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UKRAINE & THE UNITED STATES: EXPERIENCE AND PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION

PROCEEDINGS



Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv
Faculty of History
Department of Modern and Contemporary History of Foreign Countries

**UKRAINE & THE UNITED STATES: EXPERIENCE AND PROSPECTS FOR
COOPERATION**

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This collection is recommended to anyone who is interested in the history of international relations, foreign and domestic policies, social processes and culture of the United States, bilateral relations between Ukraine and the United States..

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Maryna Bessonova

THE USA THROUGH THE EYES OF PARTNERS: CHALLENGES FOR THE
LEADERSHIP AT THE BEGINNING OF 2026

The commemoration of the U.S. 250th anniversary in 2026 serves as a critical juncture for reappraising Washington’s global and regional roles. The onset of Donald Trump’s second presidency has transformed the international system, with support for Ukraine serving as a litmus test of U.S. reliability and hegemonic status. In this

context, analyzing American leadership through the prism of partner perceptions is particularly salient. Public opinion within allied nations is now a decisive indicator of the global leader's standing. It reflects not only current levels of trust but also signals potential shifts in foreign policy priorities and the growing risk that the United States will lose its traditional allies.

According to the Pew Research Center's Global Image of Countries project, the majority of the international community viewed the U.S. favorably during the 2024 presidential race. The spring 2024 survey reported an average 54% favorability rating for the U.S., significantly higher than China's 35%. U.S. ratings were particularly strong in middle-income countries at 61%, compared to 53% in high-income nations. Conversely, China's favorability showed a sharp economic divide, garnering only 24% support in high-income countries while reaching 56% in middle-income societies [7]. The survey also showed a greater tendency to trust the US leader in international affairs (on average, 43%) than the Chinese leader (on average, 24%) [7]. The same survey also compared attitudes towards the main U.S. presidential candidates at the time: J. Biden's rating was higher (on average, 43% of respondents trusted him) than that of his rival, Trump (who was trusted by only 28%) [10].

The isolationist slogans of the 2024 election campaign and Donald Trump's first foreign policy steps as U.S. President contributed to a decline in positive attitudes towards the U.S. and a rise in anti-American sentiment worldwide. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center across 24 countries worldwide in January-April 2025 (in the first months of D. Trump's second term) confirms this. Even though, on average, 49% still had a favorable view of the U.S. (a decrease of 5% compared to the previous year), indicators of a positive attitude towards China began to increase slightly to 37% (versus 35% in 2024) [6].

Other surveys confirm this trend. For example, a 2025 Gallup poll shows that the U.S.'s ratings are falling sharply worldwide. For example, the approval rating of U.S. leadership fell by 10 points or more in 44 countries between 2024 and 2025, while it increased by a similar amount in only seven [5]. The decline in the United States' positive image was observed primarily among allies, including many NATO

members. Compared to 2024, approval of U.S. leadership fell the most in Germany (-39 points) and Portugal (-38 points), with 16 other countries showing declines of at least 10 points [9]. The low level of support for the U.S. leadership in NATO countries is similar to what Gallup found during President D. Trump's first term (2017–2020) and under President G. W. Bush (2007–2008).

China surpassed the United States in global approval ratings in 2025, with a median of 36% approval of China's leadership, compared to 31% for the United States. China's five-point lead over the United States is the largest Gallup has recorded in China's favor in nearly 20 years [5].

Observations indicate that in recent years, public perceptions of the United States and China in high-income countries have become more closely aligned than at any point since 2018. Specifically, approval ratings for both the U.S. and China are remarkably similar in countries such as Brazil (56% for the U.S. vs. 51% for China), Argentina (52% and 47%), Germany (33% and 29%), Italy (47% and 45%), Sweden (19% and 18%), and the Netherlands (29% and 30%). As of early 2025, these figures have reached parity in two nations: both France and Canada report identical approval ratings of 36% and 34%, respectively, for both global powers [6].

Canada, as the United States' closest partner, deserves special attention. The current parity in approval ratings for the United States and China is the result of contrasting trends. For example, the number of Canadians who assessed the United States favorably decreased by 20% (from 54% in 2024), while the share of those with a positive attitude towards China increased by 13% [6]. The beginning of D. Trump's second term caused a sharp deterioration in the image of the United States in Canada: in just one month (February–March 2025), the number of those who considered the United States an "ally" fell from 30% to 17%, while the perception of the country as an "enemy" increased from 27% to 43% [8, p. 16]. The primary triggers for this shift were the threats of tariff impositions and the provocative proposal of Canadian annexation (as the 51st state). Economic pressure and 'American aggression' emerged as the top concern for 38% of Canadians, surpassing inflation. Notably, this negativity was distinctly personalized: 81% of those surveyed expressed

dissatisfaction with the head of the White House, and 64% specifically identified him as the source of their disappointment, whereas only 3% held grievances against the United States as a nation [8, p.10-11, 23]. The perception of D. Trump's figure has become a significant indicator of public sentiment in Canada, and the growing critical attitude towards Washington's policies became a decisive factor in the parliamentary elections on April 28, 2025 [1, p. 207-208]. Consequently, this led to a paradoxical situation where 55% of Canadians named the U.S. as their country's main "ally", while simultaneously 59% considered the U.S. the main "threat" to Canada (significant threat to the economy (77%) and to national security (53%)) [4].

China is competing with the U.S. as a country with which other nations would like to maintain economic ties (for example, 53% of Australian respondents gave priority to China, not the U.S. (42%)). In 12 of the 24 countries surveyed in January-April 2025, more people considered China to be the world's leading economic power than the U.S. In 4 countries, China and the U.S. were about equally likely to be named the world's leading economy, and only 8 countries noted the U.S. as the leading economic power. There are also shifts in attitudes towards the Chinese leader. Thus, trust in Xi increased in 16 of the 24 countries [6].

Although the United States was most often cited as the country's most important ally in the survey, it also appeared as the greatest threat [2]. For example, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Kenya, and Mexico considered the United States both a major ally and a major enemy. The United States was the greatest threat to South Africa, Indonesia, and Spain. In France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, the United States was the second most frequently cited threat (after Russia).

According to 2025 NATO polls, despite similar average approval ratings for the U.S. and China across the Alliance, China has significantly higher ratings than the U.S. in eight member states, while the U.S. is ahead of China in only three. For example, Beijing leads Washington by at least 10 points in approval ratings in Slovenia, Luxembourg, Turkey, Bulgaria, Spain, Montenegro, Iceland, and Greece. The U.S. has a higher approval rating than China only in Poland, Albania, and

Romania. The remaining 20 member states give Washington and Beijing ratings that are statistically similar [9].

According to a new POLITICO European Pulse survey conducted in March 2026 across six major EU nations, the United States under Donald Trump is perceived more as a threat than an ally. Since January 2025, Trump's policies have called into question Washington's commitment to NATO, while threats to annex Greenland and Canada, the ongoing trade war, and the outbreak of a conflict with Iran, which European countries refused to join, have led to a marked deterioration in relations with partners. Specifically, the U.S. was characterized as a threat by 51% of respondents in Spain, 46% in Italy, 42% in Belgium, 37% in France, and 30% in Germany. Poland remained the exception, with only 13% holding this view. For comparison, China is perceived as a threat by 43% of respondents in France, 38% in Belgium, 37% in Poland, 25% in Spain, 23% in Germany, and 20% in Italy [3]. Only 12% of those surveyed in March in Poland, Spain, Belgium, France, Germany, and Italy considered America a close ally, while 36% saw it as a threat. In contrast, 29% of those surveyed in the six countries saw China as a threat.

In conclusion, the onset of D. Trump's second term has confronted the U.S. with a multifaceted crisis of leadership, characterized by an unprecedented erosion of trust among its core strategic partners. The primary challenges undermining Washington's global standing include the destabilizing effects of aggressive trade wars, provocative rhetoric regarding the annexation of territories such as Canada and Greenland, and a pivot toward isolationism that calls into question long-standing NATO commitments. This shift has transformed the perception of the U.S. from a traditional security guarantor into a source of regional unpredictability, as evidenced by approval ratings that have reached parity with, or even fallen behind, those of China in key allied nations. Furthermore, the refusal of European partners to align with U.S. military initiatives in Iran and the intensifying economic competition from Beijing signal a significant loss of international legitimacy. Consequently, the United States faces the urgent necessity of a fundamental strategic reappraisal; continued disregard for the

interests of its allies risks accelerating a transition toward a multipolar world where the U.S. role is no longer dominant.

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Viktoriia Pilkevych

THE UNITED STATES' WITHDRAWAL FROM UNESCO

UNESCO was established in the aftermath of the Second World War to preserve global peace by fostering cultural, educational, and scientific ties between nations. Today, UNESCO has 194 member countries [3]. The Preamble to the Organization's Constitution states that: "That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed" [1]. The United States of America was among the founding member states, beginning its cooperation in 1946. During this period, the position of Director-General was held by U.S. representatives: John W. Taylor (as Acting Director-General, 1952–1953) and Luther Evans (1953–1958). The state ratified a number of the Organization's conventions, including the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, among others. To date, 26 properties in the United States are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List: 13 cultural, 12 natural, and 1 of a mixed type [4].

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