

U.S. Standing in the World: Causes, Consequences, and the Future

LONG REPORT
*of the Task Force on U.S.
Standing in World Affairs*



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US REPUTATION DARKER SINCE SEPT 11

United Press International, September 11, 2003

US STANDING WITH ARABS HITS A LOW

Christian Science Monitor, September 2, 2004

TROUBLED US STANDING STARTING TO AFFECT BUSINESS OVERSEAS

Seattle Times, July 4, 2004

EVEN AMONG ALLIES, IMAGE OF U.S. DROPS

Washington Post, June 28, 2007

NEGATIVE VIEWS OF U.S. PERSIST, DESPITE FAITH IN OBAMA

Inter Press Service, July 7, 2009

U.S. standing—its position with respect to reputation, stature, or prestige in world affairs—declined dramatically in the past decade. Many American leaders and citizens worry that this decline, despite a recent upturn, may be part of a long-term trend that will be hard to reverse.

In a summer 2008 poll, more Americans ranked “improving American standing in the world” as “very important” (versus “somewhat” or “not” important) than any other foreign policy goal listed, including “protecting the jobs of American workers” and “preventing the spread of nuclear weapons”¹ (See Figure 1)—and that was *before* the current economic crisis unleashed a new torrent of international criticism of the United States.

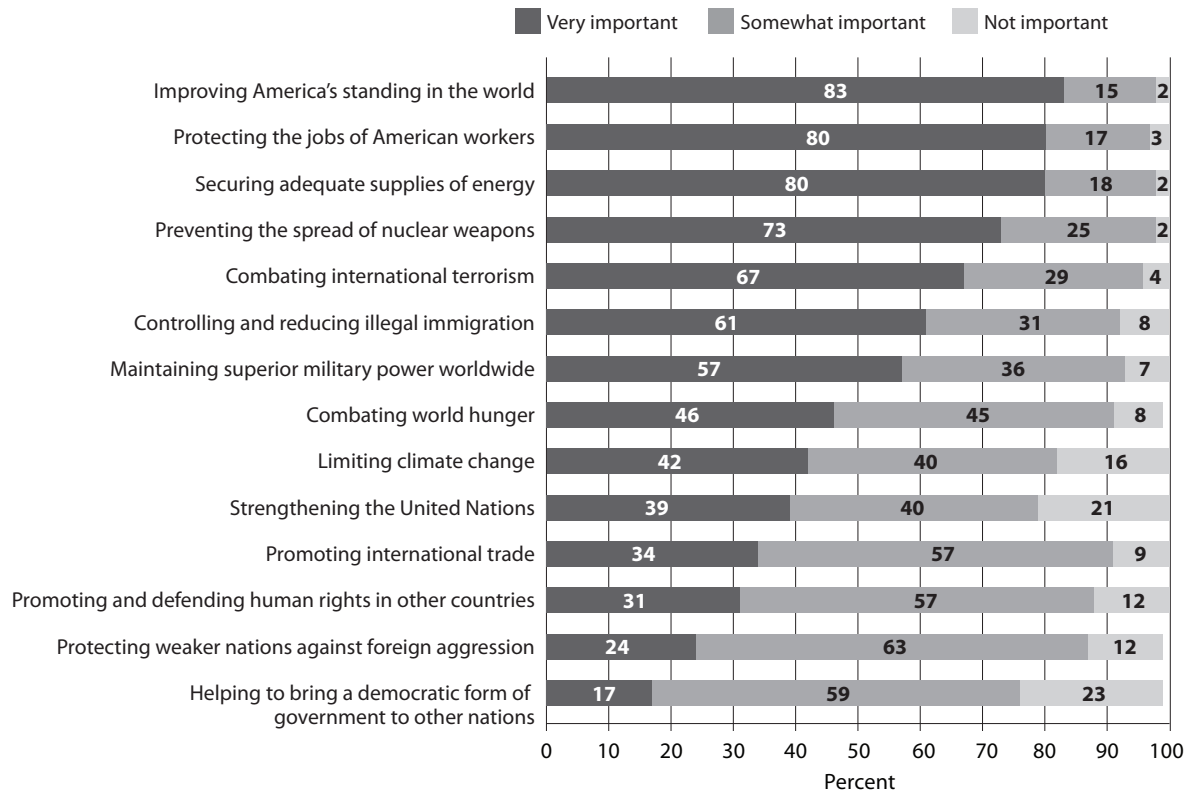
Not surprisingly, perhaps, one of President Obama’s central foreign policy objectives has been to “restore American standing.” To date, Obama appears to enjoy broad confidence around the globe. Favorable foreign attitudes towards the United States have risen sharply. At the same time there are strong indications of continuing, deep global dissatisfaction with U.S. economic and military policies. This suggests that U.S. standing remains a significant political issue. The disjuncture between confidence in Obama and discontent with U.S. policies is a potentially troubling fault line for the United States and the Obama presidency.²

The decline in U.S. standing seems to both reflect and reinforce weakened U.S. diplomacy abroad and domestic troubles as well. But is this true? What causes standing to rise or fall, and what happens when it does? Would a better understanding of standing help the United States to drive or manage those consequences, good or bad? Perhaps most important, what can be done to better protect and enhance America’s standing in the future?

Those are the questions the American Political Science Association Task Force sought to explore and to answer.

Figure 1: U.S. Foreign Policy Goals

Percentage who think the following should be very, somewhat, or not important foreign policy goals of the United States.



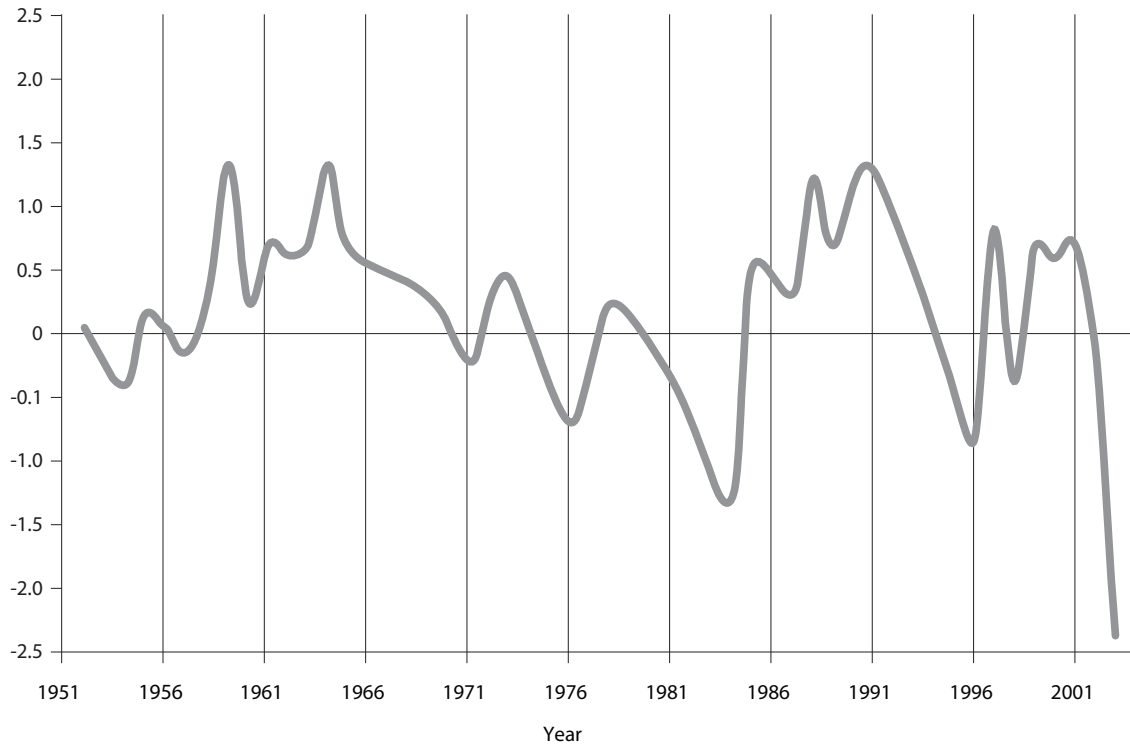
Source: Chicago Council Report on "Troubled by Loss of Standing in the World, Americans Support Major Foreign Policy Changes", September 2008. http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/POS_Topline%20Reports/POS%202008/2008%20Public%20Opinion_Foreign%20Policy.pdf (accessed July 24, 2009).

We believe that “standing” is significant for both scholarship and policy. Scholars recognize that even as a country’s military and economic power remain constant, its standing can affect its relative influence in world politics.³ Although political scientists rarely use the word “standing,” they have invoked terms such as prestige, reputation, credibility, moral stature, authority, and legitimacy to capture this effect.⁴ We focus on standing because it has become the term of art in contemporary public discussions, and U.S. officials have focused on related concepts since at least the Second World War.

In the policy world, many leaders also recognize that standing matters; as Colin Powell once argued, “diplomacy uses the reputation of power to achieve what power itself often cannot achieve, or can achieve only at greater and sometimes excessive cost.”⁵ And this is not the first time the United States has experienced a decline in standing: it occurred in the 1970s, during and after the Viet Nam war, and in the early 1980s, during the Euromissile controversy (See Figure 2). Of course, preserving standing is not the only concern of U.S. officials; other aims that damage standing may at times deserve priority. But our hope is that, by helping to shed light on how standing is bestowed and why it matters, we can aid in understanding, restoring, safeguarding, and bolstering U.S. standing going forward.

Figure 2: Trend in Net European Attitudes toward the United States
(normalized average, yearly base).

Percent of Change in Attitude



Sources: USIA XX series 1952-67, Eurobarometer series 1970-2001, Pew Global Attitudes survey 2002, and Transatlantic Trend Survey 2002-4 as compiled and charted by Pierangelo Isernia, "Anti-Americanism in Europe during the Cold War," in Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds. *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 78.

I. Standing and its Relevance

What is "Standing"?

Unlike something a nation possesses and can easily measure, like wealth or military might, standing is an attribute *assigned* to the United States by actors beyond its borders—such as foreign leaders and peoples, international organizations, and transnational groups—and *assessed* by citizens within them. U.S. standing has both an absolute and a relative quality. It is absolute in the sense that it can be high or low and vary over time. It is relative in that we might want to know whether U.S. standing is better or worse than that of other countries or actors, such as China or the European Union.

Standing is multifaceted. In this study we are concerned with two key elements: credibility and esteem. Credibility refers to the U.S. government's ability to do what it says it is going to do—to "stand up" for what it believes, and "stand against" threats to its interests and ideals. Esteem refers to America's stature, or what America is perceived to "stand for" in the hearts and minds of foreign publics and policymakers.

Credibility and esteem can be mutually reinforcing, but they can also be difficult to pursue in tandem—a trade-off implied by Machiavelli’s famous dictum: “it is much safer to be feared than loved.”

Standing can be further illuminated by comparison with several related concepts: power (hard and soft), anti-Americanism, legitimacy, and reputation.

In terms of both credibility and esteem, standing is densely interwoven with U.S. “hard power”—i.e., the nation’s material military and economic capabilities. U.S. capabilities help the nation to advance its interests and achieve its goals; and to the extent the United States has a technologically advanced military and robust wealthy economy, it will be attractive to or respected by others.

Yet, standing and capabilities are not the same thing. U.S. standing may vary even if U.S. hard power does not. Since 2000, for example, standing has declined (see Figure 3), but relative American power has been steady (see Figure 5 below). Instead, we can say that standing is often importantly influenced by changes in hard power. But such capabilities often do not speak for themselves. The manner in which they are deployed as well as the aims and values associated with their use also mold standing. As we will see, how people think about power and its utility mediates how they view standing.

Similarly, standing overlaps with, but differs from, soft power, which, as Joseph Nye writes, “arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies.”⁶ Soft power refers to the ability to get what you want through appeal rather than coercion. Standing differs in that it is not something a country has but something that others bestow upon it, and it can thus rise and fall even as a country’s attractiveness remains relatively constant.

Standing also can be distinguished from pro- or anti-Americanism. Standing is not about whether others are for or against the United States, but instead whether they view the United States as a credible actor with traits that should be admired or emulated. Anti-Americanism is often a matter of individual opinion; standing reflects a collective social assessment of the U.S.’s position for a particular audience.⁷ And while public opinion surveys can take the pulse of personal views, a more sophisticated measure of U.S. credibility and

Standing is not about whether others are for or against the United States, but instead whether they view the United States as a credible actor with traits that should be admired or emulated.

esteem requires using other, often indirect, measures. These might include analysis of mass media, certain types of group votes (e.g. at the UN), “grades” from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other rating agencies, demand for U.S.

education, and the frequency with which U.S. legal precedents are cited in international court cases.

If legitimacy is “conforming to recognized principles or accepted rules and standards,” then we can easily see it as distinct from standing while at the same time able to influence it.⁸ That is, adhering to certain principles may either help or impede a state’s perceived position, but it is different from that position itself, which can also be influenced by other factors.

In contrast, standing and reputation have much in common and are almost synonyms. Standing might be taken as a particular kind of reputation—one related to national position

Figure 3: U.S Favorability Rating*

	1999/ 2000	2002	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Figures in Percent								
U.S.	—	—	—	83	76	80	84	88
Canada	71	72	63	59	—	55	—	68
Britain	83	75	70	55	56	51	53	69
France	62	62	42	43	39	39	42	75
Germany	78	60	45	42	37	30	31	64
Spain	50	—	38	41	23	34	33	58
Poland	86	79	—	62	—	61	68	67
Russia	31	61	37	52	43	41	46	44
Turkey	52	30	15	23	12	9	12	14
Egypt	—	—	—	—	30	21	22	27
Jordan	—	25	1	21	15	20	19	25
Lebanon	—	36	27	42	—	47	51	55
Palestinian territories	—	—	*	—	—	13	—	15
Israel	—	—	78	—	—	78	—	71
China	—	—	—	42	47	34	41	47
India	—	66	—	71	56	59	66	76
Indonesia	75	61	15	38	30	29	37	63
Japan	77	72	—	—	63	61	50	59
Pakistan	23	10	13	23	27	15	19	16
South Korea	58	52	46	—	—	58	70	78
Argentina	50	34	—	—	—	16	22	38
Brazil	56	51	35	—	—	44	47	61
Mexico	68	64	—	—	—	56	47	69
Kenya	94	80	—	—	—	87	—	90
Nigeria	46	76	61	—	62	70	64	79

1999/2000 survey trends provided by the Office of Research, U.S. Department of State, Question 11a.

* % Respondents with a favorable opinion of the United States

Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Confidence in Obama Lifts U.S. Image Around the World."
Released July 23, 2009 <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=264> (accessed July 23, 2009).

in the world. Reputation, like standing, might apply either to credibility or to esteem. But standing has a more relative connotation in that it refers to position within a particular setting—in this case the society of states or “international community.”

Why Does Standing Matter?

Why should policymakers—or political scientists—care about standing at all?

First, recent history suggests that standing can play a fundamental role in the shaping of strategy. In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush initiated a new national strategy for the United States that favored the credibility dimension of standing—emphasizing a policy package of assertive unilateralism, preventive use of force, and aggressive democratization. The administration achieved some initial successes, swiftly toppling the Taliban in Afghanistan, securing dismantlement of Libya’s nuclear program, and encouraging an apparent halt or slow-down in Iran’s nuclear weaponization program.

Yet, over time, despite the lack of further terrorist attacks on U.S. soil, the Bush administration’s single-minded approach lost significant support at home and abroad, as the United States grew mired in Iraq, was accused of violations of international law, and drew international criticism and resentment—even as Osama bin Laden remained at large. The attendant declines in standing, in terms of both credibility and esteem, only made it harder for the United States to be effective in foreign affairs—prompting the Bush administration to take what some saw as a reverse course after 2005, returning to a posture that was more akin to the typical pattern of American internationalism since World War II.⁹

More distant history speaks to the significance of standing as well. During the long period of Cold War competition with the Soviet Union, the United States was intent that its commitment to protect its allies, especially those in Europe, would be seen as credible by both Soviet leaders and Europeans. U.S. participation in the Korean and Viet Nam wars was spurred by the fear that a perception of diminished U.S. credibility would lead others to join a rising Communist tide. The United States acted to protect its standing as defender of the free world.¹⁰

Historically, some U.S. presidents have worried about the consequences of falling standing and hoped for the benefits of rising standing. John F. Kennedy, for example, attached great weight to America’s image in the world. A heavy consumer of USIA multi-nation surveys, he viewed them as an early warning system on international perceptions of the United States and a means to make U.S. foreign policy more responsive to global trends.¹¹ Dwight Eisenhower also worried about the U.S. image overseas in his case, how the country’s *domestic* policies might affect its international esteem. Eisenhower’s decision to enforce *Brown v. Board* in Little Rock in 1957, for example, reflected concerns about how U.S. action (or inaction) on desegregation would be viewed in the Third World.¹²

Jimmy Carter’s decision to seek ratification of the Panama Canal Treaty, which cost him politically at home, was also influenced by concerns about U.S. legitimacy and moral standing abroad.¹³ Ronald Reagan worked to raise perceptions of American standing in terms of the credibility of America’s military and economic capabilities, using that influence to help end the Cold War. Other leaders such as Lyndon Johnson and George W. Bush heeded standing less, or at least less successfully—and the political price extended to their aspiring

successors as well, as standing worked against Hubert Humphrey's and John McCain's campaigns for the White House.

Diminished standing may make it harder for the United States to get things done in world politics. Despite the world's high economic growth rates since the mid-1980s, achieved under the auspices of the so-called Washington consensus, in the past year the standing of the U.S. economic model and position in the world has suffered; insistence on new regulatory standards, sharp differences on how to combat the deep recession that is gripping the world, protectionist tendencies and calls for a new reserve currency all point to eroding confidence in the American model, which may have broader consequences; U.S. intelligence chief Dennis Blair testified in February 2009 that the crisis "has increased criticism about free market policies, which may make it difficult to achieve long-time U.S. objectives . . . It already has increased questioning of U.S. stewardship of the global economy and the international financial structure."¹⁴

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Conversely, increased standing has benefits. Part of the reason the Bush administration returned in 2005 to the Six Party Talks it had initiated on North Korea was because the United States was experiencing isolation from the perceived unilateralism of the first Bush term. That renewed engagement helped to restore goodwill and respect for U.S. leadership in Asia, which in turn fostered support for other U.S.-led initiatives in the region, such as encouraging the "win-win" Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate that promotes the use of clean energy technology.

It may be useful to think of standing as the everyday currency of America's existence in the world, the foreign-policy equivalent of domestic "political capital." It has intrinsic value, including in Americans' self-image, even when it has no readily observable behavioral implications.

II. Three Audiences of U.S. Standing

Who or what bestows standing on the United States? We have focused on three primary audiences. The first is other major countries and regions of the world. One could imagine that U.S. standing may differ according to a number of factors including the geography, economic development, or religious orientation of particular political communities. Our aim was to understand how foreign government elites, non-government elites, and citizens in various parts of the world interpret and react to U.S. standing.

A second is the network of international actors that includes formal organizations such as the United Nations or the World Trade Organization, non-governmental organizations, and the more informal ties of people across borders captured in the terms "global civil society" or "world society."

A third audience that evaluates U.S. standing exists within the American polity itself. The aim here is to clarify how U.S. officials and citizens view the country as a global actor.

For each audience, the pressing questions about standing are the same. What is the track record of standing? Has it risen or fallen, and if so, why? And how do changes in U.S. standing in one arena influence standing in the others?

Regions

One indicator of U.S. standing is found in polls of foreign opinion. These polls have many limitations, especially in authoritarian countries, but they nonetheless deserve attention.¹⁵

Global opinion towards the United States has fluctuated since the 1960s and experienced a particularly deep downturn between 2002 and 2007. In the past two years, favorable public attitudes towards the United States have turned sharply upward, especially in 2009.

The early months of the Obama administration have brought global enthusiasm for and confidence in the President's abilities. This has had a strong, positive impact on foreign attitudes towards the United States. This "Obama effect" is based on the "honeymoon period" of a new President, his acknowledged rhetorical skills, and what his election signifies about the openness of America.

In policy terms, many abroad like such Obama policies as closing Guantanamo and leaving Iraq; they do not like putting more troops in Afghanistan. More broadly, most believe that there has been little change in the U.S. disregard for the interests of

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their country, and that U.S. influence in the world is still mostly bad (India and Kenya are two notable exceptions).¹⁶ It is likely that the disconnect between high expectations of what the United States should do in the years ahead and what it actually can and will do will pose a

persistent challenge for managing U.S. standing. That task will require close attention to variation in standing across regions.

The decline was uneven across different world regions: very strong in the Middle East and Europe; strong in Latin America and Southeast Asia; and, with some notable exceptions, less pronounced in Africa and South and East Asia. The recent recovery in these opinion polls has also been uneven, with the most significant improvements in Europe and the Americas (See Figure 3).¹⁷ Although these regional trends conceal substantial national and issue differences and cannot rely on quantitative data alone, it is still useful to reflect on such cross-regional variations.¹⁸

Elites vs. Masses. One way in which regions vary involves differences between national elites and the general public. An important predictor of U.S. standing among foreign elites is whether U.S. policy is perceived to be helping or harming their interests. General publics, however, tend to focus on the justness and morality of U.S. conduct. When foreign publics deem the United States is not playing by the rules, is applying double standards, and is engaging in hypocrisy, U.S. standing suffers. The legacy of Iranian hostility towards the United States has roots in America's overthrow of Mohammad Mosaddeq and support for the Shah despite professed adherence to self-determination/liberal democratic norms.

The disjuncture between national elites and mass publics has led to different political dynamics in the Middle East and in Europe, the two regions that have seen American standing plunge most sharply. In the Middle East, authoritarian regimes are often quietly more supportive of American policy than they can say publicly. Mass publics' critical view of America and U.S. policy is often also a political indictment of their own regimes, which are cooperating with the United States. American policies thus tend to produce diametrically opposed results at government and popular levels. Policies that improve American standing with Arab governments, such as being tough on Saddam Hussein's Iraq or on Khameni's Iran, tend to please rulers and irritate public opinion. Likewise, many Arab leaders were happy to see Israel bomb Hamas and Hezbollah, but the attacks infuriated the Arab public.

In Europe, by contrast, democratically elected governments by and large express the sentiments of the citizenry. If there are divergences in views between elites and publics, as there were in several countries on the issue of the Iraq war of 2003, they tend to become prominent issues in the next election campaign or government transition. This was true in elections in France (Sarkozy 2007) and Germany (Merkel 2005) as well as in Spain (Zapatero 2004) and Blair's resignation in Great Britain (2007).

In regions where U.S. standing has declined somewhat less, such as Latin America and Southeast Asia, or held constant or improved, as in East Asia and Africa, the gap between elites and mass attitudes is politically less salient. At the same time, perceptions of a lack of U.S. attention to particular regions can affect standing. Leaders in South Asia and Africa have often complained that the United States is either too indifferent to or ignorant of their regions' instabilities or human suffering.

While the political dynamics of American standing play out differently in authoritarian and democratic regions, this does not mean that one or the other leads to a more favorable or hostile disposition. Across all of the world's major regions, the erosion of American standing has been greatest in the regions that are the least democratic (the Middle East) and the most democratic (Europe).

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Whether in dictatorships or democracies, U.S. standing may be seen differently by mass publics versus leaders.

Different Meanings. Not surprisingly, U.S. standing is assessed differently in different regional contexts. These different assessments are shaped by different priorities, different regional threats, and different degrees of regional integration and identity.

In the Middle East, the professed U.S. policy of democratization since 2002 threatened authoritarian regimes; and perceived U.S. disengagement from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reinforced the view that the United States was neither a fair nor an engaged arbiter in the conflict. In East Asia, the continued availability of American markets for East Asian exports had a strong effect on national prosperity; this strengthened America's standing among elites and the public. Despite the large amount of economic and military assistance that the United States provides to Pakistan's elites, its standing remains extremely low among the public, who resent past U.S. support of the country's military dictators and massive intervention in the country's domestic politics. In addition, many Europeans believed that

the American turn toward unilateralism and the doctrine of preemptive war was unraveling the multilateral fabric of Europe's preferred international order. President Obama's leadership style is reassuring European publics greatly without eliminating lingering suspicions that his presidency may represent a change in style rather than substance.

American standing in a relative sense is influenced by the presence of a major regional power. Where such a power exists and is hostile, as in Cold War Europe (Soviet Union) or potentially not benign, as in contemporary East Asia (China) and South Asia (India), American standing is somewhat protected by fears that domination by the regional power would be even worse. Even in the Middle East, Iran's regional aspirations give the United States some strong support among the elites of Sunni states. In Latin America, where there has traditionally been no dominant regional power, American standing was more exposed (though that may now be changing with Brazil's emergence on the global stage). And while there is no regional power in Africa, the memory of European colonial rule gives the United States a substantial measure of esteem and credibility by comparison. Here we see one of the ways in which relative power and threat influence assessments of credibility and esteem.

There is, as of yet, no clear finding that U.S. relative standing is suffering in terms of credibility or esteem based on the rise of "competing" models offered by Europe, China, or even Russia. Polls in 2009 suggest recent declines in the relative attractiveness of these

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actors.¹⁹ At the same time, the economic meltdown of 2008–09 has prompted widespread critiques of the U.S. economic model; serious political fallout from this crisis may still lie ahead, as waning esteem

may limit the credibility of the United States in economic affairs. Some herald the "Beijing consensus"—a Chinese approach that promises capitalist development without political interference—as a replacement for the U.S. model. The "status" of the dollar as the global reserve currency is increasingly a topic of discussion.²⁰

America's standing may in some places and at some times also be affected by the notion of regional identity. In regions where elites have regional identities in addition to national ones, American standing diminishes.²¹ For example, the building of a European polity during the last 25 years was, in part, a conscious political attempt to delink Europe from American policies and to evolve what many European political elites (though perhaps not the European public) see as a better political model for Europe and the world. EU economic might sustains this belief. This has contributed to the recent loop that American standing has taken in Europe, including among some of its oldest allies. Germany went from a 78 percent favorable rating of the United States in 2000 to 31 percent in 2008, before a sharp recovery to 64 percent in 2009 (see Figure 3). In contrast, South Asia has no such region-wide identity, and American standing in India is as high as ever.

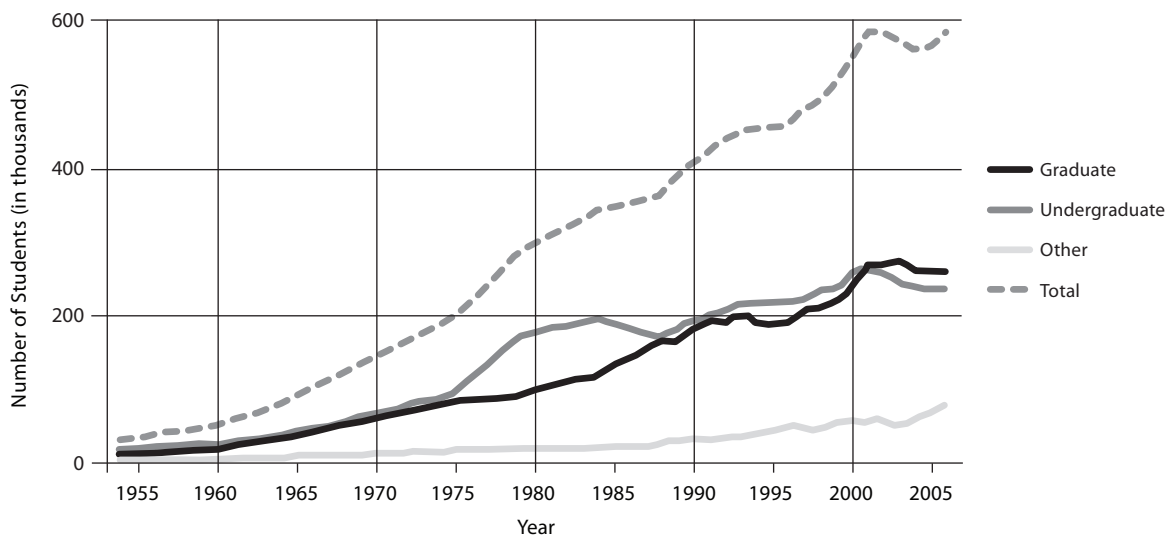
Cross-regional public opinion research suggests that popular opposition to the United States is mostly shallow and benign, and thus prone to rapid swings.²² The main exception to this pattern is the Middle East, where a prevalent negative public opinion is the product of a critical view of the American polity, U.S. anti-terrorist policies, fear of U.S. military intervention, and the U.S. stance on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

U.S. “standing in the world” is hardly monolithic. It is viewed differently across regions and policies, and such differences deserve attention in crafting policy.

Regional Roller Coaster. Going forward, the likelihood of a rebound in America’s standing differs by region. In the Middle East, much will depend on what American diplomacy can accomplish in the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and diplomacy with Iran. In South Asia, American standing will depend on successful U.S. management of contradictory pressures engulfing the region’s interstate and non-state conflicts. In East Asia, the way in which the Obama administration deals with economic and security issues will be the critical factor. If America responds to the global financial and economic crisis by providing fewer global and regional public goods, its standing will diminish in East Asia and dive once again in Europe. Similarly, if growing U.S. budget deficits require cuts in the recent expansion of American aid programs in Africa, this might also erode American standing in a continent where trends have been more positive in recent years.²³ Here, economic and military capabilities in the form of aid or public goods are another way in which U.S. hard power shapes U.S. standing.

During the last four decades, while American standing has declined at times, it has bounced back because the American model continued to have strong appeal (i.e., esteem). One indicator of this is the continuing attractiveness of the U.S. higher educational system and the fact that many who come to study in the United States end up staying²⁴ (See Figure 4). An additional reason for America’s reestablished standing may be that American leaders have learned from their mistakes. In some cases the mistake may have been an excessive concern with credibility and capability as measures of standing (Presidents Kennedy and George W. Bush), in other cases perhaps a lack of concern or too much attention to esteem (President Carter).

Figure 4: International Students in the U.S. by Academic Level



Source: Data from Carol Atkinson, "Does Soft Power Matter? A Comparative Analysis of Student Exchange Programs 1980-2006," unpublished manuscript, Vanderbilt University, Department of Political Science, Nashville, TN (2009) based on Institute of International Education statistics.

International Organizations

International organizations, law, and global civil society play a crucial role in America's standing in the world, providing settings in which the United States can articulate its goals and solve problems with other states. They also provide formal structures through which the rest of the world can publicly and collectively support American policies, or reject them. And as multilateralism's critics point out, international organizations also provide vehicles through which other states can set forth competing agendas and organize to pursue policies not favored by the United States. Standing is essential to leadership in these institutions.

Trends in IO Standing. Evidence of standing is more elusive in the category of “international society,” perhaps because the nature of that society is much less developed than in nation states. Still, we can get a sense of how U.S. standing has changed over time by considering how the United States is viewed in prominent international organizations like the United Nations, and by NGOs.

Figure 5 tracks international support for U.S. votes in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) since World War II. The United States was instrumental in the UN's creation, yet, as Figure 5 illustrates, support for U.S. positions within UNGA has declined considerably over time—a trend that began as early as the 1960s, accelerated during the Reagan years, and, despite an uptick following the USSR's collapse, resumed its downward slide in the mid-1990s.

The drop in support for the United States is especially pronounced during the George W. Bush administration, with agreement between the United States and Latin America, African, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries plummeting by around 50 percent in the last decade

Astonishingly, the absolute level of agreement today between the United States and the typical country in each region is below the level of agreement between America and its existential rival, the Soviet Union, at the height of the Cold War.²⁵

alone. Astonishingly, the absolute level of agreement today between the United States and the typical country in each region is below the level of agreement between America and its existential rival, the Soviet Union, at the height of the Cold War.²⁵

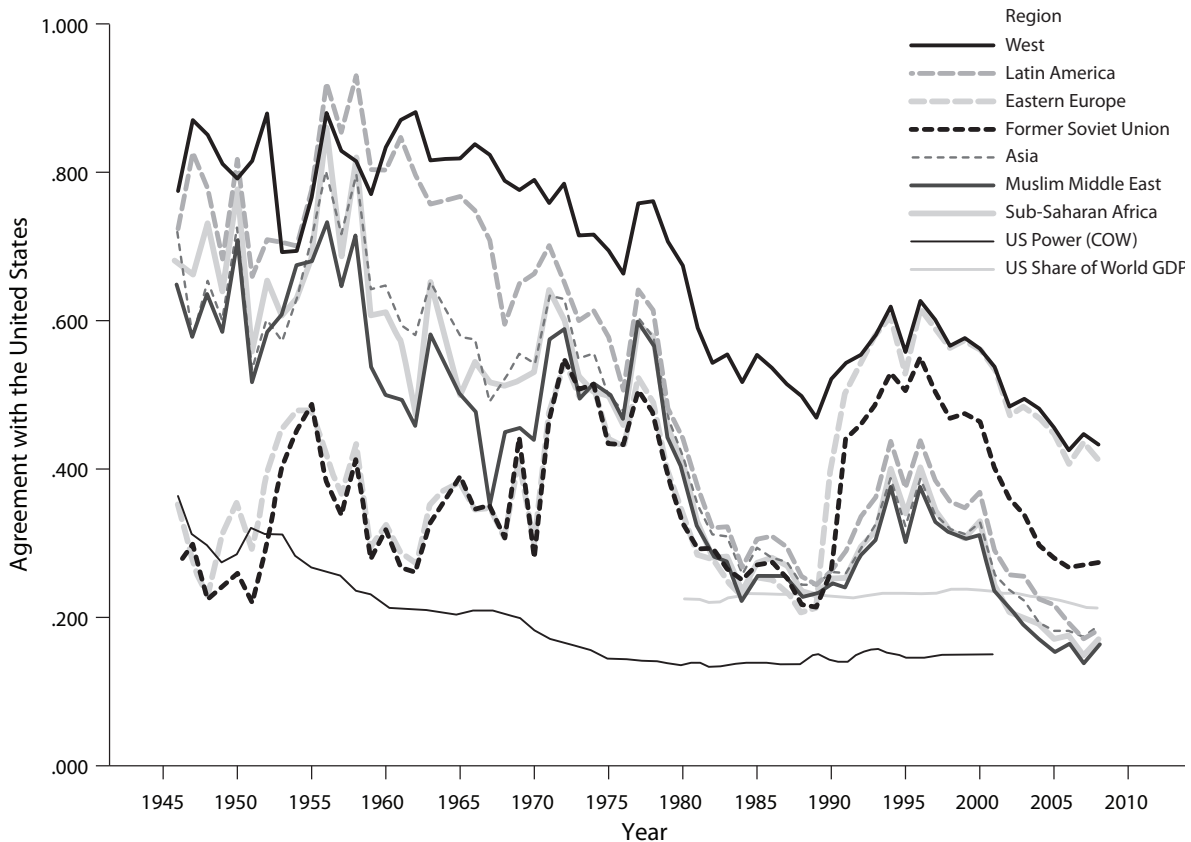
Although the data are not always consistent or reliable, various country rankings by both IOs and NGOs paint a similar picture of decline—even in areas in which the United States has traditionally prided itself as a leader. In the Reporters without Borders Press Freedom Index, for example, the United States has fallen from number 17 in 2002 to number 36 in 2008, below Mali, Ghana, and Slovakia.²⁶

Sometimes a new organization can herald a change in standing. The rise of the G20 as a replacement for the G8 in economic affairs inevitably dilutes the sway of the U.S. in global economic governance (as it does for the other G8 countries). Its new prominence as a forum of heads of state, not just finance ministers, is a result of the economic crisis of 2008–2009 and the related critique of the United States as the downturn's source.

Sources of Standing. Why has U.S. standing in the United Nations eroded?

In part, this is because the sheer number of countries in the world has risen, from 151 in 1973 to more than 190 today. This means more competing interests on the global agenda, interests with the potential to diverge from those of the United States.

Figure 5: Agreement with the US in UN General Assembly Votes (w/ Relative US Power)



Source: Based on Erik Voeten and Adis Merdzanovic, "United Nations General Assembly Voting Data", hdl:1902.1/12379 UNF:3:Hpf6qOkDdzzvXF9m66yLTg== http://dvn.iq.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/Voeten/faces/study/StudyPage.xhtml?studyId=38311&studyListingIndex=0_da0ced8e8168aa48c06c85ca0e04. World GDP data comes from: <http://www.econstats.com/weo/V012.htm>. COW data on U.S. relative power: <http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/Capabilities/nmc3-02.htm>.

But two additional factors have come into play that reflect on America itself: first, a growing sense that Washington is no longer a dependable “team player,” and second, a fear that Americans may be less committed to providing international public goods today than they were during the Cold War. It is clear is that when the United States is seen as acting as a “team player,” it can have positive repercussions for U.S. standing, whereas perceptions of U.S. unilateralism can have the opposite effect. Whether these perceptions of U.S. behavior are accurate is open to debate, but when it comes to America’s standing in the world, perceptions define the reality.

When the United States fails to sign and ratify high-profile, widely accepted international agreements, for example, its international standing falls, as has been the case with the Kyoto Protocol.²⁷ The

The United States has ratified over one hundred other environmental agreements... yet the U.S. is known internationally largely for its unwillingness to ratify Kyoto.

United States has ratified over one hundred other environmental agreements, which is over twice as many as Canada and France and five times as many as Japan.²⁸ Yet the U.S. is known internationally largely for its unwillingness to ratify Kyoto.

American standing also falls when Washington violates international laws and norms and fails to comply with U.S. treaty commitments and values. For example, violations of high-profile agreements, such as the Geneva Convention on torture, have clearly hurt U.S. standing as measured by opinion polls, statements by foreign governments, and NGOs.²⁹ Evidence of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo severely damaged the global esteem in which the U.S. was held, especially among its allies.³⁰

U.S. reluctance to commit to new international legal obligations may in part be due to a generally strong compliance record with international law. Unlike some states, the U.S. is hesitant to sign agreements with which it knows it cannot comply. Nonetheless, a few high-profile cases wash out the effects of U.S. adherence to almost all of its other international treaty obligations. Perhaps perceived U.S. hypocrisy is more deleterious because we hold ourselves up—or others look to us—as a model.

If the United States pursues controversial, high-profile policies through unilateral means when multilateral ones are expected, U.S. standing will likely suffer. This pattern seems apparent at the United Nations, where agreement with the United States increased significantly with the demise of the Cold War in the late 1980s. This was the time when the United States had newfound relative material power as the sole remaining superpower. The United States was also trumpeting a new form of international community. As President George H. W. Bush put it, the United States would “pursue our national interests, wherever possible, within a framework of concert with our friends and the international community.”³¹ It was a vision of a collaborative world in which the United States’ unchecked dominance would be used for jointly agreed ends.

This sentiment peaked by the end of Clinton’s first term, when countries arguably began to detect rising instances of the U.S. unilateral exercise of power, such as declining to sign the Ottawa Convention on the Banning of Land Mines, refusing to pay its UN dues, failing to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, not waiting for UN Security Council approval before the 1998 bombing of Iraq, not seeking UN approval in the bombing campaign against Serbia in the spring of 1999. In the subsequent Bush years, perceptions of American unilateralism increased significantly due to a string of early decisions and rhetoric on the ABM treaty, the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court, and then the invasion of Iraq.³² Today, unilateral U.S. policies in response to the economic crisis (think “Buy American”) may have a similar negative impact on standing.

Another critical source of U.S. standing in the global order relates to the nature of U.S. hegemony itself and America’s ability to provide public goods and leadership. The United States is not just a powerful country. After 1945, it became deeply involved in managing the international order in ways that promoted U.S. interests. Doing this successfully involved providing a range of public goods that benefited others: alliances, extended deterrence, security of the seas, multilateral peacekeeping and conflict resolution, nurturing a globalizing world economy by opening domestic markets, providing liquidity in times of crisis, and promoting free trade.³³

U.S. efforts in recent years that have provided public goods in humanitarian aid and global health have seen positive returns for the United States. For example, humanitarian aid in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami significantly improved favorable attitudes

towards the United States in Indonesia.³⁴ And U.S. spending on AIDS and two other diseases, tuberculosis and malaria, primarily in Africa helps to explain that region's distinctive positive attitude towards the United States. If the United States becomes unwilling or unable to provide these goods in the future, it is a safe bet that its standing and influence will both decline.

As at the regional level, U.S. standing on the global stage appears susceptible to both *vicious* and *virtuous cycles* resulting in valleys and peaks, declines and advances. As credibility and esteem decline, the United States may be less able to lead and accomplish its policy goals. Others will be less willing to follow a U.S. lead or defer to U.S. opinions because they no longer believe the United States will get the job done, honor promises, or offer a desirable model to emulate. This, in turn, may further diminish U.S. standing. We see some evidence of this in the most recent period of diminished U.S. standing in global institutions. Logically, however, the converse ought to be true as well. As the United States is perceived to honor promises and show interest in multilateral leadership, its standing may be expected to increase, which may make expanded leadership, increased authority and cooperation possible. We suspect, however, that is harder to recover standing than to lose it.

Of course, there is at times a tension between being a team player and an effective provider of public goods or true leader. For example, U.S. support of the G20 as the hub of international economic rulemaking shows a willingness to cooperate with an increasingly diverse and inclusive group of countries. What is less clear is whether the U.S. can effectively lead and generate public goods for the system through the G20. In this situation, the United States gains in standing from being a team player—but if U.S. policy in the G20 is perceived as ineffective, the United States may ultimately lose in terms of credibility.

Conversely, leaders must sometimes take a lonely stand against the crowd—as the United States often does in supporting Israel at the United Nations.

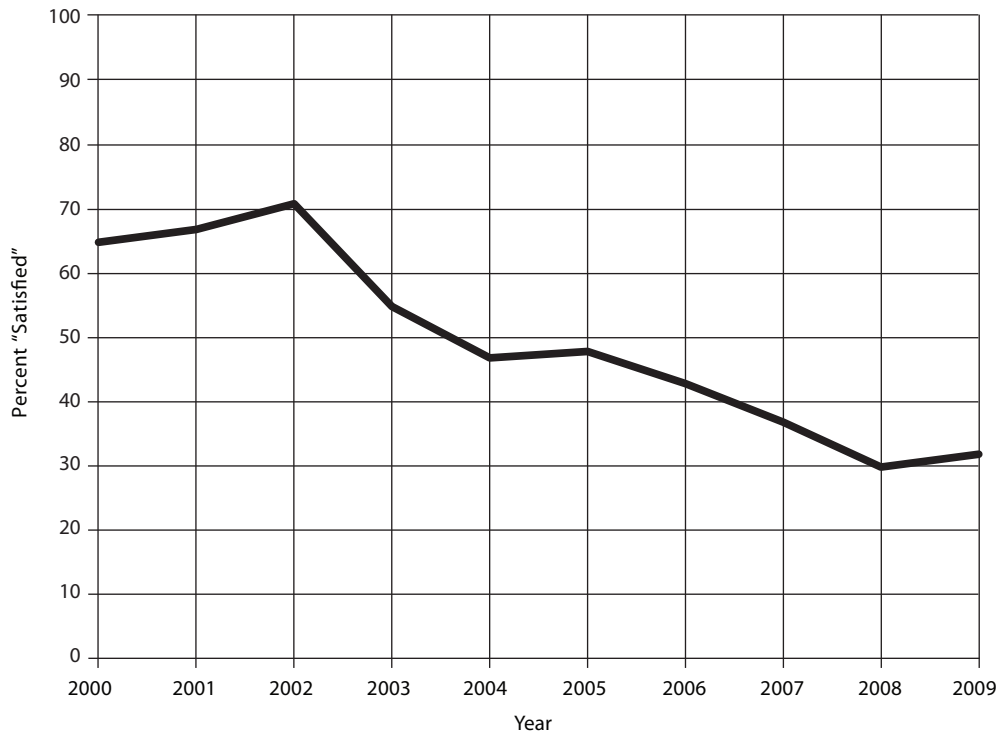
United States

America's international standing depends not only on how the United States acts abroad, but also on what U.S. citizens think about America's position in the world. What factors, international and domestic, shape Americans' views of their country's standing? Do America's leaders worry about the nation's international image, and if so, why?

American Perceptions of Standing. Americans are currently unhappy about the country's standing abroad. Despite high levels of confidence at home (and abroad) in Obama's presidency, a February Gallup Poll shows that only 30 percent of the public is satisfied with the United States' global position, roughly the same level that was recorded in 2008 when George W. Bush was still president. As Figure 6 indicates, public satisfaction with America's standing has declined steadily since the United States invaded Iraq in 2003 and is now less than half the pre-war level. Public confidence in how the rest of the world sees the United States has followed a similar trajectory, declining from 75 percent who believed that the United States had a positive international image before the September 11 terrorist attacks to just 45 percent today.³⁵

Americans are currently unhappy about the country's standing abroad.

Figure 6: American Public Satisfaction with U.S. Position in the World



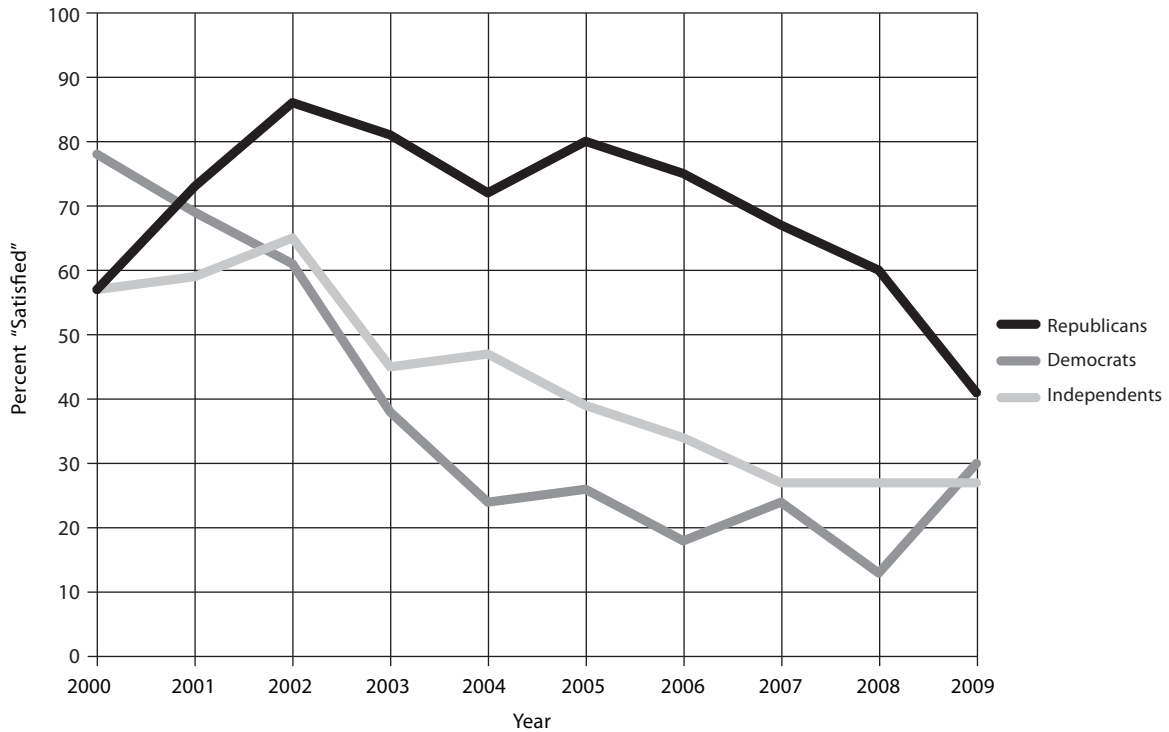
Source: Compiled from Gallup Surveys. See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/104782/Discontent-US-Global-Position-Hits-Record-High.aspx#1> and <http://www.gallup.com/poll/115087/no-perceived-gains-world-standing-post-bush.aspx> (accessed August 11, 2009).

Interestingly, the seeming uniformity of the trend masks a substantial divergence of partisan views on which aspects of standing are most important. For Republicans, standing seems to evoke hard power notions of “resolve,” which favor the credibility side of standing. Democrats appear to emphasize ideas that highlight esteem, like “legitimacy” and “moral standing.”

This partisan gap is also apparent in public perceptions of U.S. standing, which widened considerably during Bush’s tenure. As Figure 7 indicates, both Republicans and Democrats believe that U.S. standing declined between 2002 and 2009. Dissatisfaction among Democrats increased sharply during the first term of the Bush presidency; Republican dissatisfaction surged during the second term. Yet Republicans and Democrats report very different satisfaction levels on standing. With the exception of the immediate post-September 11 period, during the Bush presidency, Democrats have been consistently less satisfied with America’s position in the world than have Republicans.

Partisan differences over America’s position in the world predate the controversies of the Bush presidency. And while the partisan gap has narrowed since mid-2008, it has not disappeared, nor is it likely to. This is because where Democrats and Republicans stand on American standing is shaped by which party controls the presidency. In Figure 7, Democratic satisfaction with U.S. standing was higher under Clinton. Now that a Democrat is in the White House, it is on the rise again. By contrast, Republican satisfaction rose when Bush assumed the presidency, and it has fallen under Obama.

Figure 7: American Public Satisfaction with U.S. Position in the World by Political Party



Source: Compiled from Gallup Surveys. See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/104782/Discontent-US-Global-Position-Hits-Record-High.aspx#1> and <http://www.gallup.com/poll/115087/no-perceived-gains-world-standing-post-bush.aspx> (accessed August 11, 2009).

National Election Survey data from the Eisenhower through Bush years point to the same conclusion. As Figures 8a and 8b indicate, Democratic and Republican voters' views of America's position in the world (in terms of strength or weakness) vary depending on party control of the White House. Democrats are more sanguine about America's position in the world when a Democrat is in the Oval Office. Republicans are more optimistic when their party is in charge of foreign policy.

Democratic and Republican voters' views of America's position in the world (in terms of strength or weakness) vary depending on party control of the White House.

Significantly, this partisan polarization has soared since the end of the Cold War (Figure 9). Partisan differences over America's global position averaged by presidency indicate new highs under Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.³⁶

Explaining the Partisan Gap. One factor in the increasing party rivalry in foreign policy is the end of the Cold War. The trend lines in Figures 8a and 8b are consistent with recent studies on the politics of U.S. foreign policy that show that between the early 1950s and the mid-1970s, the Cold War had a dampening effect on domestic partisan debate over foreign policy.³⁷ Partisan politics certainly was very much alive during the era of bipolarity, but has intensified further since the collapse of the Soviet empire and the rise of the United States as the sole global superpower.

Figure 8a: Belief that U.S. Position in the World Has Grown Weaker in Past Year

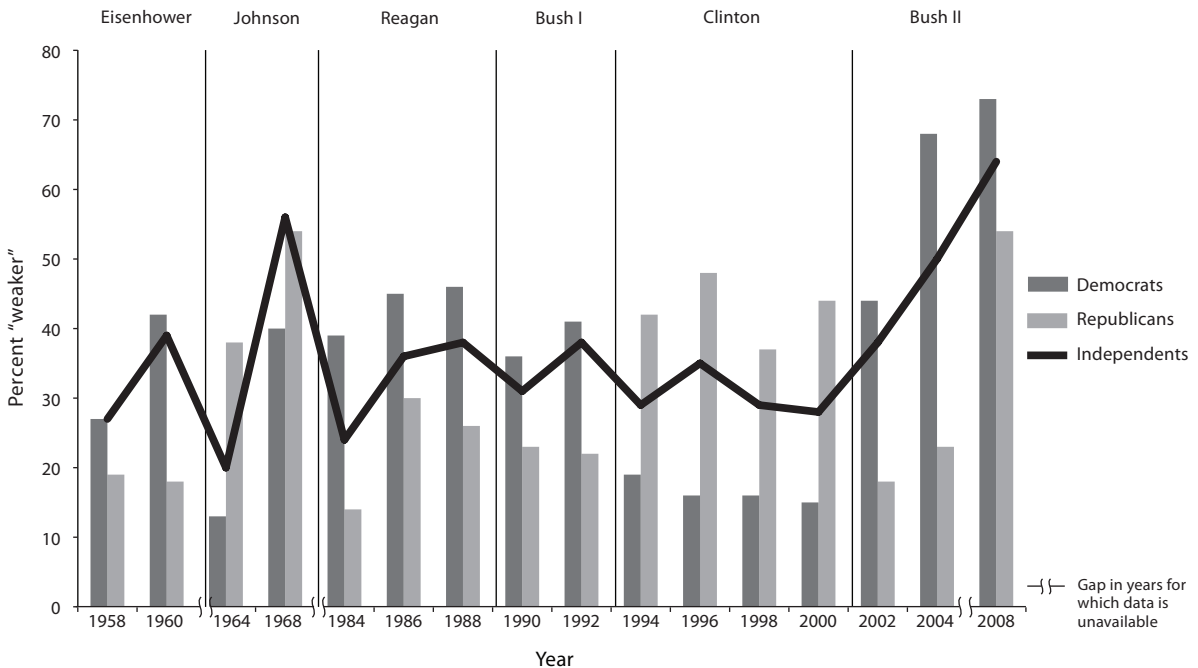
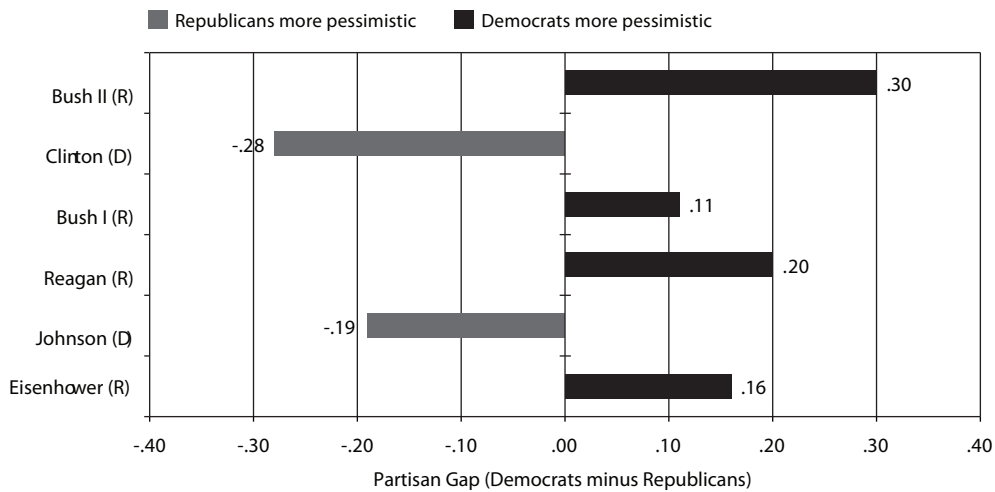


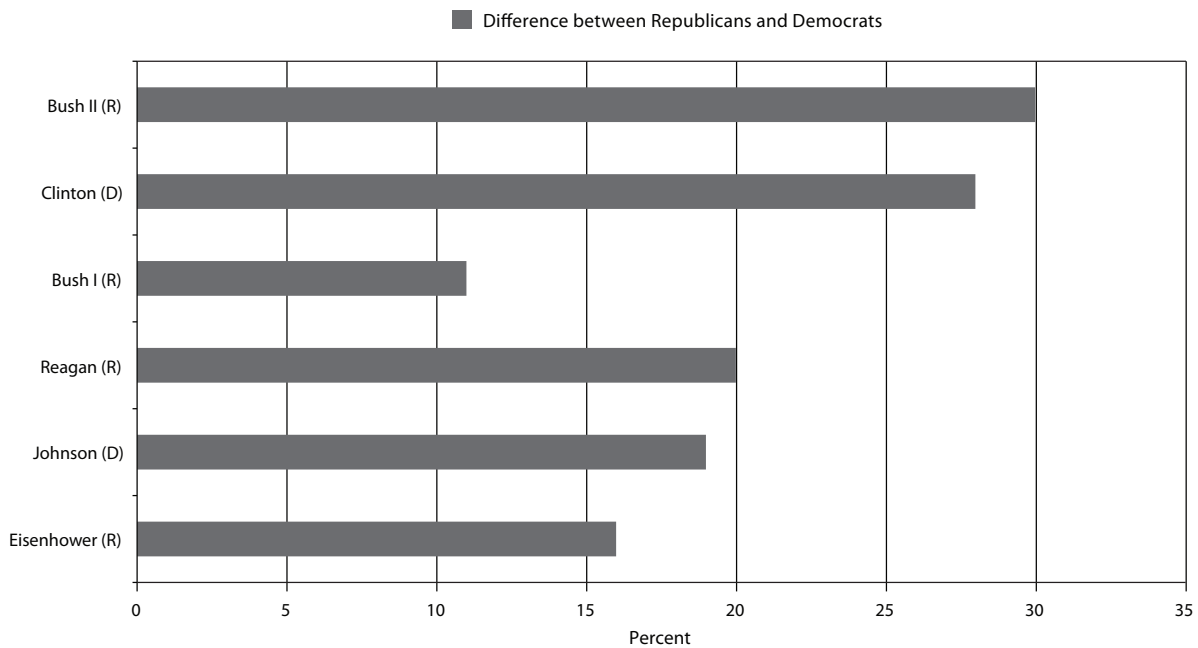
Figure 8b: Partisan Gap in Belief that U.S. Position in the World is Weaker



Source: Based on National Election Survey data. See <http://www.electionstudies.org/> (accessed August 11, 2009).

International developments alone, however, do not fully account for these partisan divisions over U.S. standing. Some scholars have found that domestic ideologies—conservative versus liberal—correlate with attitudes toward the use of diplomacy versus force in world affairs.³⁸ Even more important, American “world views”—beliefs about national power, international legitimacy, and state sovereignty—do color judgments (especially, whether the U.S. is “stronger” or “weaker”) and may mediate partisan perceptions about standing.³⁹

Figure 9: The Widening Partisan Divide over U.S. Position in the World



Source: Based on National Election Survey data. See <http://www.electionstudies.org/> (accessed August 11, 2009).

Political changes at home have also taken their toll. Some of these changes have become part of the political system: e.g., the ideological homogenization of the two parties, the sorting of the electoral map into “Red” and “Blue” states, and the rise in income inequalities.⁴⁰ Others are more contingent and reflect short-term political developments such as Bush’s strategy of playing to his electoral base and the Democrats’ use of the Iraq war in the 2006 midterm elections.

Standing and Presidential Politics. Do changes in standing influence those who make foreign policy? As a first cut, any assessment of standing’s domestic impact should distinguish between elected and non-elected leaders. Scholars disagree about how much weight officials in the State Department or other governmental agencies attach to domestic or foreign publics’ views of U.S. standing. The same, however, cannot be said about presidents. Presidential scholars have long argued that U.S. standing abroad matters for presidential leadership.⁴¹

Concerns about U.S. standing also mattered at home. In the 1960 presidential campaign, Kennedy and the Democrats exploited public concerns that the United States under Eisenhower was lagging behind the Soviet Union in missile production and space exploration—key indicators, Kennedy claimed, of international power and prestige.⁴² Ronald Reagan and the Republicans did much the same thing in 1980, when they criticized Jimmy Carter for compromising American power and standing—a view that a majority of the public came to share.⁴³ And of course in the 2008 presidential campaign, both John McCain and Barack Obama pledged to restore America’s standing.⁴⁴

Obama’s efforts to make good on that pledge appear to be paying domestic political dividends. Though Americans remain largely dissatisfied with U.S. standing abroad (Figures

6 and 7), when asked in a Gallup Poll what was “the best thing” the president had done in his first one hundred days in office, the top answer given was improving the United States’ image in the world.⁴⁵

Standing across Audiences

In the real world, of course, standing is not neatly separated into three discrete audiences. There are overlaps and clear mutual effects that work across the divides. Likewise, issues of standing and leadership show up in several audiences. Looking across the three audiences yields some provocative generalizations.

Mutual Effects. Opinion in regions and other countries should affect U.S. standing in international organizations, especially where governments represent popular opinion. Declining (rising) public support for the U.S. may make it easier for other governments to withhold (offer) support for U.S. positions in the UN and other global forums.⁴⁶ More generally, a global society that is composed of the peoples of the world records its views in global polls about U.S. standing. It remains unclear, however, whether the recent recovery of “favorable views of the U.S.” in some countries will translate into greater support for the United States in the United Nations.

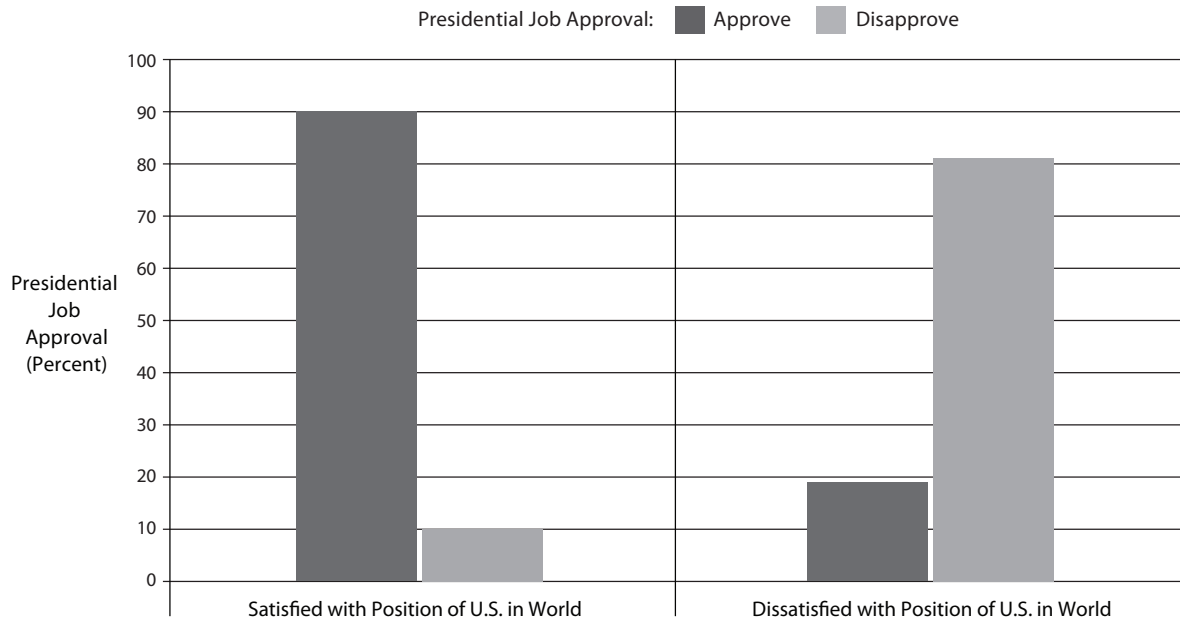
International standing often matters to presidents for reasons of domestic legitimacy. It might be fruitful to consider international standing as a domestic performance constraint influencing public judgments about presidential competence, much like quarterly GDP growth figures.⁴⁷ As Figure 10 suggests, in 2004, Americans who were “satisfied” with America’s position in the world gave President Bush high job approval ratings; conversely, those who were “dissatisfied” with U.S. standing gave Bush low marks. Obviously, a president’s job approval depends on many factors, especially the economy. Still, it may be that international standing functions as a kind of proxy for presidential performance.

There exists the risk, though, that seeking improvements in foreign opinion could have domestic political costs. For example, today a clear majority in foreign opinion favors shutting down Guantanamo and withdrawing from Afghanistan. Majorities in the United States favor the opposite position.⁴⁸ Boosting foreign support may fuel criticism that the President is ignoring opinion at home, similar to the way George H.W. Bush was criticized for ignoring domestic issues in favor of foreign affairs during the campaign of 1992.

Just as the country’s standing abroad can affect presidents’ ability to command domestic public support, standing at home can affect foreign policy and external opinion. A president’s domestic approval ratings or how Americans view standing can alter foreign leaders’ willingness to make concessions to the United States and thus shape the success of presidents in international negotiations. Moreover, how presidents handle crises at home can affect their standing abroad. The Bush administration’s handling of Hurricane Katrina had a negative impact on both the Bush presidency and the general U.S. image in the world.⁴⁹

U.S. domestic politics and domestic institutions also shape how the United States is perceived globally. America’s founders deliberately designed the country’s governing institutions to divide power.⁵⁰ This creates political frictions that Americans regard not only as inevitable but as desirable. U.S. presidents can promise abroad and cajole at home, but

Figure 10: U.S. Standing Abroad and Presidential Approval at Home, 2004



Source: Cable News Network and USA Today. Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll # 2004-35: 'Presidential Election/Stem-Cell Research/Iraq/Foreign Policy' [computer file]. 1st Roper Center for Public Opinion Research version. Lincoln, NE: Gallup Organization [producer], 2004. Storrs, CT: The Roper Center, University of Connecticut [distributor], 2004. http://roperweb.ropercenter.uconn.edu/cgi-bin/hsrun.exe/Roperweb/Catalog40/Catalog40.htm?start=summary_link?archno=USAIPOCNUS2004-35 (accessed August 4, 2009).

sometimes checks by other branches of government will constrain their ability to deliver. Unavoidably, at times the United States will be perceived to be selfish or hypocritical or both—the outcome not of a deliberate policy as much as the consequence of a government of several independent parts and subject to electoral change. As noted above, the U.S. Senate rejected Clinton’s commitment to the CTBT and George W. Bush reversed Clinton’s earlier commitment to the Kyoto treaty. Bush championed the expansion of free trade but was limited in his ability to act when Congress failed to renew fast track authority in 2007.

Furthermore, the legal culture in the United States stresses the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* (“agreements must be kept”). Law has a political and cultural significance in American public life that makes it impossible for U.S. governments to simply sign treaties and agreements it has no intention of observing or upholding. This specific legal culture makes the United States appear at times more obstinate than other states with different and more permissive legal cultures. What is perceived by Americans as a strictly national matter has ramifications for America’s international image.

Leadership and Standing. Across the various global audiences and at home, high standing is essential for leadership. When U.S. standing is high, we should see more, and more effective, U.S. leadership in the world as well as noticeable effects on domestic politics.

In international organizations, for example, leadership could take several forms, including agenda setting, rule reform, and institutional creation, all of which should be affected by standing. In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, when U.S. standing was

surging, the United States was successful in creating new institutions such as the WTO, and in getting existing institutions to engage in activities that suited its interests, such as UN peacekeeping and peace building activities. Since 1996, UN members are less likely to vote with the United States in the General Assembly.

Standing can also influence institutional creation and rule reform. Other states have tried to create new international institutions or rules without U.S. participation, sometimes successfully (the International Criminal Court, the Kyoto Protocol, the Mine Ban Treaty), sometimes less so (the Asian Monetary Fund).

Similarly, in the international financial institutions, the Washington Consensus dominated the policies implemented by the IMF and World Bank immediately after the Cold War. During the Asian financial crisis, the United States had little difficulty in dictating terms to the affected countries in order for them to receive IMF loans⁵¹, and after the crisis, the United States was able to orchestrate the creation and codification of a new set of financial codes and standards with a minimum of fuss. This is in sharp contrast with the current financial crisis, where there has been pushback to the United States' favored solution of government stimulated growth; other countries prefer more regulation of international financial practices and markets.⁵²

Since the mid-1990s the United States has taken few initiatives to reshape multilateral institutions or create new ones in response to emerging problems.⁵³ It is not clear whether a loss in U.S. standing has caused the multilateral agenda to turn more negative or whether it was a lack of leadership that did so, perhaps also causing a loss in standing.⁵⁴

As already noted, standing and leadership are also relevant in domestic politics. Moreover, fluctuations in international standing shape public perceptions of foreign policy

Fluctuations in international standing shape public perceptions of foreign policy competence.

competence. Presidents deemed by the public to be incompetent Commanders-in-Chief invariably experience some diminution in public support and their

power as domestic agenda setters; examples include Woodrow Wilson over the League of Nations; Jimmy Carter over the hostage crisis in Iran; George W. Bush over Iraq. If these presidents seek reelection, they can expect the party-out-of-power to make foreign policy, and America's international position in particular, a campaign issue.

Cross-Audience Conjectures. Looking across audiences, one of our most striking conjectures is the consistency in the distinction between the two main aspects of standing, credibility and esteem. It is apparent not only in the abstract conceptual discussion but also in the different notions of standing held by elites and mass publics in different regions and countries, and between Republicans and Democrats in the United States.

For example, at the outset of the 1960s, American Democrats criticized President Eisenhower for his apparent lack of concern over issues of prestige in the unfolding space race and the competition for "hearts and minds" in the developing world. Forty years later, Democrats instead highlighted issues of legitimacy in challenging a very different Republican president. At the outset of the Pershing missile debate of the late 1970s, under President Carter, U.S. credibility was in question. A few years later, under President Reagan, the

pendulum had swung the other way; it was esteem that some felt was lacking.⁵⁵ Notably, these debates were not just about U.S. capabilities or goals, but instead about how those relate to U.S. credibility and esteem.

Secondly, standing's meaning varies across space and time. During the Cold War, U.S. standing varied greatly among the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, and Third World governments. Today, U.S. standing differs significantly among Muslims in West Africa, the Gulf region and Southeast Asia; among West and East Europeans; and even among Canadians and Mexicans.

A third conjecture is the possible resonance of Republican and Democratic notions of standing in different regions of the world. Today, Democrats' concerns about *esteem* parallel Europe's priorities, while Republicans' worries about *credibility* seem closer to views echoed in East Asia. However, this is less clear for the other regions: because of the deep split in the Middle East between elites (who appear to share Republican notions of standing) and mass publics (who share Democratic notions of standing); because of the possible conflation of the United States playing the role of both global and regional power in Latin America; and because of the lack of heavy American footprints in Africa.

A fourth conjecture is the potential importance of transnational political coalitions. When like-minded governments come to power (Reagan, Thatcher, Kohl in the early 1980s; Clinton, Blair, Schröder in the mid- to late 1990s), American standing receives a boost.⁵⁶ The election of conservative governments in Germany (Merkel, 2005) and France (Sarkozy, 2007) was seen by some as an indicator that the decline in U.S. standing in Europe during the second Bush administration was finally at an end.⁵⁷ The evidence on this point remains, however, decidedly mixed, since other indicators showed a continuing slide (See Figure 3).

A final conjecture links standing, partisan politics, and transatlantic relations. U.S. standing in Europe has sometimes plunged in periods when the United States has taken assertive action that threatened an escalating war. Moreover, this has often involved intense partisan conflict at home. For example, the "second" Cold War during the first half of the 1980s did not mute partisan differences as the "first" Cold War had done; rather, it sharpened them. Reagan's rearmament policy, tough rhetoric, and changes in U.S. war fighting doctrines actually raised the specter of nuclear war in Europe, encouraged the rise of a powerful European peace movement, and initially produced lower U.S. standing. Ultimately, Reagan's perceived success in ending the Cold War caused a surge in American standing in his second term and into George H. W. Bush's first term (see Figure 2). To date, the virulent reaction to the security policy of George W. Bush's administration mirrored the first part of that experience in Europe as well as in the United States.

III. Standing and the Future of U.S. Foreign Policy

The dynamics of U.S. standing are complex, and we grasp only imperfectly the sources and impact of U.S. credibility and esteem in the world. Yet standing is a matter of consequence for U.S. foreign policy, and American leaders must pay attention to standing in making policy. What follows distills five lessons for the role and management of standing in America's foreign relations.

1. Factor standing into national interest

Standing should never be the sole consideration behind U.S. foreign policy. There will inevitably be trade-offs between other pressing interests in particular situations; for example, the United States may need to act to protect itself from an imminent threat, and this action may diminish its standing among some audiences.

It is important, however, to acknowledge more explicitly the costs and benefits of maintaining standing in policymaking. For decision makers under pressure, it is tempting to focus only on what is concrete and immediate and has short-term impact. But just as it is dangerous for business leaders to focus only on quarterly profits and ignore their firm's long-term health, so too must U.S. leaders consider the nation's stock of credibility and esteem.

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U.S. standing is a form of political capital akin to what accountants call "good will" that is mostly consequential over the long term and affects other nations' willingness to offer it the "benefit of the doubt." Moreover, U.S. credibility and esteem help to mold Americans'

sense of unity and collective purpose. Standing is easy to neglect, but wise policymakers should consider its impact and sometimes protect it even when there are short-term costs.⁵⁸

2. Use different tools for different jobs

As seen above, how others think about standing varies across regions and even between foreign elites and mass publics. Inevitably there will be trade-offs. For example, attempting to boost the U.S. image with elites in the Middle East may involve demonstrations of credibility that transgress values important to regional publics. Arab leaders may respect U.S. loyalty to Israel, which is anathema to Arab publics. U.S. support of a loyal ally such as Mubarak may seem like a contradiction of the support for human rights favored by Egyptian citizens. To maintain its standing among these two constituencies, the United States must thread the needle, serving relatively narrow interests while also supporting broad moral objectives.

Similarly, credibility and esteem are both aspects of standing. Yet different actions may be needed to boost one or the other, and at times policies focused on improving one may involve costs to the other. President Kennedy ended a moratorium on nuclear tests and approved the use of napalm in Viet Nam in order to boost U.S. credibility in the world. Doing so, however, had negative effects on U.S. esteem.⁵⁹

Likewise, it might be wise to focus on certain aspects with specific countries or at particular times. Dealing with North Korea may demand more attention to credibility than to esteem. Following a period where credibility is the major emphasis, as was the case in the George W. Bush administration, esteem may deserve special attention, and after a period where credibility has been less favored, as during Clinton's first term, credibility may deserve more weight. In actions on Guantanamo and in speeches aimed at the Muslim world, the Obama administration to date has increased attention to esteem.

U.S. foreign policy will not always be able to maximize American standing, but it will do a better job by recognizing that different tools are suited to particular jobs.

3. Heed the bond between power and standing

While standing is not a simple reflection of American capabilities and relative power in the world, a mutual influence exists. Enduring changes in U.S. economic and military capabilities are likely to change standing, even as standing can enhance or diminish capabilities that do exist. In a relative sense, the presence of competitors with sufficient power to threaten other countries can enhance U.S. standing with those same countries.

U.S. leaders can also use capabilities to provide public goods and maintain the alliances that importantly affect U.S. standing in the world. This is not charity. Such efforts should be specifically directed at parts of the international system that work in America's as well as the world's interests. The United States should exercise leadership by coordinating the actions of other capable states, sharing with them the task of designing policies and the costs of carrying them out. Although the benefits—and accompanying expectations—should not be oversold, such efforts add to U.S. standing, and U.S. standing in turn makes it easier to wield power and ask for burden sharing.

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4. Move beyond public diplomacy

The decline in U.S. standing has led to a wave of reports about how to upgrade and improve U.S. public diplomacy.⁶⁰ While public diplomacy can be improved, it should not be the only approach to standing. During the Cold War, U.S. public diplomacy organizations like USIA worked best when they disseminated factual information and objective news. Deliberate spinning of the news, of the kind now perfected in electoral campaigns and in recent years imitated by the U.S. government, is received with suspicion or outright disbelief in many countries where U.S. standing has plummeted. The creation of a new major government organization, department, or government-controlled entity would be challenged by high levels of suspicion and disbelief that now prevail in several regions and many countries.

To be sure, more resources must go to a broader definition of public diplomacy. As seen above, public goods are a particularly important category. There has, however, been an imbalance in the types of public goods the U.S. provides. The United States will spend more than 600 billion dollars for defense in 2010-11, ten times the amount for diplomacy and foreign assistance—and this even after the Obama administration had sharply reversed the budgetary priorities of the U.S. government. There is no doubt that the U.S. military is one of the key providers of the United States' most important international role—i.e., the guarantor of general stability and freedom of the seas, commerce, and travel. That role enhances U.S. credibility and perhaps esteem as well. Greater funding for other types of diplomacy, however—e.g., humanitarian aid, social services in fractured nations—would, if effective (a major caveat), enhance credibility and esteem as well, and perhaps at better value. Moreover, many argue, greater investments in these areas might reduce the likelihood of instability and conflict that require U.S. military intervention.

Going beyond the world of states, we are also seeing a shift to a more pluralist, complex global network of intersecting exchanges. This shift provides opportunities to enhance

America's standing. Global electronic chat rooms, business organizations eager to rebrand themselves, thousands of NGOs that work across borders, private diplomacy (conducted by rock stars, corporate executives, foundation heads, and ex-presidents) are by now rivaling in size the foreign aid expenditures of major states. Furthermore, innumerable electronic, audio, and print media outlets, hundreds of thousands of foreign students, the dreamscapes of Hollywood movies, and American Idols all have an effect on standing that is significant even though it cannot be measured readily. The United States needs to consider how it nurtures these efforts without dictating their content. One idea would be to rework the tax code so that it enhances and encourages international activity that earns good will.

5. Support data collection and analysis on standing

As indicated above and in the appendix, we need to gather more information to better understand this vital aspect of U.S. foreign policy. Most specifically, the United State does not collect reliable indicators on the different facets of standing (esteem and credibility) for different audiences (elites vs. mass publics) abroad and at home.

The data collection efforts by the U.S. government and private organizations have been sporadic, prompted by headline-grabbing events and crises. This is true of all world regions, with the exception of Europe, where some survey data are available for selected years since the 1950s.⁶¹ Even for the U.S. public, we lack consistent questions over time. The United States supports periodic National Election Surveys at home. Questions involving U.S. standing should be added to this survey.

A comparable effort should be made to encourage private polling organizations to include questions about standing in their global polls and to develop metrics other than survey data that capture the standing of the United States. To the extent that systematic data exist, they are in recent years centered almost exclusively on public opinion surveys—an important but far-from-perfect indicator of standing. Modest public funds should also be directed to other types of data collection (for example foreign media analysis, collection of statistics on cultural exports like films or the impact of U.S. legal precedents) to rectify this problem, and to encourage broader research programs that illuminate a foundational component of U.S. influence in world affairs.

Conclusion

The United States would be well served by nurturing credibility and esteem, twin foundations of how the world regards the United States. Standing is far from the only concern in, or source of, U.S. foreign policy, yet it remains a touchstone in formulating a wise, long-term American approach to the world.

Moreover, U.S. standing is a marker of self assessment—part and parcel of who Americans are and what we do. Our collective sense of self—our goals, values, interests, and dreams—helps to shape expectations that lead to judgments of our actions and form the basis of respect and loathing, appeal and repulsion. In turn, those sentiments in foreign

lands, international organizations, and American voting booths can enhance or constrain U.S. diplomacy and provide a mirror to Americans.

U.S. standing is a marker of self assessment — part and parcel of who Americans are and what we do.

There is much we do not know about standing and more we need to explore. What we do know is that standing is a complicated element of America's foreign relations, and it deserves more rigorous study. We have included possible questions for future research in the appendix. It is our hope that a better understanding of standing will give decision-makers the tools they need to manage this asset wisely in the U.S. policymaking process.



Dissenting Views

Our caveats with the report, which is in every way an exemplary product of intellectual collegiality and good will, are three-fold.

First, as this report suggests, what Americans think about US standing is heavily influenced by whether one is Republican or Democrat. When Republicans hold the presidency, Democrats become progressively more dissatisfied with US standing than Republicans do. The opposite holds true when Democrats hold the presidency. This pattern has prevailed since the 1950s.

In light of this pattern, this report makes too much of the recent decline of US standing, implicitly indicting the administration of George W. Bush and endorsing President Obama's rhetoric to "restore" that standing. This point of view is certainly popular and defensible—one could even say confirmed by the elections. But we would have preferred a disclaimer much earlier in the report warning the reader to be aware that political bias affects perceptions of standing. The academic community, unbalanced as it is between self-identified Republicans and Democrats, is not immune to such bias.

Second, just as US standing is heavily influenced by political bias in the United States, it is equally influenced by political dispositions in foreign countries. At least some, perhaps a good deal, of the dissatisfaction with US standing around the world has nothing to do with US esteem and credibility. It has more to do with the politics and foreign policies of those countries themselves, or with the attitudes of groups within them.

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As the report suggests, dissatisfaction with US standing is highest in the Middle East and Europe. However, European views of the United States as clumsy, warlike, and uncultured begin in the 19th century, and European criticisms today reflect European attitudes about the use of force, which are reflected in and reinforced by weaknesses in military power as much as by doubts about US esteem. In the Middle East, poll respondents are unhappy about many local things—ethnic and sectarian conflicts, government oppression, lack of economic opportunity, Arab-Israeli and other regional (Iran-Iraq) disputes, and so on. Much of this unhappiness gets displaced onto the United States and would register just as strongly against European powers, Russia, or China if they wielded the preeminent power the United States has today, regardless of the policies they might pursue.

The report notes the declining level of support in the United Nations for the United States and points to factors that have increased or decreased the percentage of countries

Republican or Democratic, unilateral or multilateral, support for the US just keeps going down.

voting with the US at particular moments. The most striking thing about the data, however, is that support for the United States has declined, with some ups and downs, since the 1950s. Republican or Democratic, unilateral or multilateral, support for the US just keeps going down. This

result may have as much to do with the dynamics of the UN itself as with US credibility and esteem.

Third, it is not clear that standing has independent consequences for effective diplomacy. Our colleagues have argued that standing involves both credibility and esteem. As they recognize, these two factors are not easily aggregated, do not have the same sources, and can go in different directions. We believe that credibility matters. Credibility is based on power and past performance, not on sentiments about the United States. The impact of esteem is far less evident. Obama has raised American esteem but has not produced more European troops for Afghanistan, secured concessions from North Korea, or made any headway with Iran.

Conversely, in the early 1980s President Reagan incurred sharp drops in US standing to expand dramatically US defense capabilities, challenge the Soviets to an arms race they could not win, and prod NATO to deploy intermediate range nuclear missiles in Europe. The report highlights these policies as evidence that standing matters in terms other than capabilities or power. But in fact, the low standing of these policies mattered not at all. As one Soviet official at the time later testified, these policies had a significant impact on Moscow and contributed to ending the Cold War: “Reagan’s course in the early 1980s sent a clear signal to Gorbachev and his associates of the dangerous and counterproductive nature of the Soviet Union’s further expansion, which was overstretching its resources, aggravating tensions, and provoking hostile reactions across the globe.”⁶² Similarly, George W. Bush undertook a military surge in Iraq at a time when his own domestic and US world standing were at an all-time low. However one feels about the Iraq war, US policy in Iraq is much better off today because that surge and other policies succeeded.

Stephen D. Krasner and Henry R. Nau



Appendix

Suggested Questions for Further Research

Conceptual

What is the nature of the relationship between credibility and esteem? Do they vary together?

What is the relationship of unilateralism and multilateralism to standing, credibility, and esteem?

How does the possession and use of hard power affect various components of standing?

Regions

How do the foreign media, press, and the Internet shape views of standing?

How do views of America affect how foreign citizens think about their own government and society?

What is the standing of other countries in world affairs? How does that standing compare to the United States in terms of sources and impact?

Do other countries (such as the Nordic countries and Canada/China and Russia) have standing in international forums that exceeds/falls short of their material power? Why and to what effect?

Have other countries suffered from challenging or violating the system of international rules and law? For example, France did not sign the NPT until 1992, would not sign the Limited Test Ban Treaty, and held fifty atmospheric tests in the South Pacific from the mid-60s through the mid-70s. France also withdrew from NATO. Did it suffer a loss in standing as a result?

International Organizations

How does U.S. standing relate to global governance?

How will standing affect and be affected by current changes in international economic rules and institutions?

How does diplomacy affect standing? Do things like demonstrating respect for others, listening, and so on make a difference?

Does the U.S. participate in fewer or more international agreements than other countries? Is the nature of these agreements unique? How do they affect standing?

Appendix, cont'd

United States

How is U.S. standing affected by the personal standing of the president? Is executive standing a third dimension in addition to credibility and esteem?

Do politicians worry more about U.S. standing if they represent large immigrant populations?

Is the process of making foreign policy more vulnerable to politicization and electoral gamesmanship when the public believes U.S. standing is weakening or when it is strengthening?

Do presidents reap positive domestic spillover effects from upswings in U.S. international standing that occur on their watch?

When presidents consciously take steps to change U.S. standing abroad (through repayment of UN dues, support for international treaties, etc.), what are the consequences for their political power at home?

How have presidents used the issue of standing abroad to make the case for policies at home?

How do Americans with different world views or partisan loyalties differ in their opinion of the relative role in world affairs of democracy/culture, force/diplomacy, confrontation/cooperation, unilateralism/multilateralism, and so on?



Endnotes

1. See "Troubled by Loss of Standing in the World, Americans Support Major Foreign Policy Changes," The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, September 2008. http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/POS_Topline%20Reports/POS%202008/2008%20Public%20Opinion_Foreign%20Policy.pdf (accessed June 9, 2009). In January 2009, a BBC poll indicated that "improving U.S. relations with the rest of the world" remained a high priority goal for Americans – even as solving the financial crisis became the issue of greatest concern. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/19_01_09_obamapoll.report.pdf (accessed June 9, 2009).
2. Steven Kull, Clay Ramsay, Stephen Weber, and Evan Lewis, "America's Global Image in the Obama Era," *World Public Opinion.Org*, July 7, 2009. http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/jul09/WPO_USObama_Jul09_packet.pdf (accessed July 9, 2009); Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Confidence in Obama Lifts U.S. Image around the World." Released July 23, 2009, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=264> (accessed July 23, 2009).
3. Similarly, standing can remain constant while military and economic power rise or fall. China retains relatively modest standing today even as its capabilities soar.
4. On prestige, see Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and the related issue of honor; see Barry O'Neill, *Honor, Symbols and War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999). On reputation, see Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation in International Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996); Michael Tomz, *Reputation and International Cooperation: Sovereign Debt across Three Centuries* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007); James E. Alt, Randall L. Calvert and Brian D. Humes, "Reputation and Hegemonic Stability: A Game-Theoretic Analysis," *American Political Science Review* 82 (1988); Dale Copeland, "Do Reputations Matter?" *Security Studies* 7 (1997); George W. Downs and Michael A. Jones, "Reputation, Compliance, and International Law," *Journal of Legal Studies* XXXI (2002); Gregory D. Miller, "Hypotheses on Reputation: Alliance Choices and the Shadow of the Past," *Security Studies* 12 (2003); Shiping Tang, "Reputation, Cult of Reputation, and International Conflict," *Security Studies* 14 (2005); Barbara F. Walter, "Building Reputation: Why Governments Fight Some Separatists but Not Others," *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (2006); Mark J. C. Crescenzi, "Reputation and Interstate Conflict," *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (2007). On credibility specifically, see Daryl Press, *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Military Threats* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005); Anne Sartori, *Deterrence by Diplomacy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007); Randall Stone, *Lending Credibility: The International Monetary Fund and Post-Communist Transitions* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002). On moral stature and legitimacy, see Ian Hurd, *After Anarchy: Legitimacy and Power in the United States Security Council* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007); Thomas Franck, *The Power of Legitimacy among Nations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997); Christopher Gelpi, *The Power of Legitimacy: Assessing the Role of Norms in Crisis Bargaining* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002); Mlada Bukovansky, *Legitimacy and Power Politics: The American and French Revolutions in International Political Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002); Christian Reus-Smit, *American Power and World Order* (New York: Polity Press, 2004); Ian Clark, *Legitimacy in International Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Katharina P. Coleman, *International Organizations and Peace Enforcement: The Politics of International Legitimacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics," *International Organization* 53 (1999); Michael Barnett, "Bringing in the New World Order: Liberalism, Legitimacy, and the United Nations," *World Politics* 49 (1995); Rodney Bruce Hall, "Moral Authority as a Power Resource," *International Organization* 51 (1997); David M. Edelstein, "Might Makes Right? Rethinking Legitimacy and the Use of Force," Mortar Center for International Studies Working Paper (2005); Stacie E. Goddard, "Uncommon Ground: Indivisible Territory and the Politics of Legitimacy," *International Organization* 60 (2006); Shirley V. Scott and Olivia Ambler, "Does Legality Really Matter? Accounting for the Decline in US Legitimacy Following the 2003 Invasion of Iraq," *European Journal of International Relations* 13 (2007). On authority, see David Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009); Rodney Bruce Hall and Thomas J. Biersteker, eds., *The Emergence of Private Authority in Global Governance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Nicholas Onuf and Frank F. Klink, "Anarchy, Authority, and Rule," *International Studies Quarterly* 33 (1989); Claire A. Cutler, "Locating 'Authority' in the Global Political Economy," *International Studies Quarterly* 43 (1999).
5. Colin Powell, "The Craft of Diplomacy," *Wilson Quarterly* 28:3 (Summer 2004), 60-67, reprinted in Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick, eds., *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence*, 5th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), p. 216. http://books.google.com/books?id=CwN6RATLak0C&pg=PA213&lpg=PA213&dq=colin+powell+%22craft+of+diplomacy%22+text&source=bl&ots=ARPQTA-LZe&sig=WTeM3J0vU1rn5KWwrr3I2gTp-3N4&hl=en&ei=V6QuSu7XDpGMNZDwMpwJ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1#PPR8,M1 (accessed June 9, 2009).
6. Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), p. x.
7. Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, <http://mw1.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anti%20americanism> (accessed June 6, 2009); Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2007).

8. Discussions of legitimacy parallel standing. Legitimacy is defined in two ways: substance and process. Substance definitions align more easily with the credibility dimension of standing; process definitions relate to esteem. These are admittedly porous boundaries.
9. See, for example, Mike Allen and Romesh Ratnesar, "The End of Cowboy Diplomacy," *Time*, July 9, 2006, www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1211578,00.html (accessed April 9, 2009); and Philip H. Gordon, "The End of the Bush Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2006): 75-86.
10. As Lyndon Johnson explained to Martin Luther King, Jr. in early 1965, "If I pulled out [of Vietnam], I think our commitments would be no good anywhere. I think that we'd immediately trigger a situation in Thailand that would be just as bad as it is in Vietnam. I think we'd be right back to the Philippines with problems. I think the Germans would be scared to death that our commitment to them was no good, and God knows what we'd have in other places in the world" Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), p. 220.
11. As historian Mark Haelele notes, "Under Kennedy, the USIA embarked on a systematic effort to measure world sentiment 'about the U.S. and major international issues.'" See his "John F. Kennedy, USIA, and World Public Opinion," *Diplomatic History* 25 (Winter 2001): 63.
12. See Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).
13. Carter was particularly concerned about U.S. standing in Latin America and viewed the treaty as a means for improving America's image in the region. On the politics of the treaty's ratification, see Adam Clymer, *Drawing the Line at the Big Ditch: The Panama Canal Treaties and the Rise of the Right* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2008).
14. February 12, 2009: Senate Select Committee on Intelligence: Statement for the Record by Dennis C. Blair, Director of National Intelligence - Annual Threat Assessment Hearing. <http://www.dni.gov/testimonies.htm> (accessed March 26, 2009).
15. There are validity issues with opinion polling, especially in non-democratic countries. See, for example, Timur Kuran, *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
16. Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Confidence in Obama Lifts U.S. Image around the World." Released July 23, 2009, e.g., p. 6, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=264> (accessed July 23, 2009).
17. Long-term trend data on public assessments of the United States exist only for Europe. The data show a more dramatic collapse after 2002 than at any time since the early 1950s. See Pierangelo Isernia, "Anti-Americanism in Europe during the Cold War," in Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2007), pp. 75-79. The unavailability of survey data reflects the sporadic American interest in the subject. Data tend to be available only for times of crisis such as the early 1980s or the years after 2002.
18. In view of the conceptual distinctions between standing and related concepts such as hard and soft power, anti-Americanism and legitimacy, the unavailability of systematic regional data is regrettable. This report relies in its assessment of regional variation primarily on the judgments of its task force members.
19. "Views of Russia and China Decline in Global Poll," BBC World Service Poll, February 6, 2009. http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/feb09/BBCevals_Feb09_rpt.pdf (accessed April 10, 2009); Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Confidence in Obama Lifts U.S. Image around the World," Released July 23, 2009, esp. pp. 24, 43-49, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=264> (accessed July 23, 2009). For a report that suggests that the EU may be a viable – if still lagging – alternative to the United States, see GARNET Working Paper No. 62/09, "Research Report: The External Image of the European Union - Phase Two," Sonia Lucarelli, Lorenzo Fioramonti (ed.), http://www.garnet-eu.org/Working_Papers.27.0.html (accessed May 6, 2009).
20. Anthony Faiola, "Fading of the Dollar's Dominance," *Washington Post*, June 24, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/23/AR2009062303397.html> (accessed July 1, 2009); Liu Li, "Beijing Formalizes Call for New Reserve Currency," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 29, 2009, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124616719675965215.html> (accessed July 1, 2009).
21. Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein, eds., *European Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
22. Giacomo Chiozza, *Anti-Americanism and the American World Order* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).
23. Admittedly, there exist deep disagreements within and between regions about what constitutes a public good. Securing an unrestricted flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz is considered a vital public good in Europe and Asia but not in the Middle East, where overwhelming majorities consider this an unwarranted foreign intervention in regional affairs.
24. Carol Atkinson, "Does Soft Power Matter? A Comparative Analysis of Student Exchange Programs 1980-2004," Working Paper, Vanderbilt University (2008), shows that there is no correlation between the influx of international students in the U.S. and improvements in human rights practices, while there is a positive correlation between respect of human rights and involvement in professional military educational programs. See also Carol Atkinson, "Constructivist Implications of Material Power: Military Engagement and the Socialization of States 1972-2000," *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (2006): 509-537.

25. If all states in a regional grouping voted with the U.S. on all votes, the index of agreement would be 1; if they never voted with the U.S., the index would be 0. An abstention when the U.S. votes yes or no is counted as .5 agreement. The data for 1964 is the mean between 1963 and 1964, as there was only one vote in 1964. The actual data are based on sessions, rather than years. The sessions generally run in a three-month period between September and December but sometimes continue into the following calendar year. Caribbean and Pacific Islands are omitted from the graph to enhance clarity.
26. Press freedom index by Reporters without Borders, <http://www.rsf.org/en-classement794-2008.html> (accessed June 9, 2009).

U.S. Press Freedom Index Ranking		
Year	Rank	
2002	17	
2003	31	US singled out with Israel for actions against journalists outside its borders (Iraq)
2004	22	with Belgium
2005	44	Drop attributed to Judith Miller arrest
2006	53	
2007	48	Israel is 44, and it has a military censor
2008	36	With Bosnia, South Africa, Spain, and Taiwan
Source: Reporters Without Borders		

27. The U.S. is virtually alone in not having ratified the Kyoto Protocol.
28. These data are from the United Nations Treaty Series and include original agreements only.
29. Interestingly, extensive U.S. compliance with its many bilateral obligations tends to go unnoticed. In fact, the United States is party to over ten thousand international agreements, and there is no trend in treaty disputes brought against it. Detlev F. Vagts, "The U.S. and Its Treaties: Observance and Breach," *The American Journal of International Law*, 95:2 (April 2001): 313-334.
30. In discussing the U.S. use of torture (contra the Geneva conventions) in the Bush Administration, Philip Zelikow, a counselor to Secretary of State Rice, noted another cost: "the help you lose because your friends start keeping their distance. When I worked at the State Department, some of America's best European allies found it increasingly difficult to assist us in counterterrorism because they feared becoming complicit in a program their governments abhorred. This was not a hypothetical concern." See Philip Zelikow, "Confronting America's Recent Past," *New York Times*, April 24, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/25/opinion/25iht-edlet.html?hpw> (accessed April 24, 2009).
31. George H.W. Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998), pp. 399-400. Also see Bush's September 11, 1990 "Address before a Joint Session of Congress," which uses the phrase "new world order." Available through the University of Virginia's Miller Center for Public Affairs website (Scripps Library) at <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3425>.
32. President Clinton signed the ICC treaty but thought the final version was flawed and also opposed ratifying it. See "Bad Treaty: Senate Approval Would Leave U.S. Open to False Charges," *Houston Chronicle*, January 6, 2001, A34. http://www.chron.com/CDA/archives/archive.mpl?id=2001_3271883 (accessed August 3, 2009).
33. Stephen D. Krasner, ed., *International Regimes* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983); Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984); G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).
34. See Ed Pound, "Indonesians Turn Supportive of United States," *U.S. News & World Report* 2/23/06, <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/060223/23indonesia.htm> (accessed 6/30/09).
35. See Jeffrey M. Jones, "No Perceived Gains in U.S. World Standing Post-Bush," February 18, 2009, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/115087/No-Perceived-Gains-World-Standing-Post-Bush.aspx> (accessed June 9, 2009); "Obama Rockets to Top of Poll on Global Leaders," *WorldPublicOpinion.Org*, June 29, 2009, http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/views_on_countriesregions_bt/618.php?nid=&id=&pnt=618&lb (accessed July 1, 2009).
36. Data were not available for years during the Kennedy, Nixon, Ford, and Carter presidencies.
37. See Charles A. Kupchan and Peter L. Trubowitz, "Dead Center: The Demise of Liberal Internationalism in the United States," *International Security* 32 (Fall 2007): 7-44.
38. See Ole R. Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), chap. 4.
39. Matthew A. Baum and Henry R. Nau, "Foreign Policy Views and U.S. Standing in the World," paper for 2009 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Toronto, Canada, September 2009.

40. On these structural trends, see Alan A. Abramowitz and Kyle L. Saunders, "Ideological Realignment in the U.S. Electorate," *Journal of Politics* 60 (1998): 634-52; Earl Black and Merle Black, *Divided America: The Ferocious Power Struggle in American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007); and Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal, *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006). For a survey of what is now a vast literature on this topic, see Geoffrey C. Layman, Thomas M. Carsey, and Juliana Menasce Horowitz, "Party Polarization in American Politics: Characteristics, Causes, and Consequences," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (2006): 86-110.
41. See, for example, Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1960), pp. 4-9; and Richard Rose, *The Postmodern President*, 2nd. ed. (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, 1991), pp. 37-45.
42. On Kennedy's 1960 campaign strategy, see Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro, "Issues, Candidate Image, and Priming: The Use of Private Polls in Kennedy's 1960 Presidential Campaign," *American Political Science Review* 88 (September 1994): 527-40. On the role of foreign policy in the 1960 campaign, see Robert A. Divine, *Foreign Policy and U.S. Presidential Elections, 1952-1960* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1974).
43. On the public mood in the late 1970s and early 1980s, see Daniel Yankelovich and Larry Kagan, "Assertive America," *Foreign Affairs* 59 (Winter 1981): 696-713.
44. Obama was not alone. John McCain also pledged to restore U.S. international standing. However, almost half of all voters thought McCain would continue Bush policies, while some 90 percent of that group favored Obama. See "Inside Obama's Sweeping Victory," <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1023/exit-poll-analysis-2008> (accessed June 9, 2009). One of the principles of the Obama campaign was "that people were embarrassed by the decline in America's standing in the eyes of the world and that that would have political relevance to voters who normally might not care that much about foreign policy." Dan Balz and Haynes Johnson, "A Political Odyssey: How Obama's Team Forged a Path That Surprised Everyone, Even the Candidate," *Washington Post*, August 2, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/31/AR2009073101582.html?hpid%3Dtopnews&sub=AR> (accessed August 2, 2009).
45. http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2009-04-23-obama-poll_N.htm (accessed June 9, 2009).
46. The limited data on this is not clear cut. For example, there is no long term decline in the opinion data for Western Europe in Figure 2 that clearly maps on to the downward trend in the UN in Figure 5.
47. Presidential competence in foreign affairs depends on many things – ability to keep ends and means in balance, skill at managing foreign crises, and success in winning international consent or deference to American-led initiatives.
48. Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Confidence in Obama Lifts U.S. Image around the World," Released July 23, 2009, esp. pp. 5, 22-23, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=264> (accessed July 23, 2009).
49. For examples, see <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/53.htm> (accessed April 22, 2009).
50. The institution of judicial review limits executive and legislative powers. In addition, the executive branch of government, including the president, is bound by Congressional oversight over important treaties and budgetary matters.
51. Paul Blustein, *The Chastening* (Washington: Public Affairs, 2001).
52. Daniel Drezner, *All Politics Is Global* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007); Mark Landler and David Sanger, "World Leaders Pledge \$1.1 Trillion for Crisis," *New York Times*, April 2, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/03/world/europe/03summit.html?_r=1&ref=europe (accessed July 7, 2009).
53. There are a few exceptions. Two involve notable changes to existing institutions: 1) NATO enlargement and 2) the partially successful effort to reduce membership dues in the UN. The G.W. Bush administration created the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) that is favorably assessed in Amitai Etzioni, "Tomorrow's Institution Today: The Promise of the Proliferation Security Initiative," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2009).
54. Conventional wisdom in political science has long held that "hegemonic power" is essential to create new international institutions. A decline in U.S. standing should make the creation of new IOs more difficult. Evidence on the degree to which this is true is mixed. U.S. creation of an alternative climate change forum in 2005, the Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate (APP), has met with mixed reviews. It succeeded in attracting members not party to Kyoto (both India and China have signed on – a major U.S. goal), but the APP's goal of voluntary and non-binding cooperation is viewed by many Kyoto signatories as unhelpful, even counterproductive. U.S.-led efforts to spread the Millennium Challenge approach to development aid only to "precertified" countries have also not caught on. And interest in a new Concert of Democracies from both political parties in the U.S. as well as the Bush White House went nowhere – other countries were not willing to follow. On the other hand, the Proliferation Security Initiative – a much looser, "coalition of the willing" arrangement to combat trafficking in nuclear material – has gained numerous adherents and seems likely to persist.
55. As Nina Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons Since 1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 284-285, has argued, "[President Ronald] Reagan's references [in the early 1980s] to 'prevailing' in and 'winning' a nuclear war created fear in Europe and provoked dismayed and outraged responses by both the public and a large segment of national security elites that he was retreating from mutual understandings

about nuclear weapons and deterrence. In the early 1980s millions of demonstrators took to the streets in major European capitals to block the deployments and protest the apparent lack of seriousness about arms control...."

56. Mark L. Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics, 1789-1989* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005).
57. Charles Krauthammer, "Alliance in Ruins?" *Washington Post*, November 16, 2007, A33.
58. See, e.g., Moises Naim's "Missing Links: The Hypocrisy Audit," *Foreign Policy* (September/October 2008), http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4440 (accessed April 10, 2009).
59. Haefele, "John F. Kennedy, USIA, and World Public Opinion," 78-81.
60. The most recent example is Kristin M. Lord, *Voices of America: U.S. Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2008). Its list of "selected reports" runs to a total of 34 since 2001. *Idem*, pp. 55-56. See also Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor, eds., *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (New York: Routledge, 2009). A notable recent academic study is Benjamin Goldsmith and Yusaku Horiuchi, "Spinning the Globe? U.S. Public Diplomacy and Foreign Public Opinion," *Journal of Politics* 71:3 (2009): 863-875.
61. See Ole R. Holsti, *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: How Publics Abroad View the United States after 9/11* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).
62. Alexei Arbatov, "What Lessons Learned?" in Kiron K. Skinner, ed., *Turning Points in Ending the Cold War*, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2007), p. 57.

