China beats US in global leadership: Gallup

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More people in the world approved of China's leadership than US leadership in 2017, according to a Gallup poll released on Thursday.  
The Gallup World Poll survey found the median approval of US leadership at only 30 percent, trailing the 31 percent for China. The new finding contrasts to the frequent rebuke by US politicians of China's growing global influence.  
The US approval rating plunged to an all-time low, by 18 percent from the 48 percent in the last year of President Barack Obama and four points lower than the previous low of 34 percent during the last year of President George W. Bush.  
And disapproval of US leadership climbed. The 43 percent median disapproval, 15 points higher from the previous year, set a record as well, not only for the US but for any other major global power that Gallup has asked about in the past decade.  
Comparatively, China boasts an edge with its worldwide disapproval rating of only 30 percent.  
US leadership approval ratings declined by 10 percentage points or more in 65 of 134 countries and areas, and declined the most among residents of allies and partners in the Americas and Europe, according to the poll conducted between March and November last year.  
The US approval rating suffered most in its own neighborhood, the Americas, where the ratings dropped to a new low. Approval of US leadership plummeted in every country in the region in 2017. Only a median 24 percent approved of US leadership, while a whopping 58 percent disapproved US leadership.  
In two of its immediate neighbors, only 20 percent in Canada and 16 percent in Mexico approved of US leadership.  
Comparatively, China performed better with 28 percent approval and 35 percent disapproval in the Americas.  
US leadership approval ratings declined nearly as much in Europe to 25 percent as they did in the Americas. It declined substantially in 21 out of the 28 current members of the European Union.  
China tied with the same 25 percent approval rating in Europe. But China's disapproval rating there of 48 percent is lower than the 56 percent scored by the US.  
The US also suffered a major drop in its leadership approval leading in Asia, where its contest with China has made the most headlines in Western media.  
Overall, only 30 percent in Asia approved of US leadership while 32 percent approved of China's leadership. The US disapproval rating in the region of 39 percent is higher than China's 31 percent.  
In some US security allies in Asia – New Zealand, Australia and Singapore – the US approval ratings dropped to new record lows in 2017, a decline of more than 30 points. Japan, South Korea and the Philippines also saw double-digit declines.  
Of the four countries surveyed by Gallup on leadership, Germany stood at the top with its 41 percent approval rating. China was at 31 percent and Russia at 27 percent.  
The US only beat China slightly in Africa with an approval rating of 51 percent, compared to China's 50 percent, but its disapproval rating there is 20 percent, higher than China's 15 percent.  
In its analysis, the Gallup report, released just days before President Donald Trump embarks on a trip to Davos, Switzerland, for the World Economic Forum, criticized Trump for keeping his campaign promise to put "America First" in his foreign policy.  
"In doing so, he walked away from key institutions and alliances in 2017 that he felt didn't serve US interests, including abandoning the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal and withdrawing from the global climate agreement. He further rankled relations with neighbors Canada and Mexico, repeatedly threatening to terminate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and insisting that Mexico would pay for a wall along their shared border," the report says.  
The US government received worldwide condemnation in December for its recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Its withdrawal from UNESCO and cutting of funding to the United Nations also received negative response in the global community.  
Richard Haas, president of the Council on Foreign Relations(CFR), believes the US global leadership has become worse for the most part. "The bottom line is that the United States has added a degree of unreliability," Haas said about Trump's first year in office in a CFR podcast on Tuesday.  
"We've gone from being the principal preserver of the world order such as it was, now we become something of a principal disruptor," said Hass, who has served decades in the US government, including being the director of policy planning at the State Department from 2001 to 2003.  
The Gallup results released on Thursday are based on face-to-face and telephone interviews with some 1,000 adults aged 15 and older in each country or region. Residents were asked to rate US, German and Russian leadership in 134 countries or areas, and residents in 135 countries or areas were asked to rate the leadership of China, according to Gallup.

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