
Over One-Third of Americans Believe Fewer Troops Should be Committed in Afghanistan

One-quarter believe U.S. should commit more troops

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – August 27, 2009 – As the situation in Afghanistan, especially in the wake of the current elections and the vote-counting, continues to deteriorate for U.S. troops on the ground, Americans may be thinking of this situation in a similar manner as they once thought about Iraq. In the past six months, even fewer U.S. adults believe more troops should be committed to the war there and more Americans believe fewer troops should be committed.

These are some of the results of a new **BBC World News America/The Harris Poll** of 2,004 adults surveyed online between August 12 and 14, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

In January, President Obama proposed sending an additional 30,000 or more troops to support the U.S. and allied troops there. At that time, just one-third (33%) of all adults supported this increase. Many people thought we should either keep the same level of troops (21%) or cut the number there (27%).

Currently, just one-quarter (25%) of Americans support sending more troops to Afghanistan while one in five (20%) want to keep the level of troops the same and 37% want to commit fewer troops. Among women, almost half (45%) want to cut the number of troops while 37% of men say they want to commit more troops to the war in Afghanistan.

There is also an age difference on this issue – the older one is, the more likely they are to say they want to commit more troops. Just under one-quarter of those aged 18-34 (23%) say they want to commit more troops compared to 44% of those aged 55 and older. The reverse is true with sending fewer troops as almost two in five of those aged 18-34 (38%) say they believe the U.S. should commit fewer troops while 14% of those aged 55 and older say the same. Educational levels also show a difference. Two in five of those with a high school or less education and college graduates (41% and 39% respectively) say they believe the U.S. should commit more troops in Afghanistan while two in five people with some college (39%) say the U.S. should commit fewer troops.

So What?

As there is more violence there, and more U.S. casualties there as well, Americans are hearing more about Afghanistan and, therefore, paying more attention to the conflict. And, as such, it is clear that Iraq may not be far from their minds as Americans are saying that they would prefer to see fewer troops in Afghanistan. President Obama has a lot on his plate domestically, but this is an issue that is moving to the forefront of Americans' minds and he can't afford to let this slip.

TABLE 1
INCREASING US TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

“Do you believe the United States should commit more or less troops to the war in Afghanistan?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total	Gender		Age				Education		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	HS or less	Some College	College Grad.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Commit more troops	25	37	13	23	29	39	44	41	27	39
Keep the level of troops the same	20	20	20	19	22	22	21	29	18	19
Commit less troops	37	28	45	38	30	22	14	12	39	23
Not at all sure	18	15	22	20	18	17	21	18	16	19

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 2
AMOUNT OF US TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN - TREND

“Do you believe the United States should commit more or less troops to the war in Afghanistan?”

Base: All U.S. adults

	Total Jan.	Total Aug.
	%	%
Commit more troops	33	25
Keep the level of troops the same	21	20
Commit less troops	27	37
Not at all sure	19	18

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Methodology

This **BBC World News America/Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States August 12 and 14, 2009, among 2,004 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

***The Harris Poll*[®] #95, August 27, 2009**

By Regina A. Corso, Director, The Harris Poll, Harris Interactive

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is a global leader in custom market research. With a long and rich history in multimodal research, powered by our science and technology, we assist clients in achieving business results. Harris Interactive serves clients globally through our North American, European and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms. For more information, please visit www.harrisinteractive.com.

Press Contact:

Harris Interactive
Corporate Communications
212-539-9600
press@harrisinteractive.net