



CBS NEWS POLL
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TERRORISM: THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN AND C.I.A. INTERROGATIONS
 August 27-31, 2009

The public remains negative about U.S. progress in Afghanistan. As they have for months, most Americans think the war there is going badly. Four in 10 now want U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan decreased, a percentage that has been rising since the start of the year. In addition, President Barack Obama's approval rating on handling Afghanistan has dropped eight points since April.

Critics of the Obama administration - most notably former Vice President Dick Cheney - have attacked Attorney General Eric Holder's appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate the interrogation techniques of C.I.A. officials during the Bush administration. But more Americans think that investigation is a good idea than say it is a bad one.

PRESIDENT OBAMA AND THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

Less than half the public now approves of the job President Obama is doing handling the situation in Afghanistan, down from 56% in April. While a majority of Democrats approve, just 31% of Republicans do.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S HANDLING OF AFGHANISTAN

	Now	4/2009
Approve	48%	56%
Disapprove	30	21
Don't know	22	23

THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

52% of Americans say the war in Afghanistan is going at least somewhat badly for the United States, and just 37% say it is going well. This has changed little over the past few months, though Americans are more positive than they were last December.

HOW ARE THINGS GOING FOR THE U.S. IN AFGHANISTAN?

	Now	7/2009	4/2009	3/2009	12/2008
Well	37%	33%	38%	33%	27%
Badly	52	57	53	57	62

Support for increasing U.S. troop levels is declining, and more Americans would like to see the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan decreased. 41% want troops decreased, up from 33% in April and 24% in

February. Support for increasing the number of troops has dropped from 39% in April to just 25% now.

U.S. TROOPS LEVELS IN AFGHANISTAN SHOULD BE...?

	Now	4/2009	2/2009	1/2009
Increased	25%	39%	42%	34%
Kept same	23	18	23	28
Decreased	41	33	24	26

APPOINTING A SPECIAL PROSECUTOR

Half of the public thinks the Justice Department appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate interrogation tactics used by the C.I.A. is a good idea. Fewer, 38%, think it is a bad idea.

IS APPOINTING A SPECIAL PROSECUTOR TO INVESTIGATE THE C.I.A. ...?

A good idea	50%
A bad idea	38

Views of this issue divide along party and ideological lines. Democrats and liberals support the appointment, while Republicans and conservatives agree with Former Vice President Cheney and say it was a bad idea. Moderates and independents are more divided, though both groups tend to think it's a good idea.

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1,097 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone August 27-31, 2009. Phone numbers were dialed from random digit dial samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher.

This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.