



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on November 18, 2009

Public Opinion Turns Against Afghan War

The tide of U.S. public opinion is turning against the war in Afghanistan according to an ABC News/Washington Post poll conducted November 12-15. According to the random sample of 1,001 adults, 52 percent of Americans say the Afghan war has not been worth it.

The 52 percent marks a 13-point increase from just under one year ago in December 2008. Only 44 percent now believe the war in Afghanistan has been worth fighting, the smallest number since early 2007.

President Barack Obama's dilemma of whether to send more troops or not is reflected in the poll. When asked to assume the President does send more, 46 percent favor a larger increase to both wage war and train Afghan forces, while a virtually equal 45 percent would prefer a smaller increase just to train the Afghans.



Lack of confidence in Hamid Karzai's Afghan government, especially in view of disputed election results, shows in the poll. Just 38 percent believe his government will someday have a military effective enough to take over from American forces; 58 percent doubt it. Only 26 percent think Karzai is reliable, versus 68 percent who don't think he can be counted on.

When asked to consider if withdrawing from Afghanistan increases the risk of terrorism for the United States, 23 percent think withdrawing increases the risk, but 64 percent say withdrawing leaves the risk the same. In other words, almost two-thirds of Americans don't think that the war in Afghanistan makes any difference to stopping terrorism, even though fighting the "war on terror" is the rationale for being there.

Approval of Obama's handling of the war is down to 45 percent, a drop of almost 20 points from a high of 63 percent early in the year. Although 46 percent trust him to do a better job than the Republicans would, a close 41 percent place more trust in the Republicans.

Confidence that Obama's policies are making America safer from terrorism is down five points since the summer, from 32 percent to 27 percent. A constant 22 percent believe his policies are making the United States less safe.

What is unfortunate is that the questions of a poll such as this one limit the debate to preset options and fail to consider all aspects of the situation. The question should not be whether the war is worth it, but whether it was constitutionally authorized and strictly necessary for national defense.

Whether or not the Afghan government is trustworthy or competent enough to secure its own country is of no pressing interest to the defense of American soil. If Afghanistan ends up harboring terrorists who



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strike at the United States, then war should be constitutionally declared so that once Afghanistan surrenders, victory in the war can be officially recognized and our troops can come home soon after. Any other perspective requires the United States to literally conquer and occupy the entire world in order to supposedly keep our nation safe from harm.

A never-ending war against terrorism effectively gives terrorists the continuous victory of keeping the United States on a war footing, causing more and more of our liberties to slip away and our military to become strained to the breaking point. The Voice of America [reported](#) on November 17 that the strain of perpetual war is driving the number of Army suicides to record levels.

There have been 140 suicides among active duty soldiers and 71 among reservists and the National Guard. This exceeds last year's numbers, and there is still more than a month left to go. This also marks the fifth consecutive year that the number of suicides has increased.

"This is horrible, and I do not want to downplay the significance of these numbers in any way," said General Peter Chiarelli, the vice chief of the U.S. Army, speaking about the official figures released on November 17. "We talk about these incidents of suicide using figures and percentages. However the grim reality is each case represents an individual, a person, with family and friends and a future ahead of him or her. Every single loss is devastating."



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