



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Majority of Republicans Say U.S. Is Less Respected
MORE SEE AMERICA'S LOSS OF GLOBAL RESPECT AS MAJOR PROBLEM

More Americans now say that the United States is less respected in the world than it has been in the past, and a growing proportion views this as a major problem for the country. More than seven-in-ten Americans (71%) say that the United States is less respected by other countries these days, up from 65% in August 2006.

For the first time since Pew began asking this question in 2004, a majority of Americans now sees the loss of international respect for the United States as a major problem. The percentage of Americans saying the loss of international respect is a major problem has risen from 43% in 2005 to 48% in 2006 and 56% currently.

The most recent national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted May 21-25 among 1,505 adults, finds that majorities of Democrats (81%), independents (72%) and Republicans (60%) believe that the United States has lost global respect in recent years.

In particular, Republican opinion about international respect for America has shifted

	Jul 2004	Oct 2005	Aug 2006	May 2008
<i>Compared to past the U.S. is...</i>	%	%	%	%
More respected	10	9	7	7
Less respected	67	66	65	71
Major problem	43	43	48	56
Minor/no problem	23	22	16	14
Don't know	1	1	1	1
As respected as in past	20	21	23	18
Don't know	3	4	5	4
	100	100	100	100

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
May 2008	%	%	%	%
More respected	7	9	6	8
Less respected	71	60	81	72
Major problem	56	43	67	56
Minor/no problem	14	15	13	15
Don't know	1	2	1	1
As respected as in past	18	26	10	18
Don't know	4	5	3	2
	100	100	100	100
August 2006	%	%	%	%
More respected	7	12	7	4
Less respected	65	48	76	73
Major problem	48	26	65	56
Minor/no problem	16	21	11	16
Don't know	1	1	*	1
As respected as in past	23	36	12	19
Don't know	5	4	5	4
	100	100	100	100
<i>Change in major problem</i>	+8	+17	+2	0

substantially over the past two years. A clear majority of Republicans (60%) now say the nation is less respected in the international community, an increase of 12 points since August 2006. Moreover, 43% of Republicans say the loss of global respect represents a major problem, compared with just 26% two years ago.

Over the same period, opinion among Democrats and independents about America’s global image has remained more stable. While somewhat more Democrats say the nation is less respected than in 2006 (81% now vs. 76% then), there has been little change in the proportion who view this as a major problem; opinion among independents about global respect for the United States has remained stable since 2006.

Top Threats: Islamic Extremism, Iran and North Korea

When asked to assess a set of specific international threats to the United States, public consensus is strongest about the threat posed by Islamic extremist groups like al Qaeda. More than seven-in-ten (72%) view these groups as a “major threat” to the national well-being.

	Major threat	Minor threat	Not a threat	DK
	%	%	%	%
Islamic extremist groups	72	18	4	6=100
Iran’s nuclear program	62	25	8	5=100
N. Korea’s nuclear program	55	32	7	6=100
China’s emerging power	50	31	10	9=100
Pakistan’s political instability	41	40	9	10=100
Russian authoritarianism	24	46	12	18=100

Solid majorities also say that the nuclear programs of Iran (62%) and North Korea (55%) represent major threats to the United States. Opinions about Iran’s nuclear program have changed little since 2005, while the percentage expressing concern about North Korea’s program has declined somewhat (from 66% who viewed the program as a major threat in 2005 to 55% who do so today). Half of Americans see China’s emergence as a world power as a major threat, a proportion that has remained largely unchanged since the question was first asked in 1999.

Other potential international threats – political instability in Pakistan and growing authoritarianism in Russia – are of considerably less concern to Americans. The public is divided over the severity of the threat posed by Pakistani instability (41% view this as a major threat, while 40% see it as a minor threat). Only about a quarter of the public (24%) says growing Russian authoritarianism is major threat to the United States.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to express concern about the top three potential threats (Islamic extremist groups and the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea). An overwhelming majority of Republicans (86%) say that al Qaeda and other Islamic extremist

groups represent a major threat to the country’s well-being. About two-thirds of independents (68%) and Democrats (67%) express this view.

Nearly three-quarters of Republicans (74%) say that Iran’s nuclear program is a major threat to the United States, compared with 62% of independents and 55% of Democrats. The partisan gap in opinion about the threat that North Korea’s nuclear program poses is slightly smaller; 61% of Republicans views this as a major threat, as do 58% of independents and 51% of Democrats.

	<u>Rep</u> %	<u>Dem</u> %	<u>Ind</u> %	<i>Rep-Dem diff</i>
Islamic extremist groups	86	67	68	+19
Iran’s nuclear program	74	55	62	+19
N. Korea’s nuclear program	61	51	58	+10
China’s emerging power	50	49	52	+1
Pakistan’s political instability	46	42	40	+4
Russian authoritarianism	29	23	23	+6

Cell entries show the percent naming each as a “major threat”.

Taken together, 54% of Republicans say that Islamic extremist groups and the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea are major threats; just 42% of independents and 37% of Democrats say all three represent major threats to the United States. By contrast, there is little partisan difference in the percentages viewing other potential threats (China, Pakistan and Russia) as major concerns.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 1,505 adults, 18 years of age or older, from May 21-25, 2008. The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1,505	3.0 percentage points
Republican sample	412	5.5 percentage points
Democratic sample	521	5.0 percentage points
Independent sample	508	5.0 percentage points

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of eight projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MAY POLITICAL/BELIEVABILITY SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
 May 21-25, 2008
 N=1505

QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 29 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

ASK ALL:

Q.30 I'd like your opinion about some possible international concerns for the U.S. Do you think that **(INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE)** is a major threat, a minor threat or not a threat to the well being of the United States? What about **(INSERT ITEM)**

		<u>Major Threat</u>	<u>Minor Threat</u>	<u>Not a Threat</u>	(VOL) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	China's emergence as a world power				
	Late May, 2008	50	31	10	9=100
	February, 2006	47	34	12	7=100
	Late October, 2005	52	31	10	7=100
	May, 2001	51	30	10	9=100
	July, 1999	53	33	10	4=100
b.	Growing authoritarianism in Russia				
	Late May, 2008	24	46	12	18=100
	February, 2006	22	45	16	17=100
	Late October, 2005	23	44	13	20=100
	May, 2001 ¹	27	46	12	15=100
	July, 1999	40	42	14	4=100
c.	North Korea's nuclear program				
	Late May, 2008	55	32	7	6=100
	February, 2006	60	27	6	7=100
	Late October, 2005	66	24	4	6=100
d.	Iran's nuclear program				
	Late May, 2008	62	25	8	5=100
	February, 2006	65	24	5	6=100
	Late October, 2005	61	27	5	7=100
e.	Political instability in Pakistan				
	Late May, 2008	41	40	9	10=100
f.	Islamic extremist groups like al Qaeda				
	Late May, 2008	72	18	4	6=100

¹ In May 2001 and July 1999, the item was listed as: "Political and economic instability in Russia."

ASK ALL:

Q.31 Compared with the past, would you say the U.S. is MORE respected by other countries these days, LESS respected by other countries, or AS respected as it has been in the past?

ASK IF LESS RESPECTED (Q.31=2):

Q.32 Do you think less respect for America is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem at all?

		Aug <u>2006</u>	Late Oct <u>2005</u>	July <u>2004</u>	May <u>1987</u> ²	<i>Newsweek</i> <u>Jan 1984</u>
7	More respected	7	9	10	19	27
71	Less respected	65	66	67	55	36
56	Major problem	48	43	43	--	--
11	Minor problem	14	18	19	--	--
3	Not a problem	2	4	4	--	--
1	Don't know/Refused	1	1	1	--	--
18	As respected as in the past	23	21	20	23	29
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100

NO QUESTION 33

QUESTIONS 34 AND 35 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS B.1 THROUGH B.4 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

2 In May 1987 the question asked "Compared to five years ago, would you say the U.S. is more respected by other countries, less respected by other countries, or as respected as it was five years ago by other countries?" In January 1984, the Newsweek question asked "Compared to four years ago..."