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# Germany and the United States:

## *Reliable Allies*

*But Disagreement on Russia,  
Global Leadership and Trade*

The Pew Research Center, in association with the Bertelsmann Foundation, surveyed publics in the United States and Germany to examine American and German attitudes toward the role historical memory plays in the relationship, views about each other as reliable allies, their relationship with Russia, and efforts to negotiate a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). For more, visit [pewresearch.org](http://pewresearch.org) or [bfna.org](http://bfna.org).



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# Germany and the United States: Reliable Allies

## *But Disagreement on Russia, Global Leadership and Trade*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
ON THIS REPORT:**

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## About the Report

This Pew Research Center report, in association with Bertelsmann Foundation, examines American and German attitudes toward each other and their respective geopolitical roles. This report is based on telephone surveys in the United States and Germany. In the U.S., interviews were conducted February 26 to March 1, 2015 among a national sample of 1,003 persons, 18 years of age or older. In Germany, interviews were conducted February 24-25, 2015 among a national sample of 963 persons, 18 years of age or older. For more details, see survey methods and topline results.

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## About Pew Research Center

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## About the Bertelsmann Foundation

The Bertelsmann Foundation, established in 2008, is the North American arm of the Germany-based Bertelsmann Stiftung. We are a driver of social change. We are committed to promoting the freedom of individuals and societies, and international understanding.

Our work reflects the principles of the Bertelsmann Stiftung, one of Europe's largest foundations. The Stiftung was founded in 1977 by Reinhard Mohn, who, as head of Bertelsmann AG, turned the publishing house into a leading international media group. The Stiftung's activities are guided by the principle that ownership of capital brings an obligation to contribute to society. Since its inception, the Stiftung has invested more than US\$ 1 billion in more than 700 projects. The Stiftung is headquartered in the northern German town of Gütersloh and has opened other branches in Brussels and Barcelona. The Washington, DC-based Foundation is part of this network.

Reinhard Mohn endowed the Stiftung with a majority shareholding in Bertelsmann AG, now Bertelsmann SE & Co. KGaA. Most funding for the Foundation's projects comes from that gift.

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# Trust Runs Deeper than Expected: Time for a Trans-Atlantic Upgrade

## Commentary by the Bertelsmann Foundation

Strong bilateral relations between Germany and the United States have for generations been a hallmark of the broader trans-Atlantic relationship. Following World War II, Washington and Bonn (and later Berlin) built and maintained a level of trust and understanding that allowed both countries to tackle Europe's most pressing political, economic and security issues. Both countries have enjoyed "special" relationships with other partners in Europe (the United States with the United Kingdom, and Germany with France), but Germany and the United States need now to form an "essential partnership" that can confront 21<sup>st</sup>-century challenges.

Recent developments, however, have tested that partnership. Last year's revelations of NSA surveillance activities of Chancellor Angela Merkel and throughout Germany created discord and put into question the continuation of that high level of trust and understanding that had characterized the bilateral relationship for decades. This erosion of confidence has manifested itself in the German public opposition to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), presenting policymakers with an additional obstacle to overcome.

The Bertelsmann Foundation and the Pew Research Center consequently joined on the eve of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II to survey public perceptions in Germany and the United States of the bilateral relationship and issues currently affecting it. The poll shows that while skepticism (especially in Germany) exists, support for the US-German partnership as such remains firm.

That finding contradicts the widespread perception of a relationship in crisis. This is good news, although the gap between perception and reality likely translates to an ambivalent alliance that is now punching on a global level far below its weight.

At the same time, the poll results reveal, disturbingly, that Germans and Americans are having difficulty understanding one another. If not reversed, this finding may have negative, long-term ramifications for a relationship that neither side can afford to take for granted.

### *In U.S.-German Relations We Trust*

To paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of the death of the German-American relationship are greatly exaggerated. Large majorities in Germany and the United States view the other country as a reliable ally, despite the NSA scandal.

Kremlin actions in Crimea and eastern Ukraine have likely contributed to a broad majority of Germans who favor strong ties with the US over strong or equidistant links with Russia. This is

perhaps surprising given the importance Germany traditionally attaches to its giant eastern neighbor, a result of the complex historical legacy between the two countries.

Support for Chancellor Merkel and US President Barack Obama over their handling of the German-American relationship has also weathered the NSA storm. Both leaders earn high marks in Germany for this. For the president, this may reflect a German public that blames members of the administration more than the chief executive himself for the spying scandal. Americans are more divided in their opinions of President Obama and Chancellor Merkel, though many in the US refrained from expressing an opinion, perhaps lacking sufficient knowledge to do so.

### *Tearing Down Walls, But Building New Ones?*

So Germans and Americans still trust each other. But do they understand each other? Recent disagreements—beginning with strong German opposition to the Iraq War— appear to have taken their toll. Today, in Berlin, government officials appear increasingly at a loss to understand Washington’s views on issues such as counter-terrorism strategies and data protection.

These misunderstandings start with the different interpretations of a shared history. When asked to identify the defining event in US-German relations, a plurality of Germans said it was the fall of the Berlin Wall. A plurality of Americans cited World War II and the Holocaust. This mindset may contribute to an American expectation of unconditional German support on a wide range of political, economic and security issues. At the same time, Germans’ emphasis on reunification may reflect the belief in a new, sovereign Germany and a break from the status quo ante. The turning point that the fall of the Berlin Wall represents is gradually eroding Germany’s uneasy relationship with power politics as the country grows more confident about its place in the world. Berlin is consequently becoming more willing to pursue its own interests (particularly economic interests), even when it causes friction with the United States.

German attitudes towards sanctions against Russia encapsulate this shift. The poll reveals a German majority that believes the current sanctions regime is “about right”, underscoring support for Berlin’s diplomatic efforts and a hesitation to antagonize Moscow further. Many Americans, however, want a tougher approach.

Germany’s emerging global role is also a source of division. An overwhelming majority of Germans rejects a more active military role, in stark contrast to Americans’ wishes for Germany to take more international responsibility. Notably, however, half of Germans and Americans show isolationist tendencies and favor less international engagement by rejecting assistance for other nations. This view is prevalent among Millennials (among those polled



ages 18-29) in both countries, who have come of age in a period of extended military engagement in Afghanistan and against Islamic extremism.

Such results underline additional mutual misunderstanding. The American desire for more German engagement on the world stage may reflect a number of factors including: an unawareness of German historical sensitivities regarding military activity, US confidence in the modern German state and/or the continuing desire by the US to share financial and military burdens with its partners on the world stage. At the same time, Germans perhaps do not fully appreciate the US's responsibilities as a superpower and the American public's weariness with its own military's engagements. Broadly, the isolationism of younger generations, who lack the historical perspective on the German-American partnership's importance, endangers long-term prospects for that vital link.

The German and American views on TTIP reveal a common skepticism toward a potential agreement, but for distinctly different reasons. While Germans fear a reduction in treasured European standards in health and safety, Americans maintain the reflexive position that equates trade liberalization with lower wages and outsourcing jobs. Both Washington and Berlin are relying on the notion that further transparency and public education will alleviate concerns on both sides of the Atlantic.

### *An Opportunity for Reinvention*

Overall, the survey warns us that the maintenance of a strong German-American relationship needs work and attention. As instability spreads, it is even more important for both partners to define the parameters of their relationship and form an “essential partnership” that is increasingly needed to tackle a growing list of trans-Atlantic challenges. Throughout the Cold War, joint projects such as NATO created and sustained close, collaborative ties. If that is to continue, Germany and the United States must identify new such projects. The coordination behind the West's unified response to Kremlin actions reveals the promise of continued close collaboration—and its necessity.

Greater commitment from political leaders is required if Germany and the United States are to reinforce the foundation and seize the potential of their partnership. Given public attitudes, Chancellor Merkel and President Obama have more room for maneuver than conventional wisdom suggests. Both should not refrain from using the credibility each has earned from the other's populace to further their shared interests. Both leaders should build on their joint success in crafting a unified Western sanctions policy against the Kremlin to work on a more comprehensive strategy towards Russia. While both countries should be cognizant of public concerns, the US and Germany should resolve to work together to complete the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with an emphasis on better explaining the benefits of the deal to their citizens.

# Germany and the United States: Reliable Allies

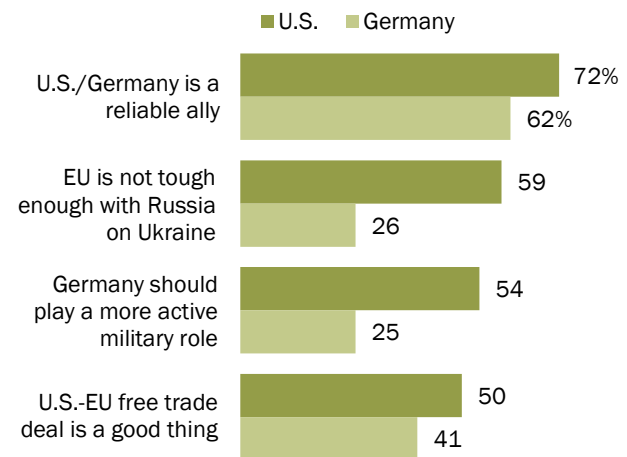
## *But Disagreement on Russia, Global Leadership and Trade*

Seven decades after the end of World War II and a quarter-century after the end of the Cold War, roughly seven-in-ten Americans see Germany as a reliable ally, and about six-in-ten Germans trust the United States, according to a Pew Research Center survey. A majority of Germans believe it is more important for Germany to have strong ties with the United States than with Russia. Germans also give U.S. President Barack Obama high marks for his management of the U.S.-German relationship. And Germans and Americans are equally wary of international entanglements and want their countries to focus on domestic problems.

But Germans and Americans do not see eye-to-eye on salient points in the history of the postwar alliance, nor about some of the key issues in its future. For Americans, the most important event in U.S.-German relations over the past 75 years remains World War II and the Holocaust. Germans are less unanimous in their views of historical importance, but to the extent that one event stands out it is the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall. In the eyes of most Americans, the “special relationship” with Britain is still stronger than that with Germany. Americans want Germany to play a more active military role in the world, but Germans emphatically disagree. Americans think that neither the European Union nor the U.S. is being tough enough in dealing with Russia on the issue of Ukraine. A plurality of Germans believes the handling of Russia is about right. And, while half of Americans voice the view that a free trade agreement between the EU and the U.S. would be a good thing, only about four-in-ten Germans agree.

These are among the main findings of Pew Research Center surveys conducted in the U.S. among 1,003 people from February 26 to March 1, 2015, and in Germany among 963 people February 24-25, 2015. All interviews were done by telephone. The survey was conducted in association with the Bertelsmann Foundation.

### The German-American Relationship



Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q1c, Q5, Q8 & Q10.

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## The Role of History in the U.S.-German Relationship

No single event in the recent history of U.S.-German relations dominates public memory in either Germany or the United States. And different events feature most prominently in Americans' and Germans' consciousness.

World War II and the Holocaust loom large for Americans. Nearly half (47%) say those events more than seven decades ago are still the most important in the U.S.-German relationship. Contrary to what might be expected, it is younger Americans, those ages 18 to 29 (51%) – not Americans ages 65 and older (40%) – who are most likely to cite the war and the Holocaust as the memory that first comes to mind when they think of the U.S. and Germany. Moreover, Republicans (56%) much more than Democrats (39%) mention WWII and the Holocaust.

### WWII, Fall of Berlin Wall Most Important Events in U.S.-German Relations

*As you think about relations between the United States and Germany over the last 75 years, which one of these events is most important in your opinion?*



Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q11.

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In the eyes of Americans, the second-most memorable event in modern U.S.-German relations has been the fall of the Berlin Wall: 28% say that is their most significant memory. Other moments in postwar relations hardly register: 8% cite the disagreement between the administration of U.S. President George W. Bush and of German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder over the Iraq War, 7% mention U.S. monitoring of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's communications, and just 3% name the postwar Marshall Plan.

For Germans, the most important event in bilateral relations over the past 75 years has been the fall of the Berlin Wall. Roughly a third (34%) of Germans surveyed cites that event. Notably, 43% of East Germans, but only 32% of West Germans, name the collapse of the Iron Curtain as the most significant event. (For more on German views about the end of the Cold War see [The Pulse of Europe 2009](#).) A fifth of Germans say it was WWII and the Holocaust (20%) or the Marshall Plan (20%) that was the most important event in the relationship. Another 12% mention the controversial U.S. monitoring of Merkel's communications. And only 8% reference the U.S.-German disagreement over the Iraq War.

## The U.S.-German Relationship Today

Economically and geopolitically, the U.S.-German alliance has become the linchpin of the trans-Atlantic relationship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Despite their disagreements at the time over the Iraq War and U.S. National Security Agency spying, Americans and Germans view each other as reliable allies. But Germans are slightly more circumspect than Americans about the alliance.

A widespread majority of Americans (72%) see Germany as a reliable ally, including nearly a quarter (24%) who thinks of Germany as very reliable. Older Americans (77%) have more faith in Germany than younger ones do (66%).

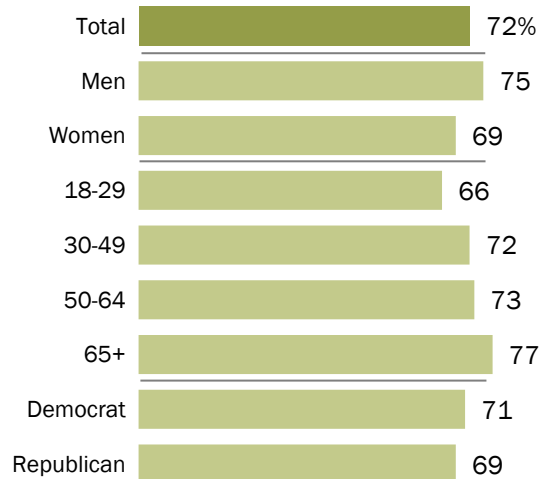
About six-in-ten Germans (62%) believe the United States is a reliable ally. But only 13% see Washington as very reliable. German men (68%) are more likely than women (56%) to see the U.S. as a dependable strategic partner. Notably, 31% of Germans think the U.S. is not a reliable ally.

But Americans are more likely to see Britain as a reliable ally: 85% say Britain is dependable, including 54% who consider it very reliable. American men (60%) more than women (49%) are likely to voice the opinion that Britain is very dependable. Similarly, Americans 65 years of age and older (64%) are more likely than Americans ages 18 to 29 (39%) to express such strong confidence in the “special relationship.”

A majority of Germans (55%) also view Britain as a reliable ally. But they have less faith in their EU and NATO partner than do

### Americans Across the Board See Germany as a Reliable Ally

*Germany is a very/somewhat reliable ally*

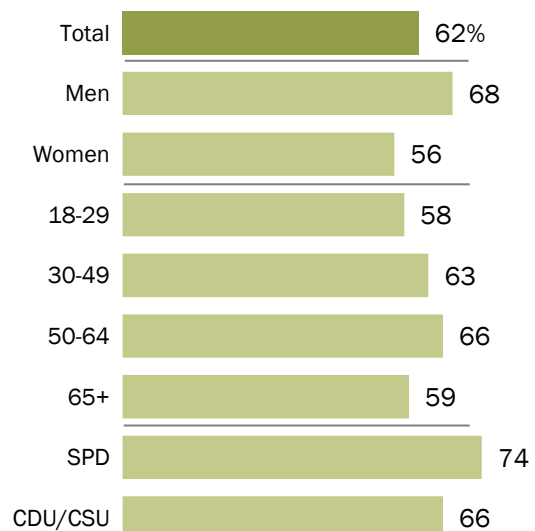


Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q1c.

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### German Men, SPD Adherents Most Likely to See the U.S. as a Reliable Ally

*U.S. is a very/somewhat reliable ally*



Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q1c.

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the Americans. Moreover, only 8% voice the view that London is very dependable.

And 32% of Germans see Britain as not too reliable or not at all reliable. Younger Germans, ages 18 to 29 (67%), are more likely to see Britain as reliable than are their elders, those ages 65 and older (44%).

France, meanwhile, is seen as a reliable ally by 69% of Americans, including 20% who say Paris is very reliable. However, there are some partisan divisions in intensity over France: While 26% of Democrats see the country as very reliable, only 15% of Republicans agree.

The Franco-German relationship – which endured three wars between 1870 and 1945 but has since been the driving force behind European integration – is today judged by the German public to be strong. More than three-quarters (78%) of Germans say France is a reliable ally, including 21% who see Paris as very reliable.

Despite their strong faith in France, there are some significant demographic differences in how Germans judge their neighbor. Men (85%) more than women (71%) are likely to see France as dependable. Older Germans (80%) have greater faith in Paris as an ally than do younger Germans (68%). Similarly, high-income Germans (87%) are more likely to look favorably on France than those with a low income (72%).

Relations between countries are often judged through the prism of national leadership. And Germans are far more likely than Americans to approve of how both U.S. President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel are handling U.S.-German relations.

About seven-in-ten (71%) Germans think Merkel is doing a good job in her management of ties with the U.S. Older Germans (79%) are more approving than younger ones (64%). Most notably, Merkel gets high marks from adherents of both her own right-of-center party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and its ally the Christian Social Union (CSU) (89%), as well as from her ruling coalition left-of-center partner the Social Democratic Party (SPD) (77%).

A majority of Germans (59%) also give Obama a thumbs-up for his dealing with Germany. Again, it is older Germans (67%) rather than younger ones (43%) who are bigger fans of Obama's management of the relationship.

## Americans, Germans Differ on Britain as a Reliable Ally

*Percent saying \_\_\_ is a very/somewhat reliable ally*

	U.S.	Germany	Britain	France
	%	%	%	%
Americans	–	72	85	69
Germans	62	–	55	78

Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q1a-c.

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Americans are divided over Obama's handling of ties with Germany: 40% approve of the job he is doing, 36% disapprove. But nearly a quarter (23%) of Americans have no opinion about his stewardship of the relationship, a sign that Germany is not on the radar of many Americans. As might be expected, Democrats (67%) say Obama is doing a good job, while only 16% of Republicans agree, suggesting much of the American public's lack of faith in Obama's dealings with Germany may reflect a broader partisan criticism of his overall [foreign policy performance](#).

Roughly four-in-ten Americans (38%) also approve of how Merkel is handling bilateral ties, while fewer disapprove (27%). Notably, men (44%) are more supportive than women (33%), as are those with a college degree (46%) compared with those with some college education (35%). The finding that 35% of Americans have no opinion of how Merkel is dealing with U.S.-German relations is further evidence that Americans are not paying much attention.

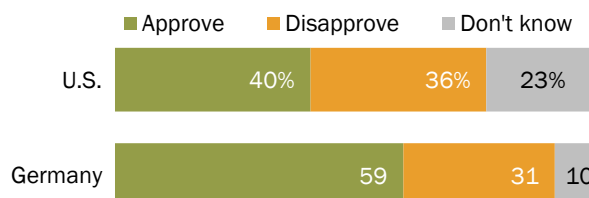
## Germany and the World

In recent years, there has been much discussion among foreign policy elites and pundits about resurgent American isolationism and German [reluctance](#) to take on greater global responsibilities. The public appetite to engage with the rest of the world can wax and wane over time depending on circumstances. But by one broad measure – public willingness to assume greater international obligations – Germans and Americans see eye-to-eye: They would prefer to focus on domestic tasks.

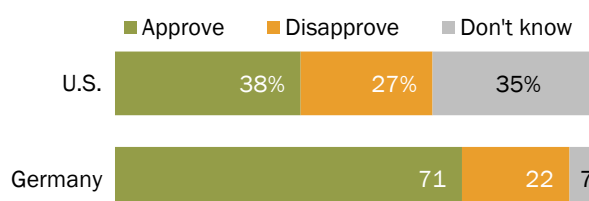
Half of both the German and American public say their country should deal with its own problems and let other countries deal with their own challenges. Roughly comparable proportions of Germans (43%) and Americans (39%) believe that their nation should help other countries deal with their difficulties.

### Higher Approval for Obama and Merkel by Germans than by Americans

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Obama is dealing with U.S.-German relations?*



*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Chancellor Merkel is dealing with U.S.-German relations?*



Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q2a-b.

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In particular, it is younger Germans and Americans who are more inward looking than their older counterparts. More than half of both Americans (57%) and Germans (54%) ages 18 to 29 hold the view that their country should deal with its own problems and let others deal with theirs. And only 36% of that age group in Germany and 31% in the United States believe that their country should help other nations deal with their difficulties. This stands in sharp contrast with the attitudes of their older countrymen: 46% of both Americans and Germans ages 65 and older are of the opinion that their countries should do more to help others.

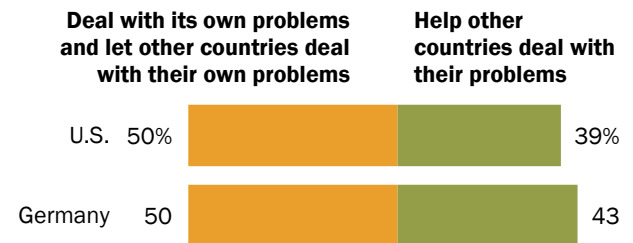
In addition, low-income Germans (61%) are more likely than high-income Germans (40%) to be inward-looking. There is no significant difference in attitudes on this issue between high- and low-income Americans. In Germany, those living in the East (60%) are far more likely to want Berlin to focus on domestic problems than are people in the West (47%), who are divided on the issue.

German reticence about taking on more international burdens can be seen in public attitudes toward greater sharing of the global security burden. Asked if Germany should play a more active military role in helping to maintain peace and stability in the world, only 25% of Germans agree. Just over two-thirds (69%) believe that, given its history, Germany should limit its military role in world affairs.

German women (75%) are more likely than men (63%) to want to limit their country's military activities, as are older Germans (90%) compared with their younger compatriots (58%). Notably, there is no partisan difference on this issue in Germany: 78% of CDU and CSU members are against a greater military role, as are 77% of SPD adherents. And East Germans (77%) are more likely than West Germans (68%) to want to limit Germany's military role in world affairs.

## Half in U.S., Germany Prefer to Concentrate on Domestic Rather than Foreign Problems

*Our country should ...*



Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q4.

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## Younger Generations More Parochial

*Our country should deal with its own problems and let other countries deal with their own problems*

	18-29 %	65+ %	Diff
U.S.	57	42	+15
Germany	54	46	+8

Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q4.

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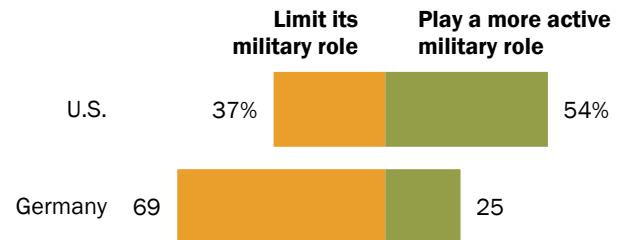
Americans say they would welcome Germany taking on more strategic responsibilities. More than half (54%) think Berlin should play a more active military role in maintaining peace and stability, while only 37% say it should limit its role. Older Americans (57%) and Democrats (60%) are the most likely to back a more active German military.

Germans are also divided over deepening economic ties with the U.S. Just 41% think a U.S.-European Union free trade agreement called the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which is now under negotiation, would be good for Germany; 36% say it would be a bad idea. That support is down 14 percentage points since a [Pew Research Center survey](#) in February-March 2014. High-income Germans (43%) are more likely to hold the view that TTIP is a bad thing than are low-income Germans (32%). While about half (51%) of CDU and CSU adherents think TTIP is a good thing, only 42% of SPD members support it. However, a significant portion of the German public is undecided: 23% volunteer they have not heard enough about the pact, think it is neither good nor bad or simply voice no opinion.

Half (50%) of the American public backs TTIP, largely unchanged from 2014. And only about two-in-ten (21%) think it would be bad for the United States. Democrats (59%) are more supportive than Republicans (45%). Nevertheless, as with Germans, much of the public is undecided. More than a quarter of Americans (28%) have not heard enough about the negotiation, think it is neither good nor bad or have no view on the topic.

## Americans Want to See a More Active Military Role for Germany; Germans Disagree

*Should Germany ...*



Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q10.

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## Decreasing Support for TTIP in Germany

*TTIP will be \_\_\_ for country*

	2014	2015	Change
	%	%	
Germany			
Good thing	55	41	-14
Bad thing	25	36	+11
U.S.			
Good thing	53	50	-3
Bad thing	20	21	+1

Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q5.

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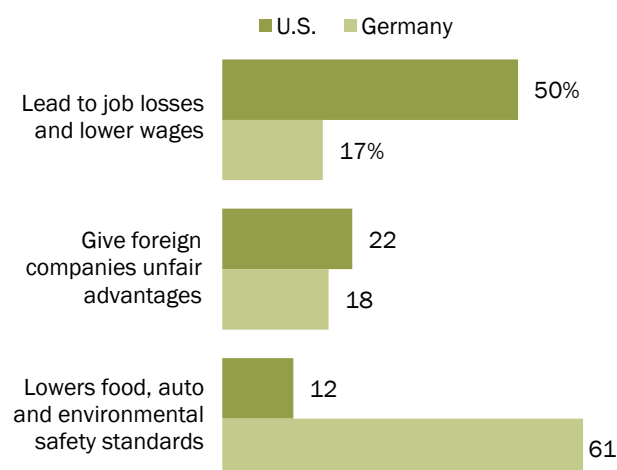
Among the Germans and Americans who hold the view that TTIP would be a bad thing, their opposition is fueled by different concerns. Roughly six-in-ten (61%) of the Germans against TTIP say they fear the deal would lower German food, environmental and auto safety standards. Just 18% believe it would give foreign companies that invest in Germany unfair advantages. And only 17% worry it would lead to job losses or a decrease in workers' wages.

Older Germans (77%) and women (65%) are the most worried about TTIP undermining German standards.

Among those Americans who voice the opinion that TTIP would be bad for the U.S., fears focus on its potentially adverse impact on jobs and wages (50%).

### Among Those Who Think TTIP Is Bad, Americans, Germans Differ on Why

*Of those who say TTIP will be a bad thing (21% of Americans and 36% of Germans), their reasons why a free trade agreement would be bad for their country:*



Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q6.

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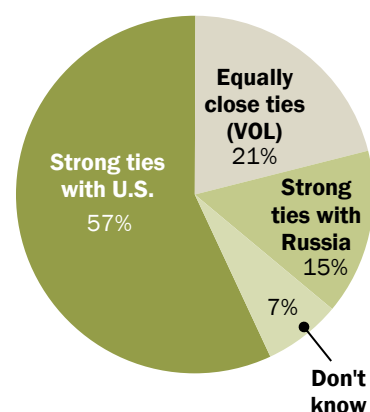
## Germany, America and Russia

Not since the end of the Cold War have German-American-Russian issues loomed so large in international affairs. This is in large part because of recent developments in Ukraine, where Russian activities have led to U.S. and European economic sanctions against Moscow. But Germany's geographic proximity and economic ties to Russia give Berlin and Washington different stakes in the confrontation with Moscow.

Nevertheless, a majority of Germans (57%) believe it is more important for Germany to have strong ties with the United States than with Russia. Just 15% prefer strong ties with Russia, and another 21% volunteer that it is best to have an equally close relationship with both. However, East and West Germans differ on ties with the U.S. While 61% of Germans living in the West prefer a strong affiliation with America, just 44% of people living in the East agree. And

### Germans: Majority Prefer Strong Ties with U.S.

*Which is more important for Germany – to have strong ties with the U.S. or strong ties with Russia?*



Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q3.

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while 23% of people in the East voice support for strong ties with Russia, only 12% of those in the West agree.

On the issue of Ukraine, when asked if it is more important to be tough with Russia or to have a strong economic relationship with her, half of Germans voice the view it is more important to be tough. In spite of Germany's long-standing economic and energy ties with Russia, only about a third (35%) express the opinion that it is better to have a strong economic relationship with Moscow. Notably, younger Germans (53%), ages 18 to 29, are much more supportive of standing up to Russia over Ukraine than are older Germans (36%), ages 65 and older.

Americans and Germans disagree, however, about whether the current U.S. and EU posture toward Russia over Ukraine is too tough, not tough enough or about right. Americans want to ratchet up the pressure, while most Germans do not support a tougher stance.

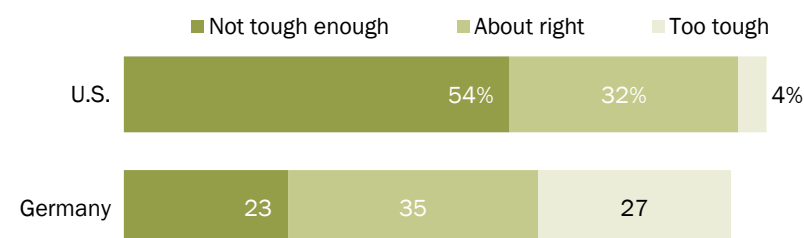
More than half of Americans (54%) believe that U.S. policy toward Russia is not tough enough. And 59% say the EU is not being strong enough. At the same time, roughly six-in-ten Germans (62%) think the

U.S. position with regard to Russia is too tough (27%) or about right (35%). Similarly, 62% of Germans believe that EU actions against Russia are too strong (18%) or about right (44%). Only 23% of Germans think Washington is not tough enough. And 26% believe the European Union is not aggressive enough.

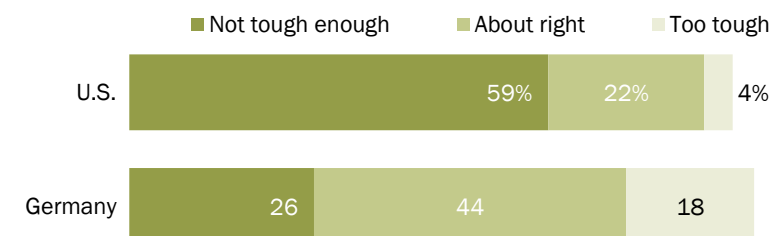
Older Americans (65%) are much more likely than younger ones (45%) to hold the view that the U.S. is not being tough enough on Russia. Republicans (69%) are also more critical than are Democrats (47%).

### Americans Want Harder Line with Russia; Germans Disagree

*The U.S. is being \_\_\_ in dealing with Russia on the issue of Ukraine*



*The EU is being \_\_\_ in dealing with Russia on the issue of Ukraine*



Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q7 & Q8.

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Americans ages 65 and older (70%) are even more critical of the EU's dealing with Russia over Ukraine and at odds with Americans ages 18 to 29 (47%) on this issue.

In Germany, supporters of the SPD (39%) are more likely than adherents of the CDU and CSU (23%) to voice the view that the U.S. is being too tough on Russia. And East Germans (27%) are more likely than West Germans (16%) to say that the EU is being too tough.

## The East-West Divide in Germany

One legacy of the Cold War is a lingering difference in perspective between Germans from the former East Germany and the public in the former West Germany. Both East (61%) and West Germans (62%) see the United States as a reliable ally. But East Germans (44%) are less likely than West Germans (61%) to prioritize close ties with the U.S. over ties with Russia. East Germans (60%) are far more likely than their fellow countrymen in the West (47%) to voice the view that Germany should deal with its own problems and let other countries deal with theirs. In this vein, Germans in the East (77%) are more likely than those in the West (68%) to want to limit Germany's military role in the world. And Eastern Germans (43%) are more likely than their Western counterparts (32%) to cite the fall of the Berlin Wall as the most important event in modern U.S.-German relations.

### East-West Divide in Germans' Attitudes

	East Germany %	West Germany %	Diff
Germany should deal with its own problems and let other countries deal with their own problems	60	47	+13
The EU is being too tough in dealing with Russia on the issue of Ukraine	27	16	+11
The fall of the Berlin Wall is the most important event in U.S.-German relations over the last 75 years	43	32	+11
Germany should limit its military role in world affairs	77	68	+9
It is more important for Germany to have strong ties with the United States rather than with Russia	44	61	-17

Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q3, Q4, Q8, Q10 & Q11.

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## The Partisan Divide in the United States

**Partisan politics** increasingly divides

Americans on a range of issues, not the least of which is the U.S.-German relationship.

Republicans (69%) and Democrats (71%) agree that Germany is a reliable ally. But Americans view a number of critical issues in the relationship through a partisan lens.

Democrats (67%) are far more likely than Republicans (16%) to approve of President Obama's handling of Washington-Berlin ties. Nearly seven-in-ten Republicans (69%) say the United States is not being tough enough on Russia over Ukraine; only 47% of

Democrats agree. Most Democrats (59%) believe TTIP will be good for the country, while only 45% of Republicans support that view. And while 60% of Democrats would like to see Germany play a more active military role in the world, just 51% of Republicans want Germany to take on more of the security burden.

### Partisan Differences in U.S. Over German-American Relationship

	Dem	Rep	Diff
<b>Americans</b>	%	%	
Approve of Obama's handling of U.S.-German relations	67	16	+51
TTIP is a good thing for U.S.	59	45	+14
Germany should play a more active military role	60	51	+9
U.S. is not tough enough on Russia on the issue of Ukraine	47	69	-22

Source: 2015 Pew Research Center survey. Q2a, Q5, Q7 & Q10.

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## **Survey Methods**

### **Pew Research Center**

### **February - March 2015 Survey**

This report is based on telephone surveys in the United States and Germany conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International.

In the U.S., interviews were conducted February 26 to March 1, 2015 among a national sample of 1,003 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in the continental United States (502 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 501 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 276 without a landline phone – roughly 95% of U.S. households). Interviews were done in English and Spanish. Statistical results are weighted to account for probability of being included in the sample and to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is  $\pm 3.7$  percentage points.

In Germany, interviews were conducted February 24-25, 2015 among a national sample of 963 persons, 18 years of age or older, living in Germany (767 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 196 were interviewed on a cell phone; cell phone users included those who have a cell phone only and those who have both landline and cell phone connections). Interviews were exclusively conducted in German. The survey was conducted by interviewers employed and supervised by TNS Emnid, Bielefeld. Statistical results are weighted to account for probability of being included in the sample and to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is  $\pm 4.7$  percentage points.

The margin of sampling error reported is based on all interviews conducted in a country. The margin of error takes into account the design effect due to weighting. For results based on the full sample in a given country, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus the margin of error. The margin of error is larger for results based on subgroups in the survey. Sample sizes and sampling errors for subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

## **Topline Results**

**Pew Research Center**

**May 7, 2015 Release**

Methodological notes:

- Survey results are based on national samples. For further details on sample designs, see Survey Methods section.
- Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%. The topline “total” columns show 100%, because they are based on unrounded numbers.

		Q1a How reliable of an ally is ____? Is ____ very reliable, somewhat reliable, not too reliable or not at all reliable as an ally? a. Britain					
		Very reliable ally	Somewhat reliable ally	Not too reliable ally	Not at all reliable ally	DK/Refused	Total
United States	March, 2015	54	31	4	4	7	100
Germany	March, 2015	8	47	26	6	12	100

		Q1b How reliable of an ally is ____? Is ____ very reliable, somewhat reliable, not too reliable or not at all reliable as an ally? b. France					
		Very reliable ally	Somewhat reliable ally	Not too reliable ally	Not at all reliable ally	DK/Refused	Total
United States	March, 2015	20	49	15	6	9	100
Germany	March, 2015	21	57	9	4	10	100

		Q1c How reliable of an ally is ____? Is ____ very reliable, somewhat reliable, not too reliable or not at all reliable as an ally? c. [U.S.: Germany/GERMANY: the U.S.]					
		Very reliable ally	Somewhat reliable ally	Not too reliable ally	Not at all reliable ally	DK/Refused	Total
United States	March, 2015	24	48	12	6	10	100
Germany	March, 2015	13	49	22	9	7	100

		Q2a Do you approve or disapprove of the way ____ is dealing with U.S.-German relations? a. U.S. President Barack Obama			
		Approve	Disapprove	DK/Refused	Total
United States	March, 2015	40	36	23	100
Germany	March, 2015	59	31	10	100

		Q2b Do you approve or disapprove of the way ____ is dealing with U.S.-German relations? b. German Chancellor Angela Merkel			
		Approve	Disapprove	DK/Refused	Total
United States	March, 2015	38	27	35	100
Germany	March, 2015	71	21	8	100

		Q3 Which is more important for Germany – to have strong ties with the United States or strong ties with Russia?					
		Strong ties with the United States	Strong ties with Russia	Equally close ties with both the U.S. and Russia (VOL)	Neither (VOL)	DK/Refused	Total
Germany	March, 2015	57	15	21	2	5	100

		Q4 Which of these statements comes closer to your view?					
		[U.S.: the U.S. /GERMANY: Germany] should deal with its own problems and let other countries deal with their own problems	[U.S.: the U.S. /GERMANY: Germany] should help other countries deal with their problems	Neither (VOL)	Both (VOL)	DK/Refused	Total
United States	March, 2015	50	39	3	5	3	100
Germany	March, 2015	50	43	1	4	2	100

		Q5 As you may know, the U.S. and the EU are negotiating a free trade agreement called the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or TTIP. Do you think this trade agreement will be a good thing for our country or a bad thing?					
		Good thing	Bad thing	Haven't heard enough (VOL)	Neither good nor bad (VOL)	DK/Refused	Total
United States	March, 2015	50	21	15	2	11	100
	March 2014	53	20	14	2	12	100
Germany	March, 2015	41	36	7	3	13	100
	March 2014	55	25	8	1	11	100

		Q6 ASK IF SAYS FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IS A BAD THING (Q5=2): Which of the following is the most important reason why you think a free trade agreement between the U.S. and the EU would be bad for our country?							
		It would give foreign companies that invest in [U.S.: the U.S. /GERMANY: Germany] unfair advantages	It would lower [U.S.: American/ GERMANY: German] food, environmental, and auto safety standards	It would lead to job losses or a decrease in workers' wages	None of the above (VOL)	All of the above (VOL)	DK/Refused	Total	N=
United States	March, 2015	22	12	50	3	9	3	100	230
Germany	March, 2015	18	61	17	2	2	0	100	360

		Q7 In your opinion, do you think the U.S. is being too tough, not tough enough, or about right in dealing with Russia on the issue of Ukraine?				
		Too tough	Not tough enough	About right	DK/Refused	Total
United States	March, 2015	4	54	32	11	100
Germany	March, 2015	27	23	35	14	100

		Q8 In your opinion, do you think the European Union is being too tough, not tough enough, or about right in dealing with Russia on the issue of Ukraine?				
		Too tough	Not tough enough	About right	DK/Refused	Total
United States	March, 2015	4	59	22	15	100
Germany	March, 2015	18	26	44	11	100

		Q9 Thinking about our country's relations with Russia, which is more important – being tough with Russia on the issue of Ukraine OR having a strong economic relationship with Russia?			
		Be tough with Russia	Strong economic relationship with Russia	DK/Refused	Total
Germany	March, 2015	50	35	15	100

		Q10 Some people say that Germany should play a more active military role in helping to maintain peace and stability in the world. Other people say that, given its history, Germany should limit its military role in world affairs. Which view is closer to your own?			
		Play a more active military role	Limit its military role	DK/Refused	Total
United States	March, 2015	54	37	9	100
Germany	March, 2015	25	69	5	100

		Q11 As you think about relations between the United States and Germany over the last 75 years, which one of these events is most important in your opinion?							
		World War II and the Holocaust	The Marshall Plan	The fall of the Berlin Wall	U.S.-German disagreements over the Iraq War	U.S. monitoring of [U.S. ONLY: German Chancellor] Angela Merkel's communications	None of the above (VOL)	DK/Refused	Total
United States	March, 2015	47	3	28	8	7	1	6	100
Germany	March, 2015	20	20	34	8	12	0	6	100





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