



Press Release

New Global Poll in 24 Countries Shows Growing Consensus (84%, up 7%) That Free Trade Benefits Local Economies

Strong majorities in Canada (89%) and US (87%) agree that Free Trade benefits their local economy

Toronto, ON, November 17, 2017 — This eighth wave of Ipsos's annual Global Poll for the Halifax Security Forum shows a strong, consistent, and growing (up 7% since 2016) consensus among global citizens that free trade benefits their local economy. This includes citizens in all three countries involved in the NAFTA negotiations. Support for the local economic benefits of free trade in Mexico stands at 93% (up 6%), in Canada it's at 89% (up 9%), and the US it's at 87% (up +7%).

The country where citizens are the least likely to believe that free trade benefits their local economy is France (64%, up 16%). Also of note, even though the Brexit vote might suggest that citizens of Britain have turned sour on free trade, a strong majority (93%, up 3%) agree that free trade helps the British economy.

Give the domestic economic benefits of free trade, are the world's governments doing enough to increase it? Three quarters (76%) believe that their local government is doing what they can to increase free trade. Eighty percent of Canadians think this, as do 76% of Americans, and 88% of Mexicans (the strongest agreement in the world).

Threat Assessment

While Global Citizens may have a positive and improving views of free trade, there are several other aspects of global affairs that concern them:

- 80% agree that over the last year the world has become a more dangerous place. This represents a decline of 4% over 2016. However, while the world is a touch less scary than it was last year, only half (51%) of us are prepared to say that things are getting better. The biggest optimists in the world reside in China (84% agree world getting better), followed by India (79%), Russia (65%) and Peru (65%). The world's pessimists live in Japan (26%), Belgium (31%), and France (34%). Americans (46%) and Canadians (41%) are in the middle of the pack in terms of optimism, but both are more pessimistic than optimistic about the current direction of the world.
- What do we see as most threatening in the world today? For most of us, it's being hacked for fraudulent or espionage purposes (74%, unchanged), a domestic terrorist attack (72%, unchanged), or a nuclear-chemical-biological attack somewhere in the world (71%, up 4%). For all the threats tested, the numbers have remained stable over the last year.
- What do Canadians worry about most in terms of security threats? It's being hacked for fraudulent or espionage purposes (77%, unchanged), followed by a domestic terrorist attack (76%, up 10%). For Americans, it's a domestic terrorist attack (90%, unchanged), or a major domestic natural disaster (90%, up 5%). It should also be noted that for all the threats tested, the US is above the global average for all of them. The US also leads the world in being concerned about a nuclear-

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Press Release – continued –

chemical-biological attack, being involved in an armed conflict with another nation, being hacked, or experiencing a violent domestic conflict between ethnic or minority groups.

- How well prepared are our governments to deal with the security threats facing us? The global public believes their governments are appropriately prepared to meet only one threat – a major health epidemic. For the top three threats facing the world (being hacked, domestic terrorism, or a nuclear-chemical-biological attack), the world’s citizens have the least confidence in their government’s current level of preparation. While Canadians are more optimistic than the world average about their government’s level of preparedness, they are much less certain about how well prepared we are to deal with the top three threats facing Canada – being hacked, domestic terrorism, or a nuclear-chemical-biological attack somewhere in the world. Americans are less likely than Canadians to believe that their government is prepared to meet security threats, and the top three have the biggest gaps – domestic terrorism, domestic natural disaster, and being hacked. But, Americans are also concerned about the lack of preparation for nuclear-chemical-biological attack somewhere in the world.
- The survey also looked at public concern about nuclear proliferation. The world is divided on this issue. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with this statement – “even though more of the world’s countries have nuclear weapons today, it really hasn’t increased the likelihood of nuclear war.” Half (49%) agreed. However, 43% of Americans and 40% of Canadians agreed. The highest level of agreement was in India (75%), the lowest was in Japan (28%).

Engagement in World Affairs

One trend that’s emerged in previous waves of this survey is that the willingness to participate in global affairs is mediated by views of a country’s domestic economic performance. Since global economic confidence has been on the upswing of late, we are seeing a slight softening in opposition to participation in global affairs. While a majority (71%) still agree that – “given the difficult economic issues in my country today, my country needs to focus less on the world, and more at home.” This is a slight (-2%) improvement (a negative score indicates declining opposition to engagement). Most of the positive movement has been in Europe, led by Italy (-13%) and Poland (-10%). Both the United States (80%, unchanged) and Canada (74%, +2%) are higher than the global average on this question.

While general participation in world affairs can be a tough sell at the domestic level, the story improves when it comes to specific interventions. The lesson here is that when participation is linked to dealing with a specific problem, support levels jump. These opinions have remained stable over the last year, and both Canada and the US are above the global average on all interventions:

- *My country should help parts of the world that are experiencing difficulties such as natural disasters or famine.* (78%, unchanged). Canada 87%, US 84%.
- *My country should help with the growth of democracy in the world.* (76%, unchanged). Canada (80%), US (79%).
- *My country should support economic sanctions against countries that behave badly in the world, or treat their own people badly.* (76%, unchanged). Canada (84%). US (86%)
- *My country has a responsibility to be a moral leader in the world and set an example for other countries to follow.* (72%, unchanged). Top – India (90%). Canada (86%), US (87%).
- *My country should assist countries that have less developed economies.* (66%, +2%). Canada (74%), US (74%).

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Press Release – continued –

World Affairs Influencers

When it comes to influence in world affairs, who do global citizens most want to see at the table? Again, this year, Canada (82%, unchanged) tops the list. Next are Germany (76%, -5%), France (75%, +4%), and the United Nations (72%, unchanged). Filling out the bottom of the list are Iran (31%, +5%), Israel (43%, +6%), and Russia (50%, +4%).

The biggest mover in terms of global influence over the last year has been the United States. While a majority (55%) of the world's citizens say the United States has a positive influence on world affairs, this is down 9% from 2016. The US now trails China (58%, +3%) in terms of global perceptions of positive influence in world affairs.

While views of the US's influence may have declined over the last year, what has remained stable is the world's agreement (58%, -2%) that – "it is good for the world that the United States feels it has a special responsibility to assist countries or peoples when they are confronted by military aggressors." Americans (75%, +5%) are more likely than average to think this, as are Canadians (65%, unchanged). Topping the list of countries that agree are India (83%, unchanged) and Poland (77%, +8%). At the bottom of the list are Russia (29%, +5%), Germany (40%, -7%), and China (48%, +3%).

What has also stayed stable (65%, +2%) is the belief among the world's citizens that their country has enough common values with the US that they can cooperate on solving important international problems. Notably, there are increasing majorities on this in both Russia (74%, +12%) and China (62%, +9%). A stable majority of Canadians (81%, unchanged) also share this sentiment.

The US leads both China (57%, +7%) and Russia (54%, +7%) when it comes to the question of shared values, although the gap is closing. However, all three countries trail the European Union (72%, +4%) on this attribute.

Public support for the United Nations was also gauged in the survey. A majority (65%) describe the UN as important and relevant. Almost three quarters (72%) of Canadians see the UN in a positive light, along with 70% of Americans. The highest level of support for the UN is in India (79%), with the lowest in Turkey (39%) and Russia (39%).

Values and Security Issues

Several questions were asked this year on social values related to security issues.

- *Economic power is more important in world affairs than military power.* A strong majority (76%, unchanged) agreed with this statement." Canadians (77%, +2%) were close to the global average, while Americans (70%, +8%) were slightly below the global average. No country's citizens saw military power as being more important than economic power in world affairs.
- *Under some conditions war is necessary to obtain justice.* A strong minority (44%, -3%) agreed with this statement. Majorities in Canada (53%, unchanged), and the US (71%, -8%) agreed, which put them both well above the global average. China (72%, unchanged) ranked highest on this question, while Japan ranked lowest (24%, -7%).
- *Given the dangers in the world, my government needs to spend more on my country's military.* A majority (57%, -2%) agreed with this statement. Majorities in Canada (63%, unchanged) and the US (71%, unchanged) agreed, which puts them both above the global average. India (85%, unchanged) ranked the highest on this question, while Spain (36%, unchanged) ranked the lowest.
- *I expect in the next 25 years we could see another world conflict involving superpowers similar to World Wars 1 and 2.* Global citizens are pessimistic on this question. A strong majority (65%, unchanged) agrees that another global conflict involving superpowers is likely. Canadians (78%, +2%) and Americans (82%, +5%) lead the world in terms of pessimism

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Press Release – continued –

about a global conflict. At the other end of the scale are Japan (42%, +5%), Germany (55%, unchanged), and China (55%, -2%)

Climate Change

- Only half (50%) of the world's citizens agree that "most of the world's countries are doing what is appropriate and reasonable to fight climate change." Most Americans (55%), and a minority of Canadians (46%) feel this way. Countries that are the most optimistic include China (86%), India (77%), and Saudi Arabia (66%). The most pessimistic countries are Spain (30%), Japan (32%), France and Germany (both 35%).

About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between September 22 and October 6, 2017, on behalf of the Halifax Security Forum. The survey was conducted with 18,594 respondents in 24 countries around the world via the Ipsos Online Panel system. The countries reporting herein are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Great Britain, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United States of America. The survey was conducted with an international sample of 18,594 adults aged 18-64 in the US and Canada, and age 16-64 in all other countries. Approximately 1000+ individuals participated on a country by country basis via the Ipsos Online Panel except for Argentina, Belgium, Hungary, India, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden and Turkey, which each had a sample of approximately 500. Weighting was employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects the adult population according to the most recent country Census data, and to provide results that approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of 1,000 and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.1. For a sample of 500 it would be +/- 4.5 percentage points. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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Press Release – continued –

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