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Six Nation Survey Demonstrates How ‘Brand Obama’ May Help Boost Positive Perceptions of ‘Brand America’



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Survey of Arab World Shows Optimism Towards Potential Impact of U.S. President Barack Obama

Six Nation Survey Demonstrates How ‘Brand Obama’ May Help Boost Positive Perceptions of ‘Brand America’

Washington, DC – A new survey of the six leading Arab countries in the Middle East indicates that newly elected U.S. President Barack Obama currently enjoys widespread optimism among citizens of that region that he will have a positive effect on their own country, the Middle East, the United States and indeed the world. In fact, it would appear that "Brand Obama" is running well ahead of "Brand USA" suggesting that his ability to improve the view of favorability towards the United States by residents in the region is quite palpable.

It also suggests that the new President has a high degree of hope and goodwill emanating from the region with the expectation that he will bring a positive effect that will ripple through their own country, the Middle East, the world and the in his home of the United States.

The survey of 7000 respondents was conducted by Ipsos (referred to in the region as *Ipsos MENA*) on a country by country basis and included residents in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan.

The Current View of "Brand USA" ...

The findings make it clear that, at present, roughly only a third (33%) of the total number of respondents in the region have a favorable view of the United States of America compared to roughly 4 in 10 (43%) who have an unfavorable view of the United States. An average of 14% of residents had a neutral view towards the United States while 11% indicated that they "don't know".

In five of the six countries surveyed, "Brand USA" received more unfavorable than favorable ratings, and one country tied in its ratings.

The most favorable view of the United States is held by those in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (38%) compared to the most unfavorable view held by Jordanians (56%); however, it's noted that Jordanian respondents also had the second highest favorable views towards the United States (36%), and, as demonstrated below, was the country most likely in the region to give President Obama the most favorable rating and the highest marks for his potential positive impact effect *in all categories measured*.

The country by country findings, in ranked order, are as follows:

- **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:** 38% favorable (6% very /32% mainly) versus 43% unfavorable (20% very/23% mainly); 14% neutral, 5% don't know.
- **Jordan:** 36% favorable (5% very/31% mainly) versus 56% unfavorable (28% very/28% mainly); 4% neutral, 4% don't know.
- **United Arab Emirates:** 34% favorable (10% very/24% mostly) versus 40% unfavorable (18% very/22% mainly); 17% neutral, 9% don't know.
- **Kuwait:** 34% favorable (13% very/21% mainly) versus 34% unfavorable (16% very/18% mainly); 21% neutral, 11% don't know.
- **Lebanon:** 31% favorable (8% very/23% mainly) versus 41% unfavorable (24% very/17% mainly); 17% neutral, 11% don't know.
- **Egypt:** 22% favorable (6% very/16% mainly) versus 45% unfavorable (25% very/20% mainly); 9% neutral, 24% don't know.

"Brand Obama" Is Much Stronger...

It would appear that, at present, President Barack Obama has a stronger "brand image" than "Brand America" with majorities in three of the country's placing him well within the favorable range and with plurality's in the other three countries surveyed doing the same.

In other words, there is no single country in the Arab world surveyed where brand Obama's unfavorable ratings out-rank his favorable ratings. This compares to "Brand America" where out of the six countries surveyed, five of the six demonstrate unfavorable ratings out-ranking those that are favorable, plus one that is tied.

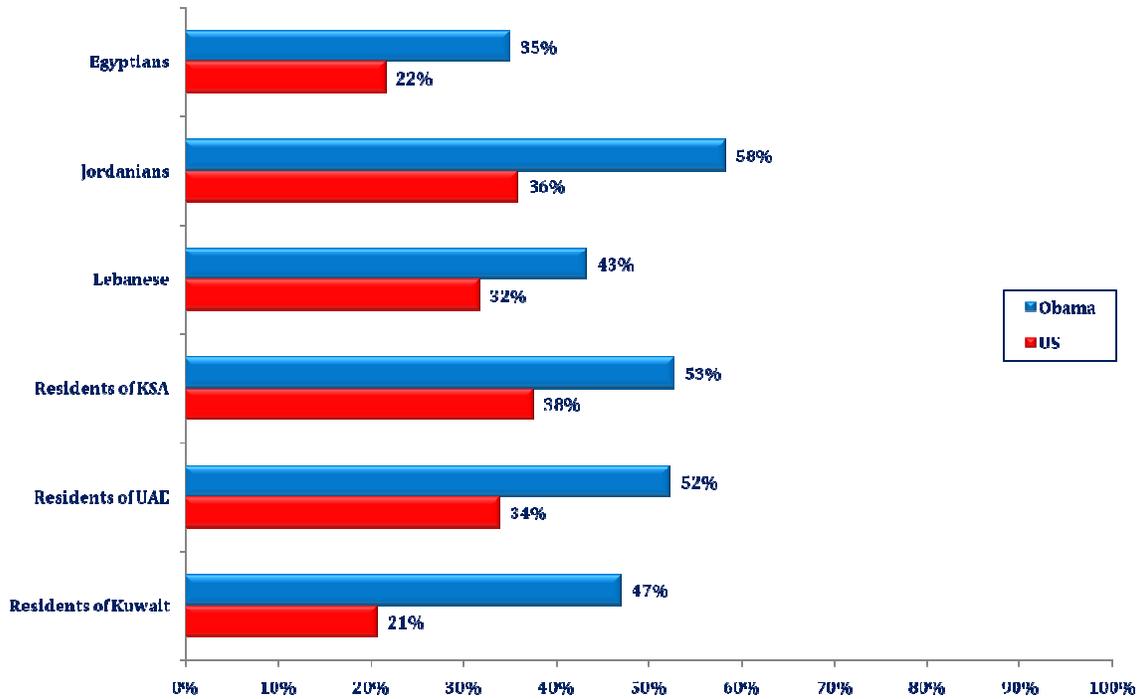
Overall, the most favorable ratings in the entire region for “Brand Obama” and its potential effect on all categories tested (following, below) were recorded by Jordanians, whereas the least favorable views, on a consistent basis, were held by those residing in Egypt.

The country by country findings in ranked order are as follows:

- **Jordan:** 58% favorable (8% very/50% mainly) versus 29% unfavorable (12% very/17% mainly); 6% neutral, 7% don't know.
- **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:** 53% favorable (9% very /44% mainly) versus 25% unfavorable (10% very/15% mainly); 14% neutral, 8% don't know.
- **United Arab Emirates:** 52% favorable (17% very/35% mainly) versus 14% unfavorable (5% very/9% mainly); 19% neutral, 14% don't know.
- **Kuwait:** 47% favorable (17% very/30% mainly) versus 14% unfavorable 7% very/8% mainly); 18% neutral, 21% don't know.
- **Lebanon:** 43% favorable (10% very/33% mainly) versus 16% unfavorable (9% very/7% mainly); 16% neutral, 25% don't know.
- **Egypt:** 35% favorable (5% very/30% mainly) versus 19% unfavorable (9% very/10% mainly); 10% neutral, 36% don't know.

The “Brand GAP Analysis”...

Directly comparing the favorability results (mean scores) between "Brand America" and "Brand Obama" produces a gap between the two—all of which are to the advantage of President Obama. What this suggests that there is more resident "goodwill" in the region being projected towards the new President than towards the United States as an entity, and because of this there is an opportunity for the President to literally “bridge the gap” where his reposit goodwill lifts the goodwill towards America. To understand this more clearly, the following is a direct comparison of the favorability scores in each of the countries surveyed:



The 'Brand Gap Score' for President Obama (the difference between the favorability percentages that he receives versus the favorability percentage that the United States of America receives) is as follows:

Kuwait: +26

Jordan: +22

United Arab Emirates: +18

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: +15

Egypt: +13

Lebanon: +11

Only One In 10 (10%) Residents in the Region Believe That The Effect Of President Barrack Obama On Their Own Country Will Be "Negative"...

Only one in 10 residents in the region appear to harbor any negative views about the effect President Obama may have on their own country. In fact, the majority in three countries and a plurality in the other three in the region fully expect the effect of the new President on their country to be positive. By ranked order:

- **Jordan:** 73% positive versus 9% negative; 10% neutral, 8% don't know.
- **United Arab Emirate's:** 53% positive versus 6% negative; 21% neutral, 21% don't know.
- **Kuwait:** 52% positive versus 9% negative; 10% neutral, 29% don't know.
- **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:** 45% positive versus 11% negative; 31% neutral, 14% don't know.
- **Lebanon:** 43% positive versus 12% negative; 18% neutral, 27% don't know.
- **Egypt:** 34% positive versus 12% negative; 15% neutral, 38% don't know.

Most Expect He Will Have a Positive Effect On The Middle East...

Most residents in the region believe that the President will have a positive effect on the Middle East, by ranked order:

- **Jordan:** 64% positive versus 22% negative; 6% neutral, 8% don't know.
- **United Arab Emirate's:** 55% positive versus 14% negative; 13% neutral, 18% don't know.
- **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:** 49% positive versus 15% negative; 24% neutral, 12% don't know.

- **Kuwait:** 48% positive versus 15% negative; 7% neutral, 30% don't know.
- **Lebanon:** 45% positive versus 16% negative; 12% neutral, 27% don't know.
- **Egypt:** 35% positive versus 14% negative; 12% neutral, 40% don't know.

Similarly, There Are Expectations For His Positive Effect On The World...

Most residents in the region believe that the President will have a positive effect on the world, by ranked order:

- **Jordan:** 67% positive versus 17% negative; 6% neutral, 10% don't know.
- **United Arab Emirate's:** 56% positive versus 12% negative; 14% neutral, 18% don't know.
- **Kuwait:** 53% positive versus 10% negative; 7% neutral, 30% don't know.
- **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:** 50% positive versus 14% negative; 22% neutral, 14% don't know.
- **Lebanon:** 46% positive versus 12% negative; 11% neutral, 32% don't know.
- **Egypt:** 38% positive versus 11% negative; 10% neutral, 41% don't know.

With Full Majorities In Each Country Surveyed Believing He Will Also Have A Positive Effect In The United States...

A full majority of residents in each of the countries surveyed in the region believe the new President will have a positive effect at home, in the United States. By ranked order:

- **Jordan:** 81% positive versus 10% negative; 2% neutral, 7% don't know.

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- **United Arab Emirates:** 71% positive versus 7% negative; 7% neutral, 15% don't know.
- **Lebanon:** 64% positive versus 5% negative; 7% neutral, 24% don't know.
- **Kuwait:** 62% positive versus 6% negative; 4% neutral, 29% don't know.
- **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:** 62% positive versus 10% negative; 16% neutral, 13% don't know.
- **Egypt:** 57% positive versus 5% negative; 4% neutral, 34% don't know.

Methodology

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted among a combined total of 7000 respondents from six countries in the Middle East region. The survey was conducted by Ipsos MENA between March 9 and March 25, 2009. For the survey, a nationally representative, randomly selected sample of respondents aged 18 and older was interviewed by Ipsos (CATI) in the following countries (with the appropriate margin of error noted): Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1400 (± 2.6); Egypt, 1400 (± 2.6); United Arab Emirates, 1200 (± 2.8); Kuwait, 1000 (± 3.0); Lebanon, 1000 (± 3.0); and Jordan, 1000 (± 3.0) with the results considered accurate within, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population in country been polled. The margin of error will be larger for other sub-groupings of the survey populations. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error. These data were weighted to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual populations interviewed. Samples for the Levant countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt), covered nationals of that country only, who are the primary residents of those countries. For Gulf Countries (KSA, UAE and Kuwait), samples covered all residents, including expatriates, since they represent large segments of the population base.

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