

**SOURCE:** Gallup Poll News Service

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March 07, 2002

## Americans Believe Muslim Antipathy Toward United States Based on Misinformation

Most see United States acting in good faith toward Islamic world

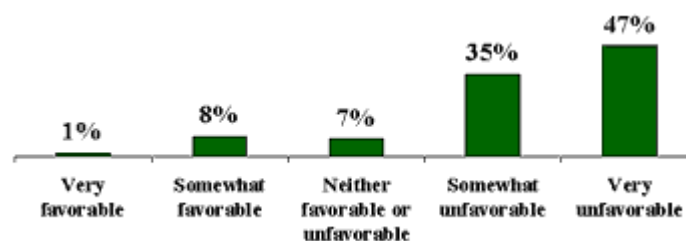
by Lydia Saad

### GALLUP NEWS SERVICE

PRINCETON, NJ -- According to a new CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll in the United States, Americans have the distinct impression that the Muslim world harbors a negative image of the United States, but they think that this perspective is unfounded. Most Americans believe the United States is acting in a fair manner toward the Muslim world, both culturally and politically. Americans also believe Muslim enmity toward the United States springs from misinformation presented by government and the media in the Islamic world, rather than as a result of U.S. policies and actions.

Eight in 10 Americans perceive that people in Muslim countries view the United States unfavorably:

**Americans' Perception of How Muslim Countries View the United States**



March 1-3, 2002

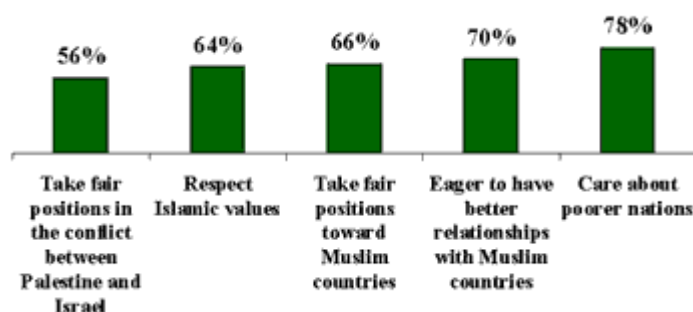
For the most part, Americans deny that these negative perceptions are based on reality. Indeed, in the March 1-3 survey, Americans had few doubts that their own nation behaved in exemplary fashion on a number of factors related to U.S.-Muslim relations. The vast majority of Americans believe that the United States, along with other Western nations, care about poorer nations (78% of Americans associate the United States with this statement), are eager to have better relations with Muslim countries (70%), take fair positions toward Muslim countries

(66%), and respect Islamic values (64%).

All of these positive sentiments can be sharply contrasted with Muslims' much more critical views of Western nations on these items, according to Gallup's recent polling in nine predominately Islamic countries. In Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Iran -- as well as in several other countries -- Gallup found minimal agreement with the statements that Western nations care about poorer nations, respect Islamic values, or take fair positions toward Arab or Muslim countries.

A majority of Americans (56%) also believe that the United States and other Western nations "take fair positions in the conflict between Palestine and Israel." This statement about Western nations' conduct was widely disagreed with by respondents in the predominately Muslim countries surveyed by Gallup.

**Policies the Public Associates With the United States and Other Western Countries**



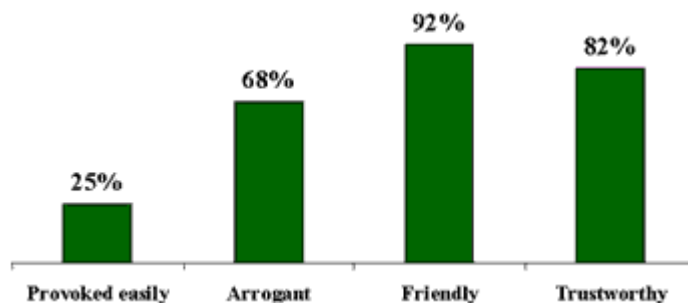
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**Americans Ascribe Mostly Positive Characteristics to U.S. International Behavior**

Similarly, Americans widely characterize the United States as being "trustworthy" and "friendly," and reject the idea that their country is easily provoked. Gallup's recent polling in predominately Islamic countries finds almost exactly opposite attitudes regarding these characterizations of the United States. For example, only 5% of adults in Lebanon and 3% in Indonesia consider the United States "friendly." Even in Turkey, where favorable attitudes of the United States prevail, fewer than one in five considers the United States to be either friendly or trustworthy. In most of the nine countries, a majority of the citizens believe the United States is easily provoked.

Only on the issue of "arrogance" do Americans and the residents of Islamic countries surveyed by Gallup generally agree. A majority of U.S. adults, as well as a majority of adults in all of the predominately Muslim countries surveyed except for Turkey, say the United States is arrogant.

**Characteristics That Americans Think Apply to the United States**



March 1-3, 2002

Given these strongly positive views that Americans have of their own country, it is not surprising to find that 78% of Americans believe Muslim hostility toward the United States springs from misinformation presented by government and the media in the Islamic world, rather than as a result of U.S. policies and actions.

**Negative Feelings Are Mutual**

Americans' own perception of the Islamic world is also more negative than positive, with 41% reporting an unfavorable opinion of Muslim countries and only 24% holding a favorable opinion. One third are neutral, saying their opinion is neither favorable nor unfavorable. (Americans' ratings of the nine predominately Islamic countries included in the Gallup poll of Islamic nations show considerable variation, however).

It is also clear that skepticism between the United States and the Muslim world is mutual. While 92% of Americans perceive their own country as friendly, only 31% and 29% describe Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, respectively, this way. Even fewer -- 20% and 17% respectively -- say these countries are trustworthy.

**Are Muslim Attitudes Relevant to Americans?**

In the new survey of U.S. adults, a majority told Gallup that what the Islamic world thinks of the United States is at least moderately important to the United States. However, given the widely touted theory that Muslim resentments toward the West are what motivate al Qaeda-based and other Muslim terrorists, it may be surprising that only a third of Americans (31%) say that what people in Muslim countries think of the United States matters "a great deal," identical to the number who say it matters "not much" or not at all. A little more than a third of Americans (37%) fall between these extremes, saying that the Muslim perspective matters a moderate amount to the United States.

The U.S. Gallup poll records about the same level of pessimism regarding the prospects for improved Western-Muslim understanding as was evident in the recent Islamic study. When asked to indicate how long it will take before a better understanding between the two cultures is achieved, a majority of Americans (53%) tend toward the view that the time will never come. Only 10% expect it to come fairly soon, while 37% are neither optimistic nor pessimistic in their outlook.

**Survey Methods**

Results for the U.S. population are based on telephone interviews with 863 national adults, aged 18 years and older, conducted March 1-3, 2002. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the margin of sampling error is + / - 4 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

*In general, please tell me whether your opinion of Muslim countries is very favorable, somewhat favorable, neither favorable nor unfavorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable.*

	<b>Very favorable</b>	<b>Somewhat favorable</b>	<b>Neither favorable nor un-favorable</b>	<b>Somewhat un-favorable</b>	<b>Very un-favorable</b>	<b>No opin</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	2%	22%	33%	27%	14%	2%

*In general, do you think people in Muslim countries have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, neither favorable*

*nor unfavorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the United States?*

	<b>Very favorable</b>	<b>Somewhat favorable</b>	<b>Neither favorable nor un-favorable</b>	<b>Somewhat un-favorable</b>	<b>Very un-favorable</b>	<b>No opin</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	1%	8%	7%	35%	47%	2%

*How much does it matter to you personally what people in Muslim countries think of the U.S. -- a great deal, a moderate amount, not much, or not at all?*

**BASED ON -- 444 -- NATIONAL ADULTS IN FORM A; ±5 PCT. PTS.**

	<b>Great deal</b>	<b>Moderate amount</b>	<b>Not much</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	24%	29%	24%	23%	*

*How much does it matter to the U.S. what people in Muslim countries think of the U.S. -- a great deal, a moderate amount, not much, or not at all?*

**BASED ON -- 419 -- NATIONAL ADULTS IN FORM B; ±5 PCT. PTS.**

	<b>Great deal</b>	<b>Moderate amount</b>	<b>Not much</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	31%	37%	19%	12%	1%

*People say different things about different cultures. Which of the following statements, if any, do you associate with the United States and other Western nations? How about -- [RANDOM ORDER]?*

**A. They care about poorer nations**

	<b>Yes, associate</b>	<b>No, do not</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	78%	20%	2%

**B. They take fair positions in the conflict between Palestine and Israel**

	<b>Yes, associate</b>	<b>No, do not</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	56%	36%	8%

**C. They respect Islamic values**

	<b>Yes, associate</b>	<b>No, do not</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
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2002 Mar 1-3	64%	32%	4%
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**D. They take fair positions toward Muslim countries**

	<b>Yes, associate</b>	<b>No, do not</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	66%	28%	6%

**E. The people are free to control their own lives and futures**

	<b>Yes, associate</b>	<b>No, do not</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	79%	18%	3%

**F. They are eager to have better relationships with Muslim countries**

	<b>Yes, associate</b>	<b>No, do not</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	70%	27%	3%

*Which of the following statements, if any, do you associate with Muslim countries? How about -- [random order]?*

**A. They respect Western or American values**

	<b>Yes, associate</b>	<b>No, do not</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	13%	82%	5%

**B. The people are free to control their own lives and futures**

	<b>Yes, associate</b>	<b>No, do not</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	17%	80%	3%

**C. They are eager to have better relationships with the Western world**

	<b>Yes, associate</b>	<b>No, do not</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	27%	68%	5%

*People have different views and perceptions of different countries. As I read off a number of descriptions, please tell me whether you think that statement applies to the United States, or not? How about -- [RANDOM ORDER]?*

**A. Trustworthy**

	<b>Yes, applies</b>	<b>No, does not apply</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	82%	16%	2%

**B. Friendly**

	<b>Yes, applies</b>	<b>No, does not apply</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	92%	7%	1%

**C. Arrogant**

	<b>Yes, applies</b>	<b>No, does not apply</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	68%	30%	2%

**D. Provoked easily**

	<b>Yes, applies</b>	<b>No, does not apply</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	25%	74%	1%

*Now, as I read off a number of descriptions, please tell me whether you think that statement applies to Saudi Arabia, or not? How about -- [random order]?*

**BASED ON -- 444 -- NATIONAL ADULTS IN FORM A; ±5 PCT. PTS.**

**A. Trustworthy**

	<b>Yes, applies</b>	<b>No, does not apply</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	20%	75%	5%

**B. Friendly**

	<b>Yes, applies</b>	<b>No, does not apply</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	31%	63%	6%

**C. Arrogant**

	<b>Yes, applies</b>	<b>No, does not apply</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
2002 Mar 1-3	68%	25%	7%

*Now, as I read off a number of descriptions, please tell me whether you think that statement applies to Pakistan,*



at all



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