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British, French and German Publics Give Biden High Marks After U.S. Election

Most are optimistic about U.S. policies and trans-Atlantic relations

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How we did this

This analysis focuses on views of President-elect Joe Biden among three major U.S. allies: France, Germany and the United Kingdom. The survey examines optimism about trans-Atlantic relationships and expectations for U.S. foreign policy under Biden's administration. Views of the United States and the newly elected president are considered in the context of long-term trend data.

For this report, we use data from nationally representative telephone surveys of 3,066 adults from Nov. 12 to Dec. 23, 2020, in France, Germany and the UK. Additional data is included from a survey conducted among 1,003 adults in the U.S. from Nov. 10 to Dec. 7, 2020.

Here are the questions used for the report, along with responses, and the survey methodology.

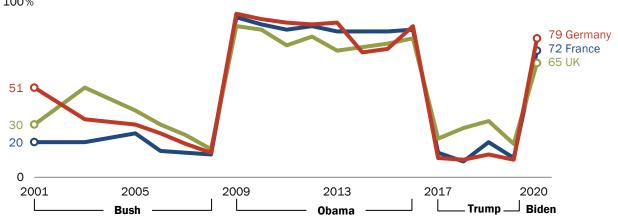
British, French and German Publics Give Biden High Marks After U.S. Election

Most are optimistic about U.S. policies and trans-Atlantic relations

Throughout his presidency, Donald Trump was broadly unpopular internationally, and his poor ratings have had a negative impact on America's overall image, especially among key allies and partners of the United States. By contrast, early reviews for his successor, President-elect Joe Biden, are much more positive, according to a new Pew Research Center survey in France, Germany and the United Kingdom. People in all three countries express confidence in Biden and optimism that relations with the U.S. will improve now that he is moving into the White House.

Biden receives much better ratings than Trump did

% who have <u>confidence</u> in __ to do the right thing regarding world affairs 100%



Source: Fall 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q28.

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Large majorities in Germany (79%), France (72%) and the UK (65%) say they have confidence in Biden to do the right thing in world affairs — a dramatic change from the low ratings Trump received in a survey conducted in the summer of 2020 in these three nations. As he prepares to begin his presidency, Biden's ratings are only slightly lower than the ratings Barack Obama received near the end of his second term.

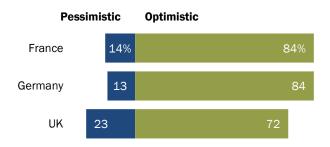
Large majorities also say that, when thinking of the future of their country, they are optimistic about their country's relations with the U.S., including more than eight-in-ten in Germany and France and roughly seven-in-ten in the UK.

There is also considerable optimism on the other side of the Atlantic: 73% of Americans feel optimistic about U.S. relations with European countries. This view is especially widespread among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (83%), but also held by a majority of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (62%).

In the three European countries surveyed, people have high expectations for the Biden administration on major policy issues. Substantial majorities believe that with Biden in the White House U.S. policies will improve on issues such as foreign policy, climate change and dealing with the <u>coronavirus outbreak</u>.

Widespread optimism about relations with the U.S.

% who feel generally __ about their country's relations with the U.S.



% who feel generally __ about their country's relations with European countries

Pess	simistic	Optimistic	
U.S.	23		73

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown Source: Fall 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q31a-b. "British, French and German Publics Give Biden High Marks After U.S. Election"

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In this moment of transition between the Trump and Biden eras, overall ratings for the U.S. are mixed. About half in the UK and France and 40% in Germany have a favorable opinion of the U.S., representing in each case a significant increase from the summer 2020 survey but still somewhat lower favorability than in the last years of Obama's presidency.

The survey finds that even before the <u>violent storming</u> of the U.S. Capitol in early January by a mob of Trump's supporters, there were widespread concerns about the health of U.S. democracy among three of America's closest allies: 73% of Germans, 64% of the French and 62% of the British think the U.S. political system needs to be subject to either major changes or completely reformed. (See "Even before Capitol riot, most people in Germany, France and the UK had concerns about the U.S. political system" for more on this question, as well as other findings on attitudes regarding the health of American democracy.)

These are among the key findings from a Pew Research Center survey conducted among 3,066 adults in France, Germany and the UK from Nov. 12 to Dec. 23, 2020. Additional data comes from a survey of 1,003 U.S. adults conducted from Nov. 10 to Dec. 7, 2020.

Confidence in Biden high

Ratings for Donald Trump were consistently negative in these three countries throughout his time in office. For instance, only about one-in-ten Germans expressed confidence in Trump in the four surveys Pew Research Center conducted in Germany during his presidency. In contrast, 79% now have confidence in Biden.

As with Bush-Obama transition, Biden election boosts international confidence in U.S. president

Highest rating

% who have **confidence** in ___ to do the right thing regarding world affairs

								ignos	t ratii	16		.01100	cracii	'6							
			Bu	sh						Oba	ma					Tru	mp		Biden	Summer -	
																			r Fall	Fall 2020	
	'0 1	'03	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	' 1 3	'14	' 1 5	' 1 6	'17	' 1 8	'19	'20	'20	change	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Germany	51	33	30	25	19	14	93	90	88	87	88	71	73	86	11	10	13	10	79	▲ 69	
France	20	20	25	15	14	13	91	87	84	86	83	83	83	84	14	9	20	11	72	▲61	
UK	30	51	38	30	24	16	86	84	75	80	72	74	76	79	22	28	32	19	65	▲46	

I owest rating

Note: All changes shown are statistically significant.

Source: Fall 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q28.

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Whereas Trump's low marks often resembled the poor ratings received by George W. Bush during his administration, Biden's reviews are closer to some of the highly positive ones for Obama during his two terms as president. (A Pew Research Center survey to be conducted later in 2021 will explore whether Biden's ratings change once he takes office.)

At this point, there are few significant ideological differences between the left and the right regarding attitudes toward Biden in these three nations. He receives roughly the same positive reviews among people who place themselves on the left, center and right of the political spectrum. However, Biden generally gets somewhat lower ratings from supporters of right-wing populist parties. For example, just 51% of Germans with a favorable view of Alternative for Germany (AfD) have confidence in Biden, compared with 84% of those with an unfavorable opinion of the party. Smaller but still significant differences exist between supporters and nonsupporters of the Brexit

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Party (now called Reform UK) in the UK and National Rally in France. (See <u>appendix</u> for more information on European populist parties.)

In the UK, views about Biden also differ according to how people feel about Brexit. While 76% of those who identify as "remainers" express confidence in Biden, it's just 52% among "leavers."

Optimism about U.S. policies under Biden

Reflecting widespread trust in Biden, majorities in France, Germany and the UK are hopeful that America's handling of various international issues will improve once he takes office.

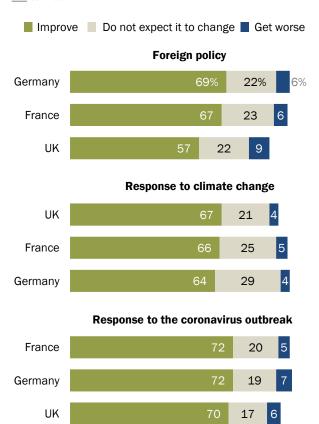
Just under 60% in the UK and roughly twothirds in Germany and France think U.S. foreign policy will improve under Biden's administration. About 65% in each country anticipate improvements in America's response to climate change. And roughly 70% in all three countries say the same about America's response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Overall, fewer than a third in any country do not expect changes in any of these areas when Biden becomes president. And only around one-in-ten or fewer believe things will get worse.

The survey did not reference specific potential policy changes under Biden. The substance of Trump policies engendered considerable criticism abroad, suggesting that many believe there is considerable room for improvement. In 2019, 85% in the UK and 90% in both France and Germany disapproved of Trump's withdrawal from international climate change agreements. And fewer than one-in-five in each

Many in European countries surveyed expect improvements under Biden

% who say that when Joe Biden becomes president, U.S. ___ will ...



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown. Source: Fall 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q29a-c. "British, French and German Publics Give Biden High Marks After U.S. Election"

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of the three countries rated **America's response to the coronavirus** positively in summer 2020.

In the absence of policy particulars, optimism about U.S. policies tends to be more pronounced on the political left than right in France, Germany and the UK. This is particularly true when it comes to America's response to the coronavirus outbreak. In the UK, people on the left are 16 percentage points more likely than those on the right to say America's response to the outbreak will get better. In France and Germany, 80% of those on the left vs. 68% of those on the right share this view.

Optimism about policy changes under Biden is also muted among supporters of right-wing populist parties — a segment that tended to express relatively <u>positive views of Trump</u> and <u>his policies</u>. Yet even among these supporters, the prevailing view is that America's response to the coronavirus pandemic, climate change and overall foreign policy will improve under the new U.S. president. For example, roughly half (51%) of Germans with a favorable view of AfD think the U.S. response to climate change will improve when Biden takes office; in the UK, a 56% majority of Brexit (Reform UK) supporters agree, as do 58% of National Rally backers in France.

Upbeat view of future relations with U.S.

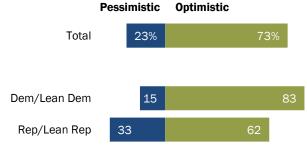
A generally positive outlook extends to trans-Atlantic relations as well. More than eight-in-ten in France and Germany are optimistic about their country's future relations with the U.S., and roughly seven-in-ten in the UK share this view.

In Germany, this optimism follows a recent low point in bilateral relations. In a survey conducted by Körber-Stiftung in September 2020, 79% of Germans described <u>present</u> relations between their country and the U.S. as bad, and many did not view the U.S. as a partner on important international issues.

In all three countries polled, people who express confidence in President-elect Biden to do the right thing in world affairs are much more likely to be optimistic about bilateral relations with the U.S. Among those who have confidence in Biden, overwhelming majorities in France (92%), Germany (91%) and the UK (79%) say they are optimistic on future

Most Americans are optimistic about future trans-Atlantic relations

% of Americans who feel generally __ about their country's future relations with European countries



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown. Source: Fall 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q31b. "British, French and German Publics Give Biden High Marks After U.S. Election"

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relations. However, even among those who do not trust Biden, most are hopeful about their country's relations with the U.S., including 64% in France, 62% in Germany and 60% in the UK.

Nearly three-in-four Americans are also optimistic about relations between their country and countries in Europe. This opinion is particularly common among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (83%), but a majority of Republicans and Republican leaners (62%) also hold this view.

A slight uptick in ratings of the U.S.

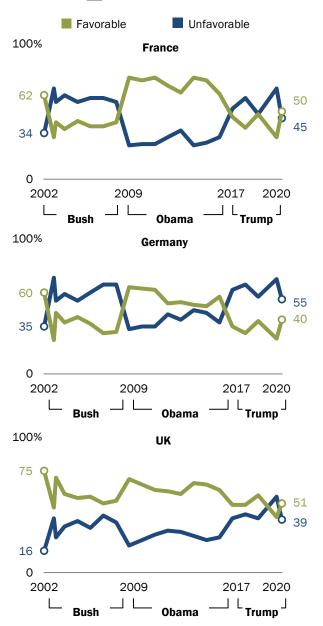
Overall views of the U.S. in the three European countries surveyed are lukewarm. In France and the UK, about half see the U.S. favorably while about four-in-ten or more see the country unfavorably. Germans are especially critical, with a majority holding an unfavorable view of the U.S. and only four-in-ten viewing the U.S. positively.

Still, these evaluations of the U.S. are more sanguine than the ratings the U.S. received <u>last summer</u>. In France, the share who see the U.S. favorably has increased by 19 percentage points, and the share has increased by 14 and 10 points in Germany and the UK, respectively. For the French and Germans, these are also the most favorable views of the U.S. expressed during the Trump presidency.

The increase in positive ratings for the U.S. is not as great as the increase observed in our 2009 survey, following the election of Barack Obama, in which ratings improved dramatically

European publics surveyed divided on views of the U.S.

% who have a ___ view of the U.S.



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Fall 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q27a.

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from the lower marks seen throughout much of George W. Bush's presidency. A Pew Research Center survey to be conducted later this year will examine whether views of the U.S. shift further once Biden takes office.

Although those on the ideological left are in some cases more optimistic about the direction of policy change under a Biden administration, it is those on the right who have more favorable attitudes toward the U.S. overall. For instance, six-in-ten Britons on the ideological right have favorable view of the U.S., compared with only about a third of their compatriots on the left. A similar pattern holds in France, where 56% on the right are favorable toward the U.S., versus 38% on the left. The difference between those on the left and on the right is not statistically significant in Germany.

Ratings of the U.S. also differ with views of right-wing populist political parties. In all three countries surveyed, those who have favorable views of a right-wing populist party are more likely than those with unfavorable views to also see the U.S. favorably.

For those in the UK, attitudes are additionally divided by views about Brexit. Those who think of themselves as "remainers" are 14 percentage points less likely to have a favorable view of the U.S. than those who see themselves as "leavers."

Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals.

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Methodology

About Pew Research Center's Fall 2020 Global Attitudes Survey

Results for the survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Gallup and Abt Associates. The results are based on national samples, unless otherwise noted. More details about our international survey methodology and country-specific sample designs are available here.

Appendix: Classifying European political parties

Classifying parties as populist

Although experts generally agree that populist political leaders or parties display high levels of anti-elitism, definitions of populism vary. We use three measures to classify populist parties: anti-elite ratings from the <u>2019 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES)</u>, Norris' <u>Global Party Survey</u> and <u>The PopuList</u>. We define a party as populist when at least two of these three measures classify it as such.

CHES, which was conducted from February to May 2020, asked 421 political scientists specializing in political parties and European integration to evaluate the 2019 positions of 277 European political parties across all European Union member states. CHES results are regularly used by academics to classify parties with regard to their left-right ideological leanings, their key party platform positions and their degree of populism, among other things.

We measure anti-elitism using an average of two variables in the CHES data. First, we used "PEOPLE_VS_ELITE," which asked the experts to measure the parties with regard to their position on direct vs. representative democracy, where 0 means that the parties support elected officeholders making the most important decisions and 10 means that "the people," not politicians, should make the most important decisions. Second, we used "ANTIELITE_SALIENCE," which is a measure of the salience of anti-establishment and anti-elite rhetoric for that particular party, with 0 meaning not at all salient and 10 meaning extremely salient. The average of these two measures is shown in the table below as "anti-elitism." In all countries, we consider parties that score above a 7.0 as "populist."

The <u>Global Party Survey</u>, which was conducted from November to December 2019, asked 1,861 experts on political parties, public opinion, elections and legislative behavior to evaluate the ideological values, issue position and populist rhetoric of parties in countries on which they are an expert, classifying a total of 1,051 parties in 163 countries. We used "TYPE_POPULISM," which categorizes populist rhetoric by parties. We added only "strongly populist" parties using this measure.

The PopuList is an ongoing project to classify European political parties as populist, far right, far left and/or euroskeptic. The project specifically looks at parties that "obtained at least 2% of the vote in at least one national parliamentary election since 1998." It is based on collaboration

between a cademic experts and journalists. The PopuList classifies parties that emphasize the will of the people against the elite as populist.¹

The Brexit Party in the UK (now called Reform UK) is only classified as populist on one measure but is still included for analysis in the report. It is not included in the PopuList and does not meet our anti-elite CHES threshold of 7.0, but is considered a right-wing populist party by the Global Party Survey and <u>other experts</u>.

Classifying parties as left, right or center

We can further classify these traditional and populist parties into three groups: left, right and center. When classifying parties based on ideology, we relied on the variable "LRGEN" in the CHES dataset, which asked experts to rate the positions of each party in terms of its overall ideological stance, with 0 meaning extreme left, 5 meaning center and 10 meaning extreme right. We define left parties as those that score below 4.5 and right parties as those above 5.5. Center parties have ratings between 4.5 and 5.5.

European populist party classifications

Party	Country	2019 Left-right	2019 Anti-elitism	2019 Global Party Survey	The PopuList
Populist parties on the left					
La France Insoumise	France	1.3	8.3	Strongly populist	Populist
Populist parties on the right					
Brexit Party	UK	8.2	5.3	Strongly populist	-
Alternative for Germany (AfD)	Germany	9.2	9.0	Strongly populist	Populist
National Rally	France	9.8	8.6	Strongly populist	Populist

Notes: Left-right indicates the average score CHES experts gave each party on an 11-point left-right scale. Scores for anti-elitism are an average of party position on direct vs. representative democracy and the salience of anti-elite rhetoric within the party. Political party name was fielded as "Brexit Party" in the UK (now called Reform UK).

Source: CHES (2019). Global Party Survey (2019). The PopuList (2019).

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¹ Mudde, Cas. 2004. "The Populist Zeitgeist." Government and Opposition.

Topline questionnaire

Pew Research Center Fall 2020 Survey January 19, 2021 Release

Methodological notes:

- Survey results are based on national samples. For further details on sample designs, see our <u>international survey methods database</u>.
- The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the United States in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Weighted %	Plus or minus
Total sample	1003		3.7 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	426	41	5.6 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	492	49	5.3 percentage points

- Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%. The topline "total" columns show 100%, because they are based on unrounded numbers.
- Since 2007, Pew Research Center has used an automated process to generate toplines for its Global Attitudes surveys. As a result, numbers may differ slightly from those published prior to 2007.
- Not all questions included in the Fall 2020 Survey are presented in this topline. Omitted questions have either been previously released or will be released in future reports.

		Q27a. Please te		e a very favorab favorable opinio			at unfavorab
		Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	DK/Refused	Total
France	Fall, 2020	7	43	31	14	5	100
	Summer, 2020	3	28	42	25	2	100
	Spring, 2019	8	40	35	13	4	100
	Spring, 2018	4	34	37	23	2	100
	Spring, 2017	5	41	34	18	2	100
	Spring, 2016	6	57	25	6	6	100
	Spring, 2015	10	63	20	7	0	100
	Spring, 2014	10	65	18	7	0	100
	Spring, 2013	7	57	27	9	0	100
	Spring, 2012	7	62	24	7	0	100
	Spring, 2011	7	68	22	4	0	100
	Spring, 2010	5	68	21	5	0	100
	Spring, 2009	8	67	20	5	0	100
	Spring, 2008	4	38	39	18	0	100
	Spring, 2007	5	34	44	16	0	100
	Spring, 2006	2	37	43	17	1	100
	Spring, 2005	3	40	42	15	0	100
	Spring, 2004	6	31	42	20	2	100
	May, 2003	8	34	38	19	1	100
	March, 2003	6	25	45	22	2	100
	Summer, 2002	8	54	26	8	3	100
Germany	Fall, 2020	8	32	38	17	5	100
•	Summer, 2020	5	21	46	24	4	100
	Spring, 2019	5	34	44	13	3	100
	Spring, 2018	3	27	50	16	3	100
	Spring, 2017	3	32	50	12	3	100
	Spring, 2016	5	52	32	6	6	100
	Spring, 2015	2	48	36	9	4	100
	Spring, 2014	4	47	39	8	3	100
	Spring, 2013	5	48	36	4	6	100
	Spring, 2012	6	46	39	5	4	100
	Spring, 2011	4	58	32	3	3	100
	Spring, 2010	5	58	31	4	3	100
	Spring, 2009	4	60	26	7	3	100
	Spring, 2008	3	28	53	13	4	100
	Spring, 2007	2	28	47	19	4	100
	Spring, 2006	2	35	46	14	3	100
	Spring, 2005	4	38	44	10	5	100
	Spring, 2004	3	35	49	10	3	100
	May, 2003	6	39	42	12	1	100
	March, 2003	4	21	41	30	4	100
	Summer, 2002	9	51	31	4	4	100
	Julillier, 2002	,	31	J J1	7	7	100

		Q27a. Please te		e a very favorab favorable opinio			nat unfavorable
		Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	DK/Refused	Total
United Kingdom	Fall, 2020	12	39	27	12	10	100
	Summer, 2020	9	32	34	22	3	100
	Spring, 2019	16	41	28	12	4	100
	Spring, 2018	12	38	27	16	8	100
	Spring, 2017	13	37	28	12	10	100
	Spring, 2016	14	47	20	6	12	100
	Spring, 2015	16	49	17	7	11	100
	Spring, 2014	13	53	19	8	7	100
	Spring, 2013	10	48	22	8	12	100
	Spring, 2012	10	50	24	7	9	100
	Spring, 2011	12	49	22	6	12	100
	Spring, 2010	14	51	18	6	10	100
	Spring, 2009	13	56	14	6	10	100
	Spring, 2008	8	45	25	12	10	100
	Spring, 2007	9	42	29	13	7	100
	Spring, 2006	11	45	20	13	11	100
	Spring, 2005	13	42	27	11	7	100
	Spring, 2004	15	43	24	10	8	100
	May, 2003	18	52	14	12	5	100
	March, 2003	14	34	24	16	11	100
	Summer, 2002	27	48	12	4	9	100

Q28. How much confidence do you have in U.S. president-elect Joe Biden to do the righ regarding world affairs – a lot of confidence, some confidence, not too much confidence confidence at all?							
		A lot of confidence	Some confidence	Not too much confidence	No confidence at all	DK/Refused	Total
France	Fall, 2020	13	59	14	9	5	100
Germany	Fall, 2020	28	51	10	9	3	100
United Kingdom	Fall, 2020	20	45	17	9	9	100

		Q29a. When Joe Biden becomes president of the United States, do you think each of the following will? a. The United States' foreign policy							
		Improve	Get worse	Do not expect it to change much at all	DK/Refused	Total			
France	Fall, 2020	67	6	23	4	100			
Germany	Fall, 2020	69	6	22	3	100			
United Kingdom	Fall, 2020	57	9	22	11	100			

		Q29b. When Joe Biden becomes president of the United States, do you think each of the following will? b. The United States' response to climate change								
		Improve	Get worse	Do not expect it to change much at all	DK/Refused	Total				
France	Fall, 2020	66	5	25	4	100				
Germany	Fall, 2020	64	4	29	3	100				
United Kingdom	Fall, 2020	67	4	21	8	100				

	Q29c. When Joe Biden becomes president of the United States, do you teach of the following will? c. The United States' response to the corona outbreak							
	Do not expect it to change Improve Get worse much at all DK/Refused Total							
France	Fall, 2020	72	5	20	3	100		
Germany	Fall, 2020	72	7	19	2	100		
United Kingdom	Fall, 2020	70	6	17	8	100		

		me whether	about the future er you feel gener out? a. (survey	ally optimistic o	r generally					
		Generally optimistic	Generally pessimistic	DK/Refused	Total					
France	Fall, 2020	84	14	2	100					
Germany	Fall, 2020	84	84 13 3 100							
United Kingdom	Fall, 2020	72	23	5	100					

		Q31b. Thinking about the future of (survey country) please tell me whether you feel generally optimistic or generally pessimistic about? b. (survey country's) relations with European countries						
		Generally Generally optimistic pessimistic DK/Refused Total						
United States	Fall, 2020	73	23	3	100			