

The Conflict with ISIS: Support for Ground Troops Grows October 23-27, 2014

- 57% think things are going badly in the U.S. fight against ISIS, and 61% of Americans don't think President Obama has a clear plan for dealing with the militant group – up five points from earlier this month.
- 64% Americans think ground troops will be necessary to defeat ISIS, and now they are divided evenly sending U.S. ground troops into Iraq and Syria.
- A large majority of Americans (71%) continue to support airstrikes against ISIS.

The U.S. Fight Against ISIS

Two months after U.S. airstrikes were launched against the Islamic State in Iraq, most Americans are still unconvinced that President Obama has a clear plan for dealing with the militant group. 61% don't think he has a clear plan. Just 29% think he does; that is down seven points from earlier this month.

Does President Obama Have a Clear Plan for Dealing with ISIS?

	Now	10/8/2014	9/2014
Yes	29%	36%	35%
No	61	56	55

71% of Americans support U.S. airstrikes against ISIS, but evaluations of how things are going for the U.S. in its fight against the militant group are negative. 57% think it is going somewhat or very badly. About a third says it is going well, including just 3% who say the fight is going very well.

How is the U.S. Fight Against ISIS Going?

	Total	Reps	Dems	Inds
Well	33%	21%	47%	30%
Very well	3%	1%	6%	3%
Somewhat well	30	20	41	27
Badly	57%	72%	45%	58%
Somewhat badly	33	34	34	32
Very badly	24	38	11	26

Americans are now split on whether the U.S. should send ground troops into Iraq and Syria to fight ISIS. The percentage that favors ground troops (47%) has been inching up since September.

U.S Ground Troops to Fight ISIS

	Now	10/8/2014	9/2014
Favor	47%	44%	39%
Oppose	46	50	55

Most Republicans support using U.S. ground troops, while most Democrats, and half of independents, are opposed.

U.S Ground Troops to Fight ISIS – by Party

	Total	Reps	Dems	Inds
Favor	47%	65%	39%	43%
Oppose	46	28	56	49

Still, most Americans do think ground forces will ultimately be necessary to remove the threat from ISIS. 64% say U.S. ground troops will be needed, while just one in five thinks airstrikes alone will work.

Will U.S. Be Able to Remove ISIS Threat With...?

	Total	Reps	Dems	Inds
Ground troops will be necessary	64%	74%	58%	62%
Airstrikes alone	19	15	24	18

85% of Americans express at least some concern that U.S. intervention in Iraq and Syria will lead to a long and costly involvement there, including 48% who are very concerned.

Concerned that U.S. Intervention in Iraq and Syria Will Lead to Long & Costly Involvement?

	Now	10/8/2014	9/2014
Very concerned	48%	53%	40%
Somewhat concerned	37	34	43
Not too/not at all concerned	13	11	16

Most Americans continue to view ISIS as a major threat to the security of the United States. 58% say it is a major threat, while another 21% say ISIS is a minor threat. Just 15% say ISIS is not a threat to the U.S. at all.

How Great a Threat is ISIS to the U.S.?

	Now	9/2014
Major threat	58%	53%
Minor threat	21	34
Not a threat	15	11

This poll was conducted by telephone October 23-27, 2014 among 1,269 adults nationwide. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups may be higher. Data collection was conducted on behalf of CBS News by SSRS of Media, PA. Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

CBS News National Poll
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October 23-27, 2014

Q1-Q46 Released separately.

Q47. How would you say things are going for the U.S. in its fight against the militant group ISIS in Iraq and Syria? Would you say things are going very well, somewhat well, somewhat badly, or very badly?

Very well	3	1	6	3
Somewhat well	30	20	41	27
Somewhat badly	33	34	34	32
Very badly	24	38	11	26
Don't know/No answer	9	6	8	12

Q48. Do you think the militant group ISIS is a threat to the security of the United States, or not? (IF YES, ASK): Do you think it is a major threat or a minor threat?

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Yes, major	58	75	52	54	61
Yes, minor	21	17	22	21	21
Not a threat	15	5	20	17	14
Don't know/No answer	6	3	5	8	4

Q49. Do you think Barack Obama has a clear plan for dealing with ISIS militants, or not?

Yes, has clear plan	29	11	47	26	36
No, does not have clear plan	61	85	42	63	56
Don't know/No answer	10	4	11	11	8

Q50. Do you favor or oppose US airstrikes against ISIS militants in Iraq and Syria?

Favor	71	85	68	64
Oppose	20	10	22	24
Don't know/No answer	9	4	9	12

Q50a. Do you favor or oppose the U.S. sending ground troops into Iraq or Syria to fight ISIS militants?

Favor	47	65	39	43	44
Oppose	46	28	56	49	50
Favor ground troops in Syria only	*	-	*	-	*
Favor troops in Iraq only	*	*	-	-	*
Don't know/No answer	6	6	4	8	5

Q51. Do you think the United States will be able to remove the threat from ISIS militants using airstrikes alone, or do you think ground troops will be necessary in order to remove the threat from ISIS militants?

Air strikes alone	19	15	24	18	21
Ground troops will be necessary	64	74	58	62	65
Don't know/No answer	17	11	18	20	15

Q52. How concerned are you that U.S. intervention in Iraq and Syria will lead to a long and costly involvement there – very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned?

	TOTAL RESPONDENTS				Sep14a %
	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	
Very concerned	48	48	48	49	53
Somewhat concerned	37	35	39	35	34
Not too concerned	8	11	7	8	7
Not at all concerned	5	5	5	4	4
Don't know/No answer	2	*	1	3	2

	Unweighted	Weighted
Total Respondents	1,269	
Total Republicans	337	301
Total Democrats	393	406
Total Independents	539	562