

Global Poll Finds Widespread Belief that Afghans Want NATO Forces Out

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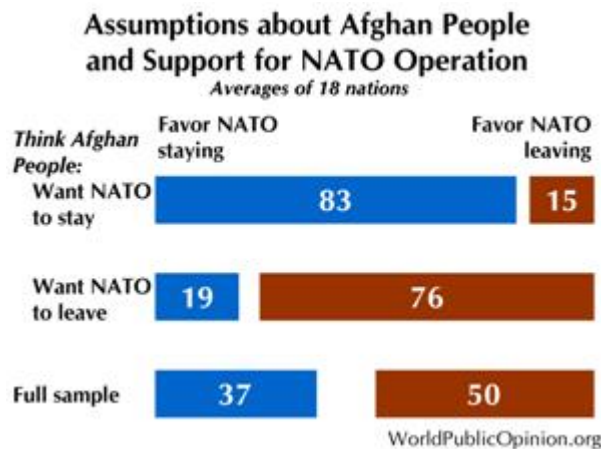
[Questionnaire/Methodology \(PDF\)](#)



A new WorldPublicOpinion.org poll of nations around the world finds that most publics polled believe that the Afghan people want NATO forces to leave Afghanistan now. On average 53 percent have this belief, while 30 percent assume that most Afghans want NATO forces to stay.

(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Pete Thibodeau)

Among those who believe that the Afghan people want NATO forces to leave, 76 percent say that NATO forces should leave. Among those who believe that the Afghan people want NATO forces to stay, 83 percent say NATO forces should stay. Overall, on average, 37 percent think that NATO forces should remain in Afghanistan, while 50 percent think the mission should be ended now.



At the same time there is considerable concern about the possibility of the Taliban regaining power. In 18 of 20 nations polled most think that it would be bad if the Taliban were to regain power in Afghanistan, with an average of 61 percent saying that it would be bad and just 21 percent saying that it would be good. In Pakistan, where many Afghan Taliban insurgents are based, 61 percent of the public also say that it would be bad if the Taliban were to regain power.

"Even though there is widespread concern about the possibility of the Taliban regaining power in Afghanistan, most people seem to be saying that the Afghan people should decide whether or when NATO forces leave," comments Steven Kull, director of WorldPublicOpinion.org.

WorldPublicOpinion.org conducted the poll of 19,178 respondents in 20 nations that comprise 62 percent of the world's population. This includes most of the largest nations--China, India, the United States, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Russia--as well as Mexico, Germany, Great Britain, France, Poland, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Kenya, Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, the Palestinian territories, and South Korea. Polling was also conducted in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau.

WorldPublicOpinion.org, a collaborative project involving research centers from around the world, is managed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland. The margins of error range from +/-3 to 4 percentage points. The surveys were conducted across the different nations between April 4 and June 18, 2009.

The belief that most Afghans want NATO forces out is especially widespread in majority-Muslim nations, including Pakistan (86%), the Palestinian territories (74%), and Egypt (67%). However, this view is also widely held in Russia (63%), Germany (55%), and Mexico (76%).

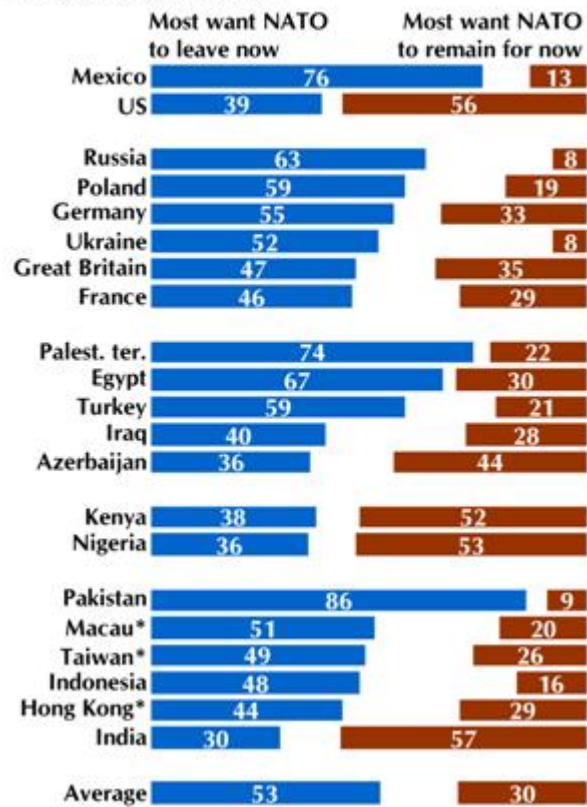
The belief that the Afghan people want NATO to stay is the dominant position only in India (57%), the US (56%), Nigeria (53%), Kenya (52%), and the majority-Muslim nation of Azerbaijan (44% to 36%).

Within every nation people's assumptions about the attitudes of the Afghan public are highly correlated with their attitudes about continuing the operation.

So how do the Afghan people feel? The most recent polling in Afghanistan was conducted by ABC/BBC/ARD in January

Views of Afghan Opinion on NATO Forces

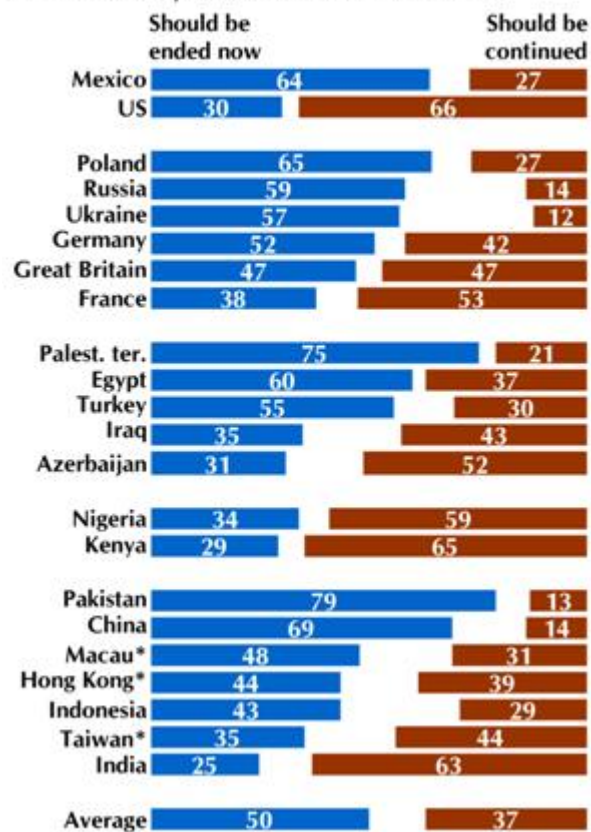
Do you think that most people in Afghanistan want NATO forces to remain for now, or do you think most want the NATO forces to leave now?



* Excluded from average WorldPublicOpinion.org

Should NATO Mission Continue?

Do you think the NATO mission in Afghanistan should be continued or do you think it should be ended now?



* Excluded from average WorldPublicOpinion.org

of this year. At that time a majority of 59 percent of Afghans supported the NATO forces' presence in the country. However, this was down from 67 percent who favored it in 2007, and majorities also expressed frustration with the way the mission was being conducted.

In the WPO poll, national assumptions about Afghan public attitudes are also reflected in national attitudes about the recent increase in US troops in Afghanistan. On average, 54 percent disapprove of the increase and 34 percent approve. However, in all of the nations where more believe that Afghans support the NATO presence, most people support the increase. In nearly all of the nations where more believe that Afghans oppose NATO presence, most people oppose the increase.

The two exceptions to this pattern are Britain and Iraq. Though in both cases pluralities believe that Afghans want NATO to leave, in Britain a plurality (50%) approves of the increase and in Iraq views are divided.

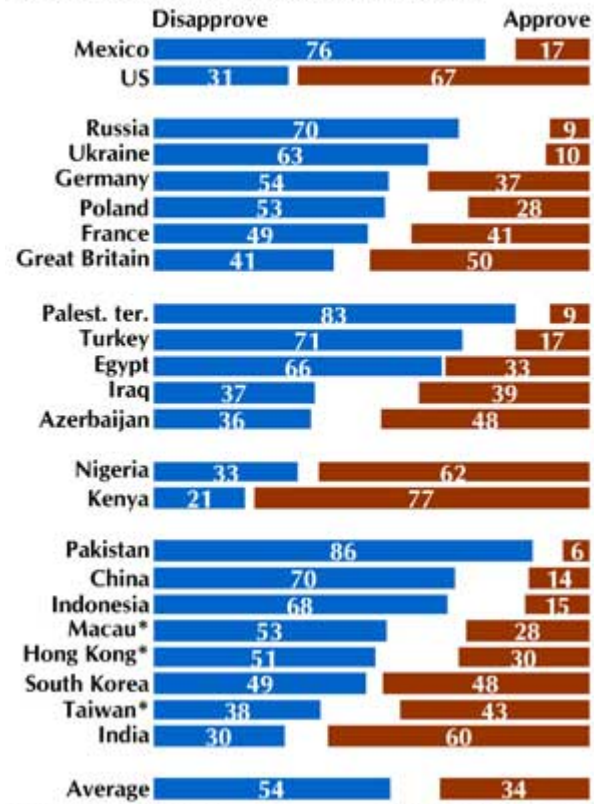
Asked how they feel about the UN-authorized NATO mission to stabilize Afghanistan and defend against the Taliban, views are divided. Nine nations approve, while 10 disapprove. On average 44 percent approve and 45 percent disapprove. Here again, attitudes are highly correlated with assumptions about the attitudes of the Afghan people.

Funding for this project was provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Calvert Foundation.

Obama Decision to Increase Troops

As you may know, the Obama administration decided to increase the number of American troops in Afghanistan.

Do you approve or disapprove of this decision?



* Excluded from average

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