

Majority of Russians and Americans View Each Other's Country Negatively, Polls Show

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The number of Russians and Americans who view each others' country negatively has soared during the Ukraine crisis, while more than four in 10 Russians believe the NATO countries have reason to fear Russia, recent poll results have shown.

According to a survey released Wednesday by independent pollster Levada Center, the number of Russians whose attitude toward the U.S. is "bad" or "very bad" is 61 percent, compared to 56 percent in early March, and 44 percent in January.

Over the same period, the number of those whose attitude toward the U.S. is "good" or "very good" has dropped to 26 percent, compared to 34 percent in early March, and 43 percent in January.

Americans' views of Russia have undergone similar changes with 68 percent, or more than

two-thirds, viewing Russia as "unfriendly" or an "enemy," a Gallup poll released last week showed. That figure has soared from 44 percent in the second half of 2013 and just 20 percent in 2006, following the Russian-Western dispute over Ukraine and Moscow's annexation of Crimea in March.

The number of Americans who view Russia as an "ally" or a "friendly" country has plummeted to 26 percent in 2014, compared to 50 percent in 2013 and 73 percent in 2006, survey results published on the Gallup website show.

Meanwhile, 44 percent of Russians think the NATO countries have grounds for fearing Russia, compared to 33 percent in 2008 and 29 percent in 2002, the Levada poll shows. Sixty-two percent of respondents believe that Russia has grounds for fearing the NATO countries, up from 54 percent in 2000.

The poll also shows that 70 percent of Russians think that their country's influence in the world is "large" or "rather large," compared to 51 percent who thought so in 2011, while the number of those who think that Russia's influence is "not very large" or that it wields "no influence at all" has dropped to 25 percent, compared to 46 percent in 2011.

Another Levada poll showed last month that nearly two-thirds of Russians viewed their country as a great power, while nearly half of those surveyed said they wanted it to be perceived as a superpower that is respected and feared by other nations.

The latest Levada poll was conducted from March 21-24 among 1,603 people in 45 Russian regions and gave a margin of error of 3.4 percentage points.

The Gallup poll was conducted from March 22-23 among 1,012 people living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. It gave a margin of sampling error of 4 percentage points.

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