

Extend Your Listening / What's for English Attitudes toward America and China



source: [The Economist](#)

Today I'm going to be talking about some research on views people have about China and America. Everybody has some kind of opinion about America or China. How could they not? They are both such big countries.

America has a huge amount of influence as a global superpower. And such a lot of influence in these institutions such as the world bank, the IMF, the UN. America dominates trade to a large degree. It's been carrying out wars in the middle east and other places so almost everyone has an opinion about the united states.

But China's also been growing. China has been growing faster than any other country in history. And China's been increasing the size of its navy, its

armed forces. China has nuclear weapons as well. And China has been searching the Earth for raw materials that it needs in order for it to keep growing. So pretty much every country has had some kind of relationship with China as well. So everybody has some sort of attitude toward America and toward China.

There's an organization called the Pew Research Center, and they have completed a research project called the Global Attitudes Survey. It measured the attitudes people have toward their own countries as well as others. It also measured the attitudes people in these countries have toward the USA and China. The results were interesting enough for the Economist magazine to make a chart based on them.

So let's take a look. Basically, in the graphic, we see two tables. One says, "Opinion of United States," and the other says, "Opinion of China." Each table shows us the percentage of favorable opinion and unfavorable opinion that people in these countries have toward the United States and toward China.

Let's take a look at South Korea, for example. It's highly favorable toward the US. 80% of opinion is favorable and 20% is unfavorable. With regard to China, South Koreans lean toward the unfavorable side. 60% of opinion is unfavorable and about 40% is favorable.

Before I go any further, perhaps I should tell you how they carried out the research. I believe Pew asked just one simple question: Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of the United States. (and then it asked the same question for China).

If the answer was either very favorable or somewhat favorable, the response was marked as "favorable." If the answer was either very unfavorable or somewhat unfavorable, the response was marked as "unfavorable."

What we're looking at is the percentage of people who answered favorable or unfavorable to this one question.

In some countries the attitude toward the US is a mirror image of the attitude toward China. (A mirror image means that it is the exact opposite). Pakistan has a quite unfavorable opinion of the United States. People who answered favorable to this question were only about 20% of the survey takers. On the other hand, about 50% of people had an unfavorable opinion of the United States. If you look at Pakistan's attitude toward China, you can

see that 80% answered favorably toward China, and just about 5% had an unfavorable opinion of China.

So. Pakistan: highly favorable toward China and highly unfavorable toward the United States. On the other hand, they are less than 20% favorable toward the USA and about 75% unfavorable.

In other countries the attitudes are not so simple to characterize.

Look at Nigeria. On one hand it has a very highly favorable opinion of the USA: 80% favorable. And just 18% unfavorable. But unlike Pakistan, it's definitely not a mirror image when it comes to their opinion toward China, because 18% percent of Nigerians are favorable toward China and about 18% were unfavorable toward China. It seems Nigerians have a very favorable opinion of the United States, but they just don't know very much about China to have an opinion one way or another. Indeed, 60% of the Nigerians must have chosen not to answer the question.

A very strange case is that of Kenya. It's highly, HIGHLY favorable toward both the USA AND China. Almost 100% favorable toward the United States and about 85% or so favorable toward China. The Economist magazine suggested that maybe it was because Obama's father is Kenyan and, as in Pakistan, China's been making investments there and purchasing Kenyan products.

Turkey is the exact opposite of Kenya. Most Turks are highly unfavorable toward both the USA and China. Almost 80% of Turks feel unfavorable toward the US and over 60% feel unfavorable toward China. I can't tell you if that has to do with recent events or longer historical trends.

With regard to some countries, perhaps the response is what you would expect. The Japanese are about 65% favorable and 35% unfavorable toward the US; and about 30% favorable to 70% unfavorable toward China. Despite some recent tensions, the Japanese do continue to support the US-Japan alliance and relationship. And while economic and cultural ties are growing with China, there remain a number of reasons for the Japanese to feel uneasy. Chinese nuclear weapons, China's support for North Korea. The visits of Japanese prime ministers to the shrine memorializing the dead Japanese soldiers and the very different official interpretations the countries have toward incidents that happened during the second world war. All of this and more may lead to the uneasiness reflected in the mostly unfavorable attitude toward China.

With regard to Europe, you would think that Europeans are becoming more and more unfavorable toward the US. They didn't appreciate the treatment of Europe during the Bush administration and they may blame the US for the current economic problems. But in fact, the Europeans remain much more favorable toward the US than unfavorable. On the other hand, Europeans are quite favorable toward China as well. Britains are about 65% favorable toward the US; on the other hand, they are around 55% favorable toward China. French are around 70% favorable toward the US and 40% favorable toward China. I never would have guessed that the French have a more favorable opinion toward the US than the British. Interesting. Germany, Poland and Spain also are highly favorable toward the US.

And Russia... Now this is interesting... Which countries would you think the Russians favor? Now think about it.... The long history of the cold war. Lots of tension between George Bush and Vladimir Putin. The media in both countries are often quite critical of each other.... But Russia is equal in its favorable attitude toward both the US and China. 60% of Russians have favorable attitudes toward both countries. And their unfavorable attitudes are equally low.

I'm also surprised by the attitudes in Latin America. In Latin America, the US is that giant powerful to the North. (The giant powerful neighbor that doesn't even speak Spanish. I might have thought that the attitudes might be unfavorable toward the US. In fact, like the Europeans, the Latin Americans generally have positive attitudes toward the US as well as positive attitudes toward China.

The situation seems rather different in Asia. China is the big neighbor, and many countries are in quite close proximity to China. But, unlike Latin America, most Asian countries are more unfavorable than favorable toward China, their giant neighbor. Only Indonesia is somewhat different. In Indonesia, they are 60% favorable toward the US and 60% favorable toward China. That's the most favorable opinion toward China in Asia.

To end with... Where are attitudes overwhelmingly negative toward the US? That would be the Middle East. Even though the US has pretty good political relationships with Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey and Pakistan - even alliances in some cases - the people are pretty negative in their attitudes toward the US. I suppose this has a lot to do with the United States' support for Israel as well as some other policies they don't understand. On the other hand, these people in the Middle East are quite favorable toward China.

