

Opinion Poll: 2011 U.S Image of Japan

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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned the Gallup Organization to conduct an opinion poll on the image of Japan in the United States of America from February to March 2011. This poll is the latest in a series of similar opinion polls conducted almost every year since 1960. For the "general public" group, telephone interviews were carried out with 1,200 citizens aged 18 and over who live in the continental United States. For the "opinion leaders" group, telephone interviews were carried out with 200 people in leading positions in the fields of government, business, academics, mass media, religion, and labor unions. (The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3% for the "general public" group and plus or minus 7% for the "opinion leaders" group, at the 95% level of confidence.)

1 The percentage who perceived Japan as a dependable ally was 84% among the general public and was 90% among opinion leaders, high figures similar to the last year's poll. 77% of the general public and 87% of opinion leaders viewed cooperation between Japan and the U.S. as "excellent" or "good." In addition, the percentage of those who agreed that the Japanese and American people had a good understanding of each other was 42% among the general public, and 35% among opinion leaders.

2 As for what country is the most important partner of the U.S. in Asia, the percentage of the general public that chose China as the most important partner was 39% and chose Japan was 31%. Among opinion leaders, China came in at first with 46% and Japan came in at second with 28%.

3 With regard to the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, the percentage of those who answered that the Treaty "should be maintained" was 92% among the general public and 91% among opinion leaders. These figures have stayed at a high level since this survey had begun to be commissioned. The percentage who answered that the Treaty contributes to stability and peace in the area either "to a great deal" or "to a moderate amount" was 86% among the general public and 90% among opinion leaders. The percentage of those who answered that the Treaty was "very important" or "somewhat important" for the U.S. in terms of its own security was 89% among general public and 90% among opinion leaders. Thus, the Japan-U.S. security system was highly appreciated in whole.

4 With regard to the perception of Japan's attributes (surveyed only among the general public), Japan was viewed as "a country with great traditions and culture" (97%); "a country with a strong economy and high technology" (91%); "a country which launches new cultures such as animation, fashion, and cuisine" (88%) and "a country with beautiful nature" (85%). With respect to areas that the public are interested in regarding Japanese culture, "cuisine" (84%); "Calligraphy(Shodo) " (63%); "Bonsai" (62%); and "Sumo or Japanese martial arts like Karate, Judo, and Kendo" (61%) were among the most selected answers.

5 As for the adoption of Japan's high-speed railway system in the United States, 34% of opinion leaders were of the view that Japanese technology should be adopted. With regard to the policy that Japan should focus on in order to deepen economic ties between Japan and the US, 89% of opinion leaders responded Japan should "promote technical cooperation, such as clean energy and a high-speed railway system, 83% answered that Japan should "sign and ratify a free-trade agreement with the US," 81% answered that Japan should "participate in a trans-Pacific partnership".