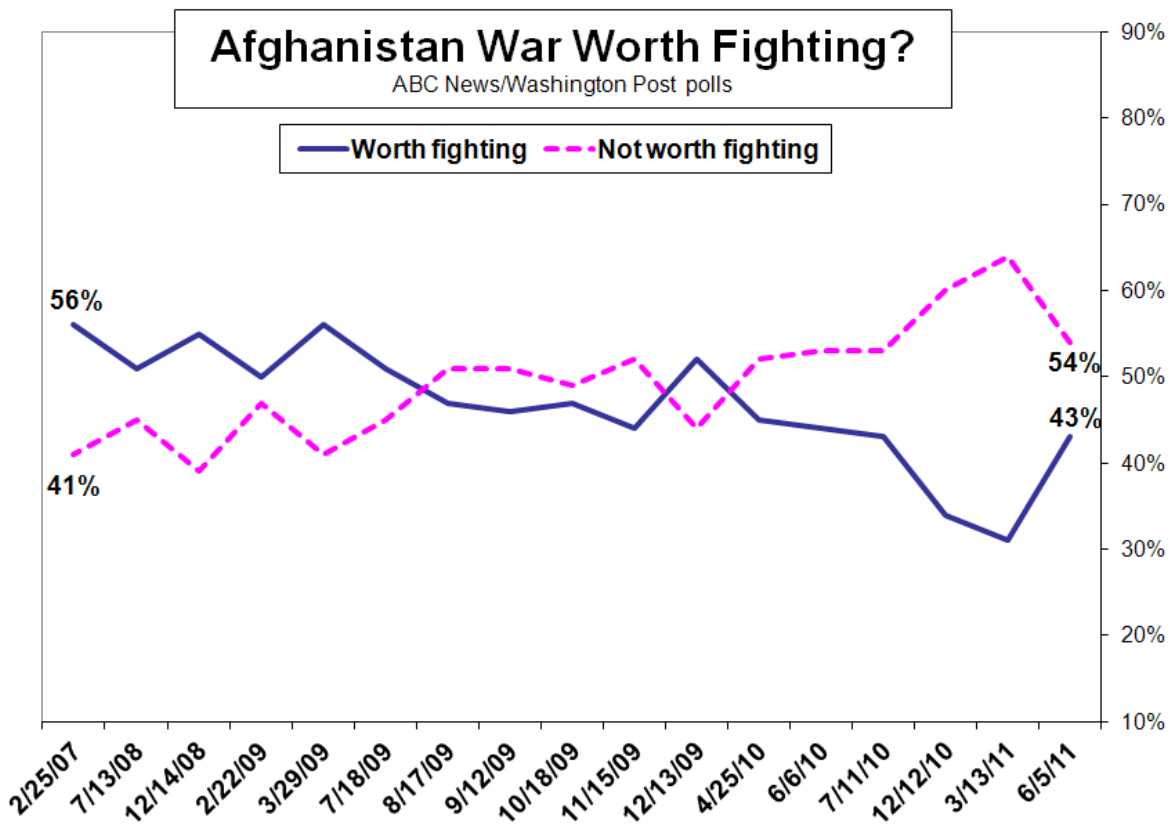


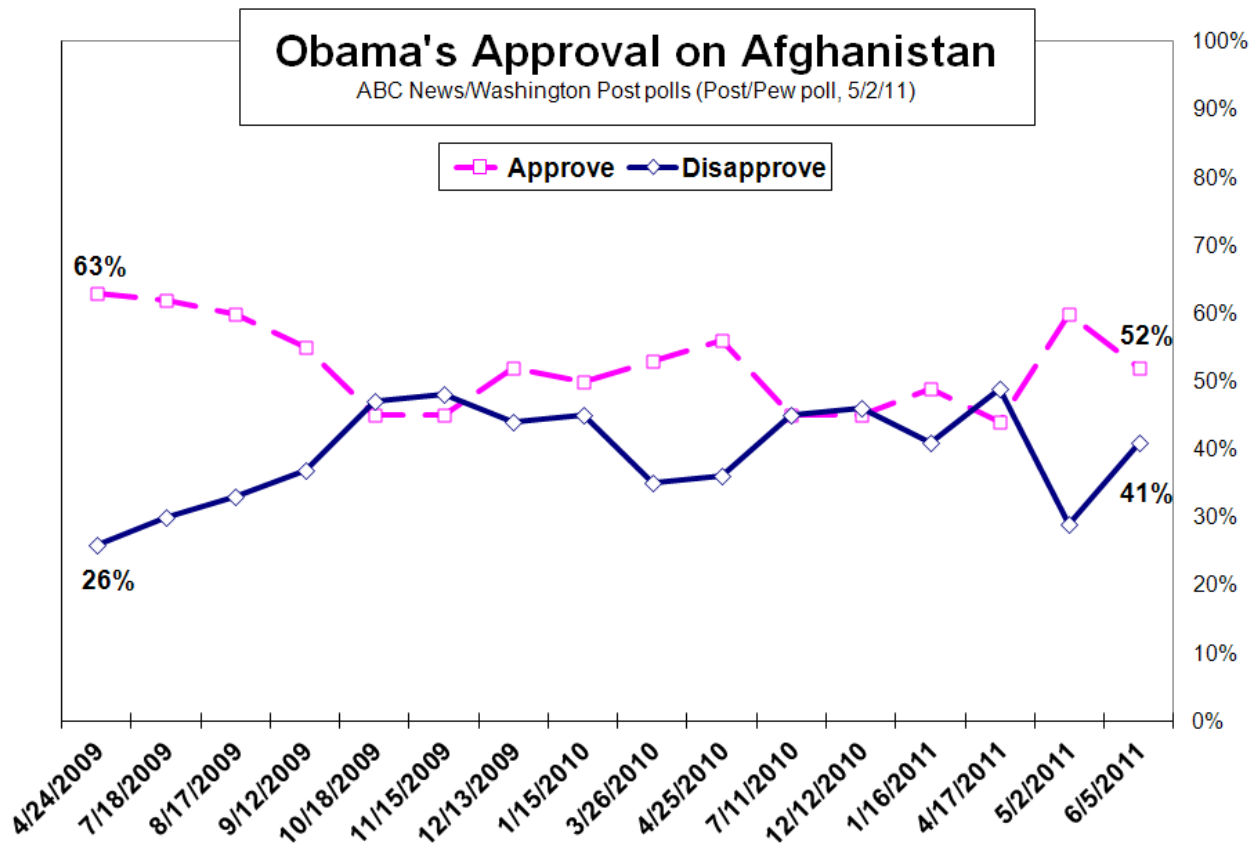
Criticism of War Eases, but Still a Majority; Three-Quarters Want Substantial Withdrawal

Public opposition to the war in Afghanistan has eased from its peak, likely influenced by the killing of Osama bin Laden. But most Americans continue to say the war has not been worth fighting – and nearly three-quarters favor a substantial withdrawal of U.S. combat forces.

Given the war's costs vs. benefits, 54 percent in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll say it has not been worth fighting, a majority steadily since spring 2010. But that's down 10 points from its high, 64 percent, in March. Then just 31 percent endorsed the war; it's 43 percent now.



The survey, produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#), also shows a diminished bin Laden bounce for President Obama: His approval rating on handling the war had jumped from 44 percent in April to 60 percent in a Washington Post/Pew Research Center poll immediately after bin Laden's death. It's 52 percent now, halfway back. Still, disapproval, at 41 percent, has eased particularly among some of Obama's strongest critics – conservatives, Republicans and Tea Party supporters.



Obama has a better rating, 60 percent approval, for handling terrorism more generally. Usually a comparatively strong area for him, this measure has followed a similar path – up sharply after the killing of bin Laden (to 69 percent in the Post/Pew poll), now moving back down.

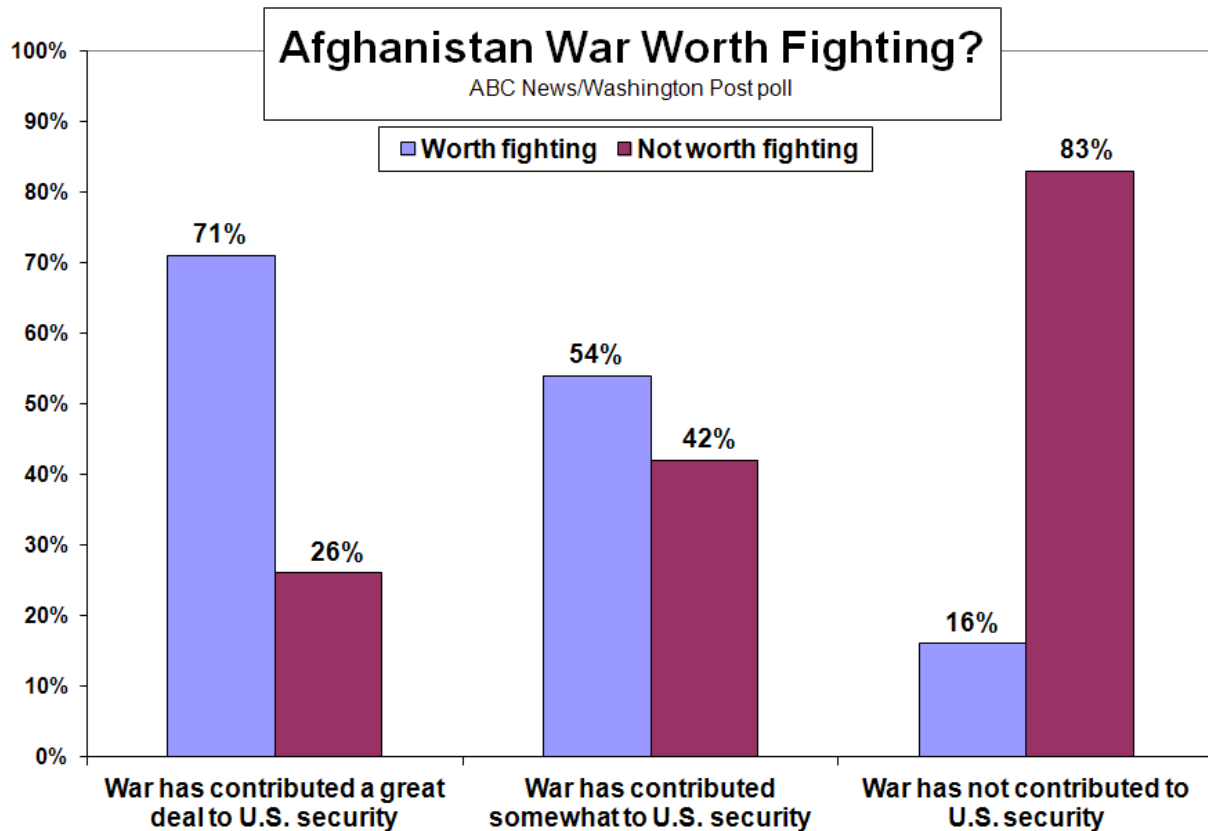
WITHDRAWAL? – There are challenges ahead: As was the case in March, 73 percent of Americans say the United States should withdraw a substantial number of U.S. combat forces from Afghanistan this summer. Yet far fewer, 43 percent, think that will in fact happen.

Some of that disconnect between public preferences and anticipated policy may be built into current views of the war. But it underscores the risk to Obama if discontent regains its springtime level: The 2-1 criticism of the war in March matched long-running disenchantment with the Iraq war in 2006-2008, with devastating impact on George W. Bush's popularity in his second term.

Withdrawal is a hot topic; while Obama has set a summer deadline for a drawdown to begin, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Gen. David Petraeus advised caution in troop reductions in an interview with Diane Sawyer in Kabul on Sunday.

IMPACTS – Most Americans, 57 percent, say the war has contributed to the long-term security of the United States. However far fewer, 25 percent, say it's contributed "a great deal," which is the kind of payback many want to see given the war's costs.

These views strongly impact support for the war overall. Among the relatively few who say it has contributed a great deal to long-term U.S. security, 71 percent say the war been worth fighting. Among those who say it's contributed to security, but not that much, support for the war drops to 54 percent. And among those who say the war has not improved U.S. security, just 16 percent say it's been worth fighting.



As for bin Laden, about half the public (48 percent) thinks his death will not change the level of threat to the United States posed by al Qaeda. The rest divide about evenly (24 percent vs. 27 percent) on whether it makes al Qaeda less of a threat – or more of one.

GROUPS – While there are partisan differences on a major troop withdrawal this summer, it's supported by majorities across party lines – 89 percent of Democrats, 72 percent of independents and 59 percent of Republicans. Republicans meanwhile are more apt than others to say the war has been worth fighting (albeit just 53 percent) and to say it's contributed to long-term security, 67 percent. Even among Republicans, though, just 28 percent say the war, now in its tenth year, has contributed “a great deal” to the long-term security of the United States.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone June 2-5, 2011, among a random national sample of 1,002 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 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-b, 2e held for release.

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

c. The situation in Afghanistan

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
6/5/11	52	23	29	41	15	26	7
5/2/11*	60	28	32	29	15	14	11
4/17/11	44	17	27	49	17	31	7
1/16/11	49	19	30	41	17	24	10
12/12/10	45	17	28	46	16	30	10
7/11/10	45	20	25	45	14	31	10
4/25/10	56	20	36	36	16	20	7
3/26/10	53	25	29	35	15	20	12
1/15/10	50	22	28	45	18	27	6
12/13/09	52	24	28	44	13	32	4
11/15/09	45	23	23	48	16	32	6
10/18/09	45	22	23	47	17	31	7
9/12/09	55	23	33	37	17	21	7
8/17/09	60	25	35	33	14	19	7
7/18/09	62	33	29	30	13	17	8
4/24/09	63	NA	NA	26	NA	NA	11

*Washington Post-Pew Research Center poll

d. The threat of terrorism

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
6/5/11	60	35	25	34	13	21	6
5/2/11*	69	42	27	21	9	12	10
2/8/10	56	28	28	39	14	25	5
1/15/10	55	31	23	42	14	28	4
11/15/09	53	31	22	41	14	27	6
9/12/09	55	31	24	34	12	23	11
6/21/09	57	NA	NA	36	NA	NA	7
4/21/09**	57	NA	NA	26	NA	NA	17

*Washington Post-Pew Research Center poll

**Pew

3-21 held for release.

22. On another subject: All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think the war in Afghanistan has been worth fighting, or not? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Worth fighting -----			--- Not worth fighting ---			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
6/5/11	43	23	20	54	15	40	3
3/13/11	31	17	14	64	16	49	5
12/12/10	34	18	16	60	18	43	5
7/11/10	43	24	19	53	15	38	4
6/6/10	44	26	18	53	13	41	3
4/25/10	45	26	19	52	15	38	3
12/13/09	52	33	19	44	10	35	4
11/15/09	44	30	14	52	14	38	4
10/18/09*	47	28	19	49	13	36	4
9/12/09	46	28	18	51	14	37	3
8/17/09	47	31	15	51	10	41	3
7/18/09	51	34	18	45	11	34	4
3/29/09	56	37	19	41	12	28	4
2/22/09	50	34	17	47	9	37	3
12/14/08	55	NA	NA	39	NA	NA	5
7/13/08	51	NA	NA	45			4
2/25/07	56	NA	NA	41	"	"	3

*10/18/09 "was" and "has been" wording half sampled. Previous "was."

23. Do you think the war in Afghanistan has or has not contributed to the long-term security of the United States? IF YES: Has it contributed to the long-term security of the United States a great deal, or somewhat?

	----- Contributed -----			Has not	No opinion
	NET	Great deal	Somewhat		
6/5/11	57	25	32	39	4
12/12/10	53	22	32	40	6
7/11/10	53	25	28	44	3

24. (HALF SAMPLE) Do you think the United States should or should not withdraw a substantial number of U.S. combat forces from Afghanistan this summer?

	Should	Should not	No opinion
6/5/11	73	23	4
3/13/11	73	21	5

25. (HALF SAMPLE) Do you think the United States will or will not withdraw a substantial number of U.S. combat forces from Afghanistan this summer?

	Will	Will not	No opinion
6/5/11	43	50	7
3/13/11	39	53	8

26. Do you think the killing of Osama bin Laden has made the al Qaeda [al KY-da] terrorist network (more) of a threat to the United States, (less) of a threat, or has it not changed the level of threat posed by al Qaeda?

	More of a threat	Less of a threat	Not changed level of threat	No opinion
6/5/11	27	24	48	1

27-45 held for release.

END