

Poll Marks Challenges in U.S.-China Relations

China's future president has some bridges to build on his visit to the United States: More than half of Americans see his country unfavorably overall.

Fifty-two percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll express an unfavorable impression of China, vs. 37 percent who see it favorably. That continues a dramatic turnaround from a brief period of overwhelmingly positive views at the time of China's pro-democracy demonstrations nearly a quarter century ago.

Strength of sentiment in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), also indicates China's image problem: Nearly three times as many Americans see it "strongly" unfavorably, 26 percent, as strongly favorably, 9 percent. Nonetheless, it's perhaps surprising that strongly negative views aren't higher, given the economic competition between the two countries.

Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping meets with President Obama in Washington today. Xi is expected to take over general secretary of China's Communist Party this year and as the country's president in 2013.

HISTORY – Favorable views of China soared to 80 percent in 1989, then plummeted to half that a year after its crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square. Positive views of the country have hovered between 34 and 42 percent in three ABC/Post polls since, while unfavorable ratings today are just 6 points from their March 1990 peak, 58 percent.

Economic concerns appear to be buttressing political ones. In an ABC/Post poll in [January 2011](#), twice as many Americans saw China more as a threat to U.S. jobs and economic security than as an opportunity for new markets and investment.

GROUPS – Partisanship and ideology significantly color views of China. The favorable-unfavorable gap is far sharper among Republicans (41 points, 26-67 percent) than among independents or Democrats (13 and 5 points, respectively). China likewise is seen more negatively by conservatives, especially strong conservatives, compared with liberals and moderates. Negative views peak at 73 percent among conservative Republicans.

While challenges in the relationship are significant, there's a chance that a generational change could be in the offing: Young adults, age 18-29, hold far more positive views of China, rating it favorably rather than unfavorably by a 2-1 margin. Among their elders, that's reversed.

	Views of China	
	Favorable	Unfavorable
All	37%	52
Democrats	41	46
Independents	39	52
Republicans	26	67
Liberals	43	47
Moderates	42	50
Conservatives	30	61
Age 18-29	60	29
Age 30+	30	59

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone Feb. 8-12, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,009 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gregory Holyk.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

Media contacts: [David Ford](#), (212) 456-7243, and [Julie Townsend](#), (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

1. Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of China? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
2/12/12	37	9	28	52	26	26	11
1/16/11*	42	7	34	49	28	22	9
6/2/98	34	NA	NA	52	NA	NA	14
3/15/90	39			58			3
4/3/89	80			17			2
2/14/89	69	"	"	28	"	"	3

*1/16/11 and previous "very" and "somewhat."

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