

2009
Ambassador
Survey

Results

The Washington
Diplomat

APCO
worldwide®

APCO Worldwide partnered with *The Washington Diplomat* in early 2009 to survey the Washington diplomatic corps on their opinions about the challenges and opportunities facing the Obama administration as it assumed office.

By drawing responses from nations large and small, developed and less developed, from all regions of the world, the results of this study provide a comprehensive prism through which the interests of the international political community can be viewed.

The study findings demonstrate a largely hopeful outlook for U.S. President Barack Obama, as all ambassadors interviewed expect President Obama to improve U.S. perception in the world. The diplomatic community understands that this is a historic opportunity for the new administration, and if President Obama is able to positively affect the global economy and constructively address the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, a majority of respondents believe he will be a successful president.

The economic crisis is clearly at the forefront of the diplomatic corps' concerns. The study reveals that ambassadors view the economy and poverty as the top challenges facing the world. Respondents also noted that the economy is the one issue the United States can best address and affect positively.

The study illustrates that the Middle East and China are key diplomatic priorities. The Middle East is singled out as the region the United States most needs to address, while the leader of China is the top leader with whom Obama needs to develop a stronger relationship.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation is the top Bush administration policy that President Obama should continue, while Bush's policies on certain aspects of the war on terror were less popular and respondents felt they should be reversed.

Ultimately, the study reveals compelling insight into international perceptions of the president and the current challenges facing the world.

Ambassadors name economy, poverty top world issues

Climate change, conflict and war also imperative

When asked to rank the top three issues facing the world, 41% of the ambassadors answering our survey select the economy as the top challenge; overall, 56% of ambassadors name the economy as one of the top three most important issues. Poverty is named by 59% of respondents, chiefly rated as the second or third most important problem.

Q: What do you see as the three most important challenges facing the world? Please place a "1" next to the topic you view as the most important, a "2" next to the second most important topic and a "3" next to the challenge ranked third.

Issue	1	2	3	Total Mentions
Economy	41%	11%	4%	56%
Poverty	15%	22%	22%	59%
Conflict and war	11%	15%	19%	45%
Middle East peace process	11%	7%	0%	18%
Terrorism	11%	4%	7%	22%
Climate change	4%	26%	19%	49%
Energy	4%	7%	11%	22%
Global health	0%	4%	0%	4%
Rise of protectionism	0%	4%	0%	4%
Immigration	0%	0%	7%	7%
Engagement of "rogue" nations	0%	0%	4%	4%
Nonproliferation	0%	0%	4%	4%
Trade	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	4%	0%	0%	4%

Similarly, when further asked for their opinions on the most pressing U.S. foreign policy issue, 44% of ambassadors name the economy, followed by 15% each naming conflict and war or terrorism.

The economy was named by 48% of ambassadors as the one issue the United States can best address and impact positively. The Middle East peace process is a distant second mention at 11%.

Middle East singled out as region United States most needs to address

Pressing needs also noted in Africa and South Asia

41% of ambassadors to the United States believe the Middle East is the region the United States and the Obama administration most need to address; overall, 82% of ambassadors select the Middle East as one of the top three regions. Africa (71%) and South Asia (64%) are the other two regions most often named.

Region	1	2	3	Total Mentions
Middle East	41%	37%	4%	82%
South Asia	26%	19%	19%	64%
Africa	19%	15%	37%	71%
Asia	4%	15%	11%	30%
Caribbean	4%	4%	0%	8%
North America	4%	0%	0%	4%
South America	0%	11%	0%	11%
Eurasia or Central Asia	0%	0%	11%	11%
Eastern Europe	0%	0%	7%	7%
Northern Europe	0%	0%	4%	4%
Central America	0%	0%	4%	4%
Caucasus	0%	0%	0%	0%

Q: Please indicate the top three regions of the world you think have the most pressing needs that should be addressed by the United States and the Obama administration. Please place a “1” next to the region with the most pressing needs, a “2” next to the second most pressing and a “3” next to the region ranked third.

While the Middle East dominates as the first and second most named region, Africa is the chief third selection. South Asia, on the other hand, is more evenly named as the region ambassadors feel have the most pressing needs that should be addressed by the United States and the Obama administration.

Collection of six issues dominate how U.S. aid funds might best be used

Local focus is important as well

When asked how U.S. aid funds might best be used in their regions, ambassadors to the United States tend to focus on alleviating poverty, improving education, promoting democracy, building infrastructure, developing human capital and addressing economic projects. There is a sense the money should be spent locally, focused on building capacity within a country or region. Additionally, ambassadors expressed the importance of accountability and performance indicators attached to the funds.

Following are some of the representative responses:

“Aid should match the local priorities and empower and educate local partners.” (Europe ambassador)

“Funds should be performance-linked. There is a need to have clearly defined performance indicators, especially those relating to governance, by which to gauge whether good money is actually being put to good use!” (Africa ambassador)

“Focus on education, poverty eradication, climate change and development of entrepreneurship.” (Americas ambassador)

“Local development and infrastructure projects; capacity-building and investing in developing human capital.” (Asia ambassador)

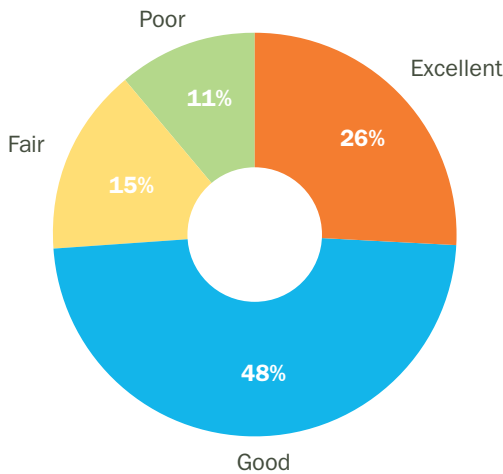
“Promoting democratic and accountance governance. Promoting health and poverty alleviation.” (Africa ambassador)

Current U.S. relations and impression in the world seen as generally positive

All interviewed expect President Obama to improve U.S. perception in the world

Three-quarters of ambassadors to the United States describe the relations between countries in their region and the United States as excellent (26%) or good (48%); conversely, 15% consider relations fair and 11% poor. This is a net positive rating of +48.

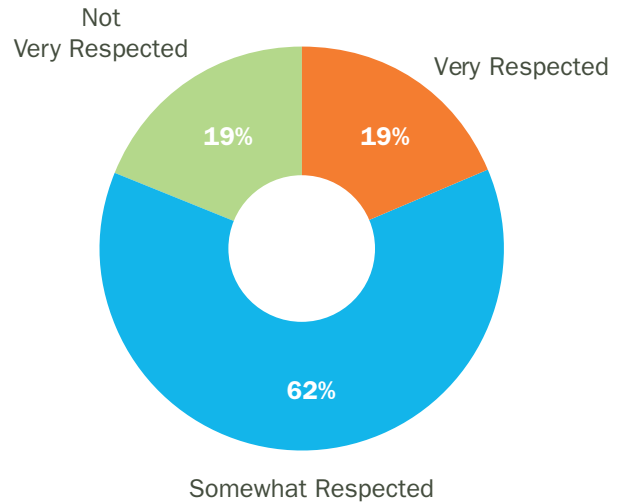
Q: How would you describe the current relations between the United States and the countries in your region of the world?



Three in five ambassadors (63%) believe most countries in the world have a positive impression of the United States, while 30% say most are negative and 7% select neutral.

Four in five ambassadors (81%) say the United States is respected in the world (19% very respected, 62% somewhat respected), while 19% say the United States is not very respected.

Q: Which one of the following phrases best describes your current view of the United States' standing in the world?



All of the ambassadors interviewed expect President Obama will either greatly improve (59%) or somewhat improve (41%) the United States' standing in the world.

Almost all ambassadors believe Obama will be considered a successful president

Solving the economic crisis viewed as most important to Obama's success

Seemingly picking up on Barack Obama's campaign theme, 67% of ambassadors to the United States describe their expectations for Obama as hopeful; 30% say confident; while 4% say concerned.

Nearly all (96%) believe it is very (41%) or somewhat (56%) likely that Barack Obama will be considered a successful president at the end of his term; 4% say it is unlikely.

Consistent with earlier concerns about the economy, most ambassadors believe positively impacting the U.S. and world economic crisis is the key measure of whether or not President Obama will have a successful first term. Other important indicators include lessening tension in the world and pursuing peace, as well as addressing issues in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Following are a sampling of key comments:

“A more peaceful world and a better state of the economy.” (Africa ambassador)

“Growth in U.S. economy (and) less international tension.” (Americas ambassador)

“Iraq stable. Afghanistan/Pakistan moving in the right direction. Middle East peace process alive. Iran in dialogue with international community. Progress on energy strategy. International climate agreement ratified by Congress.” (Europe ambassador)

“State of the U.S. and global economy; decreased unemployment and home foreclosures; resolution of regional conflicts; increased economic growth; improved health care; and improved international relations and U.S. foreign policy.” (Africa ambassador)

“We will not delve into domestic issues much as this is an American matter; however, an indicator of his success domestically would probably be based on improving the economy and returning American soldiers home.” (Middle East ambassador)

Millennium Challenge Corporation seen as G.W. Bush policy that should be continued

Some war on terror tactics should be discontinued

When asked which of several Bush administration policies President Obama should continue, 63% of ambassadors name the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

Millenium Challenge Corporation	63%
Trade	37%
War on terror	19%
General increase in foreign aid monies	19%
Africa policy/support	11%
Immigration	4%
Other	4%

When asked to name the Bush administration policies that should be discontinued, ambassadors focus on certain tactics of the war on terror. Other key mentions include unilateralism and immigration. Overall, topics as diverse as climate change, energy and limiting scientific research due to religious views are mentioned.

Here is a sampling of representative comments:

“Attitude toward climate change and energy.” (Middle East ambassador)

“Drop the use of ‘War on Terror.’ Focus on defeating terrorism by making it an unpalatable option in its home ground. An early start on the Middle East peace process and working to reduce poverty is a good start.” (Asia ambassador)

“New immigration law, war on terror (it should not be discontinued but should be waged in a different way), embargo against Cuba.” (Africa ambassador)

“Torture, war and unilateralism.” (Asia ambassador)

“Unilateralism and a tendency to exercise the United States as the sole major power in the world.” (Europe ambassador)

Most ambassadors say President Obama should develop a strong relationship with the leader of China

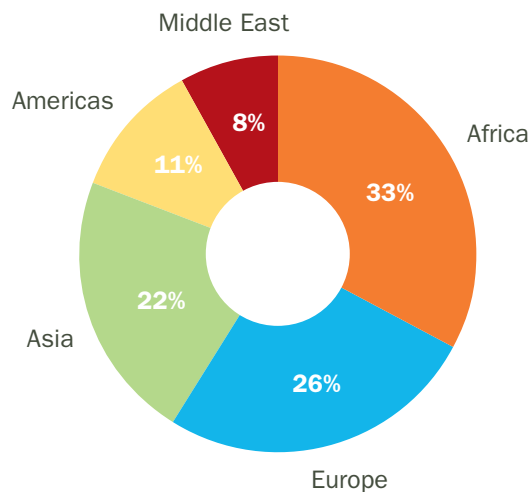
A variety of leaders are named

Thirteen of the 27 ambassadors interviewed name the leader of China as the one leader with whom they feel President Obama should develop a strong relationship. The leaders of the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia, Japan and India are also among those named.

About the survey

This survey of foreign ambassadors to the United States was developed and conducted by The Washington Diplomat and APCO Worldwide. Personal invitations to participate in this survey were sent to each of the 184 ambassadors. One of the invitations was returned as undeliverable, lowering the eligible sample to 183. The initial invitation included a letter from Victor Shible, publisher of the Diplomat newspaper, and a copy of the survey. The letter also included instructions on how to complete the survey via a secure Web site. Follow-up telephone calls were made to encourage participation.

A total of 27 ambassadors completed the survey. Of these, 16 were completed by mail and 11 were completed online. The overall response rate was 15%. The response rate by region is consistent with the overall response rate.



The responses were collected between March 16 and May 21, 2009.

About The Washington Diplomat

The Washington Diplomat is an independent monthly newspaper with a readership of more than 80,000. It is distributed to all Washington-based foreign embassies, the World Bank and IMF Group, the U.S. State Department, Capitol Hill, the White House and many other points of influence within the greater metropolitan area. For more than a decade, The Washington Diplomat has been serving the diplomatic community with regular columns and features focusing on international news and events. Each issue highlights different nations with in-depth ambassador interviews, both on the front cover and with inside profiles. Other regular features include monthly "People of World Influence" and medical columns, profiles of governmental institutions, the United Nations and various other global organizations, as well as stories focusing on international relations, politics, trade, investment and diplomacy. For more information, please visit www.washingtondiplomat.com.

About APCO Worldwide

Founded in 1984, APCO Worldwide is an award-winning, independently owned global communication consultancy with a team of more than 550 employees in 28 offices in major cities throughout the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., APCO clients include corporations and governments; industry associations and nonprofit organizations; and seven of the top 10 companies on Fortune's Global 500. APCO offers services related to business and finance; media, public opinion and society; and government and public policy. The firm is a majority women-owned business. For more information, please visit www.apcoworldwide.com.

