

American Myths Revisited: Barack Obama has not fundamentally changed how Canadians see the United States

TORONTO, Nov. 2 /CNW/ - A survey for the Historica-Dominion Institute on the first anniversary of the election of Barack Obama finds that the new president has not fundamentally changed how Canadians see the United States.

While President Obama is dramatically more popular today among Canadians than George W. Bush, Canadians feel only slightly more favourably toward the United States than they did in a similar poll four years ago, according to a recent survey conducted by the Innovative Research Group.

"What's striking about these findings is how Canadians have detached their personal view of Barack Obama, whom they quite like and respect, from the United States, which they still view with skepticism, even distrust," said Andrew Cohen, President of The Historica Dominion Institute.

When asked if they "feel at home" whenever they visit the United States, 48 per cent of Canadians agreed (16% strongly agree; 32% somewhat agree). Four years ago, 44 per cent agreed (16% strongly agree; 28% somewhat agree).

In 2009, Canadians are split on whether the United States is "a force for good in the world". While 44 per cent agree (11% strongly agree; 32% somewhat agree), 46 per cent disagree (15% strongly disagree; 31% somewhat disagree). In Quebec, just under one-third think the U.S. is a force for good.

"There really does appear to be a hardy strain of anti-Americanism in Canada," said Cohen. "Almost half of us don't feel at home there, which is surprising given all that we have in common as two peoples. Almost half of us don't believe America is a force for good in the world, even with Obama as President."

Still, Canadians overwhelmingly like Obama. Eighty-six per cent have a favourable view (48% very favourable; 40% somewhat favorable) of him, compared to only 21 per cent for Bush in 2005. However, only 42 per cent agreed that President Obama should have won the Nobel Peace Prize announced in October, while 46 per cent of Canadians disagreed.

On September 1, The Dominion Institute and The Historica Foundation of Canada merged to create Canada's largest history and citizenship organization: The Historica-Dominion Institute.

For detailed survey results, visit www.historica-dominion.ca.

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