

WHITHER THE AMERICAN GLOBAL ROLE? HOW THE WORLD SEES THE U.S.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DECADE MAKES. JUST OVER 12 years since the world heralded—and supported—America’s role in liberating Kuwait, Saddam the sequel has not seen much success at the box-office. In October 1990, WirthlinWorldwide recorded broad global support for America’s involvement in the Kuwait crisis. Back then, the U.S. had not only the support, but the blessing of the United Nations. This time around, however, despite having assembled a sizeable “coalition of the willing,” the U.S. is seen by many to be acting alone in this second shot at unseating Saddam, as many nations are cautious of supporting any action seen as unendorsed by the U.N.

In recent history, global support for U.S. endeavors has not been so hard to come by. Before now, the U.S. has been known as the global superpower, diplomat, and policeman, with the ability to sway global opinion in its favor in almost any scenario. However, that was then, and this is now.

Massive anti-war demonstrations and protests inside the U.S. and abroad, in conjunction with recent survey data, show there is a strong concern among the global public, and to a lesser degree domestically, about the war in Iraq. And, while the U.S. will continue its push to disarm Iraq by force, with or without some of its historic allies, there is a deeper issue to be reckoned with here—Is America’s global reputation at stake? And how will U.S. action against Iraq affect

America’s—and Americans’—future political, social, and even business endeavors?

Success for American companies who increasingly market to a global consumer base requires an understanding of attitudes and opinions around the world. For this Wirthlin Report, we have gathered recent international survey data—keeping in mind that current public opinion is extremely volatile and subject to change as events unfold. In addition to the survey data, we have also gathered personal commentaries from our directors in international offices. Using research data and personal perspectives, we hope to provide a complete global picture of the U.S. and its changing image in the global community.

HOW THE U.S. SEES THE WORLD

First, a look outward. American public opinion regarding other countries is not the same as it was over a decade ago; in particular, American favorability towards some key allies has slipped. According to a recent survey in which we asked Americans to rate selected countries on a scale from 0 to

HIGHLIGHTS

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American favorability towards key allies slips

2 How They See U.S.
Favorability towards the U.S. declines, especially among coalition countries

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The foremost variable for the current change in American favorability may be the perceived lack of global cooperation regarding strategy towards Iraq.

100, where 0 means “not at all favorable” and 100 means “extremely favorable,” Germany (51 out of 100), France (45), Saudi Arabia (36) and Iraq (14) all saw a decrease in favorability—both Germany and France dropping 10 points within the past nine months. Additionally, Saudi Arabia saw a 14-point drop, dating back to August 1990, and American attitudes towards Iraq (14) returned to pre-Desert Storm levels (13) following a slightly higher rating last June (23).

Wirthlin also recorded a significant 12-point drop in favorability toward the United Nations from 69 in August 1990 to 57 on March 11, 2003, indicating that the disagreements of recent months may be wearing on American patience.

While Americans hold less favorable views toward countries that have shown resistance to U.S. mandates concerning Iraq, it is interesting that American favorability toward Turkey remained steady in the face of Turkish refusal to allow U.S. soldiers into the country, marking virtually the same mid-range score (47) after Turkey’s opposition as it was in 1990 (48). This may indicate that the American public is not being overly critical of the decision by Turkey’s new parliament to remain on the sidelines—particularly when compared to outright confrontational actions by other allies (i.e. France). American favorability toward other countries including Great Britain (75), Israel (57) and Kuwait (45), shows little or no change.

The foremost variable for the current change in American favorability may be the perceived lack of global cooperation regarding the strategy towards Iraq. Just prior to Desert Storm in the summer of 1990, we asked Americans whether the response to Saddam Hussein’s refusal to disarm and abide by the UN resolution terms was a global and cooperative one or mostly a U.S. action. Over half of Americans surveyed (57%) saw the response as a global and cooperative one between the U.S., its allies and most of the Arab nations, while 39% called it primarily a U.S. action. When asked the same question a few weeks ago, only 23% saw this war as a global and cooperative response. Conversely, an overwhelming majority (71%) thought the response this time consists mostly of U.S. intervention.

Despite discussion and concern among Americans concerning the U.S. approach to war, President Bush’s approval ratings (69%) are 11 points higher than they were the weekend before hostilities began. As the war progresses, it will be interesting to see how public opinion changes according to events in the Middle East and at home.

HOW THE WORLD SEES THE U.S.

Despite the flood of sympathy towards America following the events of September 11, 2001, the world has generally grown discontent with the U.S. since then, especially in light of America’s current endeavors against Iraq. As the U.S. pursues the war with Iraq, without the unanimous support of the global community or a direct mandate from the U.N., it risks tarnishing its global reputation at the same time.

Then again, the damage may already have been done. According to the 2003 Pew Global Attitudes Report, published before hostilities broke out, favorability ratings for the U.S. were dramatically low in a number of Middle Eastern countries, including key allies Turkey (12% favorable) and Pakistan (10% favorable). Egypt recorded the lowest percentage of citizens with a favorable opinion of the U.S. (6%). The U.S. also lost public support among key Western allies such as Germany (25% favorable), Russia (28%) and France (31%). Even Great Britain saw a dramatic shift in favorability before the war—from 75% in 2002 to 48%.

American Favorability Table

QUESTION: I’d like you to rate each country or organization on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 means you feel NOT AT ALL FAVORABLE toward that country or organization, while 100 means you feel EXTREMELY FAVORABLE toward the country or organization. (Asked of U.S. adults 18+)

| | August 1990 | October 1990 | October 1994 | October 1998 | June 2002 | March 2003 |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| United Nations | 69 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 57 |
| Israel | 53 | 54 | 54 | 55 | 55 | 57 |
| Iraq | 13 | 20 | 24 | 25 | 23 | 14 |
| Kuwait | 44 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 45 |
| Saudi Arabia | 50 | 53 | 48 | 46 | n/a | 36 |
| Turkey | 48 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 47 |
| France | n/a | 56 | 55 | 55 | 55 | 45 |
| Germany | n/a | 62 | 57 | 56 | 61 | 51 |
| Great Britain | n/a | 74 | 69 | n/a | 76 | 75 |

Source: WirthlinWorldwide Surveys, except for June 2002 (Worldviews 2002 Report)

71%

OF AMERICANS SURVEYED THINK THE RESPONSE TO IRAQ CONSISTS MOSTLY OF U.S. INTERVENTION.

As is always the case, global public sentiment towards the U.S. is driven mainly by current events, so it's no wonder that U.S. reputation is on the decline in countries actively opposing war. According to a Gallup survey released earlier this month, approximately half of the citizens of the world were opposed to military action—among them, majorities in some coalition countries. The strongest opposition to military action was voiced in Argentina (83%), while majorities in France (74%) and Spain (60%) felt the same way. Even in Great Britain, a 51% majority opposed the war, says the Pew Global Attitudes Report. In fact, the only country outside the U.S. where a majority of citizens supported military action against Iraq was Australia (53%) (Gallup International Iraq Poll 2003).

Worth noting is the fact that recent public opinion polls show British opinion turning since the war began. One poll published this week indicates that 54% of the British population now supports Britain's participation in Iraq.

To explain America's waning global image in terms of current military action alone would provide an incomplete picture. The Pew Global Attitudes Report further indicated that a number of people throughout the world, especially in Europe and the Middle East, feel that the U.S. fails to consider the interests of their country when making international policies. It also showed that majorities in most countries think that U.S. policies contribute to the growing gap between rich and poor nations and feel that the United States does not do enough to

solve global problems.

Furthermore, the Bush Administration is highly unpopular in Europe. According to a study last year, less than two in five (38%) viewed the overall handling of foreign policy by the Bush administration as "excellent" or "good," while more than half (56%) said it was "fair" or "poor." Europeans gave similar marks for the Bush Administration's handling of the Arab-Israeli conflict, with only one in five rating it as "excellent" or "good." (Source: MORI, 4 September 2002).

U.S. ideas, customs and American ways of doing business are also perceived negatively throughout the world. A majority of citizens in nearly every country surveyed just prior to the commencement of hostilities felt that it was bad that American ideas and customs were spreading to their respective countries, with the strongest dissent in the Middle East (Egypt: 84%, Jordan: 82%, and Pakistan: 81%). While not as strongly, majorities in a number of other countries also indicated they dislike American ways of doing business, including citizens in France (73%), Turkey (59%), Germany (58%), and Canada (56%) (Pew Global Attitudes Report 2003).

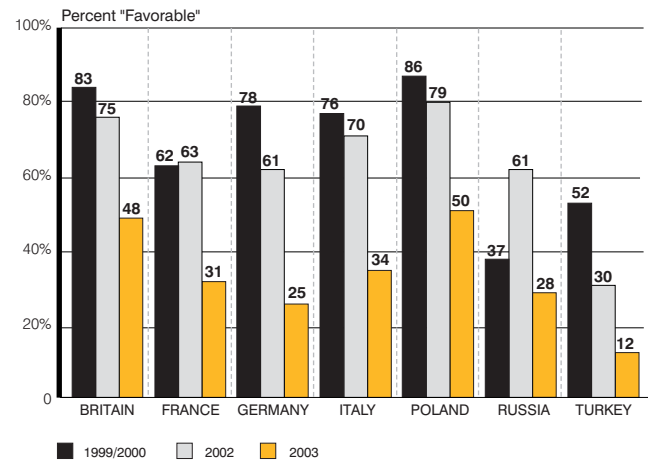
There is some indication that while U.S. global influence may be rejected, it is simultaneously embraced. Majorities in every country surveyed, except for Pakistan (42%) and Russia (41%), said they admire the United States for its technological and scientific advancements; and people in most countries said they enjoy American cultural icons such as U.S. movies, music and television shows.

73%

OF FRENCH SURVEYED SAY THEY DISLIKE AMERICAN WAYS OF DOING BUSINESS.

U.S. Image Plummetts

QUESTION: Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of the United States.
Source: 2003 Pew Global Attitudes Report



For better or for worse, perception of America's global influence is extremely high. The Worldviews 2002 report showed that on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 - not at all influential, 10 - extremely influential), on average, Europeans ranked the U.S. at an 8.9. What's more, Europeans said they do not seem to mind this strong influence—majorities in every country surveyed, except for France, indicated that it is desirable to some degree that the U.S. exert strong leadership in world affairs.

War with Iraq (in particular the outcome of this war) and U.S. foreign policies will obviously have a greater short-term effect on global public opinion than cultural icons and technological advancements. However, the key is whether



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current global attitudes are enduring or if they will dissipate quickly after the war, and second, what impact they will have on American business abroad.

PERSONALIZING THE STATISTICS: PERSPECTIVES FROM WIRTHLIN CONSULTANTS WORLDWIDE

In order to better understand global attitudes toward the U.S., and how those attitudes might affect business interchanges, we've asked the managing directors of our international offices to provide us with their perspectives on America's image in their region of the world, based on personal experience, media reports, and other sources. We present these perspectives in unedited and unvarnished form to capture the authors' true sentiments.

PERSPECTIVES FROM WIRTHLIN EUROPE UNITED KINGDOM
- Andrew Vincent, Managing Director, WirthlinEurope, Manchester, UK

The events of the past few months have uncovered some significant differences between the U.S. and its friends in Europe, including the UK. Inevitably this has caused people to question whether there is a wider Anti-American feeling.

My personal perspective from the UK, albeit gained from

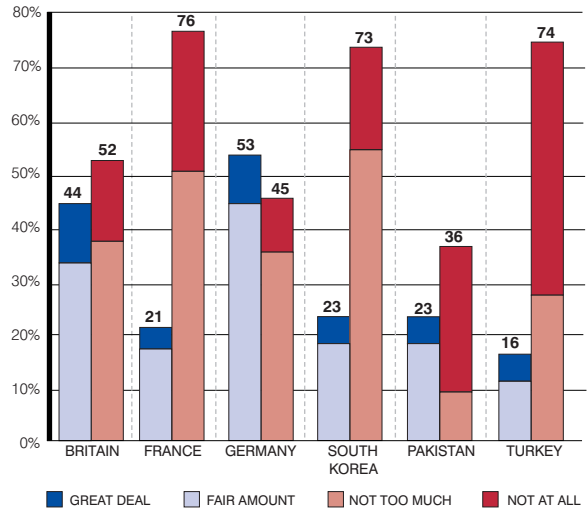
78%

OF TURKS SURVEYED SAY IT'S BAD THAT AMERICAN IDEAS AND CUSTOMS ARE SPREADING IN THEIR COUNTRY.

U.S. Interests?

QUESTION: In making international policy decisions, to what extent do you think the U.S. takes into account the interests of your country?

Source: Pew Research Center



a career spent understanding how people think, is that there have always been differences between us. These however were forgotten when the UK gave America total support for the tragic events of 9/11; but not forgotten for long.

On Saturday 16th February, at least half a million people took to the streets of London to protest a possible war—the biggest protest on anything, ever, in our history. Furthermore, in a vote in parliament on Wednesday 26th February, 122 of his own Labour MPs voted against Tony Blair's government—the largest number in the history of British politics ever to vote against a Prime Minister from within their own party. Polls earlier this year showed that many British people were against a war with Iraq (a poll for the BBC on February 12th showed that 45% felt we should play no part in military action even with a UN mandate). The U.S. news media may report on Blair's support

for Bush but clearly he does not represent the majority views of the British people. In less than eighteen months unequivocal support has turned into scepticism and in some cases outright opposition. My U.S. colleagues ask me "how has this happened?"

To understand why the British people have reacted the way they have to current events you have to understand their perspective on terrorism. In particular, their familiarity with terrorism, their resignation to what has become part of modern life and their recognition that these issues are far from straightforward. Visitors to the UK may notice that many of our major railway stations do not have rubbish bins. This is a legacy from the past, when too often bombs were placed in them and they became a security risk. Over the past thirty years, the UK has experienced numerous acts of terrorism and this is just one very simple every day example of how it affects us.

Disagreement over the current situation does not, I believe, imply a wider dissatisfaction with all things American. Rather, our relationship with the U.S. is complex, it works at many levels and like any relationship has peaks and troughs. There is currently immense dissatisfaction with the U.S. establishment. However, in February Eminem sold over 100,000 tickets in a matter of hours while between February and July the Vagina Monologues will be performed in 17 UK cities; living proof that we remain as interested as ever in America culture.

As a quizzical researcher interested in the future and how things will evolve, my interpretation of this is that the U.S. administration and those perceived to be connected to it (and this will include the major U.S. corporates) will continue to be viewed poorly. However, those who appear to put forward an alternative view are likely to continue to be popular. Against this background the logical inference for multi-nationals is for them to distance themselves from the U.S. establishment and to behave as global citizens.

In a global village we need a sense of community. The special relationship between the U.S. and the UK endures; it evolves and it changes. However, my sense is that the British people are not feeling any empathy—the relationship does not feel very special. Until this is seen to happen people in the UK will continue to feel disconnected from the U.S. leadership and its objectives. Whether this leads to a more permanent breakdown in our special relationship, only time will tell.

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
- Dori Stern, Director,
WirthlinEurope, Brussels,
Belgium

In many ways, Brussels can be considered a microcosm of Europe. It is the home of the European government and has an international community spanning every European nationality. As an American who has been living in Brussels for most of the past decade, I have been able to observe the peaks and troughs in European sentiment toward the U.S. and its leaders. The following observations will attempt to shed a bit of light on how the U.S. is viewed, both currently and historically.

Salmon Rushdie once wrote that anti-Americanism was an ideological enemy that the U.S. would find harder to defeat than militant Islam—a statement impossible to ignore today. Rushdie also explains that anti-Americanism contains a strong streak of hypocrisy, hating most what it desires most, and elements of self-loathing (“We hate America because it has made of itself what we cannot make of ourselves.”) This view is most commonly associated with the Muslim world, yet it would be hard to disassociate this with current Franco-American attitudes—two countries with histories so closely intertwined, yet now finding themselves on opposite sides of the world stage.

Anti-American sentiments, from subtle jokes to Molotov cocktails thrown into U.S. embassies, are nothing new in post-WWII Europe. There exists an underlying, long-term general anti-U.S. perception.

Separate from that are the specific peaks and troughs driven by current events. The hostilities and feelings in the late sixties and early seventies, during the second half of the Vietnam War, were a first major trough. Now we seemed to have reached a new one, driven in part by the following perceptions:

■ *The U.S. is perceived as a “young” society—and that is a two-sided coin.* On the positive side, it is ambitious and dynamic. On the negative side, it exhibits “adolescent” behaviour—irrational, materialistic, too quick to judge, superficial. This is most obvious in the ambivalent views about U.S. culture (Hollywood, jeans, burgers, rock): admired and copied, and, at the same time, despised. A similar dichotomy is true of U.S. economics, seen as efficient, but at the same time, unconsensual, anti-social and short-termed (the boom-bust cycles of stock markets are taken as confirmation).

■ *Negative views of the U.S. tend to be driven by feelings of a) an aggressive and inferior U.S. culture, b) an imperialist political and economic system, and c) controversial foreign policies.* These three elements are present in all parts of Europe but, perhaps, to different degrees in different regions. The South and Southwest (e.g. Spain, Italy, France) are more critical about U.S. culture and “imperialism,” and the North (e.g. Scandinavia, Germany) is more critical about foreign policy issues. Public opinion in the East is still in flux.



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■ *The U.S. is perceived as a monolith in its values, behaviour and actions.* The fact that there are other dimensions to U.S. culture, other political views, or that there are also critical voices within the U.S. against the unilateral approach towards policing the world, is barely recognised.

■ *“Gratitude” for the U.S. role in liberating Europe in WWII is waning.* This is due to both the passing of time and disappearance of the USSR as a perceived threat. While there is a feeling among some Europeans that they have a debt to America, it does not extend to blindly and forever applauding whatever the U.S. government decides. Europeans strongly feel that gratitude is not synonymous with automatic conformity or subservience. Additionally, with the disappearance of the USSR as a global player, the U.S. is seen as less important for guaranteeing security in Europe.

■ *There is clearly a distinction between the European perception of “the U.S.” and its citizens.* The former is both more negative and more volatile over time; in recent months, this gap has dramatically widened. Americans, as individuals, are not particularly suffering from a negative image perception.

■ *European views depend on the policy of the country and on perceptions of its political leaders.* The present leadership is extremely unpopular. President George W. Bush feeds into several stereotypes: the Texas cowboy (stupid, rough), the Texas politician

(relentless executor of prisoners), the son of money and influence (buying his way up the ladder), and the religious zealot (driven by God when starting his crusade). More than anything, Europeans simply cannot relate to this man, and often ask what is going on in Bush’s head. Bill Clinton, conversely, was much more popular—and by extension the U.S.—not only because of his more international orientation, but also because of Europe’s different view on standards of sexual morale.

■ *Social Envy may not be a factor.* There is no correlation between current level of resentment and size of income gap. In other words, the poorest Eastern Europeans are not more critical than the affluent West—in fact it’s the opposite.

■ *The present U.S. government started to be unpopular well before the Iraq crisis—soon after the new government took office.* The new government adopted an “isolationist” approach (radically breaking with the previous administration), refusing the Kyoto protocol on climate change, the International Criminal Court and the international consensus on helping crisis-hit emerging market economies. Additionally, few Europeans are happy with Washington’s apparent indifference to the plight of the Palestinians. While there was a great surge of sympathy and solidarity with the U.S. following 9/11, that has quickly faded in light of Bush’s unpopular policies.

■ *The present dispute over Iraq is based on the perception that the U.S. leaders are genuinely belligerent and seek war under any circumstances, without “good” reason.* Views differ in Europe to some degree as to the reasons for the U.S. stance (aggressive by nature, revenge for Bush senior, deflection from the failure of cracking down on bin Laden, oil interests, and so on.). But in general, there is serious scepticism about Washington’s motives and a lot of resentment for the fact that the U.S. feels it has the right to intervene anywhere. Europeans think that’s simply unfair.

Despite anti-American sentiment, there is a perplexing paradox—the U.S. may be hated but its culture in some respects has been welcomed and assimilated. For example, when France’s *Le Monde* Newspaper headlined “We are all American now” in reaction to the events of 9/11, BBC correspondent Jon Sopel commented that “there were younger people saying the Americans got what they deserve. They were also wearing Nike trainers, Levi jeans and Gap tops.”

Overall, however, anti-Americanism has swept so strongly throughout Europe, that public support of European officials who side with the U.S. suffers. An opinion poll taken in Britain in February 2003 gave Tony Blair his lowest-ever rating, with 55% saying they disapproved of him, and only 35% saying they approved. Similarly, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, who was re-elected in March 2000 with an absolute majority, has suffered a similar turn of the tide with two thirds of his own party’s supporters opposing war.

PERSPECTIVES FROM
WIRTHLIN ASIA PACIFIC

HONG KONG

- Vincent Breglio, Managing
Director WirthlinAsiaPacific,
Hong Kong

I have spent only nine years in Asia, speak Mandarin well enough to get myself in a lot of trouble on occasion, and grew up in a conservative WASP environment. Sadly, like most of us, I am a prisoner of my own experience.

In my opinion, Hong Kong and Singapore are subject to three primary rational-emotional drivers that combine to form the basis for reactions to U.S. decisions—Asian economic dependency, U.S. moral superiority and U.S. military assertiveness.

Historically, economic dependence on the West, for financial assistance, trade and new technology has been a strong positive driver of response to U.S. policy. More recently (1998 to the present), reports of badly handled U.S. driven IMF interventions in places like Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia and Indonesia open serious questions about unwanted entanglements and demands forced by the U.S. as a condition to financial support. The spectacular failure of Global Crossing, Enron and other U.S. businesses has cast a pall over the trustworthiness and motives driving U.S. corporations. The once shining lights on the hill for Hong Kong and Singapore have been seriously tarnished.

For the last five years we have collected data among Asian financial executives working in Asian enterprises along the Pacific Rim. Over that time,

confidence in and reliance upon the U.S. as a source of financial assistance has diminished significantly. Simultaneously, confidence in and reliance on China for financial support has increased significantly. In my mind, American economic influence in this part of the world is on the wane (along with that of Japan) while China is fast becoming the economic center of Asia.

Still, economic dependence on the U.S. remains high, high enough under normal conditions to offset the negative reactions to U.S. moral “finger pointing” and America’s sometimes bizarre military escapades.

Most Asian governments tend to take offense at the frequent moralizing that goes on between them and the U.S. As Americans, we seem to love comparative data that shows which countries have the “freest” economies, the “best” civil liberties, the “strongest democracy”, and so on. Not only do we publish these things, we then proceed to tell those who do not perform up to our expectations just what they are doing wrong. When U.S. business could legitimately lay claim to the “light on the hill” label, this kind of moralizing was bad enough. Now, it is absolutely intolerable to many who can point to concentration camps of Afghani war prisoners and many other warts on our own noses.

Finally, whether it’s spy planes off the coast of China or missiles through their embassy window, most in this part of the world, shake their heads and wonder about the military assertiveness of the U.S.—particularly if you are Chinese.

Troops on the ground in the Philippines remind folks in Hong Kong and Singapore that your friendly U.S. military is only a few steps away. Many find that reassuring, but a growing number view it with some alarm. Numbers who view the U.S. as the world bully are growing steadily.

Much of how these three drivers play out over the next year or so depends on what happens in Iraq. Support for the war in Hong Kong and Singapore ranges from tepid to non-existent. From the perspective of many (more in Hong Kong than in Singapore) the U.S. is about to destroy a weak enemy without sufficient cause at an unacceptably high cost in human life.

A key question is: has doing business changed as a result of the cumulative impact of these three driving forces? The short answer is, on the surface—no. Economic dependency still rules. The U.S. dollar is still king. Asian businesspersons swallow their personal feelings when dollars and cents are on the table. So, it would be very hard for a Western businessperson to sense that the U.S. has a problem. American dollars are still highly sought after.

However, into the future, as China continues to assert its influence throughout the region; Iraq events materialize that shape impressions for the next several years; and Europe leverages its perceptual advantage as the kinder and gentler business partner. That indeed may change—and change comes very quickly throughout Asia.



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CHINA

- Su Liu, Deputy Managing Director, WirthlinAsiaPacific, Hong Kong



Americans tend to use **“What America has done for China”** as a bargaining tool, to their disadvantage...In doing so, they often do not realize that they...deeply offend Chinese people.

America and Americans

Being a native of the People’s Republic of China, I can affirm that America has been the first choice for hundreds and thousands Chinese when they consider to study, work or reside in another country, because it has an image of being open, fair, free and advanced. Similarly, Americans are the preferred people to do business or work with, because in general they are straightforward, professional, honest and fair.

However, it does not take long before such relationships with America and Americans reveal an arrogant and ignorant nation. George W. Bush’s “you are either with us or against us” is a typical statement of such arrogance.

What do I mean by that? I have met so many decent Americans who have genuinely believed that the American way of living and thinking is the way for all people. Such Americans have stereotypical impressions on China and Chinese people, and are often shocked when their good intentions are rejected or wrongly interpreted.

Americans tend to use “What America has done for China” as a bargaining tool, to their disadvantage. For example, many American investors assume that they provide China with valuable capital, advanced technology, employment opportunities, new life styles, world class management skills, community charity funds, disaster relief effort, and so on, and Chinese people should be

grateful for these. In doing so, they often do not realize that the superior position they take as a giver or, even worse, as a savior, in some cases, deeply offends Chinese people and makes them more alert on “what exactly do you get in doing us a favor”.

The arrogance hidden behind such superiority often defeats the purpose of the America companies in communicating a win-win position with the Chinese government, business community and people. As a result, the companies who invest a lot in China may not gain a lot of trust and respect from the Chinese people in return. This disrespect is potentially damaging, because once other moneymaking alternatives become available, only those who are trusted and respected retain and increase their customers.

9/11 and U.S. Military Action

I still clearly remember the day when I heard of the news from TV broadcasting. At that very moment, for the first time in my life, I did not feel that I was CHINESE mourning for people who died in AMERICA. As it was for many other Chinese, nationality and country meant nothing at that moment—even people who usually only care about their three meals a day, stopped and mourned for what had happened.

Despite the tragedies of 9/11, however, the sentiment is quite different today. This is especially the case for U.S. endeavors against Iraq. The last time the U.S. engaged in war in Iraq, it was carried out as a duty on behalf of justice and truth. This time it seems

that the U.S. is acting out of reasons we do not understand or agree with.

The U.S. decision to go to war has deep implications in this region.

- It will induce constitutional crisis about the legitimacy of the UN Security Council and therefore will worry Asian countries that more non-authorized military actions will proceed against popular opinions.

- It may introduce more instability to the region because it only proves that you can solve an issue the way you want if you are militarily strong enough.

- To us, the most relevant implication might be the negative impressions it may endorse to America and American businesses, as some prestigious companies may benefit directly from the war. When Asians have no choice but to do business with U.S., they may put value differences under the table as long as the money on surface is attractive enough. At the same time, if more profitable trading opportunities arise among more peaceful partners, Asians may switch their business partner. Who would not rather make the same money from a pleasant partner than an aggressive one?

AUSTRALIA

- *Simon Berger, Consultant
WirthlinAsiaPacific, Canberra,
Australia*

As one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the world, Australia cannot really claim to have a unique, or exclusive bond with any one country. The threat to our security posed by World War II and the onset of the Cold War, however, saw our foreign policy become increasingly focused on maintaining a strong allegiance with the U.S. This was symbolically highlighted with a declaration by Australia's Prime Minister in 1966, in response to an escalation of the conflict in Vietnam, that Australia would go "all the way with LBJ."

Since that time, Australia's relationship with America could be likened to a big brother-little brother scenario.

Like a brash little brother, we have at times felt a psychological need to step out from America's shadow, assert our independence, attempt to "upstage" our larger and stronger rival and generally "be our own person." On occasion, this has led to many of us displaying an obstinate attitude toward America. As is the case within many families, spats have often broken out over "symbolic" issues that, against the bigger picture of world affairs, could be considered almost trivial.

For example in 1999, a decision taken by the U.S. Administration to impose tariffs on the imports of lamb raised our national ire. Mirroring popular sentiment on its front page, the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper depicted Bill Clinton as a wolf in sheep's clothing under the

headline "Damn Ewe." At the end of several pages of diatribe under the title "The Great Lamb Betrayal," readers were urged to jam White House fax machines with "Lambograms." (source: *The Daily Telegraph* 09/07/99)

On a more positive note, competition between the U.S. and Australia has brought about perhaps the greatest outpouring of nationalist sentiment I can recall. In 1983, our yacht, *Australia 2*, came from behind to make us the first nation to wrest the America's Cup from its host in 132 years. Despite the fact that most Australians would not have ordinarily cared about yacht racing, this David and Goliath struggle against an opposing boat (*Liberty*) syndicate (the New York Yacht Club) and skipper (Dennis Conner), who came to epitomise our perception of the arrogant and "ugly American," so captured our national imagination that when we finally triumphed against the odds, the entire country went into a state of total euphoria.

On the other hand, Australia's position as America's little brother means that we also (consciously, or unconsciously) see America as a role model and seek to mimic its behaviour. This is evidenced, in particular, by our sharing of America's unyielding commitment to the principles of freedom, justice and democracy and by Australians' tendency to completely devour American popular culture.

Most importantly, when it matters most, or when America is under threat, we feel a particular sense of loyalty and obligation to be "at one" with the U.S. and do what we can to

jump to her aide. There was no better illustration of this than in the wake of September 11, when, in addition to the acts of kindness and friendship displayed by individual Australians, the Prime Minister invoked Article IV of the ANZUS Treaty—a security pact between the U.S., Australia and New Zealand (our little brother). This act symbolically said what almost all Australians were thinking: we're right there beside you!

Is Australia right there beside America at present?

Officially, yes. Along with Great Britain, we were the only country to have sent troops to the gulf in preparedness for conflict before the war began. In recent months our Prime Minister, John Howard, has passionately argued the case for being prepared to back the U.N.'s ultimatum to Iraq with the credible threat of force if Saddam Hussein does not disarm. In a recent address to the nation, Prime Minister Howard stated "unapologetically" that our alliance with the U.S. is a factor in his position and that "Australians should always remember that no nation is more important to our long term security than the U.S." (Source: Address to the National Press Club 03/13/03)

In contrast, the opposition parties have been critical of the U.S. approach to the point where, last month, the U.S. ambassador to Australia broke with a convention of staying out of domestic politics, to accuse the Labor Party leader, Simon Crean, of making a "rank appeal to anti-Americanism." (source: *The Bulletin*, 02/12/03)



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The split in the political arena is matched by a similar divide in public opinion. Certainly, the most vocal noises on the subject come from the sizeable anti-war movement, whose voice reached a crescendo over the weekend of February 15-16 when as many as 500,000 people (out of a population of 20 million) joined anti-war demonstrations across the country (source: Sydney Morning Herald 2/21/03). Undoubtedly, an unwillingness to be America's "lackey" is one of a number of factors fuelling this opposition to, or uncertainty about, war.

On the other hand, a recent poll across 41 countries by Gallup International showed Australians as being the most in favor of military action against Iraq (with 12% supporting unilateral action and 56% supporting action with UN sanction) and with the highest percentage (52%) of people saying their country should support military conflict against Iraq if it goes ahead. (source Gallup International, Iraq 2003 survey).

As in most countries however, public opinion is probably fluid and could change considerably as events unfold. Ultimately, public opinion will crystallise with the benefit of hindsight. Whether the Australian public looks back on these times with pride about what the U.S. and Australia went through together and enhanced respect for the big brother who set a worthy example, or as a bad patch in our strained relationship, time will tell.

INTERPRETING WHAT THE WORLD SEES

The commentaries and survey data presented in this report may be hard to swallow for some Americans. While we understand the sensitive and controversial nature of such opinions, we also understand that they represent how some observers from outside the U.S. view the U.S. And while for each negative perception there exists a positive one, understanding the gamut of perceptions toward the America and its citizens can help companies and leaders make informed and effective decisions to strengthen their reputation among target audiences throughout the world.

53%

OF AUSTRALIANS SURVEYED SAID AUSTRALIA SHOULD SUPPORT MILITARY CONFLICT AGAINST IRAQ.



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