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# Rating World Leaders The U.S. vs. Germany, China and Russia

2022



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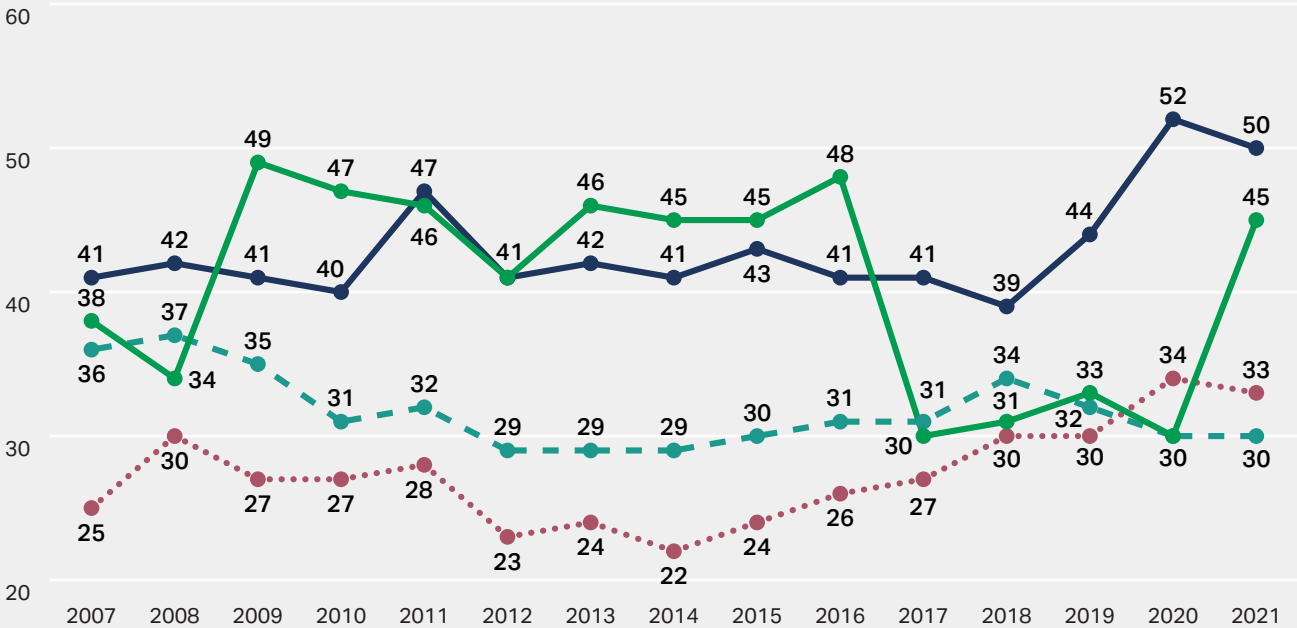
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# Global Leadership Ratings

## APPROVAL OF GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Median approval (%)

U.S. Germany China Russia



Source: Gallup



## U.S., Germany in Stronger Position Than Russia Before Ukraine Crisis

**Before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 upended the entire geopolitical order, Gallup surveys showed the U.S. and Germany held more "soft power" around the world than they had in years. In that regard, both countries were in much stronger positions heading into the conflict than either Russia or China.**

In the first year of Joe Biden's presidency, the median global approval rating of U.S. leadership stood at 45% across 116 countries and territories. While far from a ringing global endorsement of U.S. leadership, this rating is much higher than the 30% approval rating in the last year of Donald Trump's presidency or any of the previous ratings during the Trump administration.

Despite the surge in approval ratings for the U.S., Germany remained the top-rated global power for the fifth year in a row as it prepared for longtime chancellor, Angela Merkel, to leave office. In 2021, median approval of Germany's leadership across 116 countries and territories stood at 50% — essentially unchanged from the record-high 52% approval rating in 2020.

Both Germany and the U.S. netted higher approval ratings than either Russia or China, whose approval ratings continued to cluster together in the lower 30s in 2021. Russia's approval rating before its invasion of Ukraine stood at 33% — relatively unchanged from where it was in 2020 — and China's approval rating was also unchanged at 30%.

With much of the world condemning the invasion of Ukraine, Russia's approval ratings could retreat even lower than the record-low 22% Gallup observed in 2014 after Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine. China's future ratings, too, could be linked to how it responds to the crisis and whether it throws its support behind Russia or keeps above the fray.

### REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

U.S. leadership ratings around the world rebounded in 2021 in the first year of Joe Biden's presidency.

There were double-digit increases in U.S. leadership approval in 59 countries and territories between 2020 and 2021.

Ratings for the U.S. slipped after withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021.

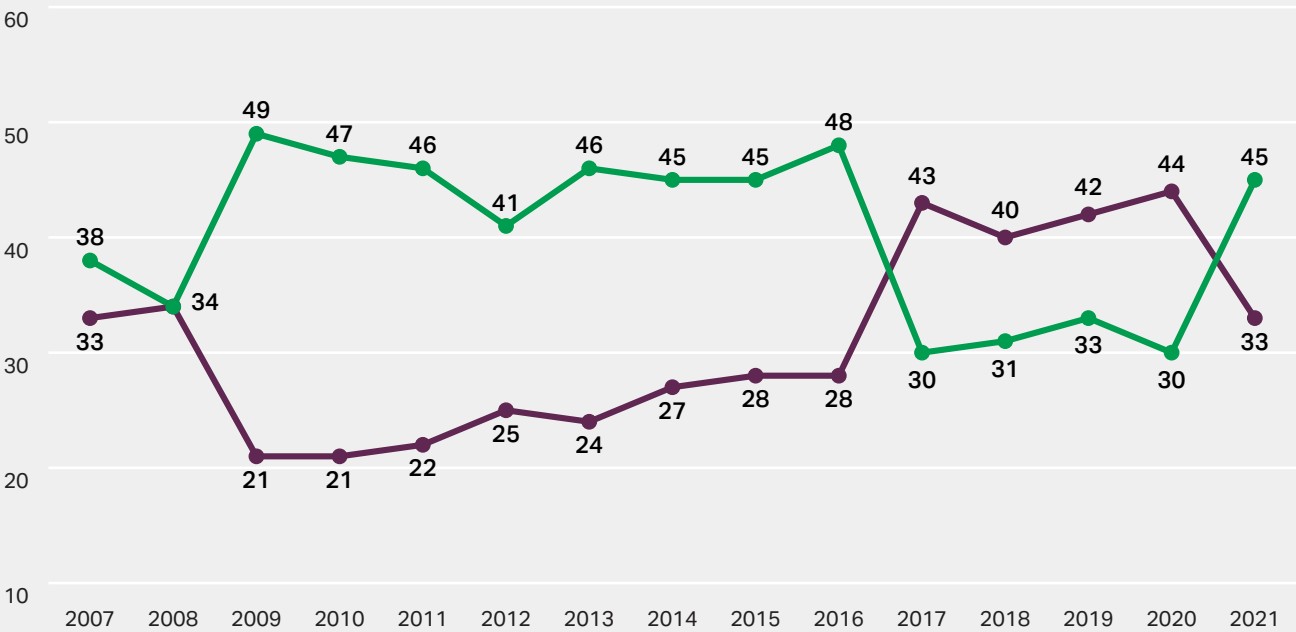
The U.S. and Germany were well-positioned to rally NATO and the rest of the world ahead of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



GLOBAL APPROVAL OF U.S. LEADERSHIP

Median ratings (%)

Approve Disapprove



Source: Gallup

## U.S. Ratings Retreat After Afghanistan Withdrawal

**Six months into his first year in office, it looked like President Joe Biden's early efforts to restore alliances and re-engage with the world were starting to pay off. However, ratings started to slip in the second half of the year.**

In the first few hours of his presidency, Biden kept his campaign promises and rejoined the Paris Climate Accord and halted Trump's decision to leave the World Health Organization. And in his first foreign policy speech as president, Biden vowed to repair U.S. alliances through diplomacy and restore the image of the U.S.

These efforts likely reassured many international partners at the time. By early August 2021, median approval of U.S. leadership worldwide stood at 49% across 46 countries and territories surveyed at that point. This approval rating matched the record-high rating when former President Barack Obama first took office in 2009.

However, the United States' overall rating slipped in the second half of the year, coinciding with the aftermath of its quick withdrawal from Afghanistan at the end of August 2021. Across 70 additional countries and territories surveyed during and after the U.S. withdrawal, median approval was 43%.

Without pre- and post-Afghanistan withdrawal measures in these same countries, it is difficult to tease out links between the withdrawal and the general decline in approval ratings. It's possible that the withdrawal, which drew criticism of Biden at home and abroad, damaged people's perceptions of U.S. leadership.

However, the lower ratings may also reflect the makeup of the countries and territories surveyed in the latter half of 2021. The list includes Iran, which gave the U.S. a 7% approval rating in 2021, and a host of other countries in the Middle East, North Africa and former Soviet states that have historically rated U.S. leadership lower.

Despite the overall decline, U.S. leadership still earned majority approval from residents in 24 of the 70 countries and territories surveyed in the later months of 2021. Ratings also improved by 10 points or more compared with the previous year in 23 countries.

So, after a strong start, Biden ended his first year in office with a 45% median approval rating and a 33% disapproval rating across a total of 116 countries and territories.

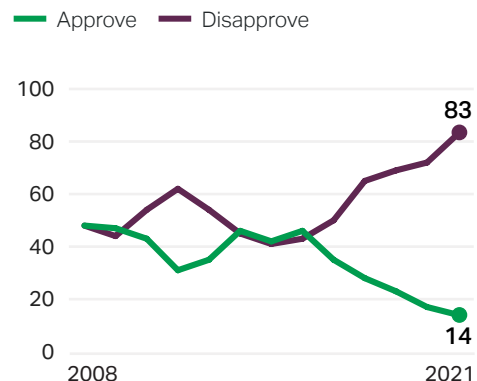
Historically, the 45% approval rating is lower than Obama's inaugural rating of 49% but higher than Trump's (30%) or either of the ratings during the last two years of George W. Bush's presidency (38% and 34%).

### U.S. Leaves Afghanistan With 14% Approval

Few Afghans approved of U.S. leadership before the withdrawal — the 14% who approved of U.S. leadership in August and September 2021 was similar to the 17% who approved in 2019. However, disapproval of U.S. leadership soared to a record-high 83%.

#### AFGHANS' DISAPPROVAL OF U.S. LEADERSHIP HIT RECORD HIGH IN 2021

Median ratings (%)



Source: Gallup

## Substantial Gains and Few Major Losses in Biden Transition

**Approval ratings of U.S. leadership increased substantially — by 10 percentage points or more — between 2020 and 2021 in 59 of the 105 countries and territories surveyed in both years.**

Ratings improved the most — by at least 40 points — between 2020 and 2021 among several European allies, including Portugal (52 points), the Netherlands (45 points), Norway (42 points) and Sweden (41 points).

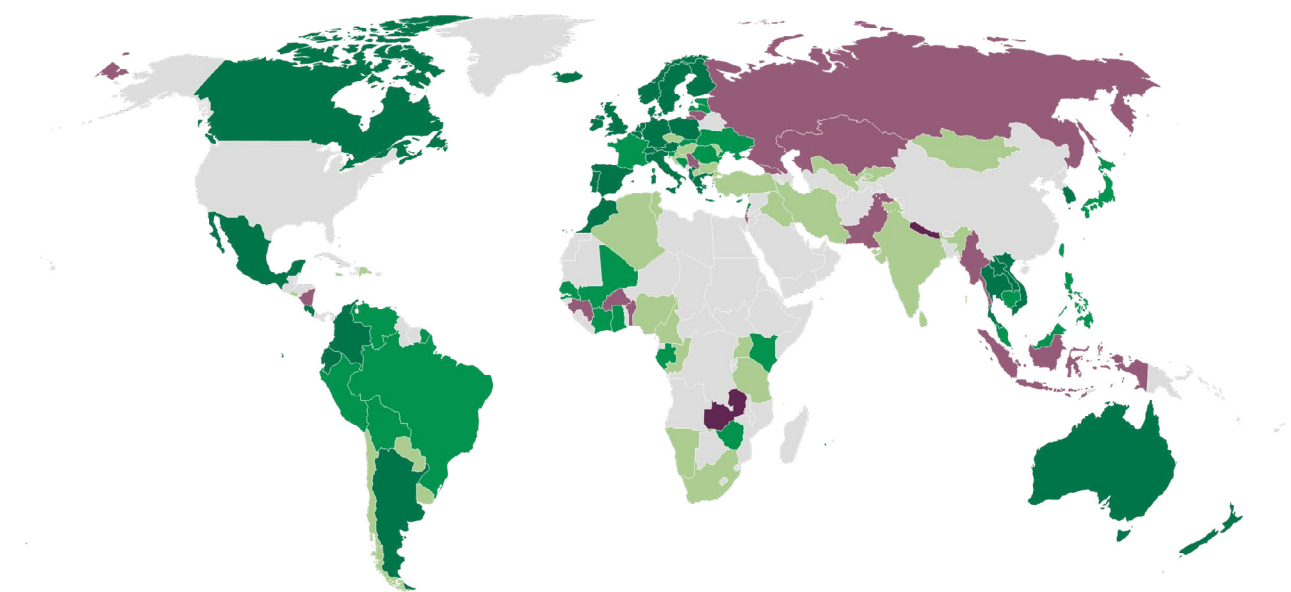
Importantly, the U.S. also regained ground among the countries in the G7, with ratings rising 38 points in Canada, 36 points in Germany, 30 points in the United Kingdom, 22 points in Italy, 18 points in France and 11 points in Japan.

Ratings of U.S. leadership dropped substantially — by 10 points or more — in just two countries, Nepal and Zambia. Rather than reflecting a major falling out between the U.S. and people in these countries, the drop between 2020 and 2021 may be at least partly attributable to a switch from telephone interviewing in 2020 to in-person interviewing in 2021.

In addition to those two countries, leadership approval headed in a negative direction in 13 other countries. This list includes Russia (where it dropped five points and has likely dropped since) and several countries formerly or still in Russia's sphere of influence. Approval ratings dropped by at least five points in Kazakhstan, Georgia and Lithuania.

CHANGES IN U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL BETWEEN 2020 AND 2021

- Declines of -10 pts. or more
- Declines of -9 to -1 pts.
- Increases of 0 to +9 pts.
- Increases of +10 to +19 pts.
- Increases of +20 pts. or more



Source: Gallup



## U.S. Image Improves Across Most of NATO

**Biden's outreach to NATO partners early in his presidency raised the profile of U.S. leadership within the bloc and likely helped him unify NATO's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine this year.**

With the large gains in U.S. leadership approval, ratings in many countries in 2021 matched or surpassed levels during the Obama years, including key NATO partners such as Germany and the Netherlands.

Between 2020 and 2021, U.S. leadership saw double-digit gains in its approval ratings in 20 of the 27 NATO members surveyed both years. Lithuania was the only NATO member where approval ratings headed in a negative direction, with a six-point drop.



## U.S. Leadership Approval Across NATO Members in 2021

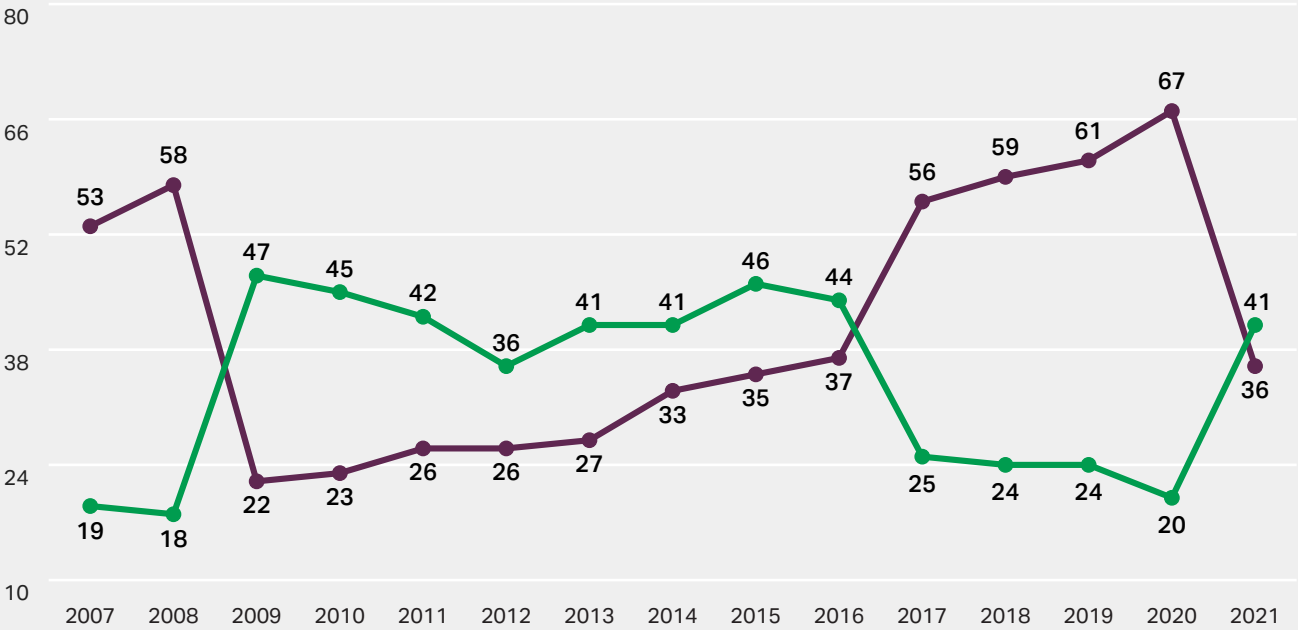
	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know/ Refused	Change from 2020 to 2021 (pct. pts.)
Albania	82%	12%	6%	+26
Portugal	64%	19%	17%	+52
Netherlands	63%	35%	2%	+45
Canada	55%	41%	4%	+38
Norway	54%	42%	4%	+42
Greece	51%	36%	13%	+30
Poland	50%	33%	17%	+20
North Macedonia	47%	34%	19%	+9
Denmark	45%	42%	13%	+31
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	45%	52%	2%	+30
Romania	44%	20%	36%	+12
Germany	42%	55%	3%	+36
Belgium	41%	36%	23%	+29
Spain	41%	53%	5%	+24
Italy	41%	55%	4%	+22
Hungary	41%	26%	33%	+6
Iceland	40%	38%	22%	+35
Bulgaria	40%	35%	25%	+8
France	36%	53%	11%	+18
Slovenia	34%	50%	16%	+15
Estonia	33%	36%	31%	+18
Slovakia	32%	45%	23%	+19
Czech Republic	30%	29%	40%	+8
Latvia	29%	33%	38%	+12
Croatia	24%	42%	33%	+3
Turkey	22%	65%	13%	+9
Lithuania	22%	20%	58%	-6

Source: Gallup 2020, 2021

U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL IN EUROPE

Median ratings (%)

Approve Disapprove



Source: Gallup

## Europe: U.S. Leadership Rebounds From Record Lows

**A closer look at U.S. leadership ratings at the regional and country level in 2021 — and where they have improved or declined since 2020 — reveals the areas of greatest vulnerability and strength in the years to come.**

Europe became disenchanted with U.S. leadership in 2017, with median approval ratings dropping 19 points between former President Barack Obama's last year in office and Trump's first year. The situation only worsened after that, and ratings neared a record low in 2020.

In 2021, approval ratings of U.S. leadership rebounded to levels not seen since the Obama administration. The 41% median approval rating in 2021 is slightly lower than the 44% approval rating during Obama's last year in office and well below the 47% in Obama's first year.

While U.S. leadership earned majority approval in just two countries or territories in 2020, the list expanded to eight in 2021. Approval ratings were highest in Kosovo and Albania — as they typically are — but they were also joined by Portugal, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Greece.

Further, approval ratings of U.S. leadership increased 10 points or more in 28 of the 36 European countries and territories surveyed in both 2020 and 2021. Portugal led Europe and the rest of the world with a 52-point increase from 12% in 2020 to 64% in 2021.

On the other side of the spectrum, the image of U.S. leadership in Europe was worst in Serbia and Russia, where fewer than one in six people approved in 2021. The 13% approval rating in Russia was down five points from the previous year, and the 16% approval in Serbia was down four points.



## U.S. Leadership Approval Across Europe in 2021

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know/ Refused	Change from 2020 to 2021 (pct. pts.)
Kosovo	89%	6%	6%	+27
Albania	82%	12%	6%	+26
Portugal	64%	19%	17%	+52
Netherlands	63%	35%	2%	+45
Norway	54%	42%	4%	+42
Sweden	52%	41%	7%	+41
Finland	52%	42%	6%	+32
Greece	51%	36%	13%	+30
Ireland	50%	47%	3%	+30
Poland	50%	33%	17%	+20
Malta	49%	32%	20%	+23
North Macedonia	47%	34%	19%	+9
Denmark	45%	42%	13%	+31
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	45%	52%	2%	+30
Romania	44%	20%	36%	+12
Moldova, Republic of	43%	33%	24%	+3
Germany	42%	55%	3%	+36
Austria	42%	50%	8%	+33
Belgium	41%	36%	23%	+29
Spain	41%	53%	5%	+24
Italy	41%	55%	4%	+22
Hungary	41%	26%	33%	+6
Iceland	40%	38%	22%	+35
Bosnia and Herzegovina	40%	36%	25%	+12
Bulgaria	40%	35%	25%	+8
Switzerland	37%	58%	5%	+27
Ukraine	37%	30%	33%	+13
France	36%	53%	11%	+18
Slovenia	34%	50%	16%	+15
Estonia	33%	36%	31%	+18
Slovakia	32%	45%	23%	+19
Czech Republic	30%	29%	40%	+8
Latvia	29%	33%	38%	+12
Croatia	24%	42%	33%	+3
Lithuania	22%	20%	58%	-6
Serbia	16%	64%	21%	-4
Russian Federation	13%	78%	8%	-5

Source: Gallup 2020, 2021



# Germany Still Leads in Europe

Of the four countries, Germany’s leadership continued to be the most popular in Europe, with a median approval of 63% in 2021 — besting the previous record high set in 2020 by one point. After being tied with Russia and China for the past several years, the U.S. is now firmly in second place behind Germany, followed by Russia and then China .

EUROPE

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of ... ?

	GERMANY	U.S.	RUSSIA	CHINA
Approve	63%	41%	22%	18%
Disapprove	20%	36%	62%	63%
Don't know/ Refused	15%	17%	17%	18%

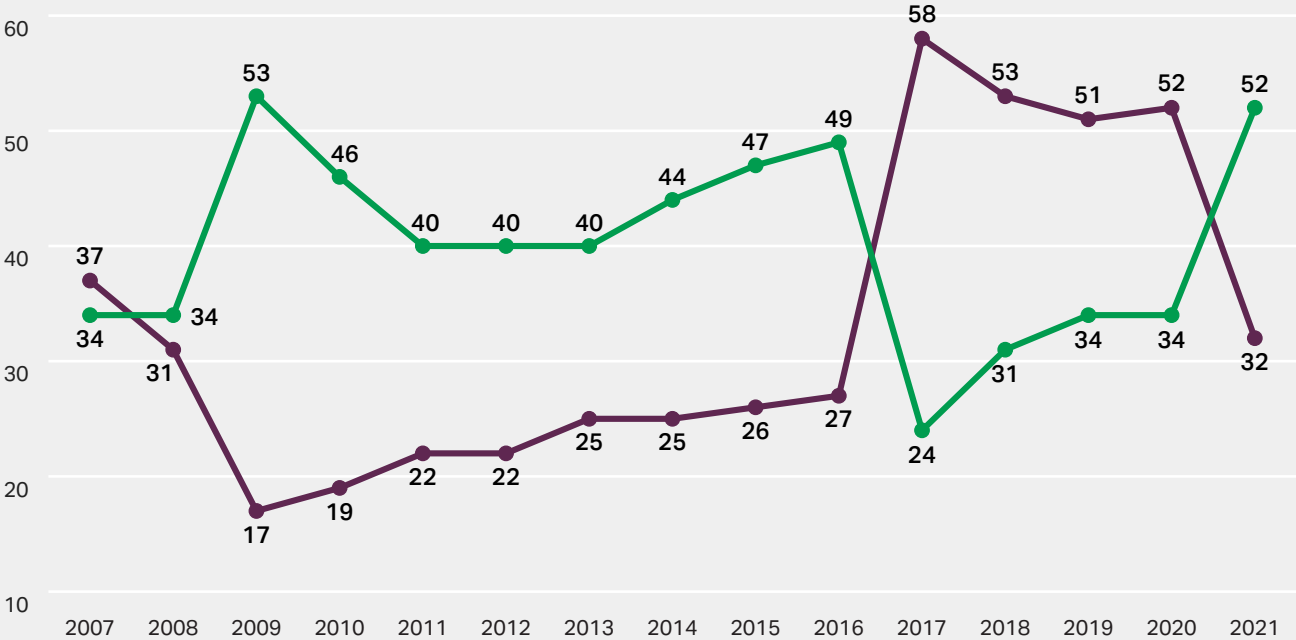
Median ratings  
Source: Gallup 2021  
Note: Medians may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL IN THE AMERICAS

Median ratings (%)

Approve Disapprove



Source: Gallup

## Americas: Approval Ratings Surge, Flip in U.S. Favor

**Approval ratings of U.S. leadership surged across the Americas in 2021, recouping many of the losses that led to stagnant, low approval ratings in the region since 2018.**

Last year, median approval of U.S. leadership across 19 countries stood at 52%, and median disapproval was 32%. These percentages are almost the exact opposite of the ratings in 2020, when 34% approved of U.S. leadership and 52% disapproved.

While U.S. leadership earned majority approval in just two countries or territories in the Americas in 2020, this list expanded to 10 countries in 2021. Approval ratings were highest in the Dominican Republic (70%), with Colombia (64%) and Ecuador (64%) placing a distant second.

U.S. leadership approval ratings increased 10 points or more in 10 of the 17 countries and territories surveyed in the Americas in both 2020 and 2021. The United States' neighbor to the north, Canada, led the Americas with a 38-point increase from 17% in 2020 to 55% in 2021. The rating in the United States' immediate neighbor to the south, Mexico, improved 26 points, rising from 26% in 2020 to 52% in 2021.

The image of U.S. leadership in the Americas was worst in Chile in both 2020 and 2021, although the 21% approval rating in 2021 was five points higher than the year before.



## U.S. Leadership Approval Across the Americas in 2021

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know/ Refused	Change from 2020 to 2021 (pct. pts.)
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	70%	18%	12%	+4
<b>Colombia</b>	64%	24%	12%	+22
<b>Ecuador</b>	64%	24%	12%	+21
<b>Brazil</b>	57%	35%	9%	+17
<b>Costa Rica</b>	56%	27%	17%	+26
<b>El Salvador</b>	56%	21%	23%	±0
<b>Honduras</b>	56%	20%	24%	*
<b>Canada</b>	55%	41%	4%	+38
<b>Venezuela</b>	53%	44%	4%	+14
<b>Mexico</b>	52%	35%	13%	+26
<b>Paraguay</b>	48%	22%	30%	+9
<b>Peru</b>	47%	37%	16%	+13
<b>Argentina</b>	45%	36%	19%	+21
<b>Bolivia</b>	44%	38%	18%	+14
<b>Panama</b>	44%	32%	24%	*
<b>Nicaragua</b>	40%	28%	32%	-5
<b>Uruguay</b>	35%	41%	24%	+9
<b>Jamaica</b>	30%	32%	38%	±0
<b>Chile</b>	21%	45%	34%	+5

Source: Gallup 2020, 2021

\*Data were not collected in 2020.



# U.S. Reasserts Its Top Status in the Americas

For years, the U.S. and Germany have been vying for the highest approval ratings in the Americas. In 2020, Germany was firmly No. 1, but the U.S. regained its top status in 2021. The median approval rating for U.S. leadership in 2021 stood at 52%, while Germany trailed the U.S. with an approval rating of 46%. Russia ranked a distant third, with 36% approval, and China earned the lowest rating of all four, at 30%.

THE AMERICAS

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of ... ?

	U.S.	GERMANY	RUSSIA	CHINA
Approve	52%	46%	36%	30%
Disapprove	32%	22%	33%	44%
Don't know/ Refused	18%	30%	29%	23%

Median ratings  
Source: Gallup 2021  
Note: Medians may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL IN ASIA

Median ratings (%)

Approve Disapprove



Source: Gallup

## Asia: U.S. Leadership Ratings Go From Record Low to Near Record High

**After being mired at record lows during most of the Trump administration, ratings of U.S. leadership rallied across Asia in 2021.**

The median rating of 41% in 2021 was only slightly lower than the previous record high of 45% measured in 2013 during the Obama administration.

Majorities in eight Asian countries approved of U.S. leadership in 2021. These included the Philippines (71%), Myanmar (65%), Mongolia (60%), South Korea (59%), Georgia (55%), Armenia (53%), Sri Lanka (53%) and Australia (51%).

Ratings of U.S. leadership showed substantial improvement in 13 Asian countries and territories in 2021, including South Korea, where ratings increased 29 points; Australia and New Zealand, which both saw ratings jump 22 points; and Taiwan, Province of China, where ratings rose 17 points.

The image of U.S. leadership in Asia continued to be the worst in Iran (7%) — where the approval is always low — and was not much higher in Afghanistan (14%).



## U.S. Leadership Approval Across Asia in 2021

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know/ Refused	Change from 2020 to 2021 (pct. pts.)
Philippines	71%	27%	2%	+16
Myanmar	65%	10%	25%	-4
Mongolia	60%	15%	25%	+8
South Korea	59%	28%	14%	+29
Georgia	55%	19%	26%	-6
Armenia	53%	14%	33%	*
Sri Lanka	53%	19%	28%	+9
Australia	51%	45%	4%	+22
Israel	50%	34%	16%	-4
Japan	50%	21%	29%	+11
Thailand	49%	19%	31%	+20
New Zealand	48%	47%	5%	+22
Taiwan, Province of China	45%	20%	35%	+17
Vietnam	45%	13%	42%	+24
Cambodia	43%	9%	48%	+11
Nepal	43%	35%	22%	-15
Lebanon	41%	47%	12%	+10
Malaysia	41%	34%	25%	+14
Cyprus	38%	33%	29%	+19
India	38%	36%	26%	±0
Iraq	37%	62%	1%	+2
Kyrgyzstan	35%	41%	25%	+1
Lao People's Democratic Republic	34%	16%	50%	+30
Uzbekistan	33%	37%	30%	+9
Hong Kong, S.A.R. of China	31%	66%	3%	±0
Kazakhstan	30%	38%	32%	-8
Singapore	29%	37%	34%	*
Indonesia	26%	51%	22%	-4
Jordan	26%	36%	38%	*
Pakistan	23%	55%	22%	-2
Turkey	22%	65%	13%	+9
Afghanistan	14%	83%	3%	*
Iran	7%	84%	9%	+1

Source: Gallup 2020, 2021

\*Data were not collected in 2020.

## Germany, U.S. Lead Approval Ratings in Asia

While Germany's leadership ratings safely topped other countries in 2020, the U.S. and Germany were both in contention in 2021. Germany's median approval rating stood at 43%, mostly unchanged from the previous year. The U.S. rating was a similar 41% — but up markedly from 31% in 2020. Russia (33%) and China (27%) were on a similar footing as they had been in the past, with China's approval continuing to drift slightly lower in 2021.

### ASIA

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of ... ?

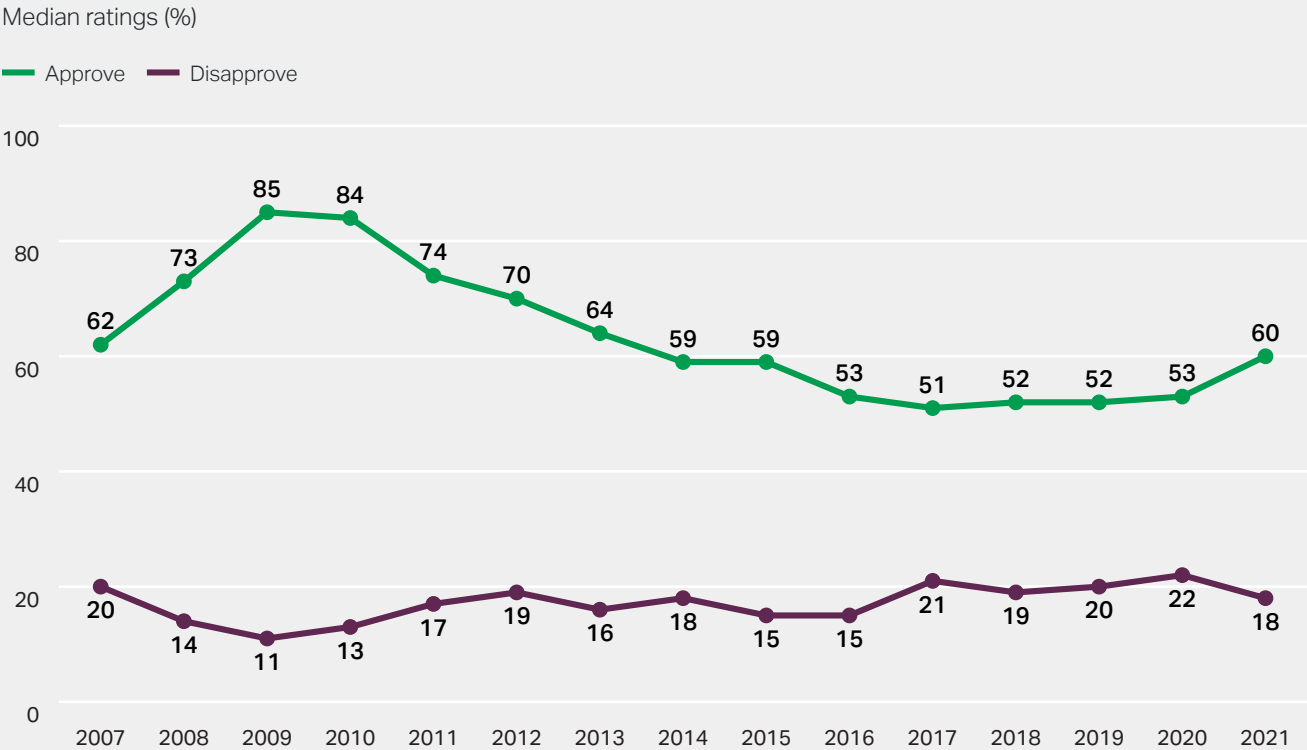
	GERMANY	U.S.	RUSSIA	CHINA
Approve	43%	41%	33%	27%
Disapprove	27%	35%	38%	48%
Don't know/ Refused	30%	25%	26%	23%

Median ratings

Source: Gallup 2021

Note: Medians may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL IN AFRICA



Source: Gallup

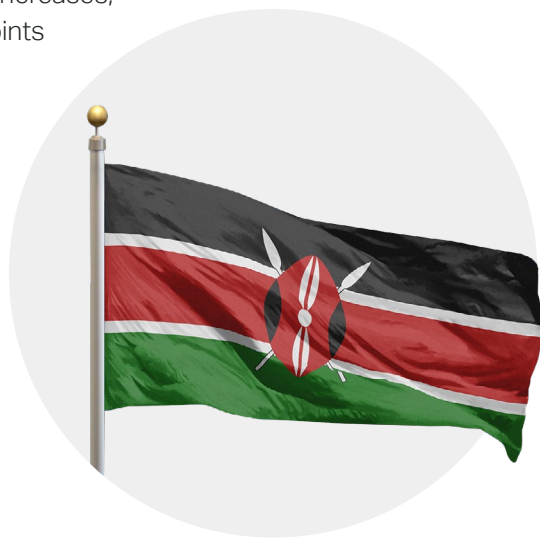


## Africa: Shining Spot for U.S. Leadership

**As it has since 2007, the image of the U.S. remained strongest worldwide in Africa in 2021. Bolstered by majority approval in 16 sub-Saharan African countries, median approval of U.S. leadership stood at 60% in 2021 — which is on the higher end for ratings since 2014.**

Among the 27 countries surveyed in 2021, eight saw substantial increases, with ratings improving by as much as 21 points in Morocco, 17 points in Mali and 14 points in Kenya.

Although Morocco saw the largest increase in U.S. approval ratings between 2020 and 2021, ratings generally still tend to be lowest in North Africa. Egyptians gave the U.S. the lowest ratings on the continent, with just over one in 10 (12%) rating the U.S. favorably.



## U.S. Leadership Approval Across Africa in 2021

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know/ Refused	Change from 2020 to 2021 (pct. pts.)
<b>Ivory Coast</b>	80%	11%	9%	+16
<b>Gabon</b>	77%	12%	11%	+15
<b>Guinea</b>	76%	7%	17%	-7
<b>Mali</b>	76%	14%	10%	+17
<b>Togo</b>	71%	7%	21%	*
<b>Cameroon</b>	69%	16%	16%	+7
<b>Republic of the Congo</b>	69%	16%	16%	+2
<b>Kenya</b>	67%	22%	11%	+14
<b>Ghana</b>	65%	8%	26%	+11
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	64%	7%	29%	*
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	63%	24%	13%	+13
<b>Uganda</b>	62%	24%	13%	+9
<b>Nigeria</b>	61%	14%	25%	+2
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	60%	13%	27%	-2
<b>Mauritius</b>	57%	32%	11%	+7
<b>Malawi</b>	54%	30%	16%	*
<b>Benin</b>	50%	16%	34%	-4
<b>Mozambique</b>	48%	24%	29%	*
<b>Namibia</b>	43%	44%	13%	+9
<b>Senegal</b>	43%	18%	39%	+11
<b>Tanzania</b>	43%	33%	24%	+7
<b>Morocco</b>	42%	24%	33%	+21
<b>Zambia</b>	42%	8%	50%	-14
<b>South Africa</b>	41%	25%	34%	±0
<b>Algeria</b>	33%	49%	18%	+6
<b>Tunisia</b>	25%	43%	32%	+6
<b>Egypt</b>	12%	55%	32%	*

Source: Gallup 2020, 2021

\*Data were not collected in 2020.

# U.S. Leadership on Top in Africa

The U.S. edged out the other countries in 2021, earning the highest approval ratings of any of the four. The 60% approval rating of the U.S. topped China (52%), Germany (49%) and Russia (42%).

AFRICA

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of ... ?

	U.S.	CHINA	GERMANY	RUSSIA
Approve	60%	52%	49%	42%
Disapprove	18%	21%	18%	25%
Don't know/ Refused	21%	26%	27%	27%

Median ratings  
Source: Gallup 2021  
Note: Medians may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## Implications Beyond 2022

In the aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, one of the big questions was how much damage the quick pullout might have done to Biden's credibility on the world stage and whether it might hamper his future ability to work with U.S. allies.

Few outside Moscow likely could have foreseen how quickly this would be tested with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. And even fewer likely anticipated the entire geopolitical order would essentially be upended as Biden started his second year in office. The only certainty about what happens next is that it has the potential to undermine the rest of Biden's presidency and shape the next world order.

## Methodology

Results for the 2021 approval ratings are based on nationally representative, probability-based samples among the adult population, aged 15 and older, in 116 countries and areas throughout 2021. Interviews took place over the telephone and in person.

For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error ranges from  $\pm 2.8$  to  $\pm 5.0$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

The margin of error reflects the influence of data weighting. 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.





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