

Nov 04, 2016 by [Adam Clayton Powell, III](#)

U.S. Leadership Still Viewed Positively, but with Major Declines in Africa ^[1]

WASHINGTON --- America's image abroad remains strong, retaining its post-Bush worldwide increase in 2009. But in new [survey data](#) released here this morning by Gallup, the U.S. has lost significant support in the past year in Africa and Latin America.

Meanwhile, worldwide views of Germany have soared, and that country now leads all other major powers, including the U.S., in global favorability scores. Germany improved its positive rating from 40% to 47% worldwide, while the U.S. remained more or less level, off slightly from 47% to 46%.

China and Russia are far behind Germany and the U.S. China lost ground and, despite being viewed as an economic superpower, its leadership is viewed positively by only 32% worldwide. Approval of Russia is even lower – 28% worldwide.

Major declines in support for the U.S. came from African countries. Survey data from South Africa, for example, show a one-year plunge in positive views of the U.S. from 92% favorable last year to 74% now. And in Liberia, approval of the U.S. dropped even more, from 90% to 65%.

China may have been a beneficiary of America's decline, scoring major gains in many African countries, up more than 20 percentage points in Ghana, Kenya, and Senegal. In Mali, 94% of the population view China favorably. Ghana and Senegal also saw major increases in support for Russia – up 29 percentage points and 32 percentage points, respectively, in the past year.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, region-wide, U.S. support dropped from a peak of 53% in 2009 to 40% in the new report, with major declines in Chile (down from 62% to 41%) and Panama (down from 60% to 36%). In Mexico, U.S. approval is off by fourteen percentage points.

Major increases in U.S. approval came from Belgium, Britain, and Cambodia.

Approval of U.S. leadership surged in 2009, when positive approval of U.S. leadership soared from 34% to 49%. Since then, worldwide support has remained more or less flat, drifting down to 48% last year and then to 47% now.

Gallup also tested global opinion in another way, asking whether respondents were willing to leave their homes and move to another country – and if so, to which country. The U.S. came out on top by far, with 150 million people worldwide wanting to move to America. Britain was second, with 45 million wanting to move there.

The largest numbers of people wanting to move to the U.S. were from China, Nigeria, and India. But adjusting for population and looking at the percentage of a nation's population that

wants to move to the U.S., the leaders were Liberia (37%), Sierra Leone (30%), the Dominican Republic (26%), and Haiti (24%).

Turning the lens 180 degrees, Gallup also measured America's view of the world. The countries viewed most positively by Americans are Canada (96% approval), Britain (90%), Germany (86%), Japan (83%), India (75%), France (also 75%), and Israel (71%).

Mexico dropped to 51% approval, a decline from 74% in 2005. At this morning's briefing, Jim Clifton, Gallup's Chairman and CEO, said the decline in Americans' view of Mexico has been devastating.

"Business implications are staggering," Clifton reported, noting sharp declines in tourism and in willingness by business executives to visit Mexico – and invest there.

Ambassador Stuart Holliday, President and CEO of Meridian International, commented on the survey results at this morning's briefing. He said the numbers show that people around the world have a "lack of confidence" in leadership of all countries. He noted that worldwide approval of the U.S., at 46%, matches almost perfectly President Obama's approval rating in the U.S.

The ambassador called for "three P's" to improve America's standing in the world: "partnership, private sector investment, and principles." Holliday and Clifton agreed that job creation is key to more positive approval, especially in Africa and Latin America. Clifton has written a book on the subject, "The Coming Jobs War", and Holliday presented this today as a challenge and an opportunity.

"We have an opportunity not just to extract resources, but to invest in long-term job creation," he said.

Ambassador Holiday also said the tone of America's internal political debate is contributing to perceptions of American weakness.

"We are talking about our own decline more than anyone else," he said.
