

# 9/11 and the War on Terror: Polls Show What People Think 10 Years Later

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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## **Polls Show that Americans Think We Overreacted, Overspent and Weakened Ourselves Through the War on Terror**

As the Brookings Institution [reported](#) yesterday, Americans think that the government overreacted and overspent in reaction to 9/11:

These are a summary of findings of a new poll conducted by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) and the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland.

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Six in ten Americans believe that that the United States weakened its economy by overspending in its responses to the 9/11 attacks. In particular, respondents felt this was especially true of the U.S. mission in Iraq. Two out of three Americans perceive that over the decade since 9/11, U.S. power and influence in the world has declined. This view is highly correlated with the belief that the United States overspent in its post-9/11 response efforts - the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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At this point, a large majority (73%) wants the United States to reduce the number of troops in Afghanistan, but less than half (44%) want troops withdrawn completely.

Fifty-five percent say that the United States has spent too many resources in the Iraq war, while a plurality of 49% called the Iraq war a mistake (45% right decision). This criticism is a bit lower than other polls that asked similar questions in 2010 and found a majority ranging from 51 to 62% saying that it was not the right decision.

Support for the decision to go to war is highly correlated with beliefs held by substantial and undiminishing minorities that Iraq was providing support to al Qaeda (46%) and either had a WMD program or actual WMDs (47%). Among those with such beliefs, large majorities say the war was the right thing while among those without such beliefs large majorities have the opposite views.

A modest majority (53%) believes that the U.S. should withdraw its troops according to schedule even if the Iraqi government asks the US to stay another year.

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A clear majority (61%) says that the United States should not take sides in its efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while just 27% want the United States to lean toward Israel (5% toward Palestinians).

(Incidentally, top American military leaders agree, saying that [the war on terror has weakened our national security](#)).

Rasmussen has repeatedly [noted](#) that Americans are strongly opposed to further military or other types of intervention in Arab countries:

As with the recent turmoil in Egypt, most Americans (67%) say the United States should leave the situation in the Arab countries alone. Just 17% say the United States should get more directly involved in the political situation there, but another 17% are not sure.

This was true for Libya. And it is true elsewhere. For example, the overwhelming majority of Americans are also opposed to [intervention in Syria](#).

### **Polls Show Widespread Doubt About Official Explanations**

The results of polls on peoples' beliefs about 9/11 around the world might surprise you:

- In its January 2011 issue, the popular German magazine "Welt der Wunder" published the results of a poll conducted by the Emnid institute on 1005 respondents. The poll indicated that [nearly 90% percent of Germans](#) are convinced that the government of the United States is not telling the whole truth about the September 11 attacks
- A new poll conducted in England by ICM shows that [more UK residents agree than disagree that the official account of what happened on 9/11 might turn out to be wrong in important respects](#). Only 8% strongly agree that they have been told the full story of the 9/11 attacks
- A new poll conducted in France by HEC Paris [shows](#) that 58% of French people doubt the official version of 9/11, and 49% believe the U.S. government might have intentionally allowed the attacks to happen
- A Zogby poll conducted in August 2007 [found](#) that 51% of Americans want Congress to probe Bush/Cheney regarding the 9/11 attacks, two-thirds (67%) of Americans say the 9/11 Commission should have investigated the collapse of World Trade Center Building 7
- A poll conducted by CNN-IBN in August 2007 found that [only 2 out of 5](#) of those polled in India – the world's second most populous country – believe that al-Qaeda is responsible for the 9/11 attacks
- Indeed, a poll taken by World Public Opinion, a collaborative project of research centers in various countries managed by the Program on International Policy

Attitudes at the University of Maryland, College Park, polled 16,063 people in 17 nations outside of the United States during the summer of 2008. They found that [majorities in only 9 of the 17 countries believe Al Qaeda carried out the attacks](#). The poll showed that in the world's most populous country - China - only [32%](#) believed that Al Qaeda carried out the attacks.

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