



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 5, 2011

## Most of Post-9/11 Vets Polled Say U.S. Must Focus Less on Foreign Wars

The poll, conducted by the Pew Research Center, reveals a number of significant findings. First, respondents revealed that they are proud of their efforts in the Middle East, but that they were greatly impacted by their time in war. Second, they seemed to believe that the American people do not have a significant understanding of the problems that wartime poses for military members and their families.



The survey also demonstrates that members of the military are more inclined to call themselves Republicans than Democrats, and to disapprove of President Obama's job performance as Commander-in-Chief.

Surprisingly, the poll also indicates that veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are less likely to be affiliated with any particular religion than those of previous wars.

Pew notes that this particular poll, based on two surveys conducted between late July and mid-September, was the first of its kind. The first survey questioned 1,853 veterans, of which 712 served in the military following 9/11, while the second poll surveyed 2,003 adults, none of whom served in the military.

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Fox News writes:

Nearly half of post-9/11 veterans said deployments strained their relationship with their spouses, and a similar share reported problems with their children. On the other hand, 60 percent said they and their families benefited financially from having served abroad in a combat zone. Asked for a single word to describe their experiences, the war veterans offered a mixed picture: "rewarding," "nightmare," "eye opening," "lousy."

Since the start of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than 6,000 troops have died in combat, while the combined costs of the wars have surpassed \$1 trillion. There are currently 98,000 American troops in Afghanistan.

President Obama campaigned on promises of withdrawing all troops from Iraq, and in July announced he would pull 10,000 troops out of Afghanistan this year and 23,000 more by next September.

The poll shows that the veterans are more supportive of the war in Afghanistan, despite its length, because it has been a less deadly conflict. Overall, however, one-third of those veterans who were polled believe that neither the war in Afghanistan nor the one in Iraq was worth the sacrifice of lives and money. In the second poll, 45 percent adhered to the same philosophy.

Fox News commented on the results of the polls,



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The findings highlight a dilemma for the Obama administration and Congress as they struggle to shrink the government's huge budget deficits and reconsider defense priorities while trying to keep public support for remaining involved in Iraq and Afghanistan for the longer term.

The results of the survey should not come as a shock to anyone who has been closely following the race for the GOP presidential nomination. Texas Congressman Ron Paul, with a strong message of non-interventionism, peace, and troop withdrawal from the American bases around the world, has managed to garner a significant majority of military campaign donations. Politifact.com reports:

We turned to the presidential candidates' latest campaign finance filings [compiled by](#) the Federal Election Commission, which breaks out donations by donors' employers. ... From April through June, Paul fielded more than \$25,000 from individuals who listed their employer as a branch of the military.

Combined, six other Republican presidential candidates listed donations from members of the military totaling about \$9,000. Our most-to-least breakdown: Herman Cain, \$2,850; Mitt Romney, \$2,750; Michele Bachmann, \$2,250; Newt Gingrich, \$500; and Tim Pawlenty and Rick Santorum, \$250 each.

Paul even edged out President Obama in military donation receipts, despite the President's alleged intentions of ending American militarism in the Middle East. Politifact reports that Obama has received only \$16,000 in donations from members of the military.

Likewise, a recent Rasmussen Report poll shows that in a potential [race](#) between President Obama and Ron Paul, Paul trails behind the President by only a single point. According to constitutionalist journalist David Kretzmann, the reason Paul fares so well against Obama is [simple](#):

Ron Paul is actually anti-war and would end the Iraq War; Obama has hardly changed a thing in Iraq.

Ron Paul would bring all U.S. troops home; Obama has started and expanded new endless wars in Pakistan, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Libya.

One must assume that Paul's popularity amongst members of the military can only be tied to his message of non-interventionism and his intent to withdraw troops from the Middle East. During an interview on the PBS "Newshour" show, Paul declared that he would remove U.S. forces from Afghanistan "as quickly as the ships could get there." He continued:

It's insane what we're doing. And I'll tell you one thing about this business about the military: We just had a quarterly [campaign finance] report, and they listed all the money that all the candidates got from the military. I got twice as much as all the other candidates put together on the Republican side, and even more than Obama got, which tells me that these troops want to come home as well because they know exactly what I'm talking about.

And despite the popularity of the wars at the times they began, there seems to be growing resentment among the American people regarding the wars in the Middle East. This resentment was made especially evident by the reaction of American citizens to the recent military action taken in Libya by President Obama. A June Gallup poll showed that a mere 39 percent of Republicans support military action in Libya, and a large majority of Independents reject the endeavor as well, with just 31 percent showing support for it. Only among Democrats is the Libya war popular — with 54 percent supporting it — a direct contrast to their views on the war in Iraq embarked upon by President George W. Bush.



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