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Recommended Citation

Smith, Andrew E. and Wright, Lori, "UNH Survey Center: New Hampshire Pessimistic About U.S. Military Interventions" (2011).
UNH Today. 3718.
<https://scholars.unh.edu/news/3718>

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Media Relations

UNH Survey Center: New Hampshire Pessimistic About U.S. Military Interventions

July 7, 2011

DURHAM, N.H. – Support for President Barack Obama’s handling of foreign policy remains low in New Hampshire, with most Granite State adults continuing to oppose U.S. involvement in Libya and to be pessimistic about Iraq and Afghanistan, according to the latest WMUR Granite State Poll conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center.

Five hundred sixteen (516) randomly selected New Hampshire adults were interviewed by telephone between June 21 and July 1, 2011. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/- 4.3 percent.

“With ongoing conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, New Hampshire adults are divided over the Obama administration’s handling of foreign policy,” said Andrew Smith, director of the UNH Survey Center.

In the most recent Granite State Poll, 47 percent approve of how Obama is handling foreign affairs, 46 percent disapprove, and 7 percent are neutral. There is a distinct partisan divide with 83 percent of Democrats, but only 16 percent of Republicans and 33 percent of independents approving of Obama’s handling of foreign affairs.

New Hampshire adults continue to be divided about Obama’s handling of the situation in Libya. Currently, only 39 percent approve of the Obama administration’s Libya policy, 41 percent disapprove, and 20 percent are neutral or don’t know. There is a significant partisan gap in approval of Obama’s handling of Libya with 59 percent of Democrats, but only 21 percent of Republicans and 35 percent of independents approving.






Since the president announced the pullout of some U.S. troops from Afghanistan, New Hampshire adults are more likely to think that the war there is going well for the United States. Currently, 49 percent of New Hampshire adults think the war in Afghanistan is going well, 44 percent think it is going badly, and 7 percent don’t know.

“This represents the most optimistic assessment of how the war in Afghanistan is going since April 2010,” Smith said.

Similarly, a plurality of New Hampshire residents approve of Obama’s handling of the war in Afghanistan. Currently, 48 percent of New Hampshire adults approve of his handling of Afghanistan, 44 percent disapprove, and 8 percent are neutral or don’t know. Democrats (70 percent) are most likely to approve of his handling of the situation in Afghanistan, while Republicans (29 percent) and political independents (35 percent) are much less likely to approve.

New Hampshire adults continue to be very pessimistic about the chances that the United States can be successful in Afghanistan. Currently, only 26 percent believe the U.S can win in Afghanistan, 62 percent think we cannot win, and 13 percent are not sure. While the overall view of potential U.S. success in Afghanistan is unchanged since April, distinct partisan differences have emerged. Democrats (69 percent) and independents (76 percent) are significantly more pessimistic than Republicans (50 percent) in believing the U.S. cannot win in Afghanistan.

Approval of President Obama’s handling of the situation in Iraq has stabilized. In the most recent Granite State Poll, 58 percent of New Hampshire adults approve of his handling of Iraq, 32 percent disapprove, and 10 percent are neutral. Obama holds majority support from Democrats (79 percent), while political independents and Republicans are divided.

 
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Opposition to the U.S. having gone to war with Iraq remains high. Currently, only 35 percent of Granite Staters support the United States having gone to war with Iraq, 57 percent oppose it, and 7 percent are neutral.

Optimism about the U.S. being able to win the war in Iraq is at its lowest levels since 2007. Currently, only 32 percent of New Hampshire adults think the U.S. can win the Iraq war, 51 percent think the United States cannot win, and 16 percent don't know. Republicans continue to be the most optimistic about U.S. prospects of victory in Iraq, yet less than half of Republicans (41 percent) believe the United States can win. Democrats and independents are much less optimistic with only 26 percent thinking winning the Iraq war is possible.

For complete tabular results, visit http://www.unh.edu/survey-center/news/pdf/gsp2011_summer_forapp070711.pdf.

The UNH Survey Center has conducted survey research projects at the University of New Hampshire since 1976. The center has grown rapidly during the past 30 years and now conducts approximately 40 to 50 major survey projects each year.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

PHOTO

Andrew Smith, director of the UNH Survey Center.
http://www.unh.edu/news/img/Andy_Smith.jpg

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T-hall

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