



Is America Still the Leader of the Free World?

For Immediate release: Friday, September 22, 2017

Many Americans think the United States is still the leader of the free world, but most do not perceive the global prominence of the United States to be growing, according to an [Exclusive Third Rail with OZY-Marist Poll](#), commissioned by WGBH Boston and OZY Media for the new PBS prime-time, cross-platform debate program *Third Rail with OZY*. Americans also exhibit lackluster confidence in the United States' ability to continue to be a leader in world affairs, marking a notable shift in public opinion over the last four decades.

The national survey was conducted by The Marist Poll in advance of this week's *Third Rail with OZY* episode, which asks "Should America Be the World's Cop?," airing Friday, September 22, 2017 at 8:30pm ET (check local listings) and streaming on pbs.org/thirdrail. *Third Rail with OZY*, hosted by Emmy Award®-winning journalist Carlos Watson, is a seven-part cross-platform series. Each week, expert and celebrity guests engage with Watson to debate a timely, provocative topic, incorporating audience and social media input and exclusive national polls.

Although more than two-thirds of Americans (67%) consider the United States to still be the leader of the free world, only 20% of residents nationally—down from 31% in a 1978 ABC News/Harris Survey—think the United States plays a more important role as a world leader. Nearly four in 10 adults (37%) believe the United States' role on the world stage is less important than it was a decade ago; 39% assert the nation functions in just as important a role as it has.

Partisan differences are present in both findings. While 86% of Republicans and 72% of independents say the United States remains the leader of the free world, only half of Democrats (50%) agree. Forty-four percent of Democrats think the United States has lost its leadership position on the world stage and 6% are unsure.

Democrats (53%) are also more likely than Republicans (23%) and Independents (38%) to consider the United States to be *less* important globally than it was ten years ago. However, Republicans and Independents do not perceive the United States to be exerting greater global influence. Pluralities of Republicans (42%) and Independents (45%) say the United States' role is neither more nor less prominent internationally than it previously was.

Americans' confidence in the United States' ability to continue to be a leader in world affairs is waning. Thirty-seven percent of U.S. adults, down from 49% in a 1983 Roper Report, are very confident that the nation will remain in the fore of international leadership. Forty-four percent are only fairly confident that the United States will retain its leadership status, and 18% are not at all confident. Again, opinion splinters along party lines. Sixty-two percent of Republicans

*All references to the survey must be sourced as "Exclusive *Third Rail with OZY*-Marist Poll"

report they are very confident in the United States to be a global leader while pluralities of Democrats (49%) and Independents (47%) say they are only fairly confident in America's ability to do so.

"The world is at America's doorstep this week, as 140 international heads of state gather at the U.N.," says Denise Dilanni, series creator and Executive-in-Charge of *Third Rail with OZY*. "With conflicts across the globe and natural disasters at our borders, what is our nation's role in the world? On *Third Rail* tomorrow, we'll debate this very timely question, 'Should America Be the World's Cop?'"

Americans' support for the United Nations is nearly as strong as it was fifty years ago. Seventy-five percent of residents nationally, compared with 81% in a 1967 Harris Survey, believe the U.N. is worthwhile while 18% do not. Seven percent are unsure. Most Democrats (88%) and Independents (82%) value the U.N. Fewer Republicans (59%) agree. Americans under 45 years of age (83%) are more likely than older residents (69%) to think the United Nations is a worthwhile organization.

A majority of Americans doubt President Donald Trump's ability to do the right thing regarding world affairs. Fifty-six percent don't have very much confidence (21%) or have no confidence at all (35%) in the president's ability on the world stage. In contrast, during President Barack Obama's first term in office, 74% of U.S. residents, according to a 2009 Pew Global Attitudes Project Poll, had a lot (48%) or some confidence (26%) in the former president to do the right thing in the realm of foreign affairs. Forty-four percent of Americans currently say they have a lot of confidence (23%) or some confidence (21%) in President Trump to do what is best for Americans internationally. By more than four to one, Republicans (84%) are more likely than Democrats (18%) to have, at least, some confidence in President Trump to do the right thing in world affairs.

More than six in ten Americans (62%) say President Donald Trump makes them feel less safe about what is happening in the world. Thirty-two percent say the president makes them feel safer, and 6% are unsure. Of note, while 66% of Republicans say the president makes them feel safer, a notable 26% report they feel less secure about world events under the Trump administration.

For more on Third Rail with OZY:

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For more on The Marist Poll:

maristpoll.marist.edu

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About The Marist Poll

Founded in 1978, The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion (MIPO) is a survey research center at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. The Marist Poll has conducted

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independent research on public priorities, elections, and a wide variety of social issues. Through the regular public release of surveys, MIPO has built a legacy of independence, reliability, and accuracy. Its results are featured in print and electronic media throughout the world.

About Third Rail with OZY

Third Rail with OZY is a co-production of WGBH Boston and OZY Media. Host: Carlos Watson. Executive in Charge: Denise Dilanni. Executive Producers: Eugenia Harvey and Cameo George. Funding is provided by Corporation for Public Broadcasting and PBS. Exclusive *Third Rail with OZY* poll conducted by The Marist Poll, Marist College. Special thanks to collaborator The Conversation. Social media integration by Telescope.

About WGBH Boston

WGBH Boston is one of America's preeminent public broadcasters and the largest producer of PBS broadcast and digital content, including *Frontline*, *NOVA*, *American Experience*, *Masterpiece*, *Antiques Roadshow*, *Arthur*, as well as other children's, primetime, and lifestyle series. WGBH also is a major supplier of programming for public radio, and a leader in educational multimedia for the classroom, supplying content to PBS LearningMedia, a free national broadband service for teachers and students. WGBH is a pioneer in technologies and services that make media accessible to those with hearing or visual impairments. WGBH has been recognized with hundreds of honors: Emmys, Peabodys, duPont-Columbia Awards and Oscars. More information at wgbh.org.

About OZY Media

With 25 million monthly unique users and 2 million subscribers, OZY brings readers "the new and the next," offering 100% original content, with a focus on the future, via unique OZY News, OZY Magazine, OZY TV and OZY Events products. Called "the new media magnet for the news hungry" by Fortune magazine, OZY's in-depth and high-quality journalism has attracted a number of high-profile media partners including The New York Times, NPR, PBS NewsHour, TED, The Financial Times, The Huffington Post and many more, as well as guest editors including Bill Gates, President Bill Clinton, and Prime Minister Tony Blair. Founded in 2013 by Emmy award winning journalist Carlos Watson and co-founder Samir Rao, the OZY team is based in Mountain View, CA and backed by leading Silicon Valley investors including Laurene Powell Jobs, Ron Conway, David Drummond, Larry Sonsini and Dan Rosensweig and a significant investment from publishing giant Axel Springer.

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