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WORLDVIEWS 2002

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## **EUROPEANS SEE THE WORLD AS AMERICANS DO, BUT CRITICAL OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY**

One year after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, European publics look at the world in a similar way to ordinary Americans, while harboring deep reservations about the conduct of certain aspects of U.S. foreign policy. Despite recent press reports of rising anti-Americanism in Europe and an impending transatlantic split, a comprehensive survey of European and American public opinion by the German Marshall Fund of the United States<sup>1</sup> and The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations<sup>2</sup> finds that, at the public level, Europeans and Americans are in broad agreement when it comes to the war on terrorism, Iraq, and a host of other international issues. Europeans like the United States and vice versa. They view the world in broadly similar terms to Americans, sharing great concern about the threat of international terrorism. But like many Americans, they dislike certain aspects of U.S. foreign policy.

Among the key findings detailed in this report:

- **Europeans believe U.S. foreign policy contributed to 9/11.**
- Europeans are more critical than Americans of the Bush administration's handling of foreign policy.
- Europeans, as well as Americans, give **conditional support for an attack on Iraq.**
- Europeans and Americans share threat perceptions.
- Europeans and Americans share fundamental worldviews.
- Europeans and Americans share support for internationalism.
- **Europeans are ready to take on "superpower" status.**
- Europeans and Americans disagree over division of labor in efforts to secure global stability.
- **Europeans are as willing as Americans to use force** in a broad range of circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> In the six European countries (Great Britain, France, Germany, Poland, Italy, and the Netherlands), MORI (Market & Opinion Research International) conducted 6,001 telephone interviews among men and women, 18 years of age and older using a random digit dialing technique. In each of the six European countries, 1,000 interviews were conducted (1,001 for France) with a nationally representative sample. The survey was conducted by telephone in all countries except Poland, where the telephone penetration is lower, and a face-to-face approach was used. All interviews were conducted between June 1 and July 6, 2002. For results based on the total sample in each of the six countries, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is +/- 3 percentage points.

<sup>2</sup> In the United States, Harris Interactive conducted 2,862 telephone interviews among men and women, 18 years of age and older, using a random digit dialing technique with a national probability sample. In addition, personal in-home interviews with a national probability sample of 400 men and women aged 18 years of age and older were also conducted using an abridged version of the telephone questionnaire. Possible differences between telephone and face-to-face responses are being explored. All interviewing was conducted between June 1 and June 30, 2002. Data for the telephone and in-person interviews were weighted separately according to known demographic characteristics of the population and merged to form a combined sample (n=3,262). The margin of error varies between 2 and 4 percentage points.



## EUROPEANS BELIEVE U.S. FOREIGN POLICY CONTRIBUTED TO 9/11

A modest majority (55%) of Europeans<sup>3</sup> believe that U.S. foreign policy is in part to blame for the 9/11 attacks. At the same time, a slightly larger majority (59%) of Europeans believe that in its conduct since then the U.S. aims to protect itself from future terrorist attacks, rather than enforce its will around the globe.

Percentage who agree American foreign policy contributed to the September 11 attacks					
GB	FR	GER	NL	IT	PL
57%	63%	52%	59%	51%	54%
<small>Source: The German Marshall Fund of the United States and The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.</small>					

## EUROPEANS MORE CRITICAL THAN AMERICANS OF BUSH FOREIGN POLICY

Europeans rate the Bush administration's handling of foreign policy more negatively than Americans. Only 38% view its overall handling of foreign policy as "excellent" or "good," while 56% say it is "fair" or "poor." The Bush administration gets much higher marks for its handling of terrorism (47% "excellent" or "good") and the war in Afghanistan (35%) than for its handling of the Arab-Israeli conflict (20%) or the situation in Iraq (21%).

## EUROPEANS AS WELL AS AMERICANS GIVE CONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR ATTACK ON IRAQ

Contrary to recent press reports, the publics on both sides of the Atlantic have very similar concerns regarding Iraq. Both publics regard Iraqi weapons of mass destruction as a top international threat. Iraq is also viewed very unfavorably by Europeans and Americans.

Most strikingly, 60% of respondents in the six European countries surveyed would support a U.S. attack on Iraq, but only 10% would do so without UN approval and the support of allies. When presented with various scenarios for a U.S. attack on Iraq, Europeans' support for their country's participation is most heavily influenced by the presence or absence of a UN mandate.

The American public's readiness to use force against Iraq also hinges upon multilateral support and UN approval. Only 20% feel the United States should intervene alone (vs. 10% of Europeans), whereas 65% of Americans and 60% of Europeans would favor intervention with UN approval and the support of allies.

Preferences on using U.S. troops to invade Iraq								
<i>The U.S. should...</i>	GB	FR	GER	NL	IT	PL	EUROPE	U.S.
...not invade Iraq	20%	27%	28%	18%	33%	26%	26%	13%
...only invade with UN approval and support of allies	69%	63%	56%	70%	54%	53%	60%	65%
...invade Iraq even if they/we have to do it alone	10%	6%	12%	11%	10%	10%	10%	20%
<small>Source: The German Marshall Fund of the United States and The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.</small>								

<sup>3</sup> The figures given for Europe as a whole are weighted on the basis of adult population in each of the six countries surveyed.



Europeans, like Americans, are critical of the Bush administration’s handling of the situation in Iraq. Only 21% of Europeans and 32% of Americans rate it as either “excellent” or “good.” In Europe, those most critical are the French—with 81% rating it either as “fair” or “poor”—, the Germans (74%), and the British (77%).

## EUROPEANS AND AMERICANS SHARE THREAT PERCEPTIONS

Europeans generally see threats the same way—if not with the same intensity—as Americans. Asked to rate threats to their country’s national security over the next 10 years, the same threats—international terrorism, Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, and Islamic fundamentalism—appear at the top of both lists. But a far larger percentage of Americans than Europeans categorize these threats as extremely important, perhaps reflecting the fact that it was the United States rather than Europe that was directly attacked one year ago.

One striking difference is China; Americans (56%) are far more likely to view China’s rising power as an extremely important threat than Europeans (19%).

Surprisingly, the threat of immigration also registers far higher among Americans (60%) than Europeans (38%), despite the attention several rightwing candidates in Europe have given to the issue in recent months.

## AMERICANS AND EUROPEANS SHARE WORLDVIEWS

Europeans and Americans have comparable perceptions of friends and allies and a strong affinity for each other. When asked to rate the warmth of their feelings on a thermometer scale from zero to one hundred, Americans and Europeans like and dislike the same countries. Iraq falls to the bottom of both European (25) and American (23) thermometers. The greatest divergence is over Israel, with Americans rating it far higher than Europeans do (55 vs. 38).

Possible threats to vital interests seen as “extremely important” (“critical” in U.S.)		
THREATS	EUROPE	U.S.
International terrorism	65%	91%
Iraq developing WMD	58%	86%
Global warming	50%	46%
Islamic fundamentalism	49%	61%
Military conflict between Israel and Arab neighbors	43%	67%
Large number of immigrants and refugees coming into your country	38%	60%
Tensions between India and Pakistan	32%	54%
Globalization	22%	29%
Development of China as a world power	19%	56%
Economic competition ...from the U.S. (in Europe) ...from Europe (in the U.S.)	18%	13%
Political turmoil in Russia	15%	27%

*Source: The German Marshall Fund of the United States and The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.*



Similarly, Europeans and Americans tend to agree upon the relative distribution of power in the world. When asked to rank various countries on a scale of one to ten in terms of influence, both see the world alike. Americans and Europeans on average give the United States a 9, the EU a 7, and the various European countries between 5 and 7. The greatest gap in perceptions is over China.

Europeans and Americans agree on the relative importance of economic versus military strength. Asked which is more important in determining a country's overall power and influence in the world, substantial majorities in Europe (84%) and the United States (66%) rate economic strength higher. The U.S. figure is up three percentage points from 1998, contradicting the view that Americans place added value on military strength relative to economic strength after the attacks of September 11.

European and American attitudes toward international institutions are more similar than commonly believed. Either a plurality or a majority of the public on both sides of the Atlantic believes the World Bank, IMF, WTO, NATO, and UN should be strengthened. The UN especially gets strong support from roughly three-fourths of Europeans and Americans.

Majorities on both sides of the Atlantic regard NATO as "still essential," though the U.S. figure is down from 65% in 1998<sup>4</sup> to 56% in 2002. A second round of NATO enlargement enjoys strong popular backing, with a majority of Europeans and Americans supporting the admission of all candidate countries AND Russia (60% in Europe and 68% in the United States for the latter).

## **TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERS SHARE SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONALISM**

Both Europeans and Americans believe it is best if their countries take an active role in world affairs. Overall, 78% of Europeans believe their country should play an active part in the world, as compared to 71% in the United States. Eighty-one percent of Europeans also find it either "very desirable" or "somewhat desirable" that the European Union exerts strong leadership in world affairs; 83% of Americans say the same about their own country.

Both Europeans and Americans also want to see their *counterparts* across the Atlantic play a global leadership role. Seventy-nine percent of Americans want strong EU leadership in world affairs. Sixty-four percent of Europeans would like the United States to do the same.

## **EUROPEANS ARE READY TO TAKE ON SUPERPOWER STATUS**

Europeans appear ready to take on a stronger world role. When asked if the United States should remain the only superpower or the EU should become a military and economic superpower like the United States, 65% of European respondents opt for the latter. The French (91%) and Italians (76%) are the most supportive of this notion, with the Germans (48%) the most cautious. Of those desiring the European Union to become a superpower, 9 out of 10 indicate they support this as a way for Europe to better cooperate with the United States, not compete with it. A majority of these would support increased defense spending if necessary to attain this status.

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<sup>4</sup> USIA 1998.



<b>Roles of the United States and Europe as superpowers</b>								
	GB	FR	GER	NL	IT	PL	EUROPE	U.S.
U.S. should remain only superpower	20%	3%	22%	11%	7%	12%	14%	52%
EU should become superpower like US	56%	91%	48%	59%	76%	63%	65%	33%

*Source: The German Marshall Fund of the United States and The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.*

While Europeans desire superpower status, the American public shows ambivalence about such a development. Americans want greater cooperation with their allies, yet they resist any changes in the existing distribution of power.

## **EUROPEANS AND AMERICANS DISAGREE OVER DIVISION OF LABOR**

A substantial majority (70%) of Americans agree that “when dealing with common problems, the United States and the European Union should be more willing to make decisions jointly, even if this means that the U.S., as well as Europe, will sometimes have to go along with a policy that is not its first choice.” But differences emerge on the balance of responsibility that Europe and America have for global stability. A majority (56%) of the American public does not want to see a division of labor whereby the United States takes the lead on military matters while Europe emphasizes things like assisting poor countries to develop their economies and trying to reconstruct societies after war. Small majorities in every European country except France would accept such a division. Yet a slight majority (52%) of Americans also wants the United States to remain the sole superpower. Only 33% believe that the EU should become a superpower like the United States.

## **EUROPEANS ARE AS WILLING AS AMERICANS TO USE FORCE**

Europeans are often berated by American leaders for spending too little on defense and putting too much faith in economic and diplomatic tools. However, the survey shows that, at least in principle, Europeans are willing to use troops or force in a broad range of circumstances—though they give higher priority to international and humanitarian goals than Americans. For example, 88% of Europeans support the use of troops to help a population struck by famine (vs. 81% of Americans), 80% to uphold international law (vs. 76%), 78% to liberate hostages (vs. 77%), and 75% to destroy a terrorist camp (vs. 92%).

In one circumstance—intervening to end a civil war—Europeans are much more willing than Americans to use force. Seventy-two percent of Europeans would approve such a mission, while only 48% of Americans would—perhaps a reaction to the U.S. engagement in Somalia.



In fighting terrorism, Europeans are ready to commit troops, but give a higher priority to economic and diplomatic tools than Americans. Europeans are willing to use a variety of means to combat terrorism, including air and ground troops, but have a greater preference than Americans for “softer” tools. Asked about a range of tools to fight terrorism, 91% of Europeans favor helping poor countries develop their economies (vs. 78% of Americans), 69% attacks by ground troops against terrorist training camps (vs. 84%), and 68% air strikes against terrorist camps (vs. 87%).

Percentage who favor the following measures to combat international terrorism		
	EUROPE	U.S.
Helping poor countries develop their economies	91%	78%
Attacks by ground troops against terrorist training camps and other facilities	69%	84%
Air strikes against terrorist training camps and other facilities	68%	87%
Restricting immigration into own country	63%	77%
Assassination of individual terrorist leaders	51%	66%

Source: The German Marshall Fund of the United States and The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.

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The complete questionnaires and results for the U.S. and European surveys are provided on the CD-ROM provided in this courtesy advance-briefing packet. All data is **strictly embargoed for public release at 12:01 a.m. EDT September 4, 2002**. Your cooperation is appreciated.