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World View

Kerry Is Widely Favored Abroad

Hostility Toward Bush Revealed in Surveys and Interviews

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Washington Post Foreign Service

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PARIS, Sept. 28 -- From Canada to Mexico, from London and Paris to Jakarta and Beijing, President Bush is widely unpopular as a candidate for reelection, according to surveys and interviews conducted in 20 countries.

Sen. John F. Kerry appears to be the runaway favorite abroad, even though few people outside the United States know much about the Massachusetts Democrat or his positions on foreign policy questions.

"If foreigners could vote, there's no question what the result would be," said Guillaume Parmentier, director of the French Center on the United States. "Bush's image, even before the war in Iraq, was not good. The way he comports himself, the vocabulary he uses -- good versus evil, God and all that -- even his body language, most people think is not presidential." He added, "I've never seen such hostility."

Kerry's foreign fans say they like his attitude about consulting allies and respecting their views. To them, he seems worldly, with an African-born wife. He attended school in Geneva and speaks French. A first cousin of Kerry's, Brice Lalonde, is a Green Party mayor of a small town in western France.

Bush appears to have strong support in such places as Israel and Singapore for his stance against radical Islamic groups, and in some countries that are benefiting from world trade, such as India, for his free-market views. But elsewhere, a majority of people appear to be hoping he loses.

"Kerry! Kerry! Kerry!" said Eros Djarrot, a filmmaker and founder of a small political party in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation. "Simply because Bush knows what is good for Americans, but he doesn't understand what is good for people outside America, especially people in developing countries."

Karim Raslan, a lawyer and commentator in Malaysia, another Muslim-majority country, was more blunt: "Everyone would want to see Bush out. He is loathed." He added: "The view in Asia-Pacific is, Bush is dreadful. You've got to get rid of him. But is the other guy better? I fear not."

In the Arab world, Bush is widely despised for launching the Iraq war, supporting Israel and shoring up corrupt Arab governments in exchange for their help in the region. "Bush talks about helping Egypt, but he supports Mubarak," said Ahmed Shukri, an Egyptian computer science student, referring to Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's authoritarian president. "He supports lots of dictators. We don't trust Bush and we don't know Kerry."

In the Muslim world as a whole, Bush's Middle East policies are often seen not as targeting terrorism but the Islamic faith.

Elsewhere, the American president is viewed as too quick to use force, with no concern for the consequences to

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(washingtonpost.com, Sep 28, 2004)



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others. "I don't like Bush," said Hao Zhiqiang, 42, a taxi driver in China. "He launched the Iraq war. The price of oil is getting higher because of that."

In Canada, a public opinion poll by the Globe and Mail newspaper conducted in July found that Canadians favored Kerry over Bush 60 percent to 29 percent. In Japan, an earlier opinion poll published in the Mainichi newspaper, conducted before Democrats had chosen a candidate, showed only 31 percent of respondents supporting Bush and 57 percent against him.

In Russia, an opinion poll showed Russians preferring Kerry by a ratio of almost 4 to 1, although President Vladimir Putin quipped to reporters that the Bush supporters "include a few very influential people," an apparent reference to himself.

And a survey by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, conducted June 6 through 26 in nine European countries, found that 76 percent of European respondents disapproved of Bush's handling of international affairs, up 20 percentage points from a survey in 2002. The poll also found that 80 percent of Europeans surveyed -- compared with half of Americans -- said the Iraq war was not worth the cost in human life and material loss.

The deep antipathy has produced a round of Bush-bashing magazine covers, books and television debates that many foreign policy observers say is unprecedented, stronger even than the widespread repudiation abroad of President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s.

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Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kerry is spending this week in Wisconsin as he prepares for the first debate on Thursday night in Florida. Who is the last Democratic candidate to lose Wisconsin?

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