

Three in Five Americans Give President Obama Negative Ratings on Afghanistan

Over half not confident U.S. policies in Afghanistan will be successful

New York, N.Y. — July 13, 2010 — With the recent change in military leadership for Afghanistan there is a hope by the White House and others that this will help to change the direction of the war as well as attitudes toward it. President Obama probably also hopes this helps change opinions on his handling of the situation in Afghanistan, as just three in ten (29%) have a positive opinion of how he is handling it, while six in ten (59%) have a negative opinion. In January, almost four in ten Americans (38%) had a positive opinion of President Obama's handling of the war while 53% had a negative opinion.

These are some of the results of **The Harris Poll** of 2,227 adults surveyed online between June 14 and 21, 2010 by **Harris Interactive**.

The general sense toward the situation in Afghanistan is also negative. Just one in ten Americans (10%) think the situation in Afghanistan is getting better, almost the same as in January (11%). Three in ten (29%) believe the situation is getting worse while half of Americans (49%) say there is no real change. And President Obama cannot count on people within his own party to support him on this issue. Half of both Republicans (51%) and Democrats (50%) say there is no real change in Afghanistan.

There is also a lack of confidence in long term success. Over half of Americans (55%) are not confident that U.S. policies in Afghanistan will be successful. One-third (34%) are not sure if these policies will be successful and only 12% are confident in the success in Afghanistan. Democrats are slightly more confident than both Republicans and Independents (17% vs. 10% and 8%).

Bringing troops home from Afghanistan

The timeframe for when U.S. troops should come home has been debated since American forces were first sent to Afghanistan. After the surge of troops was implemented, President Obama announced that some of those troops would begin coming home in the summer of 2011. American opinion is divided on this timetable. One-quarter of U.S. adults (25%) say all U.S. troops should come home now while 22% believe there should be no timetable for troops to come home. One in five Americans (19%) believe this is a good timetable for U.S. troops to come home, while 17% say some troops should come home before 2011 and 14% are not sure.

There is a slight shift of opinion in this since the beginning of the year. In January, over one-quarter of Americans (27%) believed there should be no timetable for U.S. troops to come home, while less than one-in five (18%) believed all U.S. troops should come home now.

There is also a large difference of opinion by political party. More than two in five Republicans (43%) believe there should be no timetable for troops to come home while 17% believe all troops should come home now and 9% believe summer of 2011 is a good timetable. One-third of Democrats (33%) believe summer of 2011 is a good timetable for troops to come home while one-quarter (26%) say all U.S. troops should come home now and 7% say there should not be a timetable.

Osama bin Laden

One view that hasn't changed so far this year is the belief that Osama bin Laden is still alive. Almost four in five Americans (78%) believe he is still alive with almost one-quarter (23%) saying he is definitely alive and 55% saying his is probably alive. The same number of Americans believed this in January of this year. Just one in ten U.S. adults (9%) say he is not alive while 13% are not at all sure.

So What?

The situation in Afghanistan is one other issue the Obama White House has on its plate for the unforeseeable future. When the focus shifted to Iraq, a lot of attention slipped away from Afghanistan and it became the "forgotten" war. With the situation in Afghanistan becoming more unstable, attention is now refocused there and Americans are going to expect something to change. If not, the same negative feelings they once felt towards Iraq will continue to emerge, and deepen, towards Afghanistan.

**TABLE 1
PRESIDENT OBAMA AND AFGHANISTAN**

"Now turning to Afghanistan, overall, how would you rate the job President Obama has done in handling Afghanistan over the last several months?"

Base: All Adults

	April 2009	Sept 2009	Nov 2009	Jan 2010	June 2010	Political Party		
	%	%	%	%	%	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
Positive (NET)	51	36	31	38	29	12	47	27
Excellent	10	5	4	7	3	1	7	2
Pretty Good	41	32	26	30	26	11	40	25
Negative (NET)	36	54	60	53	59	79	41	62
Only fair	26	35	33	31	33	36	32	32
Poor	10	19	27	22	26	43	9	31
Not sure	13	10	9	9	12	8	12	11

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

**TABLE 2
SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN**

"Do you think that the situation in Afghanistan is...?"

Base: All Adults

	July 2005	May 2007	August 2008	April 2009	Sept 2009	Nov 2009	Jan 2010	June 2010	Political Party		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
Getting better	17	12	11	12	8	6	11	10	9	11	11
Getting worse	30	26	37	28	42	47	32	29	34	24	34
No real change	37	36	35	45	41	39	46	49	51	50	45
Not sure	16	26	18	16	9	8	11	12	7	14	10

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

TABLE 3
CONFIDENCE IN POLICIES IN AFGHANISTAN

"How confident are you that U.S. policies in Afghanistan will be successful?"

Base: All Adults

	July 2005	May 2007	August 2008	April 2009	Sept 2009	Nov 2009	Jan 2010	June 2010	Political Party		
	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Confident	25	22	17	27	14	12	15	12	10	17	8
Not confident	45	41	54	40	55	61	53	55	65	44	61
Not sure	30	37	29	33	31	28	32	34	26	39	31

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

TABLE 4
TROOP SURGE IN AFGHANISTAN

"President Obama recently announced that some of the troops that were part of the surge in Afghanistan will start coming home in the summer of 2011. Do you think...?"

Base: All Adults

	Jan 2010	June 2010	Political Party		
	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Dem.
	%	%	%	%	%
All U.S. troops should come home now.	18	25	17	26	31
There should be no timetable for U.S. troops to come home.	27	22	43	7	24
This is a good timetable for U.S. troops to come home.	20	19	9	33	15
Some U.S. troops should come home before 2011.	18	17	15	21	14
Other	4	3	4	1	3
Not sure	12	14	12	12	13

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

TABLE 5
OSAMA BIN LADEN

"Do you believe that Osama Bin Laden is still alive?"

Base: All Adults

	Jan 2010	June 2010	Political Party		
	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Dem.
	%	%	%	%	%
Alive (NET)	78	78	86	77	75
He's definitely alive	23	23	22	24	22
He's probably alive	55	55	64	53	54
Not alive (NET)	10	9	7	9	11
He's probably not alive	8	8	6	8	10
He's definitely not alive	2	1	1	1	1
Not at all sure	12	13	7	14	14

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

Methodology

This **Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States between June 14 and 21, 2010 among 2,227 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.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

The results of this Harris Poll may not be used in advertising, marketing or promotion without the prior written permission of Harris Interactive.

J38301

Q755, 760, 765, 770, 775

The Harris Poll® #88, July 13, 2010

By Regina Corso, Director, *The Harris Poll*, Harris Interactive

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is one of the world's leading custom market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. Known widely for the Harris Poll and for pioneering innovative research methodologies, Harris offers expertise in a wide range of industries including healthcare, technology, public affairs, energy, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, media, retail, restaurant, and consumer package goods. Serving clients in over 215 countries and territories through our North American, European, and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms, Harris specializes in delivering research solutions that help us – and our clients – stay ahead of what's next. For more information, please visit www.harrisinteractive.com.