



**THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**For The People & The Press**

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Post-bin Laden Update

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Obama Bump Recedes a Bit

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## Post-bin Laden Update

# Obama's Bump Recedes a Bit

Barack Obama's job approval rating has fallen slightly since the day after Osama bin Laden's death was announced. But the balance of opinion regarding Obama's job performance remains more positive than it was in early April. There also continues to be more optimism about the U.S. achieving its goals in Afghanistan than there was prior to bin Laden's killing.

Currently, 50% approve of the way Obama is handling his job as president while 39% disapprove. In a May 2 poll by the Pew Research Center and *The Washington Post*, 56% approved while 38% disapproved. Obama's current job rating represents an improvement from early April, when 47% approved of his job performance and nearly as many (45%) disapproved.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted May 5-8 among 1,003 adults, finds that satisfaction with national conditions also is higher than it was before bin Laden's killing. Currently 30% say they are satisfied with the way things are going in the country while 62% are dissatisfied. In the May 2 poll, 32% were satisfied and 62% dissatisfied. In mid-March, just 22% had a positive view of national conditions, while 73% were dissatisfied.

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### Obama Approval: Before and After bin Laden's Death

	Feb 22- Mar 1	Mar 30- Apr 3	May 2	May 5-8
<i>Obama job approval...</i>	%	%	%	%
Approve	51	47	56	50
Disapprove	39	45	38	39
Don't know	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER May 5-8, 2011. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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The public is more optimistic about the United States achieving its goals in Afghanistan than it was prior to bin Laden's death. Currently, 62% say the United States will definitely or probably succeed in achieving its goals, compared with 24% who say the U.S. will definitely or probably fail.

These views are little changed from the poll conducted May 2 (63% definitely/probably succeed vs. 26% definitely/probably fail). But there is far more optimism about U.S. success in Afghanistan today than there was last December, when just 49% said the U.S. would definitely or probably achieve its goals.

However, increased optimism about the chances for success in Afghanistan has not boosted support for maintaining U.S. forces in the country. Currently, 43% favor keeping U.S. troops in Afghanistan until the situation there has stabilized, compared with 49% who support removing the troops as soon as possible. That is little changed from the May 2 survey or from last December.

Republicans continue to be far more supportive of maintaining U.S. troops in Afghanistan than either independents or Democrats. In the new survey, 60% of Republicans favor keeping the troops there until the situation has stabilized; just 40% of independents and 36% of Democrats agree.

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### Views of Afghanistan: More Optimism, Continued Division over Troop Presence

	June 2010	Dec 2010	May 2 2011	May 5-8 2011
<i>Will U.S. achieve goals in Afghanistan?</i>	%	%	%	%
Definitely/probably succeed	59	49	63	62
Definitely/probably fail	33	39	26	24
Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>13</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>U.S. troops in Afghanistan...</i>				
Keep troops in until situation has stabilized	53	44	47	43
Remove troops as soon as possible	40	47	48	49
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER May 5-8, 2011. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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The survey also finds that by a wide margin (39% to 6%), more Americans think that Pakistan mostly hurt rather than helped U.S. efforts to find Osama bin Laden; 52% say they do not know enough to say. These views also have shown little movement since May 2. In that survey, 34% said Pakistan mostly hurt U.S. efforts to find bin Laden; 8% said Pakistan mostly helped those efforts; 54% did not know enough to say.

## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted May 5-8, 2011, among a national sample of 1,003 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (671 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 332 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 141 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/detailed>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2010 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2010 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,003	4.0 percentage points
Republicans	272	7.5 percentage points
Democrats	307	7.0 percentage points
Independents	331	6.5 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
MAY 5-8, 2011 OMNIBUS  
FINAL TOPLINE  
N=1003**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.1 All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?

	Satis- <u>fied</u>	Dis- <u>satisfied</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref		<u>fied</u>	<u>satisfied</u>	DK/Ref
				Late November, 2005	34	59	7
May 5-8, 2011	30	62	8	Early October, 2005	29	65	6
May 2, 2011	32	60	8	July, 2005	35	58	7
Mar 8-14, 2011	22	73	5	Late May, 2005*	39	57	4
Feb 2-7, 2011	26	68	5	February, 2005	38	56	6
Jan 5-9, 2011	23	71	6	January, 2005	40	54	6
Dec 1-5, 2010	21	72	7	December, 2004	39	54	7
Nov 4-7, 2010	23	69	8	Mid-October, 2004	36	58	6
Sep 23-26, 2010	30	63	7	July, 2004	38	55	7
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	25	71	5	May, 2004	33	61	6
Jun 24-27, 2010	27	64	9	Late February, 2004*	39	55	6
May 13-16, 2010	28	64	7	Early January, 2004	45	48	7
Apr 21-26, 2010	29	66	5	December, 2003	44	47	9
Apr 1-5, 2010	31	63	6	October, 2003	38	56	6
Mar 11-21, 2010	25	69	5	August, 2003	40	53	7
Mar 10-14, 2010	23	71	7	<i>April 8, 2003</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>9</i>
Feb 3-9, 2010	23	71	6	January, 2003	44	50	6
Jan 6-10, 2010	27	69	4	November, 2002	41	48	11
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	25	67	7	September, 2002	41	55	4
Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	25	67	7	Late August, 2002	47	44	9
Sep 10-15, 2009 <sup>1</sup>	30	64	7	May, 2002	44	44	12
Aug 20-27, 2009	28	65	7	March, 2002	50	40	10
Aug 11-17, 2009	28	65	7	Late September, 2001	57	34	9
Jul 22-26, 2009	28	66	6	Early September, 2001	41	53	6
Jun 10-14, 2009	30	64	5	June, 2001	43	52	5
Apr 28-May 12, 2009	34	58	8	March, 2001	47	45	8
Apr 14-21, 2009	23	70	7	February, 2001	46	43	11
Jan 7-11, 2009	20	73	7	January, 2001	55	41	4
December, 2008	13	83	4	October, 2000 (RVs)	54	39	7
Early October, 2008	11	86	3	September, 2000	51	41	8
Mid-September, 2008	25	69	6	June, 2000	47	45	8
August, 2008	21	74	5	April, 2000	48	43	9
July, 2008	19	74	7	August, 1999	56	39	5
June, 2008	19	76	5	January, 1999	53	41	6
Late May, 2008	18	76	6	November, 1998	46	44	10
March, 2008	22	72	6	Early September, 1998	54	42	4
Early February, 2008	24	70	6	Late August, 1998	55	41	4
Late December, 2007	27	66	7	Early August, 1998	50	44	6
October, 2007	28	66	6	February, 1998	59	37	4
February, 2007	30	61	9	January, 1998	46	50	4
Mid-January, 2007	32	61	7	September, 1997	45	49	6
Early January, 2007	30	63	7	August, 1997	49	46	5
December, 2006	28	65	7	January, 1997	38	58	4
Mid-November, 2006	28	64	8	July, 1996	29	67	4
Early October, 2006	30	63	7	March, 1996	28	70	2
July, 2006	30	65	5	October, 1995	23	73	4
May, 2006*	29	65	6	June, 1995	25	73	2
March, 2006	32	63	5	April, 1995	23	74	3
January, 2006	34	61	5	July, 1994	24	73	3
	Satis-	Dis-	(VOL.)	March, 1994	24	71	5
				October, 1993	22	73	5

<sup>1</sup> In September 10-15, 2009 and other surveys noted with an asterisk, the question was worded "Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in our country today?"

**PEW.1 CONTINUED...**

	Satis- <u>fied</u>	Dis- <u>satisfied</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>		Satis- <u>fied</u>	Dis- <u>satisfied</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
September, 1993	20	75	5	<i>Gallup: Late Feb, 1991</i>	66	31	3
May, 1993	22	71	7	August, 1990	47	48	5
January, 1993	39	50	11	May, 1990	41	54	5
January, 1992	28	68	4	January, 1989	45	50	5
November, 1991	34	61	5	September, 1988 (RVs)	50	45	5

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.2 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?**

	<u>Approve</u>	Dis- <u>approve</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>		<u>Approve</u>	Dis- <u>approve</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
May 5-8, 2011	50	39	11	Mar 10-14, 2010	46	43	12
May 2, 2011	56	38	6	Feb 3-9, 2010	49	39	12
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	47	45	8	Jan 6-10, 2010	49	42	10
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	51	39	10	Dec 9-13, 2009	49	40	11
Feb 2-7, 2011	49	42	9	Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	51	36	13
Jan 5-9, 2011	46	44	10	Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	52	36	12
Dec 1-5, 2010	45	43	13	Sep 10-15, 2009	55	33	13
Nov 4-7, 2010	44	44	12	Aug 20-27, 2009	52	37	12
Oct 13-18, 2010	46	45	9	Aug 11-17, 2009	51	37	11
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	47	44	9	Jul 22-26, 2009	54	34	12
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	47	41	12	Jun 10-14, 2009	61	30	9
Jun 8-28, 2010	48	41	11	Apr 14-21, 2009	63	26	11
Jun 16-20, 2010	48	43	9	Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	61	26	13
May 6-9, 2010	47	42	11	Mar 9-12, 2009	59	26	15
Apr 21-26, 2010	47	42	11	Feb 4-8, 2009	64	17	19
Apr 8-11, 2010	48	43	9				

**PEW.3-PEW.4 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****NO QUESTIONS PEW.5-PEW.7****ASK ALL:**

PEW.8 Regardless of what you think about the original decision to use military force in Afghanistan, do you now believe that the United States will definitely succeed, probably succeed, probably fail, or definitely fail in achieving its goals in Afghanistan?

	Definitely <u>succeed</u>	Probably <u>succeed</u>	Probably <u>fail</u>	Definitely <u>fail</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
May 5-8, 2011	19	43	18	6	13
May 2, 2011	19	44	20	6	10
Dec 1-5, 2010	9	40	30	9	11
Jun 16-20, 2010	14	45	26	7	8
Mar 10-14, 2010	12	46	22	7	12
Dec 9-13, 2009	11	48	25	7	10
Jan 7-11, 2009	13	49	23	6	9

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.9 Do you think the U.S. should keep military troops in Afghanistan until the situation has stabilized, or do you think the U.S. should remove troops as soon as possible?

	Keep troops <u>in Afghanistan</u>	Remove <u>troops</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
May 5-8, 2011	43	49	8
May 2, 2011	47	48	4
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011 <sup>2</sup>	44	50	6
Dec 1-5, 2010	44	47	8
Jul 8-11, 2010	47	42	11
Jun 16-20, 2010	53	40	6
Apr 15-May 5, 2010 (GAP)	48	45	7
Sep 10-15, 2009 (GAP)	50	43	7
June, 2009 (GAP)	57	38	5
Mid-Sept, 2008	61	33	6
April, 2008 (GAP)	50	44	6
Late Feb, 2008	61	32	7
May, 2007 (GAP)	50	42	7

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.10 Is your impression that the government of Pakistan [RANDOMIZE: mostly helped, OR mostly hurt] U.S. efforts to find Osama bin Laden, or don't you know enough to say?

May 5-8 <u>2011</u>		May 2 <u>2011</u>
6	Mostly helped	8
39	Mostly hurt	34
52	Don't know enough to say	54
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	3

**PEW.11-PEW.12, PEW.15-PEW.18 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****NO QUESTIONS PEW.13-PEW.14**

<sup>2</sup> In surveys conducted March 30-April 3, 2011 and before, the question was worded "Do you think the U.S. and NATO should keep military troops in Afghanistan until the situation has stabilized, or do you think the U.S. and NATO should remove their troops as soon as possible?"