



An initiative of:

ANGUS REID  INSTITUTE
Public Interest Research

Kremlin Contradiction: Despite Trump's 'respect', two-thirds of Americans view Putin negatively

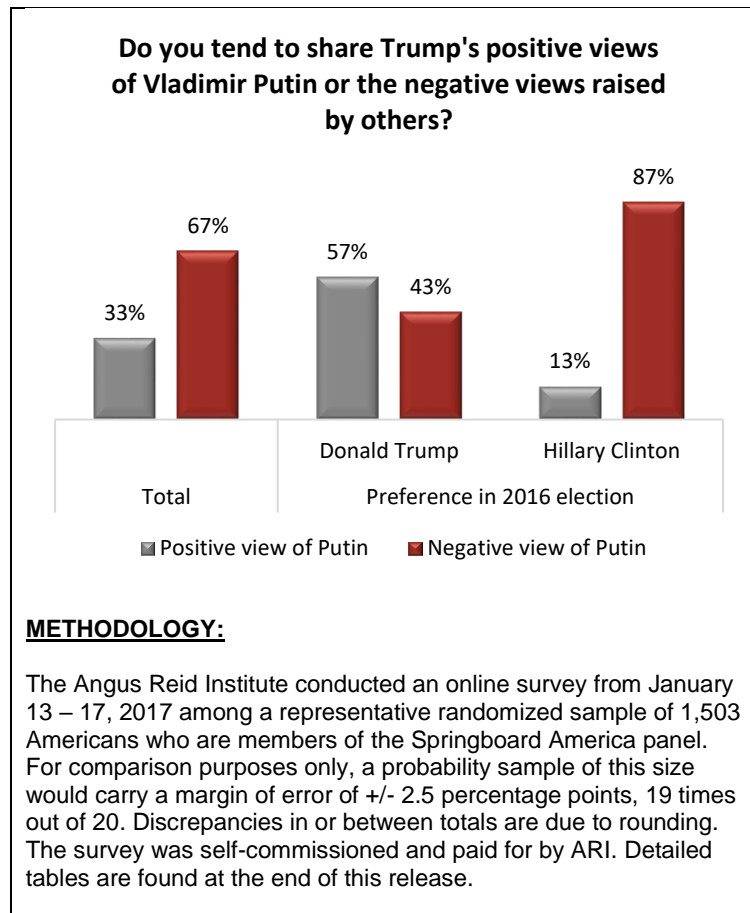
February 10, 2017 – “Very smart.” “A great leader.” At times, both during the election and since taking office, President Donald Trump has been effusive in his praise of Russian President Vladimir Putin. This was again the case during a pre-Super Bowl sit-down with Fox News anchor Bill O’Reilly. Trump reiterated his “[respect](#)” for Putin and remained open to pursuing closer ties with a former cold war foe.

A new public opinion poll of more than 1,500 Americans – part of the Angus Reid Institute’s [America Project](#) – finds little appetite for warming relations to Russia, especially among Trump’s political opponents, but also among a significant portion of those who supported him in the 2016 election.

More than two-thirds of Americans say they have a negative view of Putin. Further, they are divided on whether Trump’s overtures toward Moscow are ultimately in America’s best interests. This division falls out along partisan lines, with Trump supporters overwhelmingly believing his efforts serve America, while his opponents overwhelmingly believe this is the wrong approach.

Key Findings:

- Overall, two-thirds of Americans (67%) say they have a negative view of the Russian President, though a majority (57%) of those who supported Trump in the election hold a positive view
- Americans are split – along partisan lines – as to whether their new president is acting in his own interests or the country’s in pursuing closer ties with Russia and Putin



CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org
Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org



An initiative of:

ANGUS REID  INSTITUTE
Public Interest Research

Page 2 of 14

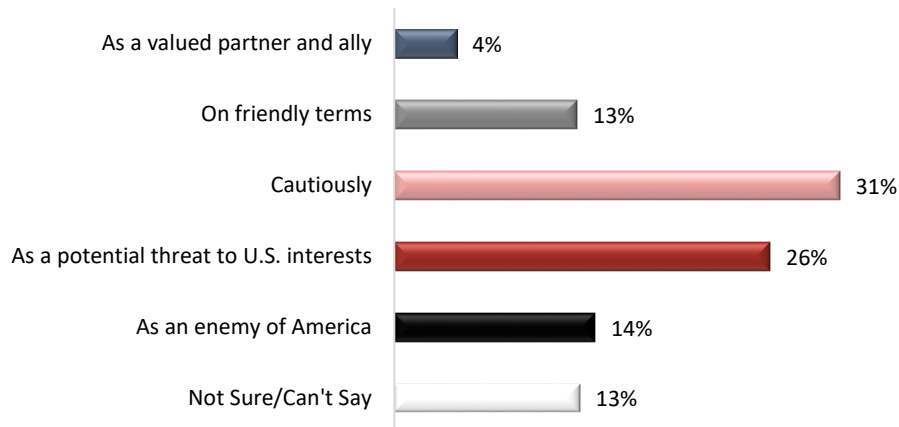
- Russia ranks last on a list of countries Americans would like their new president to approach on friendly terms, alongside China and Saudi Arabia. Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia top the list, followed by European allies France, Italy, and Germany.

Americans skeptical about Russia, Putin

One of the most controversial – but ultimately successful – aspects of Donald Trump’s election campaign was his steadfast support for opening friendly relations with Russia. Indeed, he and President Putin were said to have had a productive one-hour conversation in late January, as a first step in re-forming a relationship “in need of repair”. Americans, for their part, view the relationship with a great deal of uncertainty.

When asked, the largest segments of Americans would rather see the Kremlin engaged cautiously (31%) or treated as a threat to US interests (26%). While just under one-in-five Americans say the administration should approach Russia either as a valued partner (4%) or on friendly terms (13%).

How do you think the incoming Trump administration should approach Russia?



Views on Russia appear to owe in large part to opinion on its leader, Vladimir Putin. While Trump has praised Putin as a “great leader” and gone so far as to brush off questions about the killing of political opponents and journalists in Russia by saying “our country does plenty of killing too”, GOP stalwarts remain highly critical of Putin; indeed, the Republican-controlled Senate has opened an investigation into Russian interference in the U.S. election.

Asked which view of Putin they’re more likely to hold, two-thirds of Americans (67%) choose the negative. Among Trump supporters, however, a small majority (57%) say they have a positive view of Russia’s president:

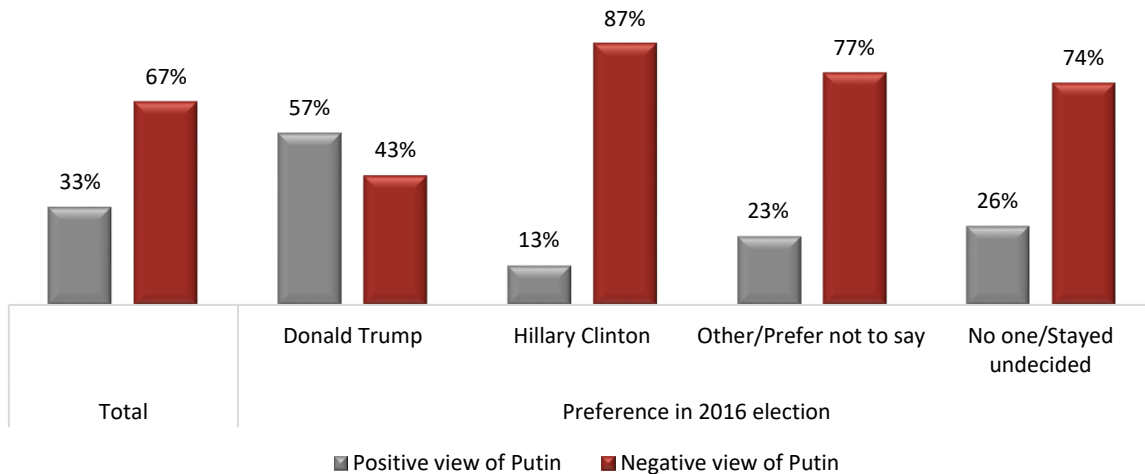
CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org
Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org



An initiative of:

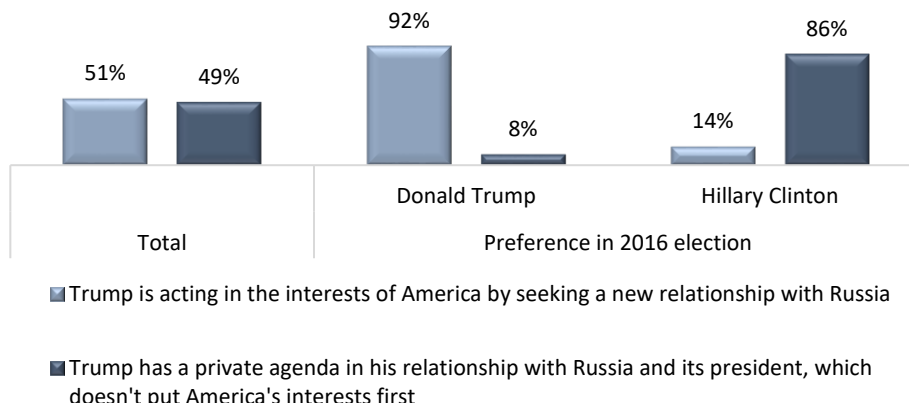
Do you tend to share Trump's positive views of Vladimir Putin or the negative views raised by others?



The message from this White House has been a strong and resonant “America First”. But when it comes to this file, roughly half of Americans (49%) say Trump’s Russia-friendly approach to foreign policy is motivated by his own private agenda, rather than the interests of the United States.

Again, Trump and Clinton supporters form vastly different camps on this question.

Which of the following statements best describes your own view (even if not exactly)?





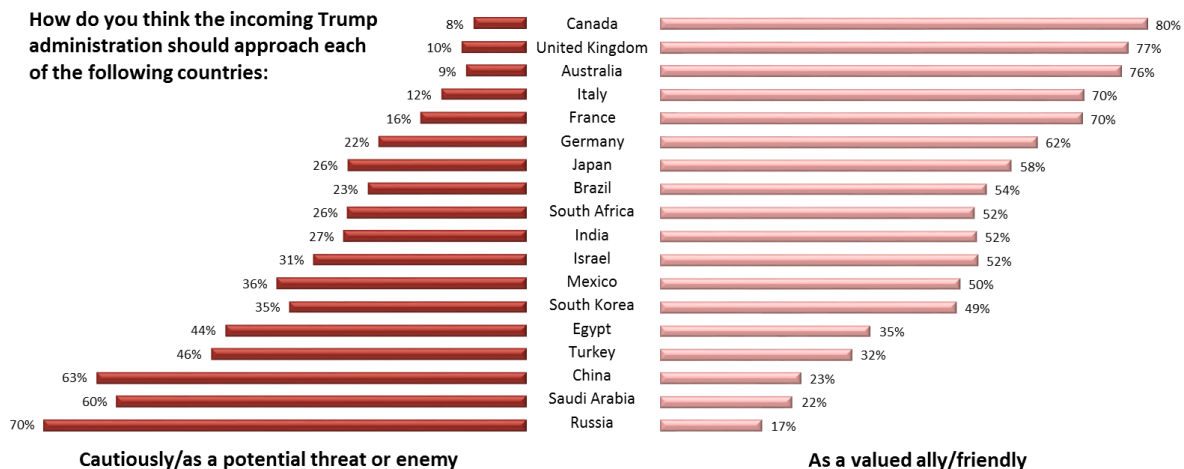
An initiative of:

To this point, little has been reported about what holdings Trump may have in Russia. While he has tweeted that he has “no deals, no loans, no nothing” with the Kremlin, claims to the contrary have surrounded both [he and members of his administration](#) in recent months.

Americans value traditional allies:

America’s new president has proposed [some major shake-ups to U.S. foreign policy](#). From the United Nations to NAFTA to NATO alliances, all international agreements appear to be on the bargaining table.

This poll however, finds the American public mostly keen on maintaining the international relationships it developed after World War II. Asked how they would like to see their new president approach 18 different countries – chosen for their geographic diversity, economic strength (most are G20 nations), and relevance to American policymakers – respondents opt for closest relations with allies in Europe and the English-speaking world, as seen in the following graph:



[Click for full-size image](#)

Canada, Britain, and Australia are in the top tier of potential allies. A full majority (57%) say the Trump administration should treat Canada as “a valued partner and ally” (see comprehensive tables). The President was quick to reach out to this triumvirate. He spoke to Justin Trudeau after the election, and called to [offer his sympathies](#) after the shooting at a Quebec mosque in late January. The administration also invited UK Prime Minister Theresa May as its first official diplomatic visit.

Trump is not afraid to play hard ball with American allies however. While three-quarters of Americans (76%) say Australia should be approached as a valued ally or friend, Trump reportedly hung up on Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull after a heated exchange regarding a refugee transfer deal negotiated by the previous administration.

CONTACT:

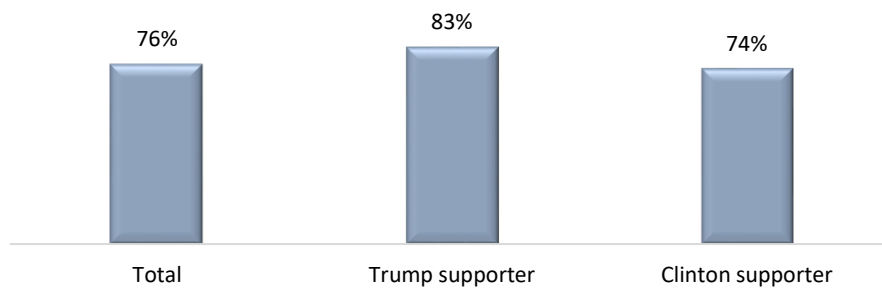
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org
Ilan Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org



An initiative of:

A bipartisan bill affirming support for the US-Australia relationship was introduced in the Senate after the incident. The bill is likely to ruffle few feathers, as support for Australia as an ally or friend crosses party lines:

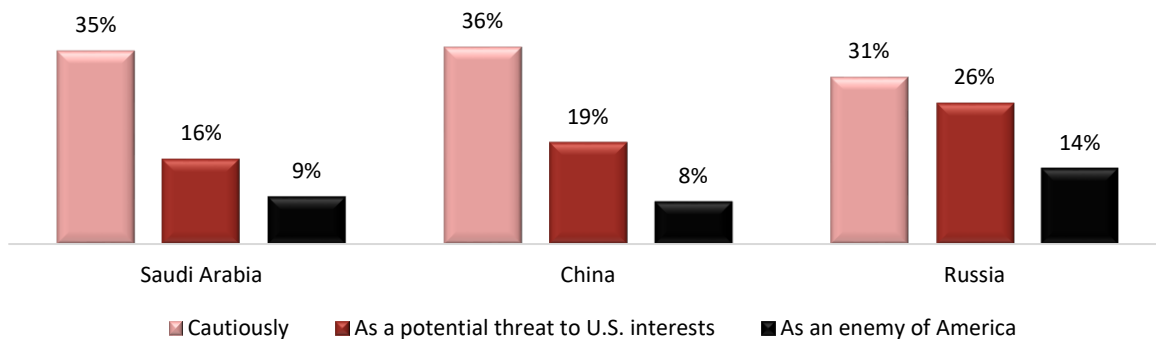
How do you think the incoming Trump administration should approach Australia:
Summary of 'valued ally' or 'friendly'



Unfavourable relationships

Other countries that sit at the opposite end of the spectrum from those considered US allies include China and Saudi Arabia. With respect to both countries, the largest number of Americans say each should be approached with caution. And though fewer say each should be viewed as a threat than Russia, just under one-quarter would like to see each approached on friendly terms:

How do you think the incoming Trump administration should approach each of the following countries?



The US relationship with China has become particularly central to foreign policy discussions in the wake of revelations that just nine months ago, President Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon stated that "there's no doubt" that the US and China will go to war. The President himself, has been critical of China in the past, claiming that the Asian power maintains an artificially low currency for trade advantages, and

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org
Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org



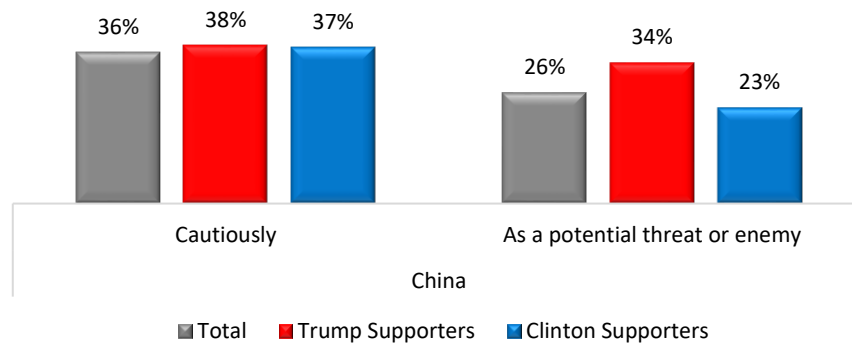
An initiative of:

ANGUS REID  INSTITUTE
Public Interest Research

going as far as calling them an “enemy” to the US. And though Trump angered China by speaking to President Tsai Ing-Wen of Taiwan, he reportedly has yet to speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Both sides of the political aisle appear to support the philosophy of the new administration. At least six-in-ten Trump and Clinton supporters respectively say China should be approached cautiously or as a potential threat.

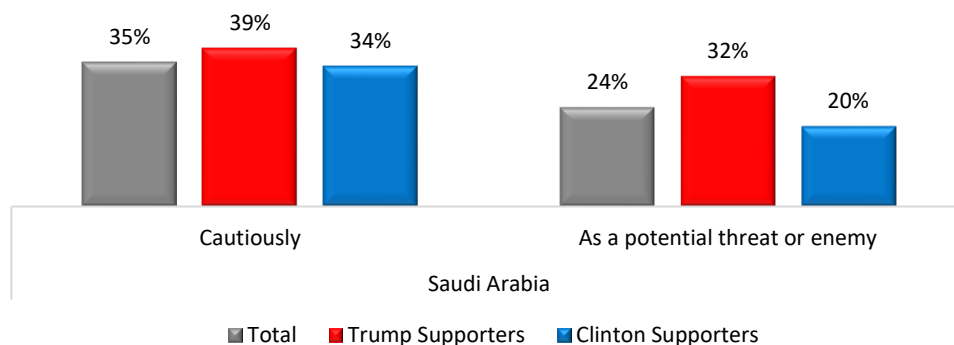
How do you think the incoming Trump administration should approach each of the following countries?



A nearly identical number of Americans say Saudi Arabia should be engaged in the same fashion as China. The Middle Eastern nation was left out of a controversial travel ban of majority-Muslim nations, with critics pointing to President Trump’s business interests potentially playing a role in that decision. The Saudi Government has voiced hope for a positive relationship with the administration, one that shares its opposition to Iran.

The American public, for their part, are less optimistic about this partnership, and would prefer the administration look upon it with caution.

How do you think the incoming Trump administration should approach each of the following countries?





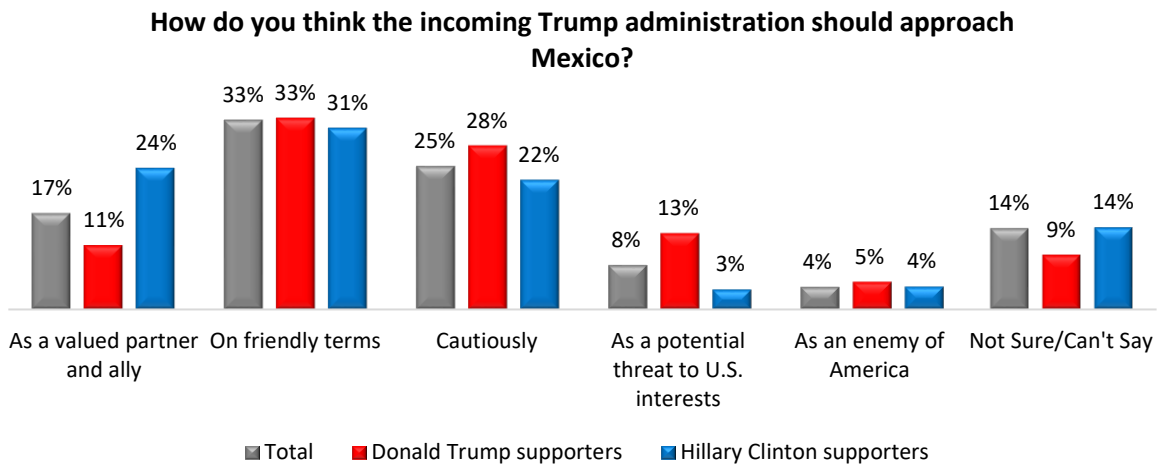
An initiative of:

Mixed feelings toward Mexico and other nations

Between close friends and the bitter foes are nations toward which Americans express mixed feelings. In some cases – such as Egypt and Turkey – American ambivalence is driven by large numbers saying they are “not sure” how their government should approach them. In others – such as Mexico and Israel – the public is bitterly divided, again along partisan lines.

As was discussed in greater detail in [a recent Angus Reid Institute report](#), Americans – especially Trump supporters – are wary of their southern neighbour, who they perceive as benefitting disproportionately from the trade relationship between the two countries.

Overall, roughly half of Americans (50%) say their new government should approach Mexico either “as a valued partner and ally” or “on friendly terms,” though there are notable partisan divisions on this question, as seen in the following graph:



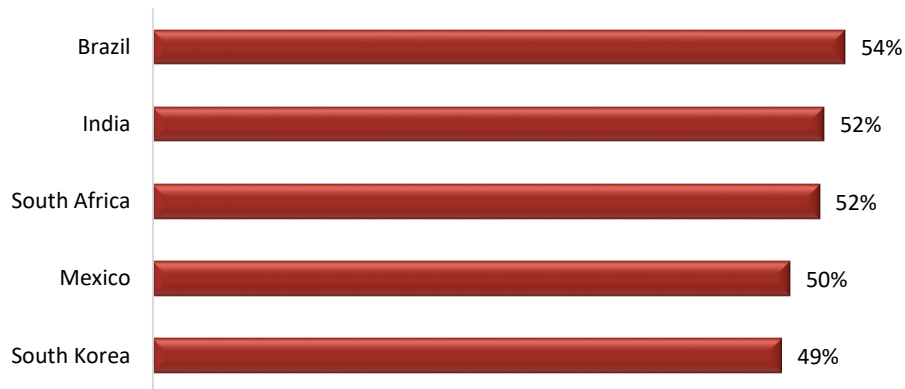
Globally, Mexico ranks alongside other G20 countries Brazil, India, South Africa, and South Korea in the minds of most Americans, though these nations are less polarizing for Trump and Clinton supporters than Mexico (see summary tables at the end of this report).



An initiative of:

ANGUS REID  INSTITUTE
Public Interest Research

How do you think the incoming Trump administration should approach each of the following countries? (Those saying "as a valued partner and ally" and "on friendly terms" shown)



Though they generally receive less attention in the United States than Mexico does, these other countries also have significant relationships with America and its new president.

For example, Americans' less-than-resounding enthusiasm for friendship with South Korea raises questions about what response a flare-up of tensions with North Korea might elicit from the Trump administration, and how the public might respond.

Americans also have mixed feelings about India, a country that – like Mexico – is sometimes seen as “taking jobs” from Americans. India is also a country in which Trump has significant business interests, and it has so far not found itself in the new president's protectionist crosshairs in the way Mexico has.

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

Summary tables follow. For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org
Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org



An initiative of:

How do you think the incoming Trump administration should approach each of the following countries? (Summary of “As a dependable ally” plus “On friendly terms”)

(Weighted sample sizes)	Total (1502)	2016 Presidential Election Preference			
		Donald Trump (565)	Hillary Clinton (552)	Other/Rather not say (213)	No one/Stayed undecided (172)
Australia	76%	83%	74%	76%	59%
Brazil	54%	52%	58%	57%	43%
Canada	80%	86%	81%	78%	63%
China	23%	20%	26%	24%	25%
France	70%	70%	74%	68%	55%
Germany	62%	67%	64%	62%	43%
India	52%	50%	58%	52%	39%
Italy	70%	74%	71%	68%	54%
Japan	58%	61%	58%	62%	44%
Mexico	50%	44%	56%	53%	42%
Russia	17%	24%	11%	19%	11%
Saudi Arabia	22%	18%	28%	20%	19%
South Africa	52%	51%	55%	56%	38%
South Korea	49%	54%	49%	48%	33%
Turkey	32%	29%	37%	31%	26%
United Kingdom	77%	83%	76%	78%	60%
Israel	52%	66%	47%	45%	34%

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org
 Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org



An initiative of:

Egypt	35%	34%	38%	35%	28%
-------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

How do you think the incoming Trump administration should approach each of the following countries? (Mexico)

(Weighted sample sizes)	Total (1502)	2016 Presidential Election Preference			
		Donald Trump (565)	Hillary Clinton (552)	Other/Rather not say (213)	No one/Stayed undecided (172)
As a valued partner and ally	17%	11%	24%	16%	10%
On friendly terms	33%	33%	31%	37%	32%
Cautiously	25%	28%	22%	24%	23%
As a potential threat to US interests	8%	13%	3%	5%	7%
As an enemy of America	4%	5%	4%	2%	3%
Not Sure/Can't Say	14%	9%	14%	16%	26%

How do you think the incoming Trump administration should approach each of the following countries? (Israel)

(Weighted sample sizes)	Total (1502)	2016 Presidential Election Preference			
		Donald Trump (565)	Hillary Clinton (552)	Other/Rather not say (213)	No one/Stayed undecided (172)
As a valued partner and ally	31%	47%	23%	23%	14%
On friendly terms	21%	19%	24%	22%	20%
Cautiously	22%	17%	25%	24%	24%

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org
Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org



An initiative of:

As a potential threat to US interests	6%	5%	5%	10%	5%
As an enemy of America	4%	4%	4%	2%	4%
Not Sure/Can't Say	16%	8%	19%	19%	34%

How do you think the incoming Trump administration should approach each of the following countries? (Russia)

(Weighted sample sizes)	Total (1502)	2016 Presidential Election Preference			
		Donald Trump (565)	Hillary Clinton (552)	Other/Rather not say (213)	No one/Stayed undecided (172)
As a valued partner and ally	4%	5%	3%	6%	2%
On friendly terms	13%	19%	7%	12%	9%
Cautiously	31%	39%	21%	31%	34%
As a potential threat to US interests	26%	21%	32%	26%	22%
As an enemy of America	14%	8%	23%	9%	8%
Not Sure/Can't Say	13%	8%	13%	15%	26%

**Overall, how would you describe the United States' trade relationship with Mexico?
Would you say our trade relationship with Mexico:**

(Weighted sample sizes)	Total (1502)	2016 Presidential Election Preference			
		Donald Trump (565)	Hillary Clinton (552)	Other/Rather not say (213)	No one/Stayed undecided (172)
Benefits mostly the U.S.	6%	6%	7%	7%	7%
Benefits the U.S. more than them	13%	6%	17%	19%	14%

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org
Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org

THE AMERICA PROJECT
Charting US Public Opinion in the Age of Trump



An initiative of:

ANGUS REID  **INSTITUTE**
Public Interest Research

Page 12 of 14

Benefits both countries quite equally	35%	23%	49%	30%	39%
Benefits them more than the U.S.	33%	42%	23%	32%	33%
Benefits mostly them	13%	23%	4%	13%	7%

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org
Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org



An initiative of:

For each of the following organizations, please indicate whether you think the incoming Trump administration should:

(NAFTA – the North American Free Trade Agreement)

(Weighted sample sizes)	Total (1502)	2016 Presidential Election Preference			
		Donald Trump (565)	Hillary Clinton (552)	Other/Rather not say (213)	No one/Stayed undecided (172)
Move to take the U.S. out of it entirely	18%	31%	10%	13%	10%
Decrease U.S. commitment	24%	32%	17%	22%	20%
Carry on with the current approach	45%	29%	56%	49%	58%
Expand U.S. commitment	13%	8%	17%	16%	12%

There has also been debate about Russian President Vladimir Putin and whether he is a good or bad leader on the world stage today. Do you tend to share Trump's positive views of Putin or the negative views raised by others?

(Weighted sample sizes)	Total (1502)	2016 Presidential Election Preference			
		Donald Trump (565)	Hillary Clinton (552)	Other/Rather not say (213)	No one/Stayed undecided (172)
Positive view of Putin	33%	57%	13%	23%	26%
Negative view of Putin	67%	43%	87%	77%	74%

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org
 Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org



An initiative of:

There has also been some discussion about Russia and President-elect Trump's approach to that country. Which of the following two statements best describes your own view (even if not exactly)?					
(Weighted sample sizes)	Total (1502)	2016 Presidential Election Preference			
		Donald Trump (565)	Hillary Clinton (552)	Other/Rather not say (213)	No one/Stayed undecided (172)
Trump is acting in the interests of America by seeking a new relationship with Russia	51%	92%	14%	45%	45%
Trump has a private agenda in his relationship with Russia and its President, which doesn't put American interests first	49%	8%	86%	55%	55%

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org
 Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org