



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on September 19, 2011

Poll: Troops Losing Confidence in Obama, Wars

The results of an annual survey of U.S. troops show the already-dismal approval rates for President Obama's performance dropped to just 25 percent among the military respondents. Support for his strategy in Afghanistan plummeted further, and less than one fourth of those surveyed said they approved of American intervention in Libya.



There was one bright spot, however. When asked about plans to withdraw all American soldiers from Iraq by the end of the year, 70 percent of respondents either approved or "strongly" approved.

Only 43 percent said "yes" when asked whether the U.S. should have invaded in the first place. And about 4 in 10 approved of Obama's handling of the war in Iraq — about the same amount of support as in last year's survey.

Despite strong backing for a complete withdrawal from Iraq this year, however, the *Military Times* poll results released last week showed U.S. soldiers are generally becoming more pessimistic. And the trend is accelerating.

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The percentage of respondents who would recommend a military career to others dropped by ten percent over last year's numbers. And confidence in the prospect of victory in America's decade-long war in the so-called "graveyard of empires" took an even greater plunge.

While in 2007 more than 75 percent thought success in the Afghan war was likely, this year less than half of respondents did. And among soldiers who had served there, the number was even lower.

Support for the President's strategy in Afghanistan declined by about ten percent, too. In 2010, more than 35 percent approved of Obama's handling of the mission. This year barely a quarter did.

Several reasons have been offered to explain what the *Air Force Times* [called](#) the "souring mood" of American servicemen. [Widespread corruption](#) in the U.S.-backed [Afghan regime](#), for example, is widely known to be a big problem.

The fact that loyalty to the former Islamic rulers-turned insurgents remains high among Afghan officials and tribal chiefs is reportedly one of the biggest concerns as well. "Everybody knows that a majority of them still have ties with the Taliban," a 31-year-old Army sergeant in Afghanistan [told](#) the *Times*, requesting anonymity.

An Army Captain who helped train Afghan forces expressed similar worries, saying that many of them would simply fight for the next power that came along whenever the U.S. occupation comes to an end. He also asked the *Times* not to publish his name.

Beyond that, however, even the definition of "victory" in Afghanistan has become elusive. In fact, it has



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shifted multiple times since the occupation began.

Over 1,700 American troops have died battling the Taliban, which has simultaneously benefited from [hundreds of millions of American taxpayer dollars](#) in recent years. But defeating the Taliban is no longer the [objective](#).

The Obama administration has [made it clear](#) that the U.S. government intends to [make peace with the Taliban](#) — and eventually allow it back into power. Ironically, however, the group is refusing the olive branch. “We are winning, why should we negotiate?” [wondered](#) a high-ranking Taliban official late last year.

But while the U.S. government fights and finances the Taliban on one hand, and tries to bargain with it and restore it to power on the other, critics say that is not the worst of it. Other seeming absurdities — especially in Libya — have raised even more alarm.

The Obama administration is currently [helping to install a new regime](#) in Tripoli that is [dominated by well-known Islamic extremists and terrorists linked to al Qaeda](#). Many of the rebel leaders have even boasted of battling American troops in other countries.

While no specifics were offered in the poll, the apparent contradictions in U.S. policy may have contributed to the fact that just a measly 24 percent of American soldiers surveyed support for [U.S. intervention there](#). The broader policies and their justifications, however, are disconcerting as well.

Analysts have suggested that American soldiers are becoming increasingly frustrated with a U.S. foreign policy consisting of nation building, occupations, propping up tyrants, secret wars, and hundreds of military bases in dozens of countries around the world. And it keeps getting more aggressive with each passing year.

Critics note that [much of the interventionism abroad is also unconstitutional](#) — not to mention counterproductive. Some experts even blame [record suicide levels among U.S. soldiers](#) on the repeated deployments and a widespread sense of despair attributed to the policies.

Many soldiers, however, have expressed their dissatisfaction with the current direction using their check books. American interventionism is often cited among the reasons for GOP presidential hopeful Rep. Ron Paul’s strong support from members of the military.

In the second fundraising quarter, the Paul campaign pulled in [double the amount of donations](#) from armed services personnel than all other Republican candidates *combined*. The Texas Congressman has also consistently raised more from members of the military than Obama.

But it isn’t just the troops who are becoming weary of Obama and the interventionist foreign policies. Recent polls [show](#) Obama’s rate of disapproval among the general public reached 50 percent for the first time since he took office, with 57 percent upset over his handling of the economy.

Public support for the wars, meanwhile, is also on the decline. Well over half of Americans disapprove of the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan — and opposition continues to build.

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