

## China Seen Surpassing the U.S. as Superpower, Poll Shows By Terry Atlas on Bloomberg

People around the world see the U.S. as a waning superpower with China poised to supplant it, according to international polling conducted for the Pew Research Center.

The polling shows people in many countries already view China as the leading economic power. Among the 39 countries surveyed, six -- including the U.S. and Japan -- had pluralities or majorities saying that China will never replace the U.S.

“Regardless of which country is seen as the economic powerhouse today, many publics believe China will eventually replace the U.S. as the world’s leading superpower, if it has not already done so,” according to the report released today by the Washington-based Pew Center’s Global Attitudes Project.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris said in a March 22 report that China’s economy, now the world’s second-biggest, is on course to overtake the U.S. as the largest in about 2016, when adjusted for relative purchasing power.

China has an economic gap to close if it is to do. Its gross domestic product of \$8.23 trillion last year was about half the \$15.68 trillion of the U.S., according to International Monetary Fund data. That gap narrows when purchasing power is taken into account, putting China’s output at \$12.41 trillion, according to the IMF.

China’s military forces are decades behind those of the U.S., as the Chinese work to develop their first aircraft carriers and to expand their ballistic missile arsenal.

### China’s Neighbors

The Pew report’s broader findings were summarized in its title: “America’s Global Image Remains More Positive Than China’s But Many See China Becoming World’s Leading Power.”

Across the nations surveyed, Pew found that a median of 63 percent gave the U.S. a favorable rating, compared with 50 percent for China. Those surveyed in many nations voiced concern about China’s rise, the authors wrote.

“Globally, people are more likely to consider the U.S. a partner to their country than to see China in this way, although relatively few think of either nation as an enemy,” according to the report.

China’s military power is viewed with trepidation by people in some regional neighbors including Japan, South Korea, Australia and the Philippines, according to the report.

“By a wide margin, the Japanese give China its worst ratings — only 5 percent express a positive view,” according to the report. “Territorial disputes have increased tensions between these two historic rivals over the past few years, and 82 percent of Japanese describe these disputes as a big or very big problem.”  
Soft Power

Also, the U.S. maintains an advantage in measures of what’s known as soft power in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, regions where China has been increasing its economic investments in recent years as it seeks influence and raw materials. Elements of soft power include scientific advances, music, movies, and ways of doing business.

The findings came from polling the Pew Research Center conducted in the 39 countries among 37,653 respondents from March 2 to May 1. The margin of error varies among the individual national polls.

The survey found rising tensions between the American and Chinese publics.

“Just 37 percent of Americans express a positive view of China, down from 51 percent two years ago,” according to the report. “Similarly, ratings for the U.S. have plummeted in China — in a 2010 poll conducted a few months after a visit to China by President Barack Obama, 58 percent had a favorable impression of the U.S., compared with 40 percent today.”  
European Attitudes

On economic power, the report finds a shift in perceptions since the 2008 financial crisis, particularly in Western European nations. In the U.K, 53 percent of those surveyed said China is the leading economy, while 33 percent named the U.S. About 6 in 10 Germans said China occupies the top position, while 19 percent cited the U.S.

The U.S. is generally seen as the world’s leading economy in Latin America, Africa and in much of China’s own backyard. More than 6 in 10 in Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea named the U.S. as the leading economic power, according to the report.

Two-thirds of the Chinese believe their country either already has or someday will supplant the U.S., according to the polls. Americans are divided: 47 percent said China has or will replace the U.S., while 47 percent said this will never happen.

“American opinion has shifted significantly since 2008, when only 36 percent said China would become the top global power and 54 percent believed it would never replace the U.S.,” according to the report.  
Youth Attitudes

Young Chinese and Americans showed an interest in each others' nations.

The U.S. is viewed favorably by half of Chinese ages 18 to 29, much more so than by their elders, according to the polling, which included 3,226 Chinese and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

About 57 percent of young Americans view China favorably, compared with 27 percent of those more than 50 years old, according to a poll of 1,002 Americans with a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

Because of its large population, China's economy lags far behind the U.S. when its output is adjusted on a per capita basis. By that measure, China's gross domestic product was \$6,076 in 2012 compared with \$49,922 for the U.S.