



Survey Finds that a Majority of Americans are Critical of the Chinese Government's Initial Handling of the COVID-19 Outbreak

A new survey released by The Pew Research Center indicates rising American discontent toward China, particularly over Beijing's handling of the initial COVID-19 outbreak in the country. According to the survey, 73% of American adults have an unfavorable view of China, and 64% also say that China did a poor job handling the coronavirus outbreak. Among other questions, the survey also solicited responses on Americans' sentiment toward Xi Jinping and Sino-American relations as a whole. Tensions between China and the United States have increasingly risen as a result of the spread of COVID-19, as the countries implemented vastly different protocols to combat the virus.

In general, Americans have been highly critical of China's handling of the COVID-19 outbreak. 64% of respondents said that China did a poor job controlling the virus, and 43% believe China did an extremely poor job in handling the outbreak. 75% of Americans believe that the Chinese government's initial handling of the virus contributed to the global spread of the virus, and about 50% of respondents said the United States should hold China responsible for its role in allowing the virus to proliferate, regardless of the prospect of worsening economic relations between the countries.

Polls from Pew Research regarding Americans' opinion on China have yielded growing numbers of unfavorability since 2017. In the past three years, the percentage of American adults that held an unfavorable view of China has grown from 47% to 73%, with the COVID-19 outbreak playing a particularly important role in shaping the views of Americans. When specifically queried over China's handling of the initial COVID-19 outbreak, 78% of respondents said China was responsible for the global outbreak of the coronavirus due to its poor handling of the initial epicenter of Wuhan. Additionally, people who reported having a very unfavorable view of China has doubled in just over a year, culminating in the current record high of 42% of Americans holding a very unfavorable opinion on China.

Also included in the Pew survey was a question on whether Xi Jinping could be trusted to do the correct thing in global affairs. 77% of respondents said Xi was untrustworthy on the international stage, and would not pursue policies to improve the global landscape. This is a 27-point increase since last year, and Xi's favorability in the United States generally has declined since then. Correspondingly, for the first time since 2014, a majority of Americans say they have no confidence in Xi, as opposed to having some or little confidence in the Chinese leader.

In terms of demographics, most Americans share similar sentiments on China, regardless of their age or political leaning. In total, 71% of adults between the ages of 30-49 view China unfavorably, and 81% of Americans above the age of 50 believe the same. Politically, 83% of Republicans and 68% of Democrats view China unfavorably. Additionally, among individuals who hold a university degree, 70% view China unfavorably, with similar levels for Americans without a college degree. The broad agreement across political lines and age groups indicates American sentiment on China is fairly uniform, regardless of other disagreements.