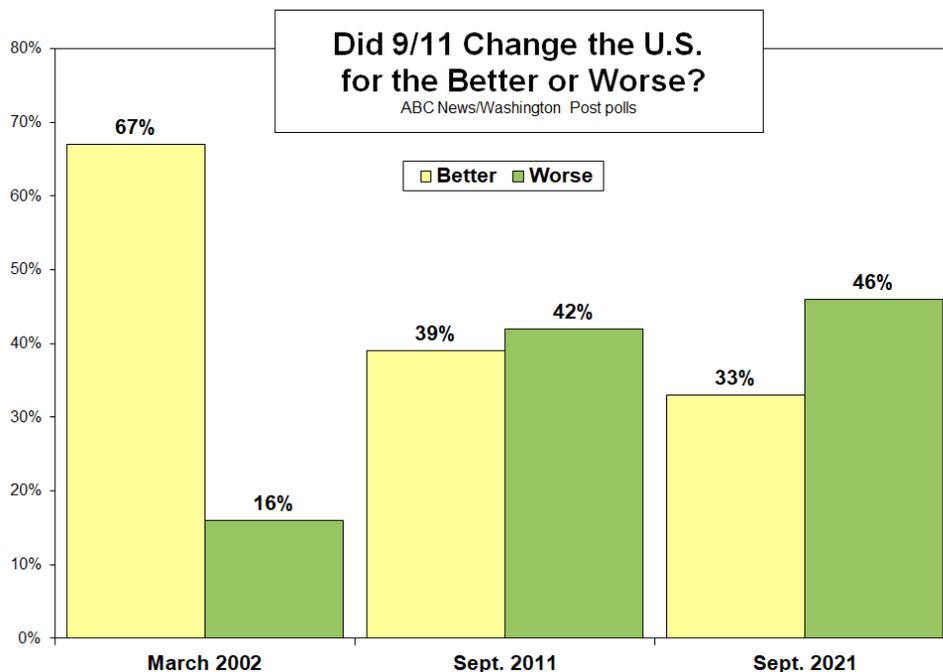


Twenty Years After the 9/11 Attacks, Just Half Call the Country More Secure

Just 49 percent of Americans see the United States as safer from terrorism than it was before the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, down from 64 percent a decade ago and among the weakest ratings of U.S. anti-terrorism efforts in ABC News/Washington Post polls.

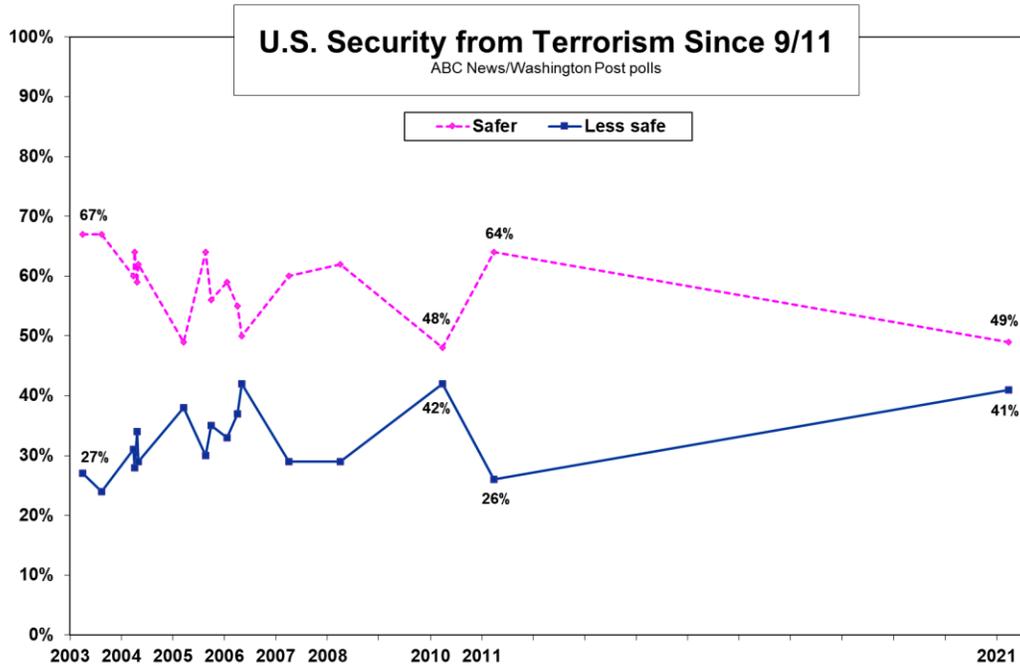
Forty-one percent instead say the United States has become less safe since 9/11, reflecting both renewed partisan divisions and the tumultuous withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan.

A vast 86 percent in this poll, produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#), also say the events of Sept. 11 had a lasting effect on the United States. But underscoring the public's sour mood on this issue, 46 percent, a new high, say it's been a change for the worse. That easily exceeds the 33 percent who see a change for the better, half as many as said so in spring 2002.



SHIFTS – Views of the country's security from terrorism have shifted sharply across the years, given both international developments and partisan U.S. politics. Confidence peaked in 2003 and 2004, fell steeply in 2005 after the London transit bombings, held especially high among Republicans during the Bush administration, plummeted among Republicans two years later under the Obama administration, then rose sharply across groups after the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011.

Ten years later, the latest decline may reflect multiple factors, including pessimism after the fall of Afghanistan and Republican-led dissatisfaction with the Biden administration.



Specifically, compared with 2011, the sense that the country is safer from terrorism now than it was before 9/11 is down 28 percentage points among Republicans, to 41 percent, compared with a slight 9 points among Democrats, to 57 percent. It's down 12 points among independents, to 52 percent.

The see-saws have been dramatic:

% calling United States safer from terrorism since 9/11				
	2008	2010	2011	2021
All	62%	48%	64%	49%
Democrats	45	49	66	57
Republicans	83	49	69	41
Independents	64	47	64	52

These patterns are mirrored in terms of political ideology, with 59 percent of moderates and 55 percent of liberals currently seeing improved safety, vs. just 39 percent of conservatives.

Just 16 percent of Americans overall say the country is “much” safer from terrorism, again near all-time lows; an additional 33 percent call it safer, but just somewhat so. Those who see the country as less safe divide evenly, 21 percent somewhat less safe, 20 percent much less. There’s another partisan split here, with 36 percent of Republicans saying the country is much less safe from terrorism than before 9/11, vs. 15 percent of independents and 11 percent of Democrats.

Another result shows that 9/11 isn't unique in its perceived impact. About as many Americans, 82 percent, say the coronavirus pandemic will change the country in a lasting way as say this about 9/11. And, also similar to current views on 9/11, 50 percent call it a change for the worse.

GROUPS – Partisan differences narrow when considering the lasting effects of the 9/11 attacks. Thirty-one to 36 percent of Republicans, Democrats and independents alike say the country has changed for the better, while 43 to 49 percent say it's changed for the worse.

But these gaps widen by ideology, with liberals most likely to say the country has changed for the worse, 59 percent, vs. 44 percent of moderates and 45 percent of conservatives.

Beyond partisan and ideological differences, 57 percent of older Americans say the country is less safe from terrorism post 9/11, vs. 37 percent of those younger than 65. Men are more likely than women to say the country has changed for the worse, 53 vs. 40 percent, as are college graduates compared with those without a degree, 55 to 41 percent.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Aug. 29-Sept. 1, 2021, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,006 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 percentage points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 30-24-36 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) with sampling and data collection by Abt Associates of Rockville, Md. See details on the survey's methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Sofi Sinozich.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com. Join our [mailing list](#) to get updates on all new poll releases.

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Full results follow.

1-16, 18-24 previously released. *= less than 0.5 percent

17. Do you think the coronavirus pandemic will change this country in a lasting way, or not? (IF YES) Is it a change for the better or a change for the worse?

	----- Yes, will change -----				No	
	NET	Better	Worse	DK/Ref	No	opinion
9/1/21	82	21	50	11	14	5

25. Do you think the events of September 11th, 2001 have changed this country in a lasting way, or not? (IF YES) Is it a change for the better or a change for the worse?

	----- Yes, changed -----				No	
	NET	Better	Worse	DK/Ref	No	opinion
9/1/21	86	33	46	7	11	3

9/1/11	87	39	42	6	13	*
9/6/02*	83	55	27	NA	13	5
3/10/02	86	67	16	4	13	1
12/19/01	91	63	25	4	8	1

*Washington Post: "terrorist attacks of last September 11th"

26. Compared to before September 11, 2001, do you think the country today is safer from terrorism or less safe from terrorism? (IF SAFER) Would you say the country is much safer or somewhat safer? (IF LESS SAFE) Would you say the country is much less safe or somewhat less safe?

	----- Safer -----			---- Less safe ---			No difference	No
	NET	Much	Smwht	NET	Smwht	Much	(vol.)	opinion
9/1/21	49	16	33	41	21	20	6	4
9/1/11	64	26	38	26	13	12	8	2
9/2/10	48	15	33	42	24	18	8	2
9/7/08	62	25	37	29	19	10	7	2
9/7/07	60	24	36	29	17	11	11	1
10/8/06	50	20	30	42	NA	NA	7	1
9/7/06	55	19	36	37			6	2
6/25/06	59	24	35	33			7	1
3/5/06	56	22	33	35			8	1
1/26/06	64	24	41	30			6	*
8/21/05	49	14	35	38			11	2
10/3/04 LV	62	29	33	29			7	2
9/26/04 RV	59	24	35	34			5	2
9/8/04 RV	64	26	38	28			5	3
8/29/04 RV	60	24	36	31			7	2
1/18/04	67	28	39	24			8	1
9/7/03	67	24	42	27	"	"	4	2

*** END ***