

Anti-American Sentiment Reaches 25-Year High in Russia

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More than 80 percent of Russians view the United States negatively.

Russians are more anti-American than they have been at any point in the past 25 years, according to a recent opinion poll.

More than 80 percent of Russians view the United States negatively, the exact inverse of how the public felt in 1992, respected independent pollster the Levada Center said in a statement.

More than 70 percent currently have a negative opinion of the European Union, according to the poll, which was conducted between Jan. 23 and 26.

Russia's political relations with the West sank to post-Cold War lows last year as Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula from neighboring Ukraine, and Russia and the West faced off in a series of tit-for-tat sanctions.

Now, with the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine heating up and U.S. lawmakers renewing

a push to supply weapons to the Ukrainian military, popular opinion of the West is not likely to improve anytime soon in Russia.

In fact, the sentiments held by Russians toward the United States and the European Union have been gradually declining since mid-2011, with a sharp fall occurring around March last year, when Russia annexed Crimea.

Most Russians have supported that annexation, with a surge of patriotic fervor having propelled President Vladimir Putin's popularity to all-time highs. His approval currently hovers around 85 percent.

Meanwhile, Russians' opinion of Ukraine has significantly deteriorated, going from about 75 percent positive in July 2013 to almost 65 percent negative today, Levada Center said.

Conversely, Russians' views of China have improved more than 20 percentage points since November 2013, with 81 percent of current respondents saying they have a favorable view of the country.

That improved sentiment reflects the pivot that Russian politicians and businesses have made toward the East over the past year as ties with the West flounder.

Russians' opinion of Belarus has remained constantly positive, hovering around the 80 percent mark for the past decade and a half.

The Levada Center said the survey, taken by 1,600 people across 134 cities and towns in Russia, had a statistical margin of error no greater than 3.4 percent.

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