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**GALLUP PAKISTAN POLL FINDINGS ON**

**Pakistanis have low hopes from Clinton's visit to Pakistan**

***Results released on: March 24, 2000***



H-45, St.52,F-7/4, Islamabad, Pakistan. Tel +92-51-2655630, Fax +92-51-2655632,  
Email: [isb@gallup.com.pk](mailto:isb@gallup.com.pk)

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## ***Pakistanis have low hopes from Clinton's visit to Pakistan - March 24, 2000***

A majority of Pakistanis do not expect much outcomes from President Clinton's visit to their country on Saturday morning. In a Gallup poll conducted with more than 1000 statistically selected men and women in the urban areas all over the country during March 19-21, Twenty-four percent (24%) said they believed Clinton's visit would be fruitful for Pakistan, 15% said it would be harmful while 58% said it would be of little consequence.

Survey results reveal that only 17% of Pakistanis are in favour of staging anti American demonstrations during Clintons visit to their country. Responding to another question twenty-five percent (25%) say they are personally happy that Clinton is visiting their country, 22% are unhappy and 53% say they are indifferent.

Twenty-five percent (25%) of Pakistanis today view that American friendship is tilted towards India, only 15% view her to be Pakistan's friend while 57% believe that the US is not a friend of either of them.

Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani, Chairman of Gallup Pakistan has made the following **commentary on public attitudes on the eve of President Clinton's visit to Pakistan.**

President Clinton's visit to Pakistan comes in the background of steady alienation among the two nations over the decade of 1990s and a public opinion which is disappointed and resentful of America whom they once perceived to be their ally against Indian threat, notwithstanding the fact that Americans even then had a different perspective on their relationship. The changed perceptions show up vividly in responses to a question which Gallup Pakistan has posed to national samples in 1981, 1990 and 1999. The question reads: **"If there is a war between India and Pakistan, who in your view would be supported by America?"** Those who are familiar with the dynamics of Indo Pakistani relations, know how significant this issue is in this part of the world. In **February 1990** Forty-one percent (41%) believed America would support Pakistan, only 10% believed she would support India, 32% thought the Americans would stay neutral and 17% did not answer. When this question was posed to a similar sample of Pakistanis in **1999**, the response was exactly the reverse: 59% believed US would support India and only 18% expected the Americans to support Pakistan, the remaining gave other responses.

Over the years **trust in America** has sharply declined in Pakistan, according to Gallup opinion polls. In **1987**, approximately 40% of those who answered this question said their trust in America was high or very high. By end **1999** the comparable figure had dropped by at least half and less than 20% gave the same answer. The level of distrust during the same period had doubled from around 33% in 1987 to nearly 70% in 1999.

Pakistan's disenchantment with America is expressed most starkly on the issue of nuclear capability. America insists that Pakistan should sign **CTBT** even if India does not. To the contrary only 11% of Pakistanis support this view, 62% are opposed to signing if the decision is delinked from India and 40% are opposed to signing **CTBT** even if India goes ahead to

sign it. There is a sharp sense of insecurity in Pakistan. In a Gallup poll held in February 2000, Seventy-one (71%) of those sampled believed there was a high (22%) or some (49%) chance of imminent war with India. More ominously 47% believed that should there be a war between the two countries, India will use its nuclear weapons; only 31% believed it would not, while 22% did not give a view.

Pakistanis had scant hopes from **President Clinton's intervention during the Kargil crisis**. In Gallup polls held at the time in July 1999, 46% believed Clinton's intervention was harmful for Pakistan, 26% believed it was helpful and 28% did not give a view. But Clinton is perhaps correct in his reported assessment that the Pakistani public blamed Nawaz Sharif for the humiliation in Kargil and this led to his fall from grace. Gallup polls at the time showed that four times as many people put the blame on Nawaz Sharif as on the armed forces.

When President Clinton speaks to a Pakistani audience on **terrorism** with or without reference to **Osama Bin Ladin** he is unlikely to touch a favourable chord. In a Gallup poll held in December 1999, the question was posed: "The United States wants Pakistani help in convicting Osama Bin Ladin. In your view should Pakistan help or not help?" Only 15% were in favour of assisting the Americans, 81% were opposed and 5% did not give a view. Earlier in 1999 when the US struck missiles on Osama Bin Ladin's reported camps in Afghanistan, 73% of Pakistanis thought it was unfair and only 5% believed it was fair; 69% believed the American charge of terrorism against Osama Bin Ladin was unfounded, 8% believed it to be true and 23% said they did not know.

While India is viewed in Pakistan as its **threat** number one by 66% of the respondents in a national urban poll, America comes next with 27%. But Washington is seen here as a **threat number one to the larger Muslim World**. Asked to choose between America, India, Russia and Israel, 60 percent of Pakistanis chose America as the greatest threat to the Muslim World while 25% named India, 6% named Israel, 1% named Russia and 8% did not answer.

A careful analysis of Gallup polls however shows that an emphasis on nuclear weapons, relations with India and terrorism overshadows some underlying issues on which there is greater harmony between Pakistani and American views. When it comes to **narcotics control, environmental protection** and even human rights relating to torture, freedom and good governance, the Pakistani perceptions are not sharply different from American views.

The survey was conducted among more than one thousand representative sample of urban men and women covering a cross section of various age, income and educational groups. The error margin in a survey of this kind is around 3 percent at 95 percent confidence level. The complete text of Gallup weekly poll may be seen on the internet at [www.gallup.com.pk](http://www.gallup.com.pk).