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Most Russians See More Enemies Than Friends Among International Community

By Jennifer Monaghan

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U.S. President Barack Obama

Just 34 percent of Russians believe their country has a greater number of friends than enemies, with the United States and President Barack Obama viewed as the nation's biggest threat, a survey by state-run pollster VTsIOM revealed Thursday.

The number of people who said Russia has more friendly relations than hostile relations with other countries dropped to 25 percent among the residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg, the survey found.

In contrast, 51 percent of those living in the two cities acknowledged that while Russia has some friends it has "many enemies" — compared to a nationwide average of 42 percent with similar views, according to VTsIOM.

An average of 12 percent nationwide said Russia does not have any enemies at all, while 8

percent believe the country is surrounded by hostile foes "on all sides," VTsIOM found.

The pollster also asked those who believe Russia does have enemies to identify who or what they see as posing the greatest threat to their society, culture and values.

In total, 37 percent of those polled said the United States and Obama posed the greatest threat. This point was illustrated on Thursday as some 20 protesters gathered in front of the U.S. Embassy to picket, holding signs boasting: "U.S. — the planet's shame" and "U.S., don't stick your nose in the business of others."

Obama and his country were followed in second place by Europe (9 percent). A further 8 percent said Ukraine and the Ukrainian government pose a threat.

Relations between Moscow and the West have deteriorated amid the ongoing the crisis in Ukraine, and on Wednesday Putin extended a sweeping ban on food imports from the United States and EU for another year.

The VTsIOM poll was carried out from May 17-18 among 1,600 people in 46 Russian regions. The margin of error was no greater than 3.5 percent.

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