

2006 Image of Japan Study in the U.S. (Summary)

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Japan

1. Results Overview

Japan-U.S. Relationship Greatly Valued (Highest Level Ever Measured)

The 2006 Image of Japan Study continues to show a positive evaluation of Japan-U.S. relations. The perception of Japan as a dependable ally remains at a very high level, with 91% of American opinion leaders and 69% of the general public responding that Japan is a dependable ally. Both among the general public and opinion leaders, the positive evaluation of the current level of cooperation between Japan and the U.S. marks the highest level ever measured by the study. (63%: general public, 85 %: opinion leaders) The percentage of those stating that the U.S. and Japan have a good understanding of each other has also increased both among the general public and opinion leaders compared to last year. Among the selected eight countries, Japan was thought to share common values with the U.S. to "a great extent" or "some extent", ranked the highest among countries/regions measured.

Japan Continues as the Most Reliable Partner, Presence of China Increases

Although the percentage of Americans who cite Japan as the most important Asian partner of the U.S. has been leading the list since 1995, the current trend shows a minor decline in the rate. (general public: from 48% in 2005 to 45 % currently; opinion leaders: from 48% to 47%). On the other hand, the percentage of those who mention China as the most important Asian partner of the U.S. has been increasing in the past few years, mentioned by 33% among the general public, a 7-percentage point increase, and 43% among opinion leaders, a 5-percentage point increase since last year.

Japan's Market No Longer Seen as Closed

In terms of economic relations, in a question asking the reasons for the Japan-U.S. trade imbalance, the percentage of respondents who chose "the closed nature of Japan's market" is the lowest since this survey was started. The percentages of those who believe the trade imbalance is due to "the U.S. industry's weak competitiveness," or "macro-economic discrepancies" were higher than that of respondents who feel it is due to "Japan's unwillingness to open markets." To the question of whether Japan's role in international society is commensurate with its economic strength, 74% (a record number) of opinion leaders responded affirmatively.

Strong Support for the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty

With regard to the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, similar to 2005, strong support for the treaty is reconfirmed, with a large majority (85% of the general public and 90% of opinion leaders) expressing the view that the treaty should be maintained.

Positive Perceptions of Japan

The perceptions of Japan were surveyed for the first time. Positive images get high points, with Japan viewed as a country with "great traditions and culture," "a country with a strong economy and high technology," and "a country with beautiful nature."

2. Overview of Survey

(1) Implementing agency: The Gallup Organization

(2) Period conducted: From February to March 2006

(3) Survey methodology:

• For the "general public" group, telephone interviews were carried out with 1,500 people (men and women aged 18 and over).

• For the "opinion leaders" group, telephone interviews were carried out with 254 people in leading positions in the fields of government, large business, organized labor, the media, academia and organized religion.

(4) The reliability of the survey:

The degree of reliability is 95% for both groups. The sampling error is $\pm 3\%$ for the "general public" group and $\pm 6\%$ for the "opinion leaders" group (for results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the margin of error is ± 3 percentage points for general public and ± 6 percentage points for opinion leaders).

3. Specific Findings

(Figures in brackets are results of the 2005 and 2004 Survey. See the attached graphs for past trends in major questions.)

(1) Perception of Japan as a Dependable Ally or Friend (See Graph 1)

- Rating of respondents who consider Japan as a dependable ally or friend

General public: 69 %	Opinion leaders: 91%
(72% , 68%)	(90%, 89%)
	: highest figures

(2) Evaluation of Overall Bilateral Relations Between Japan and the U.S.

- The most important partner to the U.S. in the Asian region (See Graphs 2 and 3)

1: Japan	General public: 45%	Opinion leaders: 47%
	(48%, 48%)	(48%, 65%)
2: China	General public: 33%	Opinion leaders: 43%
	(26%, 26%)	(38%, 24%)
		: highest figures
3. Russia	General public: 13%	Opinion leaders: 4%
	(13%, 9%)	(9%, 7%)

- Evaluation of the present level of Japan-U.S. cooperation in general

rating of positive responses, either "excellent" or "good" (See Graph 4)

General public: 63%	Opinion leaders: 85%
(61%, 60%)	(83%, 82%)
	: highest figures

- Japan-U.S. relations in the future (See Graph 5)

(Will improve)	General public: 42%	Opinion leaders: 42%
	(46%, 44%)	(29%, 30%)
(Will not change)	General public: 44%	Opinion leaders: 51%
	(42%, 43%)	(62%, 59%)
(Will get worse)	General public: 10%	Opinion leaders: 5%
	(9%, 8%)	(5%, 7%)

- The way which would most improve relations between the U.S. and Japan.		
"Improve economic/trade Relations"	General public: 36% (38%, 42%)	Opinion leaders: 44% (50%, 53%)
"Increase global cooperation"	General public: 28% (26%, 23%)	Opinion leaders: 27% (28%, 26%)
"Strengthen political/security Relations"	General public: 21% (25%, 25%)	Opinion leaders: 20% (16%, 15%)
"Promote cultural exchanges"	General public: 12% (9%, 7%)	Opinion leaders: 8% (6%, 5%)

- Degree of mutual understanding between the peoples of Japan and the U.S. (See Graph 6)		
(Good)	General public: 38% (36%, 30%)	Opinion leaders: 25% (23%, 22%)
(Fair)	General public: 45% (47%, 50%)	Opinion leaders: 58% (60%, 61%)
(Poor)	General public: 15% (16%, 18%)	Opinion leaders: 16% (17%, 17%)
		: highest figures

(3) Evaluation of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements

- Maintenance of the Japan-US Security Treaty (See Graph 7)		
(The Treaty should be maintained)	General public: 85% (86%, 85%)	Opinion leaders: 90% (83%, 83%)

- The contribution of the Japan-US Security Treaty to the peace and stability of Japan and the Far East (See Graph 8) (Rating of positive responses, either "Great deal" or "Moderate amount")		
	General public: 71% (72%, 72%)	Opinion leaders: 82% (80%, 80%)

- Importance of the Japan-US Security Treaty for U.S. security interests (See Graph 9) (Rating of positive responses, either "very important" or "somewhat important")		
	General public: 87% (86%, 86%)	Opinion leaders: 88% (82%, 83%)
		: highest figures

(4) Economic and Trade Relations

- The main reason for the Japan-US trade imbalance (See Graphs 10 and 11)		
"U.S. industry's weak competitiveness"	General public: 33% (30%, 29%)	Opinion leaders: 32% (23%, 23%)
		: highest figures
"Macro-economic discrepancies in both countries"	General public: 30% (29%, 27%)	Opinion leaders: 33% (35%, 41%)
"The closed nature of Japan's market"	General public: 29% (34%, 37%)	Opinion leaders: 29% (36%, 32%)
		: lowest figures

(5) Evaluation of Japan's International Role

- Does Japan play an important international role commensurate with its economic strength? (See Graph 12)		
"Yes"	General public: 68% (60%, 60%)	Opinion leaders: 74% (69%, 65%)
		: highest figure

"No"	General public: 25% (29%, 29%)	Opinion leaders: 23% (29%, 35%)
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-In the following areas, does Japan currently play an important international role? (Rating of positive responses)

"Science / Technology"	General public: 65% (57%, 58%)	Opinion leaders: 97% (96%, 96%)
"Global Economy"	General public: 58% (53%, 53%)	Opinion leaders: 97% (97%, 91%)
"Cultural exchange"	General public: 54% (49%, 48%)	Opinion leaders: 76% (65%, 60%)
"World Politics"	General public :44% (38%, 38%)	Opinion leaders: 71% (67%, 62%)
"Global Issues"	General public: 41% (37%, 36%)	Opinion leaders: 73% (69%, 57%)
"Economic Aid"	General public: 36% (34%, 30%)	Opinion leaders: 70% (70%, 61%)
"Security (including PKO)"	General public: 35% (31%, 31%)	Opinion leaders: 45% (39%, 39%)

(6) Perceptions of countries sharing common values with U.S.

-To what extent do the following countries or regions share generally common values with the U.S.?

(Rating of positive responses, either "great extent" or "some extent")

	<General public>	<Opinion leaders>
Japan	78% (79%, 80%)	96% (91%, 95%)
U.K.	77% (83%, 83%)	96% (96%, 98%)
Germany	72% (74%, 74%)	94% (92%, 96%)
France	59% (57%, 56%)	81% (76%, 78%)
Russia	57% (59%, 59%)	69% (69%, 74%)
Taiwan	57% (56%, 55%)	83% (84%, 84%)
China	48% (47%, 44%)	55% (50%, 46%)
North Korea	20% (19%, 19%)	14% (9%, 9%)

(7) Perceptions of Japan

-Phrases that describe Japan (Rating of positive responses)

	<General public>	<Opinion leaders>
A country that has great traditions and culture	94%	99%
A country with a strong economy and high technology	93%	97%
A country with beautiful nature	81%	85%
A peaceful country	78%	94%
A western-oriented country	62%	74%

(8) Sources of Information about Japan

Television, newspapers, and magazines or books continue to be the leading sources of information on Japan for Americans, which has not changed significantly over the years.