of the U.S. Roughly seven-in-ten Canadians (68%) view their neighbor favorably, while 26% hold an unfavorable opinion.

Over time, sentiments toward the U.S. among Canadians have held fairly steady, although favorability dipped after the start of the Iraq War in 2003 and hit a low of 55% in 2007.

Canadians Consistently Hold Favorable View of U.S.

Views of the U.S.



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q12a.

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However, even from 2003 through 2008, an era of low international opinion of the U.S., most Canadians held a favorable view of their southern neighbor.

There is a sharp partisan divide when it comes to Canadians' opinions of the U.S. Followers of the incumbent Conservative Party of Canada (CPC), led by current Prime Minister Stephen Harper, have the most positive views of the U.S. (84%). Among those who support the Liberal Party, 71% give the U.S. a thumbs-up. But among backers of the social-democratic New Democratic Party (NDP), only 58% have a favorable view of America. Despite these differences, majorities of all political stripes in Canada still have a favorable view of the U.S.

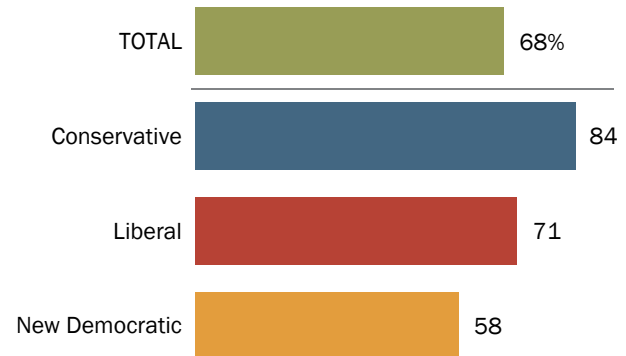
Among the other countries and institutions tested, the most admired is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). A 56% majority have a favorable view of the organization.

Fewer Canadians have a positive opinion of other countries tested, including only 39% with a favorable view of China. Even fewer have positive views of Russia (26%) and Iran (16%).

Sentiment toward China has fallen 19 percentage points since 2005 and positive views of Russia have been cut in half since 2007, when 52% of Canadians had a favorable view of their Arctic neighbor. Low opinion of Iran has remained steady since 2007. (For more on views of Iran around the world, see [Iran's Global Image Mostly Negative](#), released June 18, 2015. For more on global views of the U.S. and China, see [Global Publics Back U.S. on Fighting ISIS, but Are Critical of Post-9/11 Torture](#), released June 23, 2015. For more on international views of Russia, see [Russia, Putin Held in Low Regard around the World](#), released August 5, 2015.)

Partisan Divide on U.S. in Canada

Favorable view of U.S.

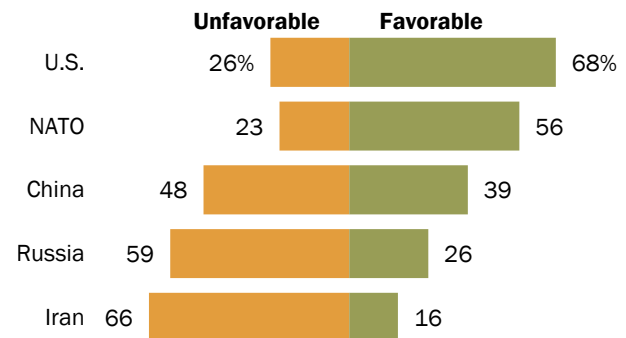


Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q12a.

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Canadians See U.S. Most Favorably, Iran Least Favorably

Views of ...



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q12a-d, f.

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Obama's Ratings Remain High in Canada

About three-quarters of Canadians (76%) have confidence in President Obama to handle international affairs, versus only 23% who express little or no confidence. This majority is less overwhelming than in 2009, however, when nearly nine-in-ten Canadians (88%) had confidence in him. In the current survey, women (82%) are more likely than men (69%) to express confidence in Obama.

Most in Canada Prefer Current Relationship with U.S.

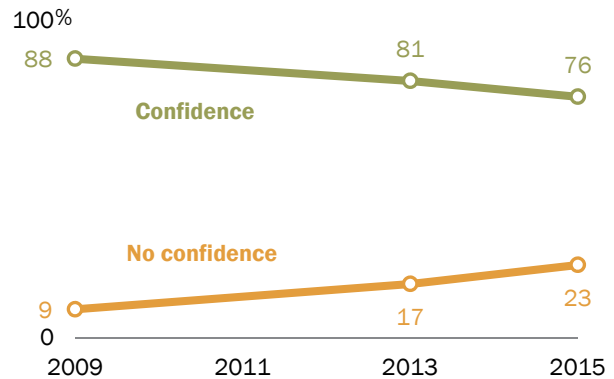
When asked about the U.S.-Canada relationship, more than half of Canadians (54%) say they want to remain about as close to the U.S. as they have been in recent years. Around a quarter (27%) say they want to be closer to their more populous neighbor, while only 16% express a desire to be less close.

Men (32%) are more likely than women (22%) to desire closer ties. And English-speaking Canadians are more inclined to want a deeper relationship with the U.S. (27%) compared with French speakers (19%).¹

CPC and Liberal supporters are also more likely to want closer ties with the U.S. (40% and 35%, respectively), compared with NDP supporters (16%).

Most Canadians Confident in Obama

How much confidence do you have in U.S. President Barack Obama to do the right thing regarding world affairs?



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q25a.

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Demographic Differences in Canada on Closer Ties with U.S.

In the future, would you like Canada to be ___ to the U.S. than it has been in recent years?

	Closer %	About as close %	Less close %
TOTAL	27	54	16
Men	32	51	13
Women	22	57	18
English-speaking	27	57	13
French-speaking	19	55	24
New Democratic	16	61	21
Liberal	35	49	14
Conservative	40	51	8

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q74a.

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¹ "English-speaking" are those who say they either usually speak English at home or do so more often if more than one language is spoken. "French-speaking" are those who say they either usually speak French at home or do so more often if more than one language is spoken.

Divide over Keystone Pipeline among Canadians

Overall, 42% of Canadians favor building the Keystone XL pipeline, which would run from Canada's oil sands region in Alberta through the American Midwest. Nearly half (48%) oppose the project. Comparatively, as of November 2014, 59% of Americans favored the pipeline, with only 31% opposed.

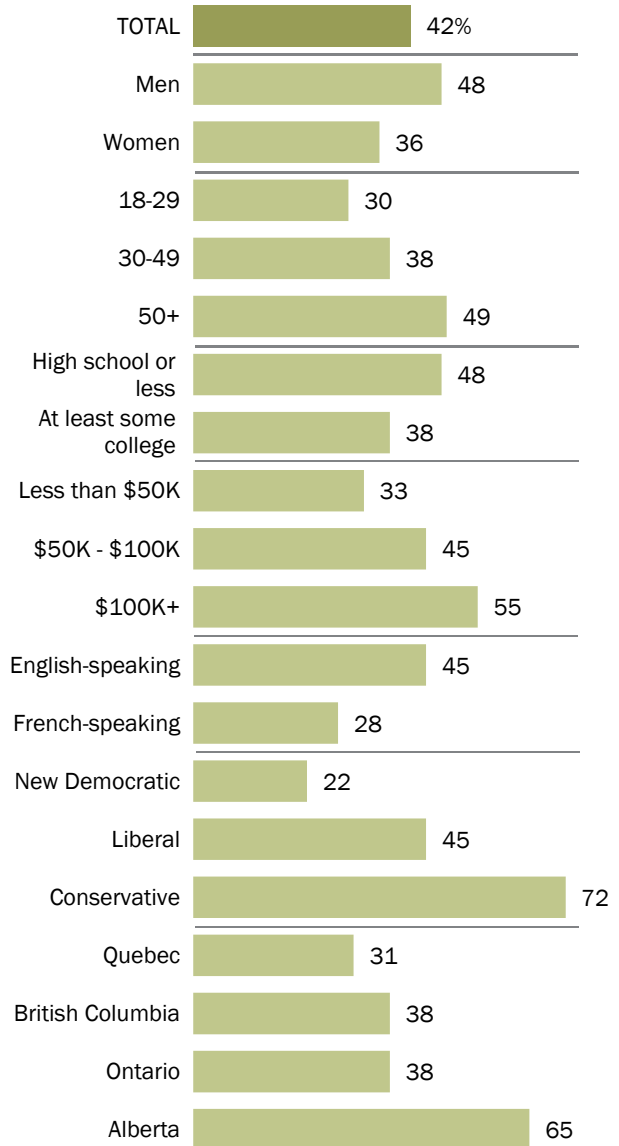
Despite a mixed assessment of the Keystone project among the entire Canadian populace, there are significant demographic differences within the country.

The largest differences are by party, and they are especially significant. CPC supporters (72%) are far more likely to favor building the pipeline, compared with only 45% of Liberals and an even smaller share of NDP followers (22%). The NDP won [provincial elections in Alberta](#) in May and opposes construction of the pipeline. However, Albertans do not share the NDP's opinion. Nearly two-thirds (65%) in Alberta favor building the pipeline through their oil sands region, while only 38% support it in Ontario and British Columbia and 31% in Quebec.²

There is also greater support for the pipeline among high-income Canadians (making over 100,000 Canadian dollars per year), those ages 50 and older, men, those with a high school education or less and English speakers.

Wide Demographic Differences in Support for Keystone XL Pipeline

Favor building the Keystone XL pipeline that would transport oil from Canada's oil sands region to refineries in the U.S.



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q21.

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² There were insufficient sample sizes for analysis in the Atlantic Provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) and the Prairie States (Manitoba and Saskatchewan).

More Canadians Say Trans-Pacific Partnership Is a Good Thing

Just about half in Canada (52%) support TPP. Roughly three-in-ten (31%) say the agreement would be a bad thing for Canada. There is similar support in the U.S. for the deal – 49% say it is a good thing, while 29% believe it is bad for America.

CPC supporters are the most favorable toward the free-trade agreement, with 70% saying it is a good thing for their country. Liberals also support the deal. However, only 42% among NDP supporters think TPP is a good thing for Canada, while a nearly equal 45% say it is a bad thing. The NDP's leader, Tom Mulcair, has [expressed skepticism](#) of the huge, U.S.-led trade deal.

There are also regional divides in the TPP issue. Albertans (60% good thing) are more inclined toward the deal than Ontarians (47%) and British Columbians (44%).

Additionally, men express greater support for the free-trade agreement compared with women.

General Support for TPP in U.S., Canada

Would TPP be a ___ for our country?



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q20a.

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Conservatives, Albertans More Supportive of TPP

Would TPP be a ___ for our country?

	Good thing %	Bad thing %
TOTAL	52	31
Men	59	29
Women	46	32
New Democratic	42	45
Liberal	60	26
Conservative	70	17
Quebec	56	27
Ontario	47	37
Alberta	60	19
British Columbia	44	41

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q20a.

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Majority in Canada Prefer Economic Ties with U.S., but Many Say China Is Leading Economy

The U.S. is by far Canada's largest trading partner, accounting for \$707 billion in goods and private services trade between the [two countries in 2012](#). When asked whether it is more important to have strong economic ties with China or the U.S., 73% of Canadians choose the U.S. Only 13% would favor stronger economic ties with China.

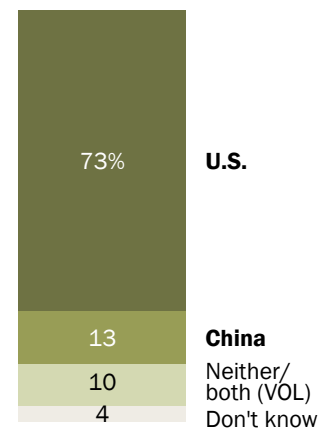
Despite these sentiments, Canadians tend to believe that China, and not the U.S., is the world's leading economic power. A 46% plurality of Canadians say that China is the top economy, while just 34% name the U.S. French-speaking Canadians (58%) and followers of the NDP (57%) are more likely to name China as the world's leading economy, compared with English speakers (43%) and both Liberals (44%) and CPC supporters (40%).

Similarly, 52% of Canadians say China will replace or already has replaced the U.S. as the world's leading superpower. Only 40% say China will never replace the U.S. Canadians ages 18 to 29 (65%) are much more likely to say China will replace the U.S. or already has than those ages 50 and older (46%). Additionally, more educated Canadians, those who speak French and NDP supporters are more likely to say that China will surpass or already has surpassed the U.S. as the top world power.

In the realm of human rights, Canadians clearly prefer the U.S. over China. More than half of Canadians (54%) say the U.S. government respects the personal freedoms of its people, compared with only 5% who say the same about China. Despite this, there has been a significant decline in Canadians' views of America's commitment to human rights in the past two years. In 2013, fully 75% in Canada said the U.S. government respected its own people's rights.

Canadians Favor Strong Economic Ties with U.S.

Is it more important for Canada to have strong economic ties with China or the U.S.?

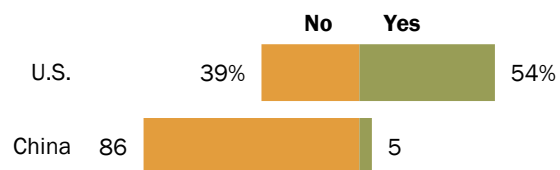


Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey, Q26v.

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Few Canadians Think China Respects Personal Freedoms

Do you think the government of ___ respects the personal freedoms of its people?



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey, Q19a-b.

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Canadians making more than CA\$100,000 are more likely to say the U.S. respects personal freedoms (61%) compared with Canadians who make less than CA\$50,000 (46%). CPC backers (70%) are also more likely to say the U.S. government respects human rights compared with Liberals (59%) and NDP supporters (42%).

ISIS Seen as Top International Threat

When asked about seven potential international threats, Canadians are clearly most concerned about the Islamic militant group in Iraq and Syria known as ISIS. Roughly six-in-ten Canadians (58%) say they are very concerned about ISIS. Canadians are also very worried about global climate change (45%) and Iran's nuclear program (43%). And 39% are concerned about cyberattacks.³

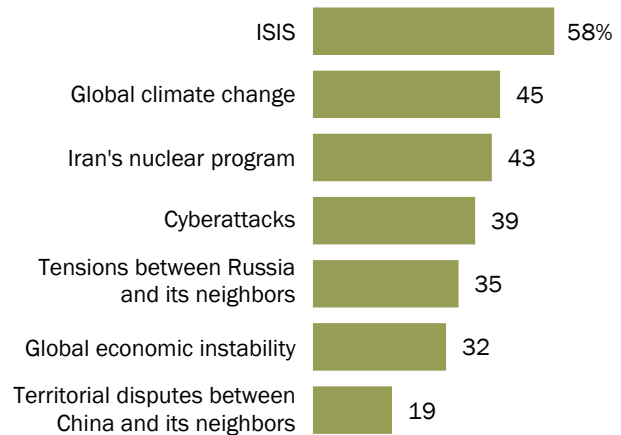
Fewer are very concerned about tensions between Russia and its neighbors, global economic instability and territorial disputes with China. (For more on global views of international threats, see [Climate Change Seen as Top Global Threat](#), released July 14, 2015.)

Across the threats tested, there are substantial differences on acute concern by gender, age and party.

On four of the international issues, women are significantly more concerned than men. This includes two-thirds of women who are very concerned about ISIS, compared with only 49% of men. Older Canadians (those ages 50 and older) are particularly worried about most of these international threats. Fully 72% are very concerned about the ISIS threat, compared with only 42% of Canadians 18 to 29 years old. Older Canadians are also more concerned about Iran's nuclear program, cyberattacks, tensions with Russia and territorial disputes with China compared with younger Canadians.

Canadians Most Concerned about ISIS

Very concerned about ...



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q13a-g.

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³ The survey was conducted before a [major cyberattack](#) on the Canadian government in June 2015.

Women and Older Canadians More Concerned about Range of Threats

Very concerned about ...

	TOTAL	Gender		Age			Party		
		Men	Women	18-29	30-49	50+	New Democratic	Liberal	Conservative
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
ISIS	58	49	67	42	49	72	49	62	74
Global climate change	45	40	50	49	48	41	60	48	27
Iran's nuclear program	43	37	48	25	36	55	32	39	61
Cyberattacks	39	35	43	26	29	52	28	44	50
Tensions between Russia and its neighbors	35	34	36	21	27	47	29	39	45
Global economic instability	32	30	34	27	33	33	29	36	31
Territorial disputes between China and its neighbors	19	18	19	9	17	23	17	18	26

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q13a-g.

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There are also significant partisan differences on the international threats tested. CPC supporters are more concerned about ISIS (74% very concerned) and Iran's nuclear program (61%) compared with both Liberal and NDP supporters. Both Conservatives and Liberals are also more concerned about cyberattacks and tensions with Russia compared with Canadians who support the NDP. However, NDP supporters are much more concerned about the threat of global climate change (60% very concerned) compared with Liberals (48%) and especially CPC backers (27%).

Methodology

About the Pew Research Center's Spring 2015 Global Attitudes Survey

Results for the survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. The results are based on national samples, unless otherwise noted. More details about our international survey methodology and country-specific sample designs are available on our [website](#).

For more detailed information on survey methods for this report, see here:

http://www.pewglobal.org/international-survey-methodology/?country_select=Canada

For more general information on international survey research, see here:

<http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/international-survey-research/>

Topline Results

Pew Research Center
Spring 2015 survey
October 6, 2015 Release

Methodological notes:

- Survey results are based on national samples. For further details on sample designs, see Methodology section and our [international survey methods database](#).
- Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%. The topline “total” columns show 100%, because they are based on unrounded numbers.
- Since 2007, the Pew Research Center has used an automated process to generate topline for its Global Attitudes surveys. As a result, numbers may differ slightly from those published prior to 2007.
- Not all questions included in the Spring 2015 survey are presented in this topline. Omitted questions have either been previously released or will be released in future reports.

		Q12a. Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of ____? a. the United States					
		Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	14	54	21	5	6	100
	Spring, 2013	9	55	24	6	6	100
	Spring, 2009	15	53	22	6	4	100
	Spring, 2007	12	43	28	14	3	100
	Spring, 2005	18	41	25	12	3	100
	May, 2003	24	39	21	13	3	100
	Summer, 2002	24	48	19	8	3	100

		Q12b. Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of ____? b. China					
		Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	6	33	35	13	13	100
	Spring, 2013	5	38	33	12	12	100
	Spring, 2009	8	45	27	9	11	100
	Spring, 2007	8	44	27	10	12	100
	Spring, 2005	12	46	20	7	14	100

		Q12c. Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of ____? c. Iran					
		Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	2	14	36	30	17	100
	Spring, 2013	1	13	36	34	16	100
	Spring, 2009	4	23	34	23	16	100
	Spring, 2007	3	19	34	33	11	100

		Q12d. Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of ____? d. Russia					
		Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	3	23	36	23	14	100
	Spring, 2013	3	39	31	8	19	100
	Spring, 2009	5	46	22	8	19	100
	Spring, 2007	7	45	23	7	18	100

		Q12f. Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of ____? f. NATO, that is, North Atlantic Treaty Organization					
		Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	10	46	18	5	22	100
	Spring, 2013	9	48	13	6	23	100

		Q13a. Please tell me how concerned you are, if at all, about _____. Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned? a. global climate change					
		Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	45	35	13	6	1	100

		Q13b. Please tell me how concerned you are, if at all, about _____. Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned? b. the Islamic militant group in Iraq and Syria known as ISIS					
		Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	58	27	8	4	3	100

		Q13c. Please tell me how concerned you are, if at all, about _____. Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned? c. tensions between Russia and neighboring countries					
		Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	35	42	14	6	3	100

		Q13d. Please tell me how concerned you are, if at all, about _____. Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned? d. territorial disputes between China and neighboring countries					Total
		Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	19	40	24	8	8	100

		Q13e. Please tell me how concerned you are, if at all, about _____. Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned? e. Iran's nuclear program					Total
		Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	43	29	14	8	7	100

		Q13f. Please tell me how concerned you are, if at all, about _____. Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned? f. cyberattacks on governments, banks or corporations					Total
		Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	39	36	15	8	2	100

		Q13g. Please tell me how concerned you are, if at all, about _____. Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned? g. global economic instability					Total
		Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	32	49	14	3	2	100

		Q17. Today, which ONE of the following do you think is the world's leading economic power?							Total
		The United States	China	Japan OR	The countries of the European Union	Other (VOL)	None/There is no leading economic power (VOL)	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	34	46	6	8	1	1	5	100
	Spring, 2013	28	56	5	3	0	1	7	100
	Spring, 2009	35	37	7	11	1	1	8	100

		Q18. Which comes closest to your view — China will eventually replace U.S. as the world's leading superpower; China has already replaced U.S. as the world's leading superpower; or China will never replace the U.S. as the world's leading superpower?					Total
		Will eventually replace U.S.	Has already replaced U.S.	Will never replace U.S.	DK/Refused	Total	
Canada	Spring, 2015	41	11	40	8	100	
	Spring, 2013	52	15	26	7	100	
	Spring, 2009	44	8	40	8	100	

		Q19a. Do you think the government of _____ respects the personal freedoms of its people or don't you think so? a. China			
		Yes - respects personal freedoms	No – does not respect personal freedoms	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	5	86	9	100
	Spring, 2013	13	76	12	100

		Q19b. Do you think the government of _____ respects the personal freedoms of its people or don't you think so? b. the United States			
		Yes - respects personal freedoms	No – does not respect personal freedoms	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	54	39	7	100
	Spring, 2013	75	20	5	100

		Q20a. (Survey country) is negotiating a free-trade agreement with [U.S.: countries in the Asian-Pacific region/ALL OTHERS: the United States and other Asian-Pacific countries] called the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Do you think this trade agreement would be a good thing for our country or a bad thing?					
		Good thing	Bad thing	Haven't heard enough (VOL)	Neither good nor bad (VOL)	DK/Refused	Total
United States	Spring, 2015	49	29	12	1	9	100
Canada	Spring, 2015	52	31	3	1	13	100

		Q21. Do you favor or oppose building the Keystone XL pipeline that would transport oil from Canada's oil sands region to refineries in the United States?			
		Favor	Oppose	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	42	48	10	100

		Q25a. For each, tell me how much confidence you have in each leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs — a lot of confidence, some confidence, not too much confidence or no confidence at all. a. U.S. President Barack Obama					
		A lot of confidence	Some confidence	Not too much confidence	No confidence at all	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	24	52	15	8	2	100
	Spring, 2013	29	52	11	6	2	100
	Spring, 2009	47	41	5	4	3	100

		Q26v. Is it more important for (survey country) to have strong economic ties with China or with the United States?					
		China	United States	Both (VOL)	Neither (VOL)	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	13	73	8	2	4	100

		Q74a. Thinking of Canada's relationship with the United States, in the future, would you like Canada to be closer, about as close or less close to the United States than it has been in recent years?				
		Closer to the United States	About as close to the United States	Less close to the United States	DK/Refused	Total
Canada	Spring, 2015	27	54	16	3	100