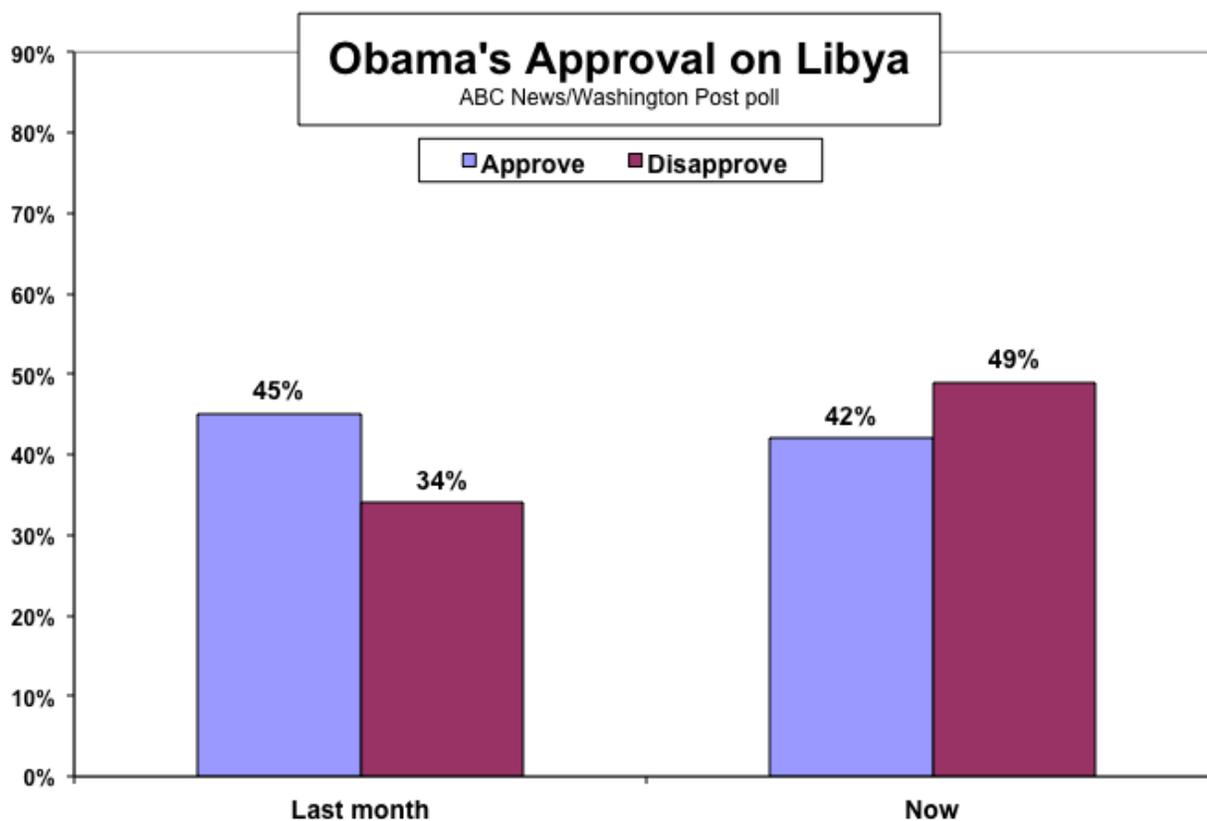


Criticism of Obama on Libya Grows

Disapproval of Barack Obama's handling of the situation in Libya has grown sharply in the past month, with the president undergoing criticism from Americans who oppose U.S. military involvement – but also from some of those who say the mission's aim is too limited.

Fifty-six percent support the U.S. military involvement overall, but many fewer, 42 percent, approve of Obama's handling of the situation. While his approval has held nearly steady, disapproval has advanced by 15 points in the past month, with fewer undecided.



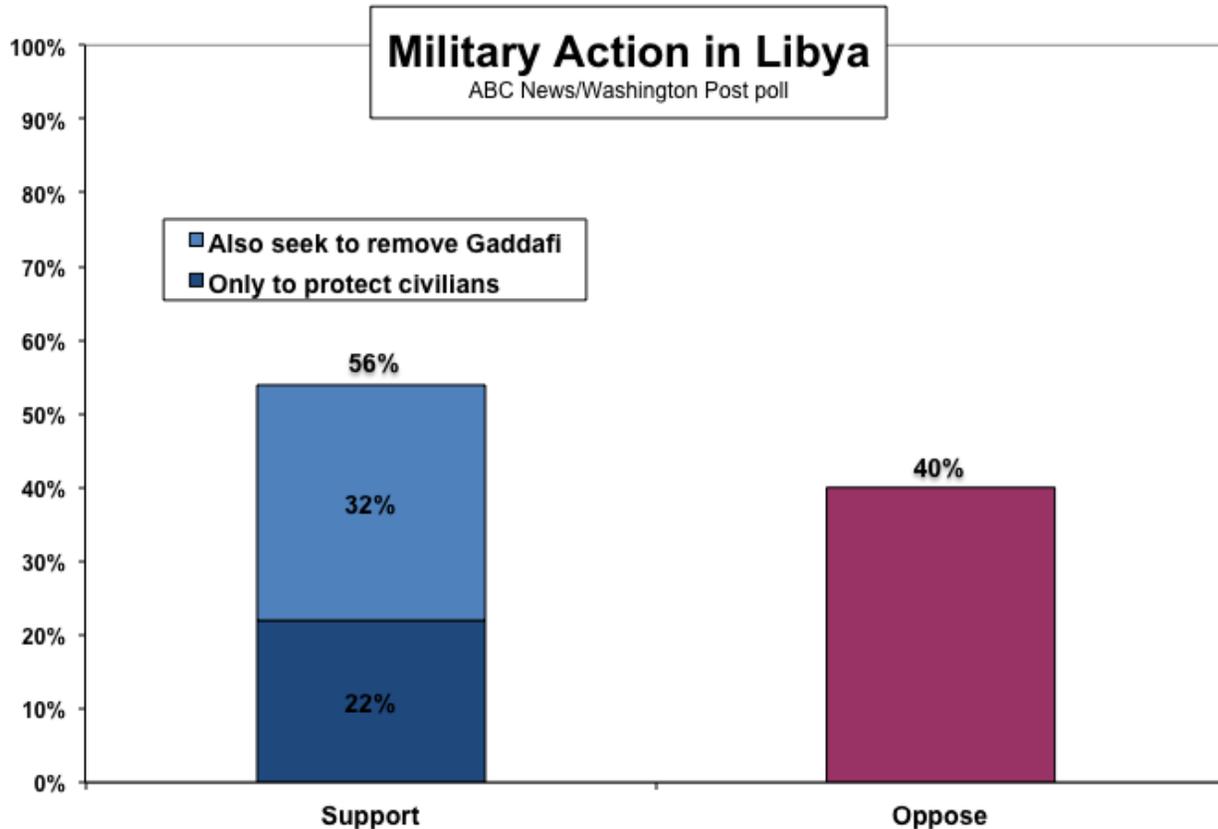
The disconnect relates to the mission; the poll, produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds that among Americans who support U.S. military participation, most say it should be aimed at ousting Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, not just protecting civilians.

That in effect identifies three camps in U.S. public opinion on Libya:

-Forty percent of Americans oppose U.S. military participation; in this group just 27 percent approve of Obama's handling of the situation, while 65 percent disapprove.

-An additional 32 percent support U.S. involvement, but say the aim should be to remove Gaddafi from power, not only to protect civilians; Obama gets a higher approval rating for handling Libya in this group, but hardly a robust one – 49 percent.

-The third and smallest group, 22 percent, supports current policy – military involvement limited to protecting civilians. In this group Obama’s approval rating for handling the situation grows to 61 percent.



A change in leadership in Libya may not be out of the question; in an interview published today in the British newspaper the Guardian, Libya’s foreign minister said an interim government and subsequent elections were possibilities, with Gaddafi’s future “on the table,” if NATO-led forces first cease fire.

INVOLVEMENT – Support for allied air strikes on Libya – whatever their aim – do not translate into support for an increased U.S. role in those strikes. Even among people who favor ousting Gaddafi as a goal, a relatively small group, 24 percent, says the level of U.S. military involvement in Libya should be increased.

Support for an increased U.S. role is lower still, 9 percent, among those who favor the current mission, protecting civilians. In both groups, sizable majorities say U.S. involvement should be kept about the same as it is now.

GROUPS – Views of Obama’s handling of Libya break down along partisan and ideological lines; however, views on U.S. involvement in the military action cross those lines. It’s backed by 62 percent of Republicans, 56 percent of Democrats and 52 percent of independents; and support ranges from 54 to 59 percent of conservatives, moderates and liberals.

As often is the case with military action, support is lower among women than men, by 11 points.

Among people who support the military action overall, support specifically for removing Gaddafi is 15 points higher among Republicans than among Democrats, though it reaches majorities in both groups, 68 and 53 percent, respectively. It’s also higher among conservatives, 67 percent, than among moderates or liberals, 51 percent.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone April 14-17, 2011, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y, with sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gregory Holyk and Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

*= less than 0.5 percent

1, 2a-c, 3-28 and 32-36 previously released or held for release.

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama is handling [ITEM]? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

d. The situation in Libya

	Approve			Disapprove			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
4/17/11	42	23	19	49	19	30	9
3/13/11	45	24	22	34	14	20	21

29. Changing topics: A coalition of international forces has been enforcing a no fly-zone over Libya, and attacking Libyan forces when they’re believed to be threatening civilians. Do you support or oppose the participation of U.S. military aircraft in this effort?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
4/17/11	56	40	4

Compare to: 30. (HALF SAMPLE) You may have heard about the idea that U.S. military aircraft could participate in creating a no-fly zone over Libya in order to keep Gaddafi's air force from attacking rebel-held areas. Is this something you would support or oppose?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
3/13/11	56	37	7

30. (IF SUPPORT U.S. MILITARY PARTICIPATION) Should this military action (be carried out only to protect Libyan civilians), or should it (also seek to remove Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi [MOA-mar ka-DAFI] from power)?

	Only to protect civilians	Also seek to remove Gaddafi	No opinion
4/17/11	40	58	2

29/30 NET:

	NET	Support Only to protect civilians	Support Also seek to remove Gaddafi	DK/Ref	Oppose	No opinion
4/17/11	56	22	32	2	40	4

31. (IF SUPPORT U.S. MILITARY PARTICIPATION) Do you think the level of U.S. military involvement in the situation with Libya should be increased, decreased, or kept about the same as it is now?

	Increased	Decreased	Same	No opinion
4/17/11	18	11	68	3

29/31 NET:

	NET	Support Increased	Support Decreased	Same	DK/Ref	Oppose	No opinion
4/17/11	56	10	6	38	2	40	4

END