

## **Majorities of Adults in Five Largest European Countries Give President Obama Positive Job Approval Rating; Reverse True for Americans**

*The divide in Europe is what to do with troops in Afghanistan*

**New York, N.Y. — November 16, 2009** — A new **Financial Times/Harris Poll** in the United States and the five largest European countries finds that President Barack Obama is still very popular in Europe – much more so than he is in his own country. But, even in Europe there is not a huge endorsement for his being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. And when it comes to Afghanistan, there is a difference over what U.S. troops should do versus what other Western country's troops should do.

These are some of the findings of a **Financial Times/Harris Poll** conducted online by Harris Interactive among 6,182 adults aged 16-64 in France, Germany, Britain, Spain, and the United States and 18-64 in Italy between October 28 and November 4, 2009.

Strong majorities in Europe (between 60% in Spain and 86% in Italy) give President Obama positive ratings while in his own country a majority of Americans (55%) give him negative ratings on the overall job he is doing. When it comes to the Nobel Peace Prize, over half of Britons (53%) and Americans (52%) as well as half of Spaniards (50%) and two in five French adults (39%) all disagree that it should have been awarded to President Obama. Two in five Italians (39%) agree it should have been awarded to him while Germans are split with 36% disagreeing and 35% agreeing.

Looking at the issue of Afghanistan:

- For non-U.S. Western troops, there is a split in what people think should happen. A plurality of Britons (44%), French (43%) and Spaniards (43%) think these troops should withdraw immediately. A plurality of Italians (43%) and 39% of Americans, however, believe these troops should stay as long as necessary. Germans are divided – with 38% saying non-U.S. Western troops should withdraw immediately and 38% of Germans saying these troops should stay as long as necessary;
- There is also a split on what U.S. troops in Afghanistan should be doing. Half of Italians (49%), 46% of Germans and 40% of British adults believe U.S. troops should stay as long as necessary. Two in five French adults (40%) believe U.S. troops should withdraw immediately and Spaniards are split with 39% each saying withdraw immediately and stay as long as necessary. Americans are also divided as one-third (32%) believe U.S. troops should stay as long as necessary and 30% say withdraw immediately;
- One of the tough decisions President Obama is facing right now is whether to send more troops to Afghanistan and he is not alone in uncertainty as between 27% and 38% of adults aged 16-64 in the five largest European countries and the U.S. are also not sure what to do. However, looking at those who do have an opinion, it is clear – half of Spaniards (50%) and just under half of Italians (49%), French (47%), Germans (47%) and 34% of Britons say do not send any more troops at all. Among Americans, three in ten (29%) say do not send more troops while one in five (20%) believe 40,000 more troops should be sent;

- When it comes to defeating the Taliban, the consensus seems to be the U.S. led mission will be somewhat successful. Majorities of Italians (55%), Spaniards (55%), French (54%), and just under half of Americans (49%) and a plurality of Britons (44%) believe it will be somewhat successful while Germans are of a different mind as 48% of them say the U.S. led mission will not be successful at all;
- Looking at the future what should these troops be doing – fighting the Taliban or engaging in nation building and improving relations in Afghanistan? Majorities of those in Spain (68%), Italy (64%), France (62%), Germany (57%) and Great Britain (51%) all say it should be on nation building or improving relations. In the U.S. there is more of a divide – 37% believe the focus should be on nation building and 30% of Americans say the focus should be on fighting the Taliban.

## So what?

As President Obama looks to make a decision on what to do in Afghanistan, he has not only the eyes of Americans on him, but also the eyes of the world. And, while he has strong job approval ratings among those in the 5 largest European countries, they also have some strong opinions on what should happen in Afghanistan with troops. All are watching and waiting to see what the next steps for U.S. troops will be there.

**TABLE 1**  
**PRESIDENT OBAMA JOB APPROVAL**

“How would you rate the overall job that President Barack Obama is doing?”

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>POSITIVE (NET)</b>	64%	82%	86%	60%	77%	45%
Excellent	7%	12%	21%	7%	8%	8%
Pretty good	57%	70%	65%	53%	69%	37%
<b>NEGATIVE (NET)</b>	35%	19%	14%	41%	22%	55%
Only fair	30%	17%	13%	37%	21%	31%
Poor	5%	2%	1%	4%	2%	24%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 2**  
**PRESIDENT OBAMA AND THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE**

“To what extent do you agree or disagree with President Barack Obama being awarded this year’s Nobel Peace prize?”

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Agree (NET)</b>	15%	27%	39%	20%	35%	21%
Strongly agree	5%	6%	10%	4%	10%	10%
Somewhat agree	10%	21%	29%	16%	24%	12%
Neither Agree nor disagree	32%	34%	34%	30%	29%	27%
<b>Disagree (NET)</b>	53%	39%	27%	50%	36%	52%
Somewhat disagree	30%	26%	18%	24%	24%	17%
Strongly disagree	23%	13%	9%	27%	13%	35%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 3**  
**NON US WESTERN TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN TO STAY OR NOT**

“With Western troops operating in Afghanistan, what do you think (Non-US) Western troops should do in Afghanistan?”  
Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
At least stay for a year (NET)	56%	57%	66%	57%	62%	79%
Stay as long as necessary	31%	17%	43%	35%	38%	39%
Stay between 2 and 5 years	7%	18%	4%	8%	9%	18%
Stay one more year and then withdraw	18%	23%	18%	14%	15%	23%
Withdraw immediately	44%	43%	34%	43%	38%	21%

Note Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 4**  
**US WESTERN TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN TO STAY OR NOT**

“With Western troops operating in Afghanistan, what do you think US troops should do in Afghanistan?”  
Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
At least stay for a year (NET)	65%	60%	69%	61%	70%	70%
Stay as long as necessary	40%	18%	49%	39%	46%	32%
Stay between 2 and 5 years	7%	18%	5%	9%	11%	15%
Stay one more year and then withdraw	17%	23%	16%	13%	13%	23%
Withdraw immediately	35%	40%	31%	39%	30%	30%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 5**  
**SENDING EXTRA US TROOPS TO AFGHANISTAN**

“President Barack Obama is considering sending up to 40,000 extra US troops to Afghanistan. Which of the following statements best describes your perspective on this issue?”  
Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
He should send no extra troops at all	34%	47%	49%	50%	47%	29%
He should send 20,000 extra troops	5%	5%	6%	5%	7%	8%
He should send 40,000 extra troops	15%	8%	8%	8%	11%	20%
He should send more than 40,000 extra troops	8%	6%	7%	8%	9%	12%
Not sure	38%	33%	30%	28%	27%	31%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 6**  
**DEFEATING TALIBAN**

“How successful do you believe the US-led mission to defeat the Taliban will ultimately be?”

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
At least somewhat successful (NET)	57%	71%	67%	71%	52%	74%
Very successful	2%	2%	2%	5%	2%	4%
Successful	10%	14%	10%	11%	9%	21%
Somewhat successful	44%	54%	55%	55%	41%	49%
Not at all successful	43%	29%	33%	29%	48%	26%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 7**  
**WHAT NEXT- FIGHTING OR BUILDING RELATIONS**

“(Non-US) Western countries/The US involvement in Afghanistan going forward should be....”

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Most focused on fighting Taliban	15%	16%	13%	15%	16%	30%
Most focused on nation building/improving relations	51%	62%	64%	68%	57%	37%
Neither of the above	12%	8%	11%	8%	14%	15%
Not sure	23%	13%	13%	10%	13%	18%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

## Methodology

This **FT/Harris Poll** was conducted online by Harris Interactive among a total of 6,182 adults aged 16-64 within France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, and the United States and adults aged 18-64 in Italy between 28<sup>th</sup> October and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Figures for age, sex, education, region and Internet usage were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult populations of the respective countries. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

***These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls and of the British Polling Council.***

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