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International Trends: Korea

An Asan and GMF survey

KEY FINDINGS 2012

International Trends: Korea 2012 Partners



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------------|
| <i>Foreword</i> | <i>iii</i> |
| <i>Executive Summary 2012</i> | <i>1</i> |
| <i>Section One: Relationships, Values, Interests, and Global Leadership</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>Section Two: Obama’s First Term and the U.S. Elections</i> | <i>11</i> |
| <i>Section Three: The Economic Crisis and its Consequences</i> | <i>17</i> |
| <i>Section Four: Foreign, Defense, and Security Policy</i> | <i>21</i> |
| <i>Methodology</i> | <i>27</i> |

Foreword

The world is in a state of flux. As Asia has risen, the postwar international order is adjusting, the meaning of global leadership is transforming, and new partnerships are emerging. What values do Koreans, Americans, and Europeans share? How do their publics view the policies of governments and relations between countries? Is globalization pitting economic powers against one another, or are the United States, Europe, and East Asia growing closer together?

The German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Asan Institute for Policy Studies have long believed that an understanding of public opinion is core to creating good policy. While the Asan Institute has been compiling unparalleled data and analysis on how the Korean public responds to government policy and current affairs, the German Marshall Fund and the Compagnia di San Paolo, with additional support from Fundação Luso-Americana, the BBVA Foundation, the Communitas Foundation, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the Open Society Foundations, have been tracking opinion over the last 11 year in their annual *Transatlantic Trends* survey, the pre-eminent source of U.S. and European public opinion on a host of transatlantic issues, including common foreign policy challenges, support for NATO, the economy, and the rise of other world powers.

This inaugural *International Trends* report marks the start of a long-term project that we hope will expand to include other partners in the Asia-Pacific, and that will evolve to show trends in public opinion rather than just comparisons. Already, the survey has shown that South Korea is not popular in Europe and the United States; that both Americans and Koreans think that the EU should exert strong leadership in world affairs; that Europeans and Koreans think the United States is more important to their interests than the countries of Asia; and that large segments of the populations in all three perceive China as both an economic and military threat.

We believe that this survey will become as invaluable a tool for policymakers, the media, think-tanks, and policy-focused academics as the Asan Institute and GMF's other major polling projects. Over the course of the partnership between the two institutions, we hope to see the findings of this survey foster a debate about how the values, policies, and goals of the countries surveyed can help to create a more collaborative world, and how governments, media, and research institutes can better communicate with the public about where we are going — and why.



Craig Kennedy
President, German Marshall Fund of the United States



Hahm Chaibong
President, The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Executive Summary 2012

Last year has seen an especially robust political debate in South Korea, as Koreans prepare to vote for a new president and National Assembly later this year — the first time the two votes have coincided in two decades. South Korean companies operate in a globalized world economy, of course, and the country's location in a tense Northeast Asian neighborhood marked by several simmering territorial disputes and the tangible presence of competing great powers makes Koreans very aware of regional security issues. At the same time, South Korea has been focusing intently on its internal challenges as well. A cultural shift driven by increased affluence has led Koreans to take on fundamental questions of economic distribution and societal fairness.

International Trends: Korea paints a complex picture of a Republic of Korea that is balancing a Western security orientation, fraught neighborhood relationships, and the demands and challenges of a globalized economy.¹ The survey has captured perceptions about how South Korea, Europe, and the United States are responding to power shifts, which relationships people think matter, and the spaces in which there are enough shared values and interests to facilitate greater international cooperation. Despite power shifts — perhaps because of them — Europe, South Korea, and the United States remain close in their ideas about global leadership and in their relationships with each other.

¹ This survey was conducted as a standalone survey between June 15 and June 21, 2012, but Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8a, 8c, 8d, 9a, 9b, 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10e, 16, 17, 18, 19a, 19b, 19c, 20a, 20b, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 were also asked between 2 and June 27 in *Transatlantic Trends*. Wherever the same questions were asked in both surveys, this report supplies the key data excerpts from the larger survey to provide international context and background for Korean opinions. Questions 5, 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 8a, 8b, 9c, 10f, 11a, 11b, 12a, 12b, 13a, 13b, 14, 15, 22, and 23 were asked only in *International Trends: Korea*.

In this context, the survey uncovered some notable findings, three of which stand out: Koreans' largely mixed feelings about their relationships with the United States and the EU, despite the fact that two-in-three Koreans want strong global leadership from both the United States and the EU; 64% of Koreans say they have been personally affected by the global economic crisis, and 70% are critical of their governments' economic policy; and three-in-four Koreans see China as a military threat.

Korean-U.S. relations: Large majorities of South Koreans viewed the United States favorably, and think their country's relationship with the United States is more important than that with its neighboring nations. They described the relationship as mostly mixed, but three-in-four hope that the United States will pursue its declared policy of a greater engagement with the nations of Asia. Like most Europeans, Koreans expressed a marked preference for the incumbent presidential candidate, Barack Obama, over his challenger, Mitt Romney.

Korean-EU relations: Similar majorities of South Koreans reported favorable views of the EU —but added that they see the relationship itself as mixed.

Korea and its neighborhood: Koreans expressed unfavorable views of Japan, China, and — most of all — North Korea; they were critical of their governments' handling of the relationship with Pyongyang. As for China, while a scant majority (53%) thought the Republic of Korea shared enough values with China to cooperate on international problems, much larger percentages said they saw China as more of an economic threat (53%) than an economic opportunity (44%). An even larger percentage viewed China as a military threat (73%).

Korea and the global economic crisis: Koreans, at 64%, said they were somewhat less personally affected than the average European or American polled in *Transatlantic Trends*. However, Korean respondents disapproved strongly (70%) of their governments' economic policy; and a remarkable nine-in-ten — more than any other country sampled in *Transatlantic Trends* — noted that they saw their own economic system as essentially unfair.

Koreans' views of their own government: Koreans were quite critical of their governments' foreign and economic policy, and only two-in-three Koreans (66%) said they felt confident that their elections reflected the will of the voters, lower than in the United States (73% said they were confident), but slightly higher than in Europe (59% expressed confidence in their elections).

KEY FINDINGS

Relationships, Values, Interests, and Global Leadership

- Forty-four percent of South Koreans described U.S.-Korea relations as being good, 51% described relations as mixed, and 5% said that relations were bad. When asked about EU-Korea relations, only 29% described relations as good and 63% described them as mixed.
- Three-in-four South Koreans reported mixed relations with both Russia (74%) and China (71%).
- Two-in-three (67%) South Koreans supported strong U.S. leadership in world affairs; 61% supported strong EU leadership. However, 66% said they disapproved of strong Chinese leadership, and 64% felt the same way about Russian leadership in world affairs.
- Three-in-four South Koreans saw enough shared values with both the United States (76%) and the EU (73%) to allow cooperation on international problems.
- While South Koreans said that they shared enough values (53%) to cooperate with China, a plurality (49%) said that they did not share enough interests.

- Fifty-five percent of Koreans said that the United States is more important to their country's national interests than the countries of Asia.
- Seventy-five percent of Koreans viewed the United States favorably, while 73% held a favorable opinion of the EU.
- Nearly three-in-four (70%) Koreans held an unfavorable opinion of North Korea, versus 29% saying their views were favorable. South Koreans also viewed Japan very unfavorably, with 38% holding a favorable view versus 62% who described the country unfavorably.

Obama's First Term and the U.S. Elections

- Three-in-four South Koreans (77%) expressed a positive opinion of President Obama's handling of international policies.
- When asked how they viewed the U.S. presidential candidates, 82% in South Korea said they held a favorable view of President Obama, while only 28% viewed Romney with favor. Seventy-four percent said they would vote for Obama if they could; 12% said the same for Romney.
- While 9% of the Korean public thought U.S.-Korea relations would improve under Mitt Romney, 31% believed they would improve under President Obama.
- Koreans were divided (53% disapproving, 44% approving) about their governments' foreign policy. But almost three-in-four Koreans (70%) disapproved of their country's economic policy.

The Economic Crisis and its Consequences

- Two-in-three South Koreans (64%) said they had been personally affected by the global economic crisis.
- Koreans had mixed feelings about government spending, but a plurality (49%) wanted to reduce it.

- When asked whether they felt the Korean economic system worked fairly for everyone or whether they believed that most of the benefits of their system went to a few, nine-in-ten South Koreans (91%) said their system was not fair.

Foreign, Defense, and Security Policy

- Fifty-three percent of South Koreans and almost two-thirds of American respondents (59%) described China as an economic threat.
- Seventy-three percent of Korean respondents said that China presented a military threat to South Korea, with only 24% disagreeing.
- Eighty-four percent of South Koreans, 67% of Europeans, and 62% of Americans agreed that the international community, including their own country, had a responsibility to protect civilians in other countries from violence, including violence committed by their own governments.

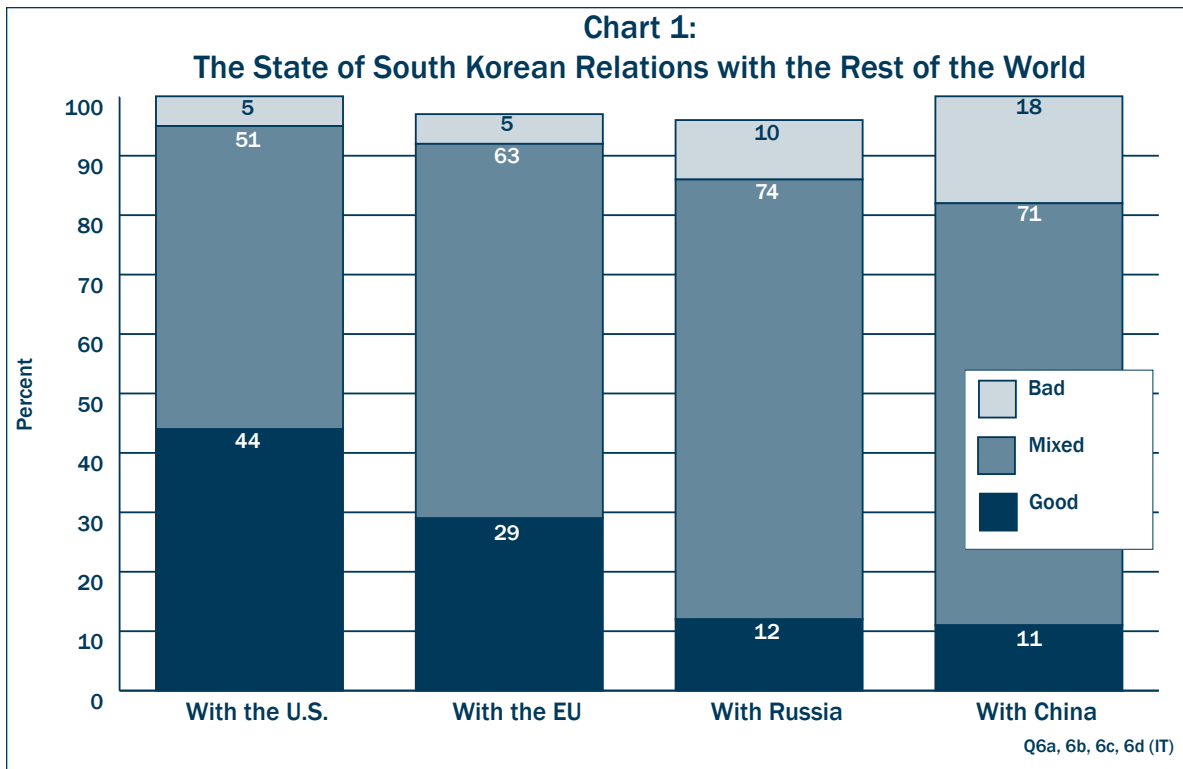
Section One: Relationships, Values, Interests, and Global Leadership

The re-emergence of Asia and half a decade of economic crisis have had a transformative effect on global leadership, multilateralism, and bilateral partnerships. Within the last two years, the United States has announced that it would rebalance focus toward Asia, while European nations have also pursued a deepened economic and political agenda in the region. South Korea has adopted a more globally oriented foreign policy, not least by playing host to the world's leaders — first at the 2010 G20 Summit and then at the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit.

KOREANS MORE POSITIVE ABOUT RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES THAN WITH THE EU — BUT NEITHER DESCRIBED AS BAD

Forty-four percent of South Koreans described U.S.-Korea relations as being good, 51% described relations as a mix of good and bad, and 5% said that relations were bad. This contrasts markedly with South Koreans' views of EU-Korea relations, with only 29% describing relations as good and 63% describing them as mixed. As with the United States, 5% of Koreans described relations with the EU as bad.²

²The charts in this report combine data from International Trends: Korea (IT) and Transatlantic Trends (TT).



For comparison,³ 44% of Americans described U.S.-EU relations as good, while 43% described them as mixed. Similarly, 46% of Europeans, when asked the same question, described U.S.-EU relations as good, while 45% described them as mixed.

KOREANS VIEW RELATIONS WITH CHINA AS WORSE THAN RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

Three-in-four South Koreans reported mixed relations with both Russia (74%) and China (71%). Only one-in-ten South Koreans stated that relations with these two countries were good, with 12% citing good relations with Russia and 11% citing good relations with China.

While only 10% thought relations between South Korea and Russia were bad, 18% said the same about relations with China. As in many other areas of Korean opinion on China, there were significant differences between age cohorts. While only 12% of those in their sixties (the lowest value) said that South Korea's relations with China were bad, 23% of those in their twenties (the highest value) held that opinion.

SOUTH KOREANS SUPPORT STRONG U.S. LEADERSHIP IN WORLD AFFAIRS

Overall, South Koreans (67%) were much more likely than Europeans (52%) to support strong U.S. leadership in world affairs. However, this differed in Korea across age cohorts. Koreans in their sixties (83%, the highest value) were much more likely to prefer U.S. leadership than those in their thirties (57%, the lowest value). Similarly, 42% of Europeans described a strong U.S. role in international affairs as undesirable, while only 31% of Koreans said the same. The Netherlands and United Kingdom came closest to agreeing with Korea, with 65% of the Dutch and 62% of the British respondents supporting a strong U.S. role.

HIGH LEVELS OF SUPPORT FOR STRONG EU LEADERSHIP IN BOTH UNITED STATES AND SOUTH KOREA

A clear majority of both Koreans (61%) and Americans (63%) found it desirable that the EU exert strong leadership in world affairs. Koreans aged 18-29 were far more in favor of strong EU leadership in world affairs (68%) than any other generation.

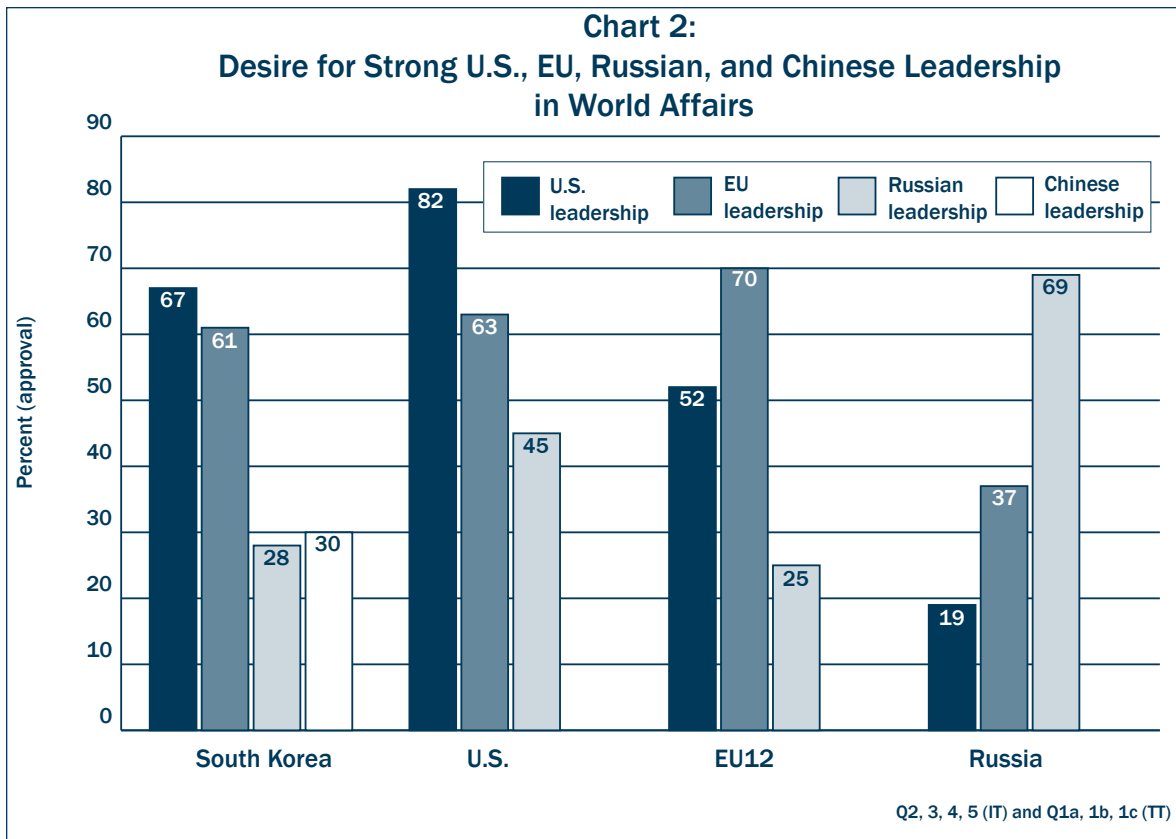
Only 28% of South Koreans were in favor of strong Russian leadership in world affairs; meanwhile, 64% said they found it undesirable. Thirty percent of South Koreans said they were in favor of strong Chinese leadership, whereas 66% said they were not in favor.

MORE KOREANS SHARE VALUES AND INTERESTS WITH UNITED STATES AND EUROPE THAN TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERS DO WITH EACH OTHER

Three-in-four South Koreans saw enough shared *values* with both the United States (76%) and the EU (73%) to allow cooperation on international problems. A slightly smaller proportion — two-in-three — of Europeans (66%) and Americans (63%) said that the United States and EU share enough values to cooperate on international problems. Within Europe, there were significant national differences, with French (77%) and German (75%) respondents feeling most strongly that they had shared values with the United States, while those in the U.K. (57%) were more ambivalent.

South Koreans were also more likely to think that they had shared *interests* with both the United States (70%) and the EU (69%) — a slightly higher rate than the number of Americans (64%) and Europeans (67%) who felt that they had enough shared interests with each other to cooperate on international problems. However, there were notable differences in views across Europe, with, for instance, 75% of French respondents but only 54% of British respondents saying they had enough common interests to cooperate with the United States.

³ All European and U.S. data cited in this Key Findings Report are from *Transatlantic Trends 2012*; see www.transatlantictrends.org.



SOUTH KOREANS SHARE ENOUGH VALUES WITH CHINA TO COOPERATE; EUROPEANS DISAGREE AND UNITED STATES IS SPLIT

While South Koreans said that they shared enough *values* (53%) to cooperate with China, a plurality (49%) said that they did not share enough *interests*. Koreans aged 60+ were more likely to say that they shared both values (55%) and interests (49%) than Koreans aged 18-29 (values: 47%, interests: 41%). U.S. respondents were split on whether or not they shared enough *values* with China to cooperate on international problems — 46% said there were enough common values, while 45% disagreed. They were similarly split on whether or not there were enough shared *interests*, with 46% (a decrease of 13% from last year’s survey) saying that there were and 47% disagreeing.

Europeans said they shared neither enough values (55%) nor interests (52%) to cooperate with China. France (71%), Germany (63%), and Sweden (62%) were most likely to say that they did not share enough values, while Russians (56%) and Romanians (54%) felt closest to China in terms

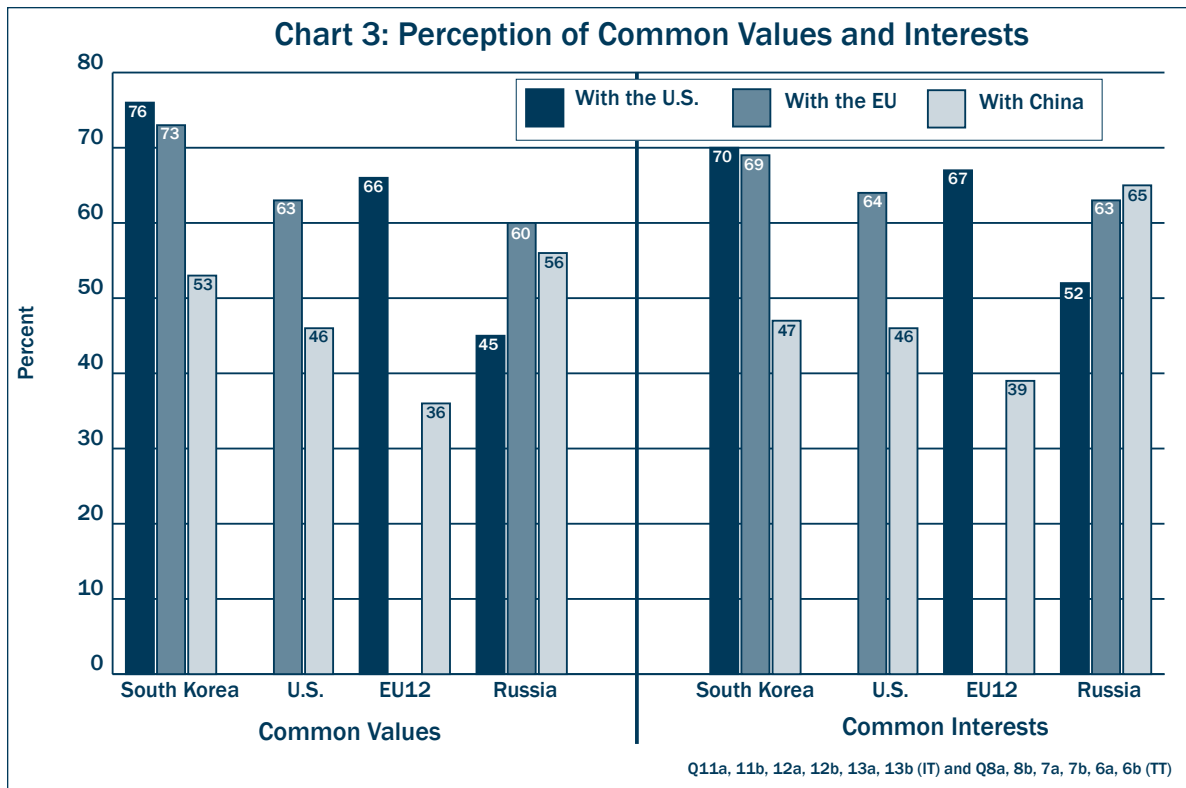
of values. French (66%) and Germans (59%) felt most strongly that there were not enough interests, while 60% of Portuguese respondents thought that there were enough shared interests to work together with China.

Among all countries polled, Russians were most likely to say that there were enough common interests with China (65%). Respondents in Turkey and France were least likely to agree (both 32%).

SOUTH KOREANS HAVE HIGH OPINIONS OF BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE; LESS SO OF RUSSIA

Seventy-five percent of Koreans viewed the United States favorably — on par with the 74% of Europeans who held a similar opinion — while 73% of Koreans saw the EU favorably, a far higher rate than that found in the United States (57%).

At the same time, 55% of Koreans said they held an unfavorable view of Russia — as opposed to 42% who had a favorable opinion. Europeans (55% unfavorable, 37%



favorable) and Americans (48% percent unfavorable, 42% favorable) took a very similar view.

KOREANS ARE MUCH MORE SKEPTICAL OF THEIR ASIAN NEIGHBORS

Korean opinion on its key Asian neighbors was much less positive. North Korea was clearly the least-liked nation, with nearly three-in-four (70%) holding an unfavorable opinion versus 29% favorable. South Koreans also viewed Japan very unfavorably, with 38% holding a favorable view versus 62% who described the country unfavorably; this

was a sharp divergence from European and U.S. opinion, as approximately 66% of the EU and 68% of the United States viewed Japan favorably.

However, South Koreans were much more in line with residents of the EU and the United States on China. Forty-four percent of South Koreans thought favorably of China — as did 41% in both the United States and Europe. On China, there was a major disparity across age cohorts in South Korea. Twice as many of those in their sixties (54%) view China favorably as do those in their twenties (27%).

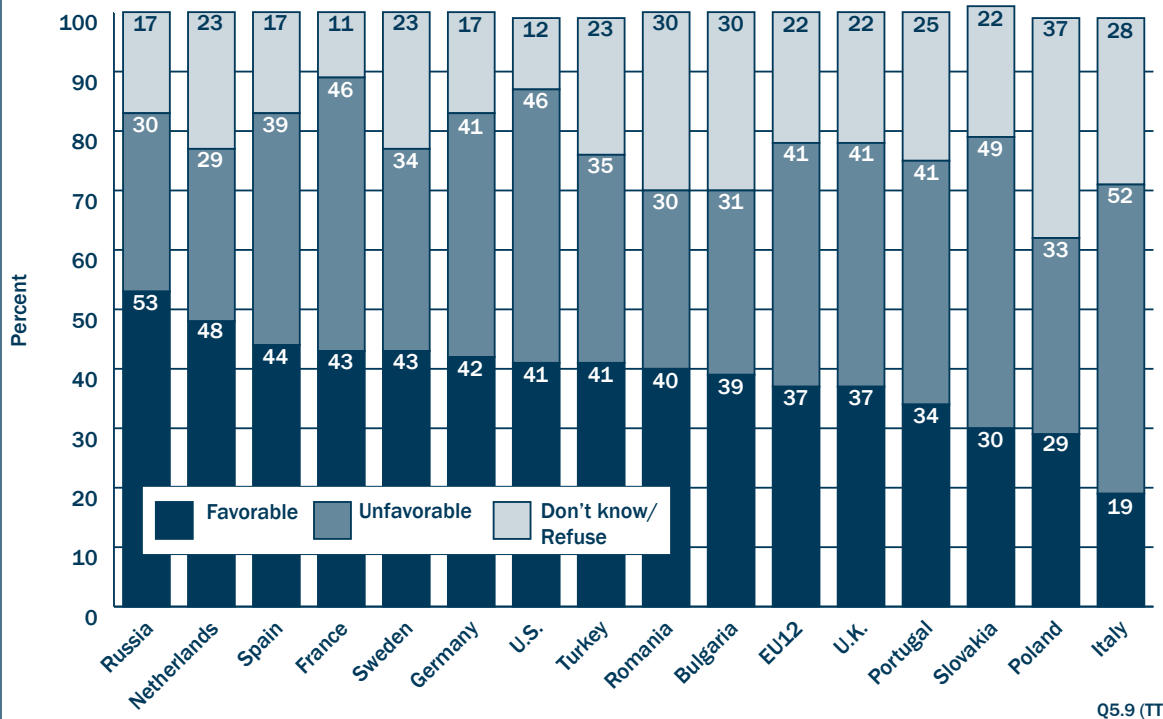
SOUTH KOREA MAY HAVE A BRANDING PROBLEM IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

In both Europe (41%) and the United States (46%), a plurality of those polled said that they had an unfavorable opinion of South Korea. Thirty-seven percent of Europeans and 41% of Americans said that they had a favorable opinion of South Korea. More Europeans (22%) answered “don’t know” or refused to answer the question when asked about Korea than when asked about any other country, suggesting a very low level of awareness. Polish (37%), Bulgarian (30%), Romanian (30%), and Italian (28%) respondents were most likely to answer “don’t know” or to refuse to answer the question.

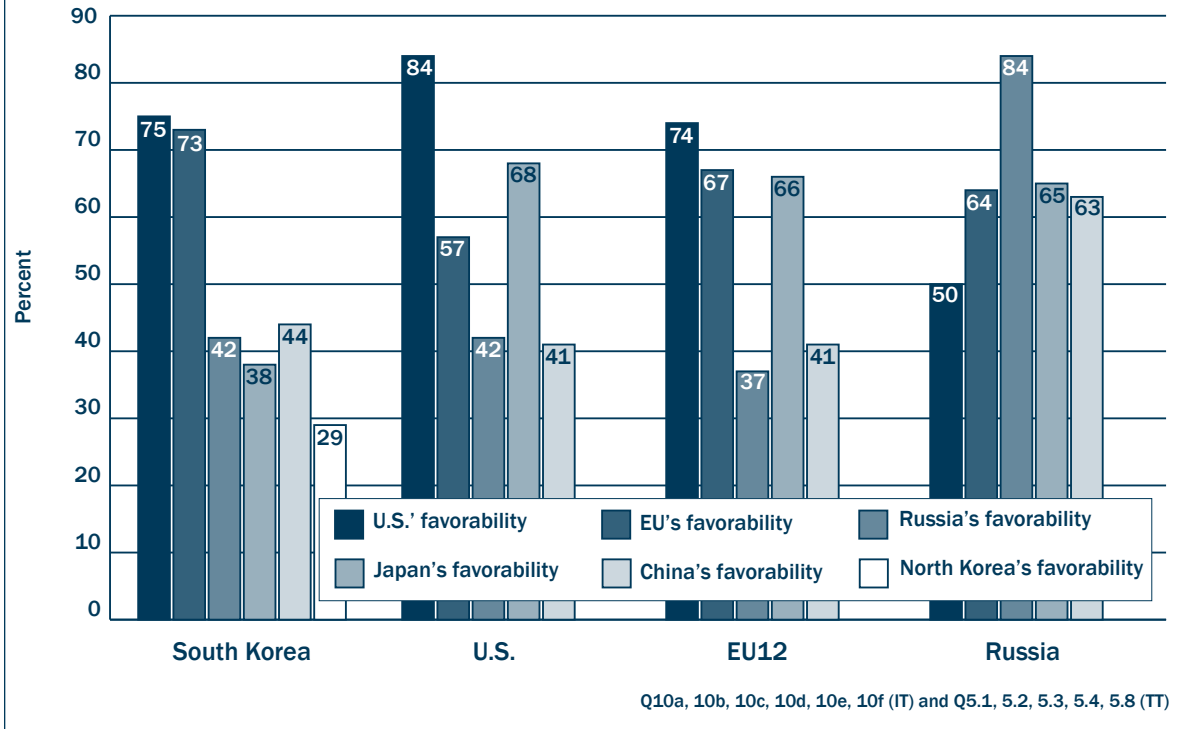
Italy reported the highest rate of unfavorable opinion (52%). Only 19% of Italians said they viewed South Korea favorably. Slovakia (49%), France (46%), Portugal (41%), and the United Kingdom (41%) followed Italy as the most likely to view South Korea unfavorably. German respondents were evenly split, with 41% saying they had an unfavorable view of South Korea and 42% answering favorable. Of all countries polled in Europe, respondents in the Netherlands were most likely to say they viewed South Korea favorably (48%), with 12% saying they had a very favorable view and 36% answering that they had a somewhat favorable view. Russians were much more positive on Korea, with 53% of respondents reporting a favorable view compared to 30% who saw Korea unfavorably.

U.S. views were evenly split, with 41% saying they had a favorable view of South Korea and 46% saying that they had an unfavorable view. Fourteen percent of Americans said they viewed South Korea very favorably, 27% answered somewhat favorably, 23% answered somewhat unfavorably, and another 23% answered very unfavorably. Along with France (11%), the United States had one of the lowest figures (12%) of respondents answering “don’t know” or refusing to answer at all.

**Chart 4:
Global Views of South Korea**



**Chart 5:
Favorable Views of the World**



Section Two: Obama's First Term and the U.S. Elections

Beginning in earnest with the first Republican debate in May 2011, the 2012 presidential election in the United States has been vigorously contested for months, with neither side making any clear progress among a largely polarized electorate. The contest for the Republican nomination ended effectively on April 10, 2012, when Rick Santorum's suspension of his campaign left the path to the nomination open to Mitt Romney. Under the current administration, meanwhile, the U.S. government has struggled to right a troubled economy that has increasingly come to define President Barack Obama's first term in office.

South Korea will also be holding its presidential elections in December this year. The combination of a political novice winning Seoul's October 2011 elections, an upset in the parliamentary elections of April this year in which the conservative party managed to retain its majority despite large-scale opposition, and the first-ever female presidential candidate, Park Geun-Hye — combined with a national debate about South Korea's economic policy — has made this election season in Korea both unpredictable and contentious.

KOREANS APPROVE OF OBAMA'S FOREIGN POLICIES — BUT HAVE MIXED FEELINGS ON IRAN

Three-in-four South Koreans (77%) expressed a positive opinion of President Obama's handling of international policies. This was comparable to the EU average (71%). The only countries in Europe who approved even more strongly were France (81%), Germany, the Netherlands, and Portugal (all 79%).

As in Europe, approval rates among South Koreans fell when respondents were asked about more specific issues, although majorities continued to support the President's

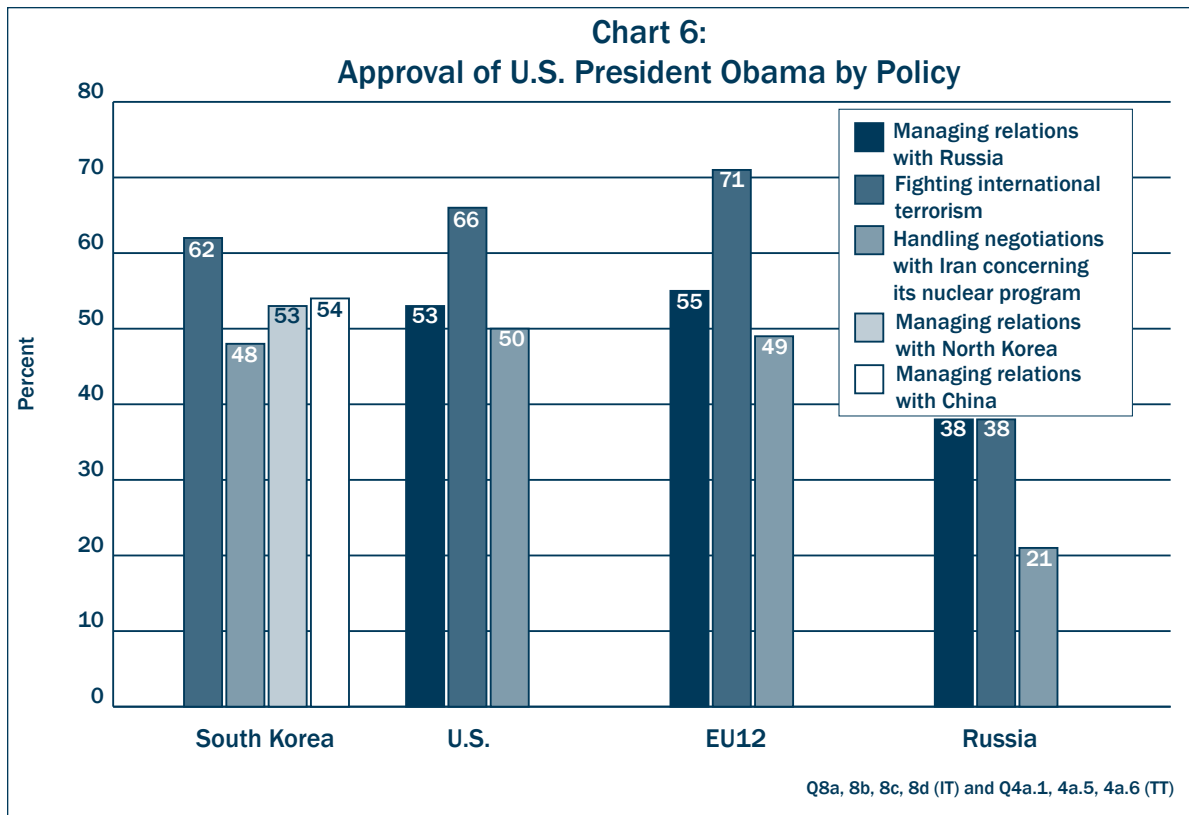
policies. Fifty-four percent approved of President Obama's management of relations with China, while 36% disapproved. A very similar percentage (53%) approved of how he had handled relations with North Korea, while 43% said they disapproved. Two-in-three (62%) South Koreans said they approved of the way Obama had dealt with international terrorism; 32% disapproved. Americans more or less agreed (66%) with South Koreans on this point; approval rates in the EU were higher (71%).

By contrast, only a plurality of 48% approved (41% disapproved) of Obama's handling of negotiations with Iran regarding its nuclear program. With their mixed feelings, the South Koreans were close to both Europeans (49% approved, 36% disapproved) and Americans (50% approved, 42% disapproved).

LIKE EUROPEANS, SOUTH KOREANS MUCH PREFER OBAMA TO ROMNEY

South Korea resembled most countries polled in *Transatlantic Trends* in preferring the reelection of President Obama. When asked how they viewed the candidates, 82% in South Korea said they held a favorable view of President Obama, while only 28% viewed Romney with favor.

This was very much in keeping with results from Europe, where 23% viewed Mitt Romney favorably compared with 82% who said the same about Barack Obama. While 45% of Koreans viewed Romney unfavorably, it should be noted that more than one-quarter (27%) either could not or would not answer. Again, this result is not far from that observed in Europe, where 38% said they did not have an opinion of Mitt Romney or refused to provide it.



In the United States, a plurality of Americans (49%) said that their view of Mitt Romney was unfavorable; 44% reported a favorable view. As for the incumbent presidential candidate, a majority (57%) of Americans said their view of Barack Obama was favorable; 40% said they held an unfavorable view.

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of South Koreans stated that if they could vote in the upcoming U.S. election, they would vote for Barack Obama. Twelve percent stated they would vote for Mitt Romney if they were able to.

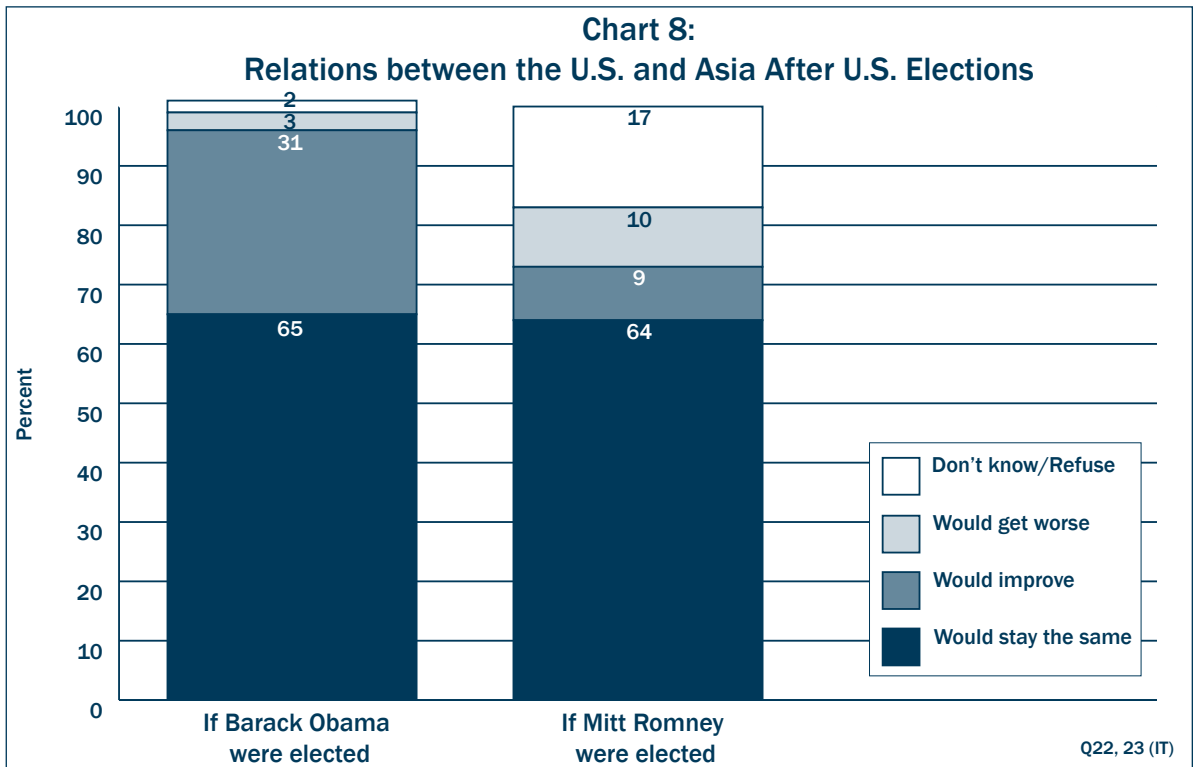
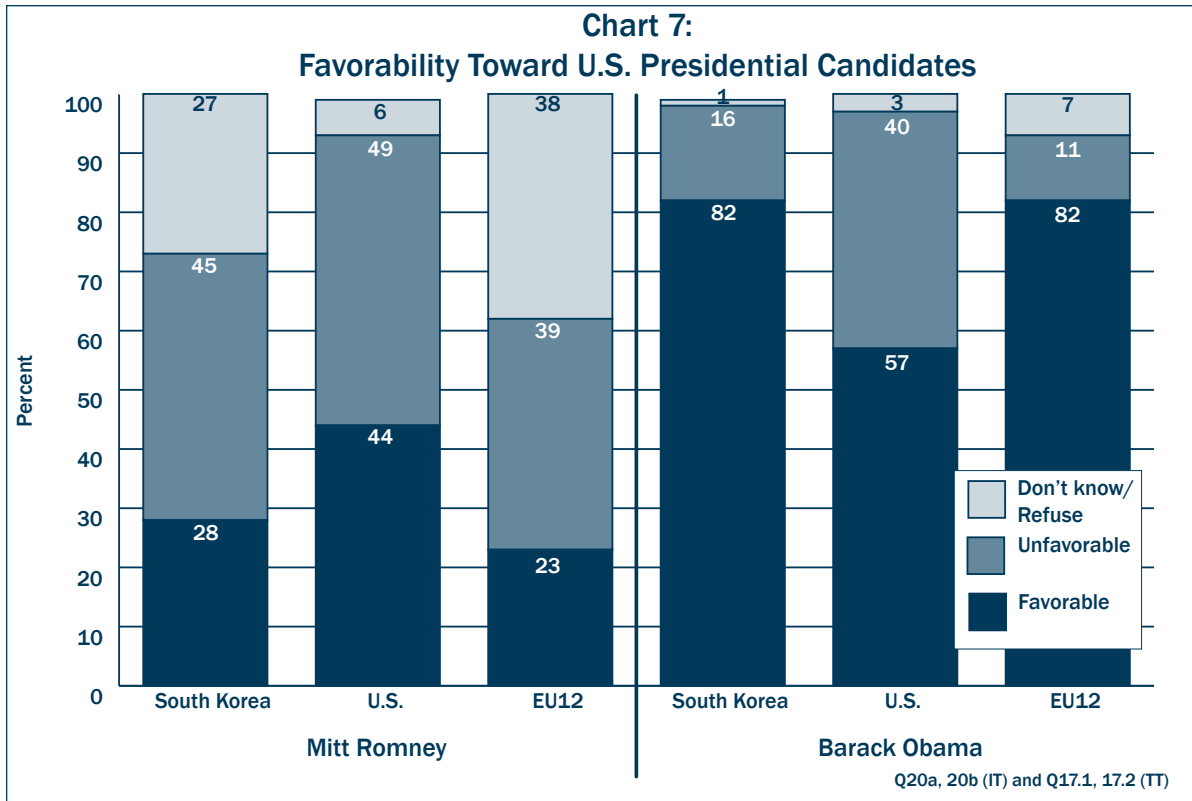
IMPACT OF U.S. ELECTIONS ON RELATIONS WITH ASIA

Two-in-three South Koreans expressed the belief that relations between the United States and Asia would remain largely unchanged regardless of the outcome of the U.S. election. While 65% stated no major changes would take place under a second Obama administration, 64% stated no major changes would take place under a Romney administration either.

However, differences emerged when respondents were asked which administration would improve relations. While 9% of the Korean public thought relations would improve under Mitt Romney, 31% believed they would improve under President Obama. Romney was also seen as more likely to damage relations between the United States and Asia, with 10% stating that he would do so versus 3% who believed the same about Obama. While 17% were unsure how relations would change under Romney, only 2% were uncertain how relations would change under a second Obama administration.

KOREANS RESEMBLE AMERICANS, EUROPEANS, IN THEIR MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT THEIR OWN COUNTRY'S FOREIGN POLICY

Koreans had somewhat mixed feelings about their government's international policies, with 53% disapproving and 44% approving. This response was the reverse of that observed in Europe (57% approved, 38% disapproved) and the United States (54% approved, 40% disapproved).



ONLY TWO-IN-THREE KOREANS EXPRESS CONFIDENCE IN ELECTIONS

Two-in-three South Koreans were confident in the results of their own elections, with 66% saying that they reflected the will of the voters, while 33% said that they did not. By comparison, three-in-four Americans (73%) said they were confident that their elections reflected the will of U.S. voters (25% disagreed); a majority of 59% of European respondents was confident in their own elections (38% disagreed).

South Koreans were more confident that the results of U.S. elections reflected the will of the electorate, with 84% confirming this view (11% disagreed), but much less confident in the results of elections in Russia: only 34% said they were confident that these reflected the will of the Russian voters, while 46% were not.

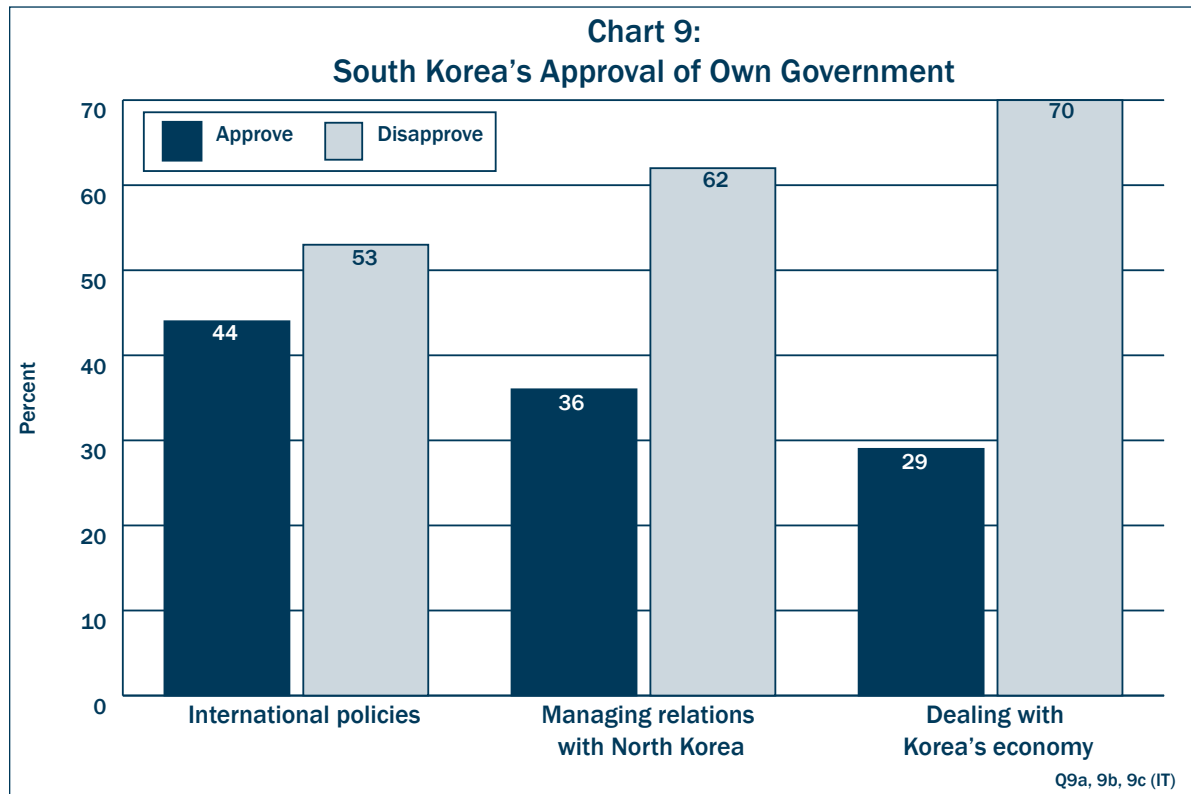
In particular, two-in-three Koreans (62%) disapproved of their governments' managing relations with North Korea (23% said they strongly disapproved); 36% said they approved. Disapproval was most pronounced in younger age groups, and among the more educated respondents.

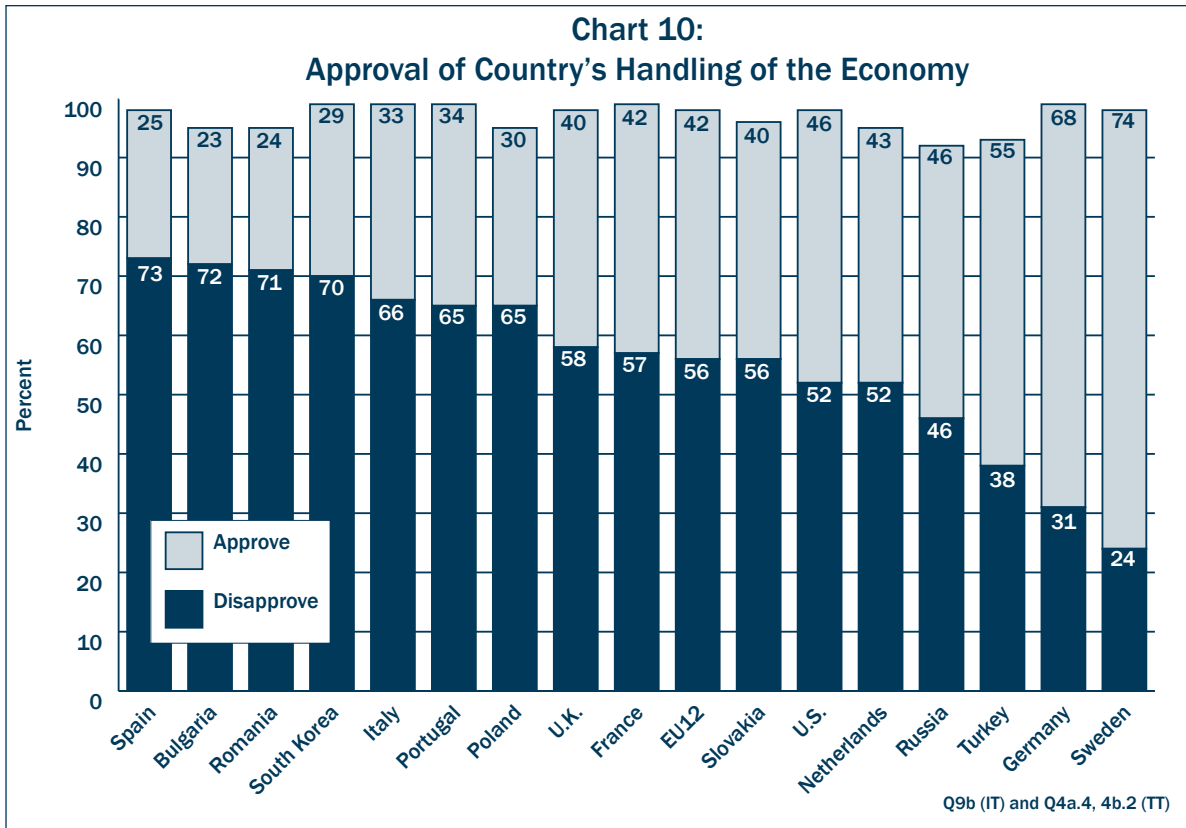
between 30 and 39 — which had also declared itself most affected by the crisis — was the most critical, with 86% saying they disapproved. These responses were much more strongly disapproving than the answers of Americans and Europeans to the same question.

KOREANS STRONGLY DISAPPROVE OF THEIR GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC POLICY

Almost three-in-four South Koreans (70%), when asked about their governments' economic policy, said they disapproved of it; 29% said they approved. The age group

Asked whether they approved or disapproved of the way President Barack Obama has been handling the U.S. economy, a majority (52%) of U.S. respondents disapproved, whereas 46% approved.





Fifty-six percent of EU respondents disapproved when asked whether they agreed with their own governments' handling of the economy, whereas 42% said they approved.

in Europe. Almost two-thirds of respondents approved in Bulgaria (63%) and Romania (61%). Majorities disapproved, however, in Spain (66%) and the U.K. (56%).

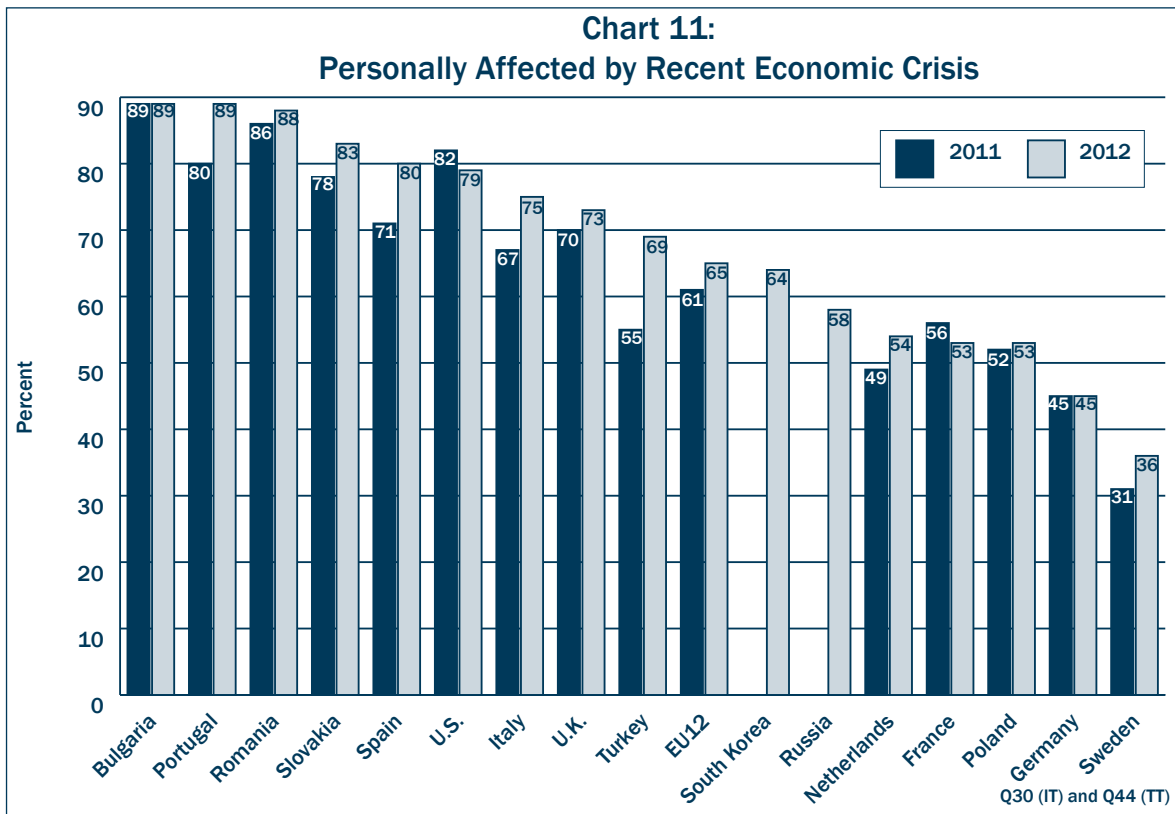
A plurality of Europeans (48%) approved of the way the European Union has been handling the economic crisis

Section Three: The Economic Crisis and its Consequences

International debate on the global economic crisis has been focused on the fragile recovery of the United States and the currency crisis in Europe, but South Koreans too have been feeling its effects. With half of South Korea's output dependent on exports, economic growth has contracted as its two biggest markets have shrunk. While growth in South Korea was 2.4% in April-June 2011, it was only 0.4% for the same period in 2012. This is largely reflected in the polling data, with respondents from Europe, the United States, and South Korea saying that they have felt the effects of the crisis.

**UNITED STATES, SOUTH KOREA, AND EUROPE
EQUALLY AFFECTED BY ECONOMIC CRISIS**

Two-in-three South Koreans (64%) said they had been personally affected by the global economic crisis, with 14% saying they had been greatly affected; 35% said they had not been affected. The age group between 30 and 39 (69%) was most likely to say it had been affected overall. The less educated (under high school: 16%, versus college or higher: 12%) and those employed in less skilled jobs (manual workers: 20%, versus employee: 10%) were also more likely to say they had been greatly affected.



In Europe, the number of respondents who claimed that their family's financial situation had been affected greatly or somewhat by the financial crisis has been steadily rising in most countries polled by *Transatlantic Trends* since the question was first asked in 2009.

In the United States, 79% of respondents (down very slightly from 82% in 2011, a three-year high) said that they had been personally affected by the financial crisis, while the percentage of EU respondents stating that they had been affected rose by ten percentage points to 65% (up from 55% in 2009, shortly after the beginning of the crisis).

KOREANS HAVE MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT GOVERNMENT SPENDING, BUT MOST WANT TO SEE DEBT REDUCED

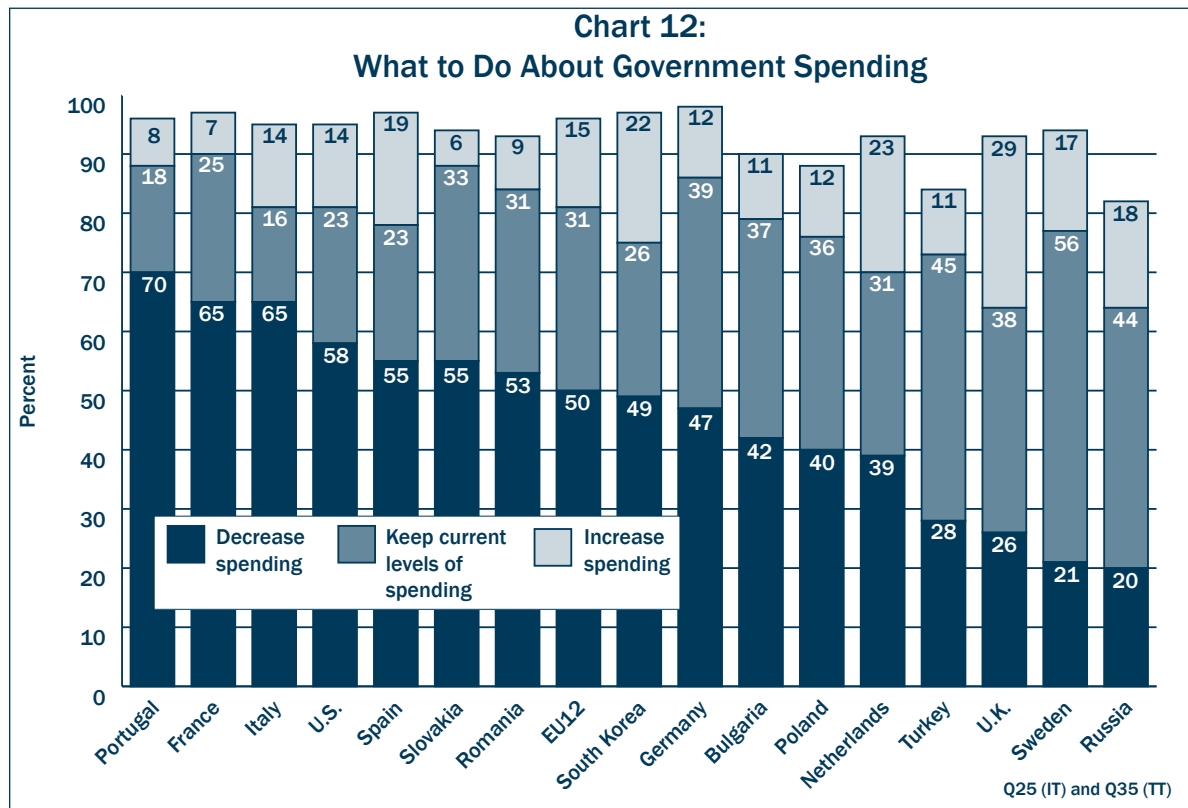
When asked whether their government should increase spending, maintain current levels, or reduce spending to reduce debt, Koreans recorded mixed feelings. A plurality of South Koreans (49%) wanted their government to reduce its spending. But 22% wanted to see spending levels increase,

while 26% wanted spending levels to remain about the same. Respondents' preference for decreases in spending increased with age (18-29: 33%; 60 and older: 56%).

In Europe, half of the respondents (50%) said they approved further decreases in spending, 31% wanted to keep current levels, and 15% wanted to increase spending; however, there were notable differences across countries. A fairly similar pattern emerged in the United States. Fifty-eight percent of Americans wanted to decrease government spending, 23% wanted to maintain current levels, and 14% wanted to increase spending.

KOREANS OVERWHELMINGLY CONSIDER THEIR ECONOMIC SYSTEM UNFAIR – MORE THAN AMERICANS OR EUROPEANS

When asked whether they felt the Korean economic system worked fairly for everyone or whether they believed that most of the benefits of their system went to a few, nine-in-ten South Koreans (91%) said their system was not fair. Urban dwellers (91%), the educated (with high school or



college educations: 92%) and women (93%) agreed with this most emphatically; the only group that was slightly less critical was the 60-and-older age group (77%).

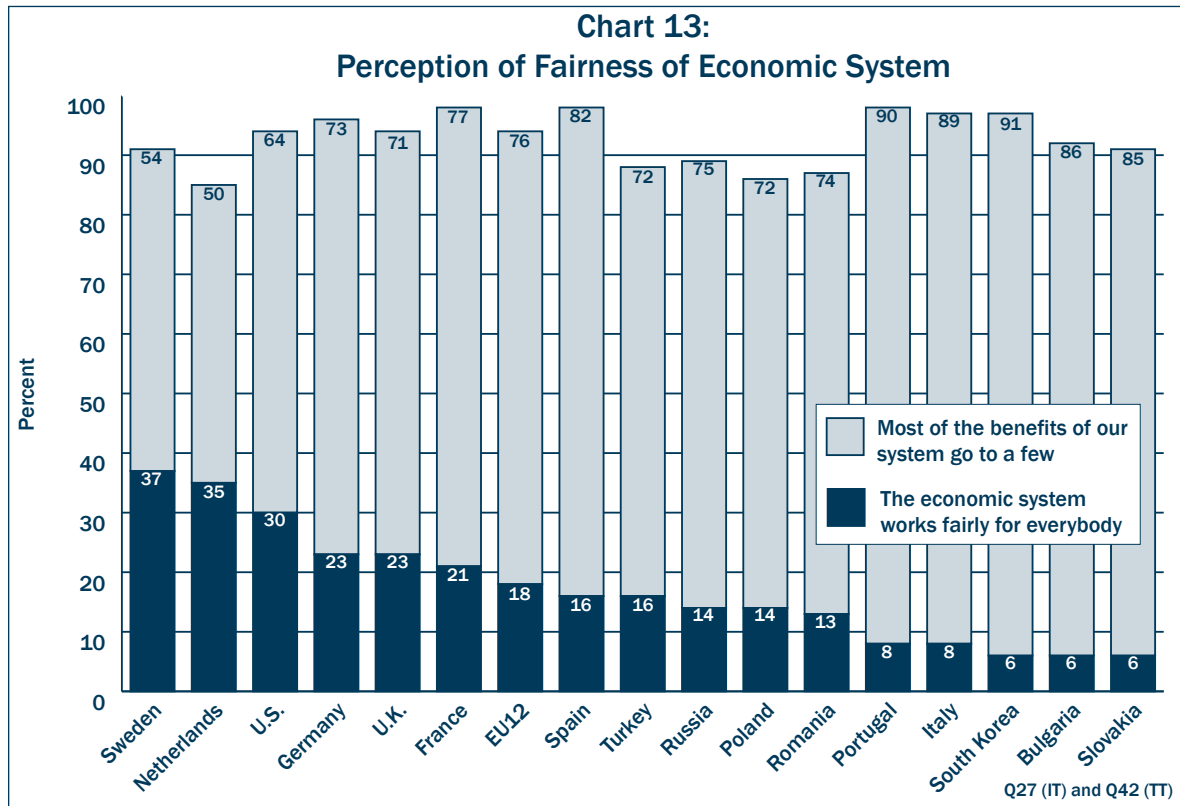
By comparison, three-in-four (76%) of those polled in Europe said most of the benefits go to a few; 64% of Americans agreed.

Even in those countries where there was more optimism, approval rates were low, with the highest ratings in Sweden (37%), the Netherlands (35%), and the United States (30%). In Portugal, Italy, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Spain, Poland, and the

United Kingdom, between 70% and 90% thought that most of the benefits go to a few.

SOUTH KOREANS, EUROPEANS, AND AMERICANS AGREE: ECONOMIC POWER IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MILITARY POWER

When asked whether economic power or military power was more important in world affairs, large majorities of South Koreans (84%) and Europeans (82%) agreed that economic power was more important. Three-in-four Americans (74%) agreed.

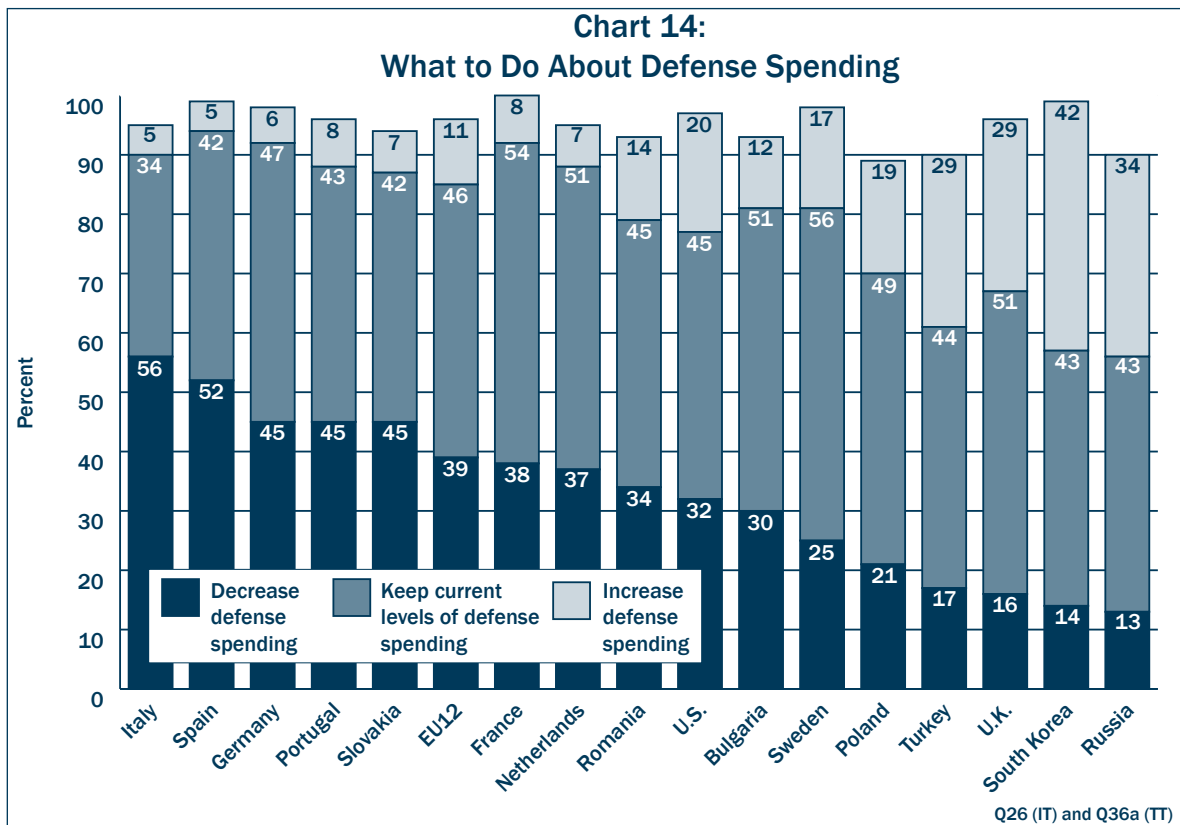


Section Four: Foreign, Defense, and Security Policy

Asian nations, the European Union, and the United States have faced a growing host of challenges in recent months. The Arab Spring, the threat of a nuclear Iran, and now the Syrian civil war have absorbed the attentions of all major powers. Meanwhile, territorial disputes, North Korea's leadership transition and China's military build-up have combined to make South Korea's immediate security environment increasingly tense.

KOREANS SPLIT ON INCREASING DEFENSE SPENDING OR KEEPING IT AT CURRENT LEVELS; EU, UNITED STATES MUCH LESS WILLING TO INCREASE SPENDING

While South Koreans were split on whether or not defense spending should increase (42%) or remain the same (43%), pluralities of Europeans (46%) and Americans (45%) agreed that defense spending should remain about the same; in 11 of the 15 countries surveyed in *Transatlantic Trends*,



majorities or pluralities wanted to maintain current levels of military outlays. Russia (13%) and South Korea (14%) were the two nations least likely to support a decrease in defense spending. By comparison, 39% of Europeans and 32% of Americans said that defense spending should decrease. But only one-in-ten Europeans (11%) and one-in-five Americans (20%) wanted to increase defense spending.

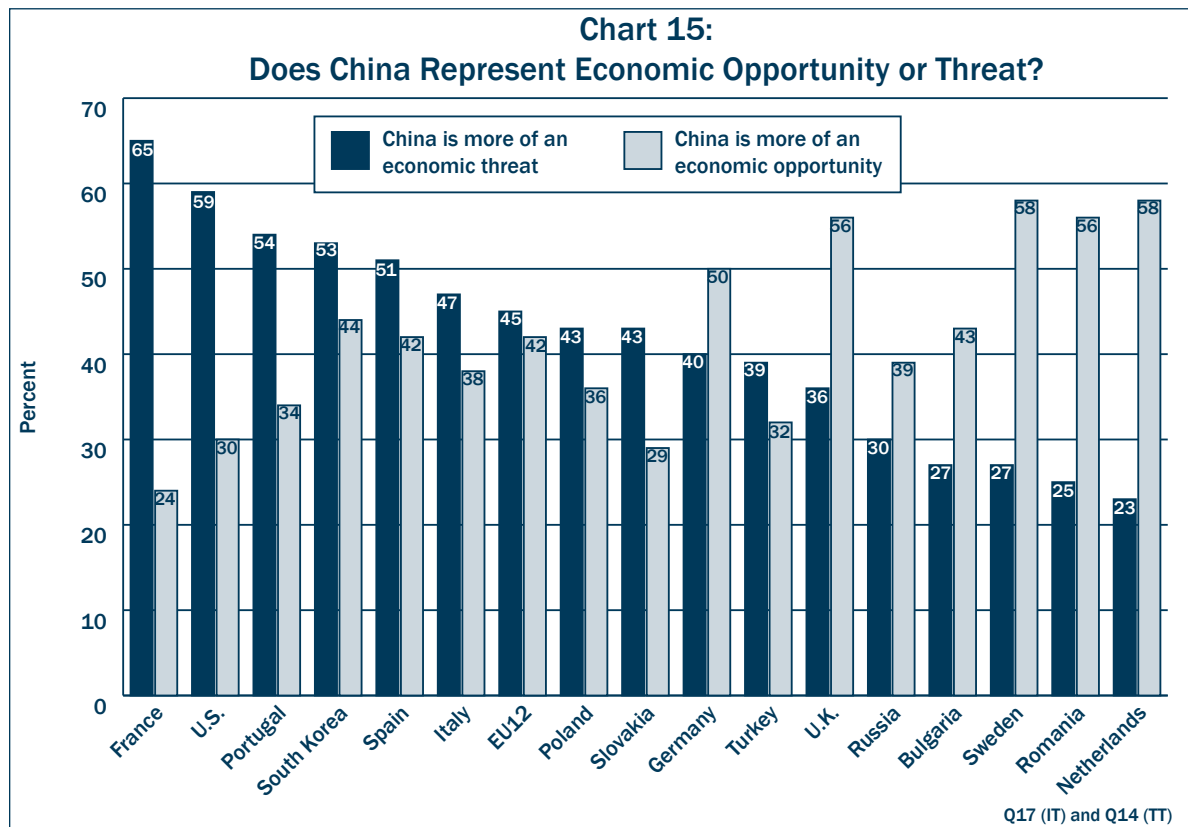
Among South Koreans, there was a wide divide by education and age on this question. While 51% of those with a college degree or higher said they saw China as an economic opportunity, only 31% of those with less than a high school education agreed. South Koreans aged 18-29 (50%) were more likely to see China as an opportunity than those aged 60 or older (37%).

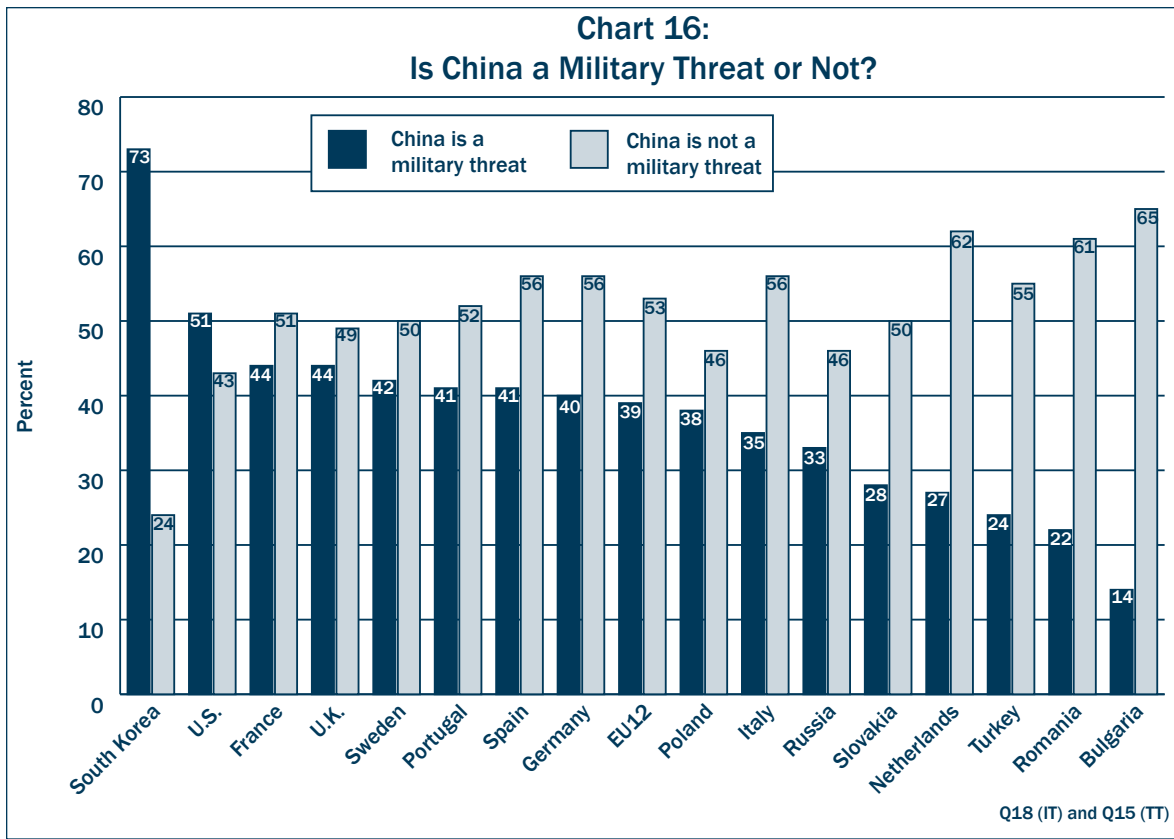
SOUTH KOREANS AND AMERICANS AGREE CHINA IS ECONOMIC THREAT; EUROPE DIVIDED

Fifty-three percent of South Koreans and almost two-thirds of American respondents (59%) described China as an economic threat, with only a third (30%) of American respondents seeing it as an opportunity. Similar numbers of Europeans (42%) and Koreans (44%) see China as an economic opportunity, but Europeans were still marginally more inclined (45%) to see China as more of an economic threat than an opportunity. For Europeans, this marked a reversal from the previous year.

LARGE MAJORITY OF SOUTH KOREANS SEES CHINA AS A MILITARY THREAT

Seventy-three percent of Korean respondents said that China presented a military threat, with only 24% disagreeing. While South Korean responses on other questions tended to vary according to age, perceptions here were very consistent, with more than 70% across all age cohorts seeing China as a military threat. The numbers of South Koreans who saw China as a threat were much higher than those in Europe and the United States. While a slim majority of Americans (51%) agreed that China presented a military threat, Europeans were more likely (53%) to say it did not.





Within the EU, France (up by 15 percentage points from 2011) and the U.K. (up by 9 percentage points from 2011) were most likely to register concerns that China presented a security threat (both 44%).

MIXED VIEWS ON U.S.-KOREAN DIPLOMATIC AND SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

A plurality of South Koreans (39%) wanted to see the level of U.S.-Korean partnership in security and diplomatic affairs remain about the same. However, if a change were in order, the South Korean public was divided on which direction it should take. While 31% wanted to see closer cooperation between the United States and South Korea, 29% wanted to see South Korea take a more independent approach. Support for a closer relationship was particularly prevalent among older age groups (50-59: 38%; 60-or older: 42%), whereas younger groups (18-29: 37%; 30-39: 45%; 40-49: 36%) were most supportive of a more independent course for Korean diplomacy and security policy.

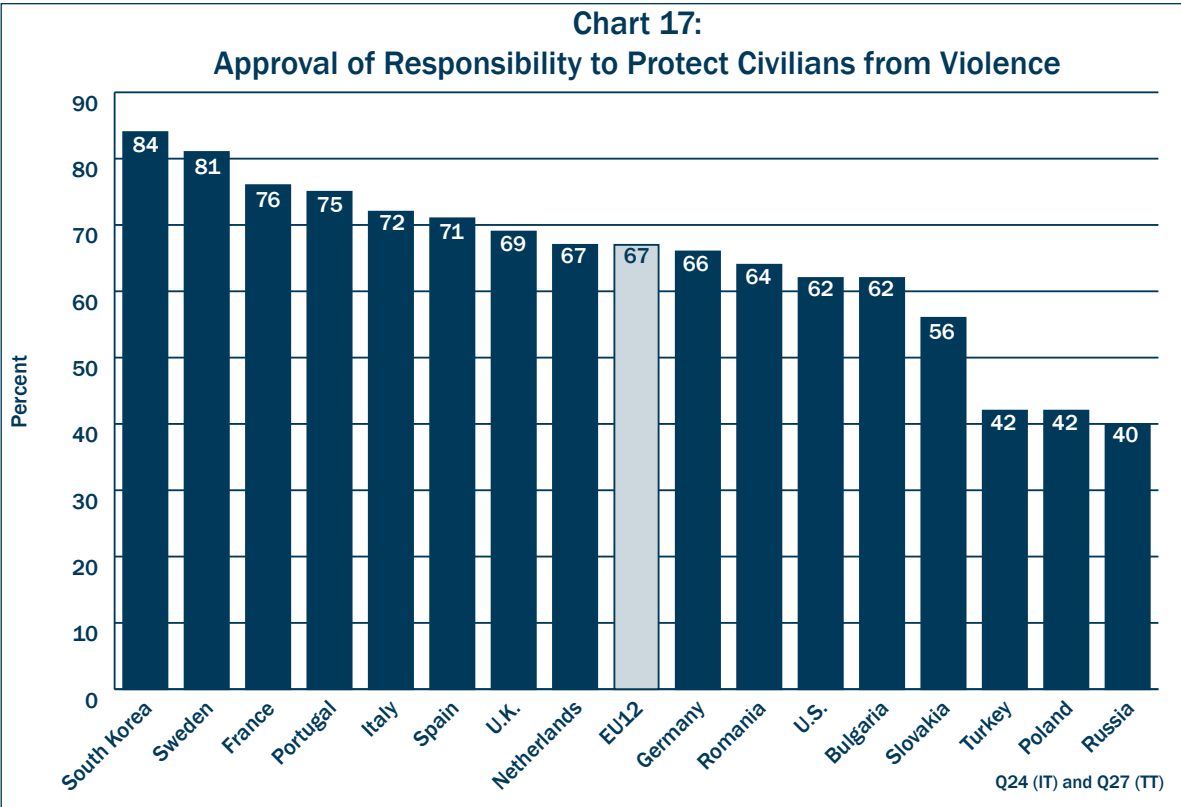
EUROPE, UNITED STATES, AND SOUTH KOREA AGREE ABOUT PRINCIPLE OF “RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT”

Eighty-four percent of South Koreans, 67% of Europeans, and 62% of Americans agreed that the international community, including their own country, had a responsibility to protect civilians in other countries from violence, including violence committed by their own governments. South Koreans’ responses were exceptionally consistent on this question across age cohorts, gender, and education.

Russia and Turkey were both split, with 40% of Russians and 42% of Turks agreeing with the statement and 41% of Russians and 39% of Turks disagreeing (all percentage differences within the 3% margin of error).

EUROPEANS, SOUTH KOREANS DISAGREE THAT WAR IS SOMETIMES NECESSARY TO OBTAIN JUSTICE, UNLIKE MOST AMERICANS

When asked whether or not war is, under some conditions, necessary to obtain justice, South Koreans and Europeans



responded similarly, with 34% of each population agreeing that it was. The numbers were close to those registered in Russia (30%) and Turkey (35%).

The United States (74%) and the U.K. (64%) were the only two countries with majorities agreeing that war can be necessary to obtain justice.

KOREANS WELCOME U.S. FOCUS ON ASIA

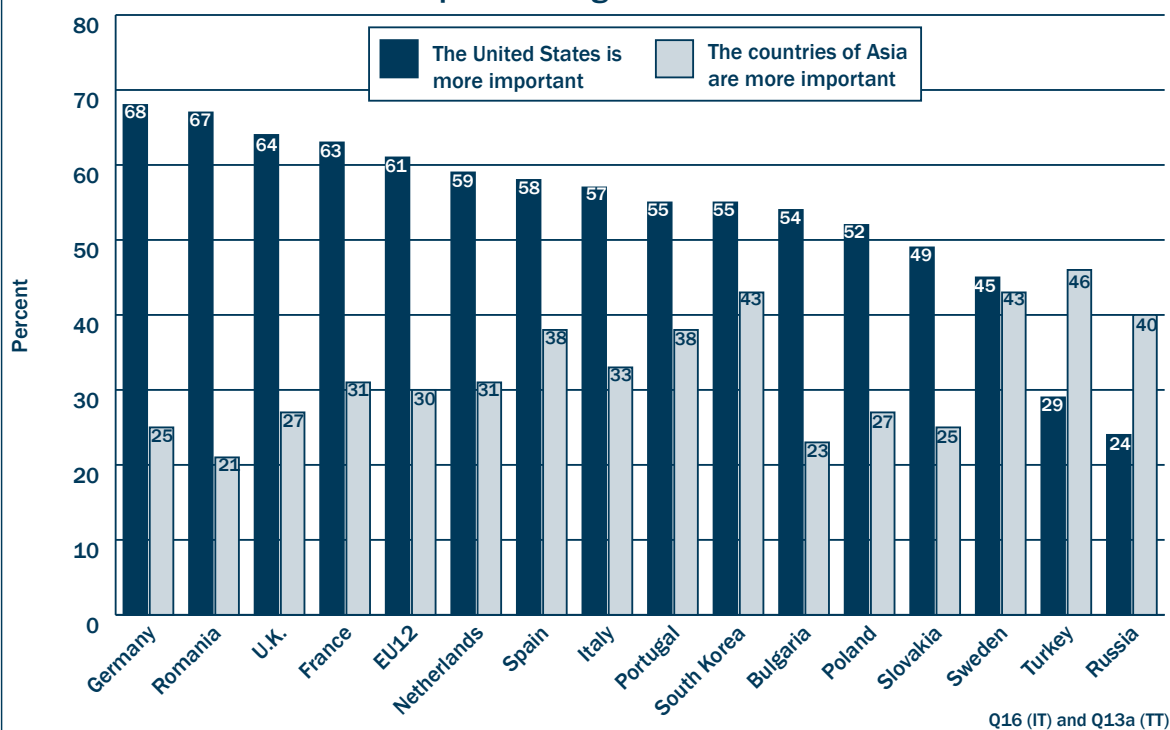
Sixty-one percent of Europeans (a 9% increase from last year) and 55% of Koreans said that the United States is more important to their country's national interests than the countries of Asia.

There were significant differences within Europe. German (68%), Romanian (67%), British (64%), and French (63%) respondents were most likely to believe in the importance of the United States. In contrast, 46% of Turks, 43% of Swedes, and 40% of Russians said that Asia was more important to their country's interests – all pluralities in their countries.

In Korea, 72% of respondents who had not achieved a high school education said that the United States was more important to South Korea than Asia, whereas only 49% of Koreans who had a college education or higher agreed. There was also a big generational difference, with majorities of those aged 18-29 (59%), 50-59 (62%) and 60+ (68%) agreeing that the United States is more important to South Korea, while those aged 30-39 (57%) and 40-49 (51%) saying that the countries of Asia were more important.

The *International Trends: Korea* survey also told respondents “there has been talk recently of a new effort by the United States to deepen its ties with Asian nations, and Korea in particular” and asked: “Would you support a trans-pacific initiative like this?” Nearly three-in-four South Koreans (70%) said they supported such an initiative by the United States. Twenty-seven percent said they did not; only 3% said that they did not know or refused to answer.

Chart 18:
More Important Region for National Interests



Methodology

This report combines the results from the *Transatlantic Trends* 2012 survey and the *International Trends: Korea* 2012 survey. TNS Opinion was commissioned to conduct both surveys, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews in all countries except Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Russia, and Turkey, where lower telephone penetration necessitated the use of face-to-face interviews. Both landline and mobile phone numbers were included in countries with a high concentration of solely mobile phone users: Italy, South Korea, Spain, Portugal, and the United States.

In all countries, a random sample of approximately 1,000 men and women, 18 years of age and older, was interviewed.⁴ Interviews were conducted in South Korea between June 15 and June 21, 2012, and in the countries included in *Transatlantic Trends*, between June 2 and June 27, 2012.

For results based on the national samples in each of the countries surveyed, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus three percentage points. For results based on the total European sample, the margin of error is plus or minus one percentage point. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can also introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

For trended questions first asked before 2010, averages were weighted on the basis of the size of the adult population in each country to maintain consistency with previous years' reports. For questions that started in 2010 or later, the results were also weighted so that the sample matches

certain population characteristics, including age, gender, education, and region.⁵

When processing is complete, data from the *Transatlantic Trends* survey are deposited with the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan (ICPSR), the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut, and the GESIS-Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences and are available to scholars and other interested parties.

For more detailed methodology and topline data, please visit www.transatlantictrends.org.

Note on European averages in *Transatlantic Trends*

Over time, additional European countries have been added to the survey. While the addition of new countries has affected the Europe-wide average, the impact has usually not been statistically significant. Therefore, for ease of presentation, we have treated several different averages as if they were part of one average. When the EU average is reported for previous years, this is based on the EU7 average from 2002-2003, the EU9 average from 2004-2006, the EU11 average from 2007-2010, and the EU12 average for 2011 and 2012.

⁴ A larger sample of 1,500 was collected in Russia.

⁵ In Korea, the data was weighted using age, gender, and regional demographics. This is the most widely accepted method of creating a nationally representative sample in Korea.

Table of European Averages Reported:

| | | |
|------|-----------|--|
| EU7 | 2002-2003 | U.K., France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Poland, and (2003) Portugal |
| EU9 | 2004-2006 | EU7 countries plus Slovakia and Spain |
| EU11 | 2007-2010 | EU9 countries plus Bulgaria and Romania |
| EU12 | 2011-2012 | EU11 countries plus Sweden |

Total Coverage of *Transatlantic Trends* survey

| Year | Total Coverage | European Coverage |
|-------------|-----------------------|---|
| 2002 | U.S. + E6 | France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, U.K. |
| 2003 | U.S. + E7 | France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, U.K., Portugal |
| 2004-2005 | U.S. + E10 | France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, U.K., Portugal, Turkey, Slovakia, Spain |
| 2006-2010 | U.S. + E12 | France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, U.K., Portugal, Turkey, Slovakia, Spain, Bulgaria, Romania |
| 2011 | U.S. + E13 | France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, U.K., Portugal, Turkey, Slovakia, Spain, Bulgaria, Romania, Sweden |
| 2012 | U.S. + E13 + Russia | France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, U.K., Portugal, Turkey, Slovakia, Spain, Bulgaria, Romania, Sweden |

