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Overall, U.S. Image Generally Steady But Kosovo Highlights U.S. Influence

Overall Opinion of the U.S. Remains Favorable

Surveys conducted in the midst of the Kosovo crisis showed nearly two-thirds across central and eastern Europe have a somewhat or very favorable view of the U.S. (*see table*). However, in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia – where publics were opposed to the NATO airstrikes – favorable opinion of the U.S. declined somewhat over the past year, likely due in part to the U.S. role in the recent actions in Kosovo. Among new NATO allies – the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland – favorable opinion remained steady.

	Bulgaria		Czech Rep.		Hungary		Poland		Romania		Slovakia	
	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999
<i>What is your opinion of the United States?</i>												
Favorable	76%	66%	83%	79%	86%	84%	86%	85%	89%	79%	77%*	59%
Unfavorable	17	25	15	19	12	12	6	9	6	16	19	39
<i>How desirable is it for our country's interests that the U.S. exert strong leadership in world affairs?</i>												
Desirable	33%	28%	51%	41%	65%	63%	59%	56%	73%*	49%	31%	21%
Undesirable	49	61	42	51	28	28	24	31	17	34	56	72
<i>The United States has too much influence over our country's affairs.</i>												
Agree	55%	61%	47%	57%	44%	52%	39%	48%	50%	46%	46%	63%
Disagree	30	21	48	38	51	37	49	39	35	41	45	32

*1997 data

Views of U.S. Leadership More Constrained

Opinion is mixed among these publics on whether strong U.S. leadership in world affairs is desirable for their country's interests (*see table*). Half or more in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia said such leadership is undesirable for their country's interests, with more now than a year ago expressing this opinion. In Hungary, Poland and Romania, publics tended to consider U.S. global leadership desirable, though this sentiment fell off somewhat in Romania.

And Many Think the U.S. Exerts Too Much Influence

Central and east European publics are more likely to have said the U.S. has too much influence on their own country than to disagree (*see table*), and except for Romanians, publics are now more likely to agree than last year. As with views toward U.S. leadership, Bulgarians, Czechs and Slovaks are most negative in their perception of U.S. influence.

Prepared by Nancy L. Mendrala, Europe Branch, (202) 619-4996. This report is based on results from face-to-face interviews with nationally representative samples of about 1000 adults (18 and older) in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia conducted in May and June 1999 for USIA by leading local social and market research firms in each country.