



# Public Opinion in the Islamic World on Terrorism, al Qaeda, and US Policies

February 25, 2009

*WORLDPUBLICOPINION.ORG STAFF*

STEVEN KULL  
CLAY RAMSAY  
STEPHEN WEBER  
EVAN LEWIS  
EBRAHIM MOHSENI

**WORLDPUBLICOPINION.ORG IS A PROJECT MANAGED BY  
THE PROGRAM ON INTERNATIONAL POLICY ATTITUDES  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND**

### **Board of Advisors**

**I.M. Destler**  
University of Maryland

**Catherine Kelleher**  
US Naval War College

**Fred Steeper**  
Market Strategies

**Gloria Duffy**  
Commonwealth Club

**Anthony Lake**  
Georgetown University

**Daniel Yankelovich**  
Public Agenda Foundation

**Bill Frenzel**  
Brookings Institution

**Benjamin Page**  
Northwestern University

**Alan Kay**  
Americans Talk  
Issues Foundation

**Robert Shapiro**  
Columbia University

**WorldPublicOpinion.org (WPO)** is an international collaborative project, managed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, with the aim of giving voice to public opinion around the world on international issues. As the world becomes increasingly integrated, problems have become increasingly global, pointing to a greater need for understanding between nations and for elucidating global norms. With the growth of democracy in the world, public opinion has come to play a greater role in the foreign policy process. WorldPublicOpinion.org seeks to reveal the values and views of publics in specific nations around the world as well as global patterns of world public opinion.

**The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA)** was established in 1992 with the purpose of giving public opinion a greater voice in international relations. PIPA conducts in-depth studies of public opinion that include polls, focus groups and interviews. It integrates its findings together with those of other organizations. It actively seeks the participation of members of the policy community in developing its polls so as to make them immediately relevant to the needs of policymakers. PIPA is a joint program of the Center on Policy Attitudes and the Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM).

**The Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM)**, at the University of Maryland's School for Public Policy, pursues policy-oriented scholarship on major issues facing the United States in the global arena. Using its research, forums, and publications, CISSM links the University and the policy community to improve communication between scholars and practitioners.

Abe Medoff and Melanie Ciolek managed the production of the report, with contributions from Jennifer Chen, Erin Huggins, and Ashley LaRiccia.

This research was supported by the United States Department of Homeland Security through the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), grant number N00140510629. However, any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect views of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The WorldPublicOpinion.org project was funded in part by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Calvert Foundation.

Members of the WorldPublicOpinion.org network of research organizations in the Middle East also collected data that contributed to this study. The organizations included the International Center for Social Research in Azerbaijan, the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, Market Trends Research International in Nigeria, the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion, and the ARI Foundation/Infakto Research Workshop in Turkey.

## INTRODUCTION

To deal with the threat posed by groups that use terrorist methods against Americans, in particular al Qaeda, the US is faced by more than the problem of the groups themselves. These groups operate in a larger society that provides them with some degree of support—enough to allow them to persist. The purpose of this study is to understand more deeply the nature and extent of this support, and also to determine how it is evolving. This points to a range of questions.

Acts of terrorism (defined here as attacks against civilians by substate actors with the intent of achieving a political goal) are unique in that they are at odds with a large body of normative thinking that spans the world, including the Muslim world. And yet to operate, groups that use terrorism must be viewed as legitimate by some sector of society. But how large is this sector? Are there reasons to believe that a new norm is emerging that endorses such methods?

For decades the United States has had a military presence in numerous Muslim nations and the stated goal of al Qaeda's effort has been to drive US troops out. However, the US has responded to such efforts by increasing its military presence and the focus of al Qaeda's attacks for some years now has been on US troops more than on US civilians. How do people in these regions view the US military presence and al Qaeda's goal of driving the US out? How do people in these Muslim nations view attacks on US troops based there? Is it different from how they view attacks on civilians?

Attitudes toward US military forces are, of course, embedded in a broader set of perceptions of US goals in relation to the Muslim world. Al Qaeda and others have accused the US of not simply fighting terrorism but seeking to undermine Islam itself, as well as seeking to maintain dominance over the resources of the Middle East. Do people in these regions find these accusations persuasive? Or do they find persuasive America's claim that its goals are to protect Muslims from extremists, promote democracy, and bring about a Palestinian state, as well as preventing further terrorist attacks against the US?

These perceptions of US goals are in turn embedded in broader attitudes about the US government and how it operates in the world. Do people in Muslim countries perceive that US military power is constrained by international law, or that the US uses its power in a way that is fair? Is American culture seen as a threat?

Once we understand the complex of attitudes about America's role and the methods that are used by groups like al Qaeda against America, we can turn to the question of how people in Muslim countries feel about al Qaeda and groups that attack Americans. To understand this in its complexity we must differentiate between how people feel about al Qaeda's various goals in relation to the US and its various methods for pursuing those goals.

A central goal of al Qaeda is to make Muslim societies more 'Islamist', i.e., more aligned with traditional interpretations of Islam and Shari'a law. How do people in Muslim societies view this goal? And how do they interpret the meaning of giving a greater role for Shari'a? A key controversy is whether groups with such goals should be allowed to participate in the political process by organizing parties and running candidates in elections, or whether they should be excluded as not genuinely democratic.

Finally, there is probably no more central front in the conflict between al Qaeda and the US than the status of governments in the Muslim world that are supported by the US: namely Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Pakistan. Al Qaeda claims that these governments are not adequately Islamist and,

due to their US support, are illegitimate and viewed as such by their populations. But do people in the Muslim world accept this interpretation?

To answer these and other questions WorldPublicOpinion.org conducted an in-depth survey of public opinion in Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia. This is the second wave of surveys: the first was conducted in late 2006 and early 2007. The research was primarily supported by the START Consortium at the University of Maryland. Other scholars of the START Consortium participated in the development of the questionnaire for both waves.

In addition to the major surveys in Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan funded by the START program, WorldPublicOpinion.org was polling around the world in summer, 2008, under separate funding. This project enabled the inclusion of 27 parallel items in its polling of four additional majority-Muslim nations as well as the Muslim population of Nigeria.

In addition focus groups were conducted in Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan, Indonesia and Jordan over the course of the two waves.

The newest survey was conducted between July 28 and September 6, 2008 using in-home interviews based upon multi-stage probability samples. In Egypt (1,101 interviews), Indonesia (1,120 interviews), and Pakistan (1,200 interviews) national probability samples were conducted covering both urban and rural areas. These sample sizes have 95% confidence intervals of +/- 3 percentage points. The surveys were conducted by the same research agencies that conducted the first wave of START polling in late 2007 and early 2008 in order that the two waves be as comparable as possible. The sampling designs were also identical to the first wave of polling in these three countries. Note: Due to the addition of rural data and more refined weighting some of the 2006/7 findings cited in this report are slightly different from those previously reported.

The supplemental polling as part of the WorldPublicOpinion.org network survey included Azerbaijan (sample size 600), Jordan (583), the Palestinian territories (638), Turkey (1023) and Nigerian Muslims (493). Confidence intervals for these countries range from +/- 3 to 4 percentage points. All of these samples were national probability samples conducted through face-to-face interviewing.

The key findings of the analysis of the general distribution of attitudes are:

***1. Rejection of Attacks on American Civilians***

Large majorities denounce attacks on American civilians, whether in the US or in a Muslim country, though there has been some softening in the numbers who hold this view strongly. Most reject the argument that such attacks are the only way to get the US to listen to the Islamic people and a growing percentage perceive them as an ineffective method for achieving political ends. As a general principle large majorities reject the use of violent methods such as bombings and assassinations to achieve political goals.....5

***2. Opposition to US Military Presence in Muslim Countries***

Large majorities endorse the al Qaeda goal of pushing the US to remove all of its military forces from Muslim countries and oppose US naval forces in the Persian Gulf. Even if the government has requested the US forces, majorities or pluralities oppose their presence. If the US were to withdraw troops from Iraq, very few assume that there would be an increase in the likelihood of attacks on the US homeland.....7

**3. Attacks on US Troops Based in Muslim Countries**

Significant numbers--majorities in some nations--approve of attacks on US troops based in Muslim countries, presumably as a means to apply pressure for their removal. .... 9

**4. Perception of US Goals in Relation to Muslim World**

Opposition to US military presence appears to be related to largely negative views of US goals in relation to the Muslim world. Most perceive the US as seeking to weaken and divide Islam and to maintain control over Middle East oil. Less than half perceive that US as seeking to protect them from extremists or as genuinely trying to promote democracy. In regard to Israel, most believe that the US is seeking to further the expansion of Israel, while views are mixed on whether the US is seeking to bring about a Palestinian state. Majorities also perceive that the US is seeking to prevent further terrorist attacks against the US. .... 11

**5. General Views of the United States**

Views of the US government continue to be quite negative. The US is widely seen as hypocritically failing to abide by international law, not living up to the role it should play in world affairs, disrespectful of the Muslim people, and using its power in a coercive and unfair fashion. The US is seen as having extraordinary powers over world events, though views are more mixed on how much Muslim publics' own governments accommodate the US. Views of the American people and culture are not as negative as for the American government, but are still largely negative. .... 15

**6. Views of al Qaeda**

Views of al Qaeda are complex. Majorities agree with nearly all of al Qaeda's goals to change US behavior in the Muslim world, to promote Islamist governance, and to preserve and affirm Islamic identity. However, consistent with the general rejection of attacks on civilians, only minorities say they approve of al Qaeda's attacks on Americans as well as its goals, suggesting that many may feel ambivalence. Consistent with this possible ambivalence, views of Osama bin Laden are mixed. The tension between support for al Qaeda's goals and discomfort with attacks on civilians may contribute to the widespread denial that al Qaeda was behind the 9/11 attacks (something that increasing numbers see as having been negative for the Muslim world). .... 20

**7. Views of Groups That Attack Americans**

In regard to the generic category of groups that attack Americans, views are divided. Only small numbers in all countries say they would speak favorably of such groups or would approve if a family member were to join such a group. However, significant numbers say they would at least have mixed feelings if a family member were to join such a group and more people say they express approval of such groups to others than say they express disapproval. .... 25

**8. Islamist Groups and Shari'a**

Majorities say Islamist groups should be allowed to participate in the political process by organizing political parties and running candidates in elections and reject the argument that such groups should be excluded because they are not genuinely democratic. The Islamist goal of giving Shari'a a larger role in Islamic society is viewed positively. Views are more mixed, however, on whether people would like to see a greater role for Shari'a in their country, and among those who do prefer a greater role views vary as to whether this greater role should emphasize the enforcement traditions or social welfare. .... 27

**9. Views of Governments of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Pakistan**

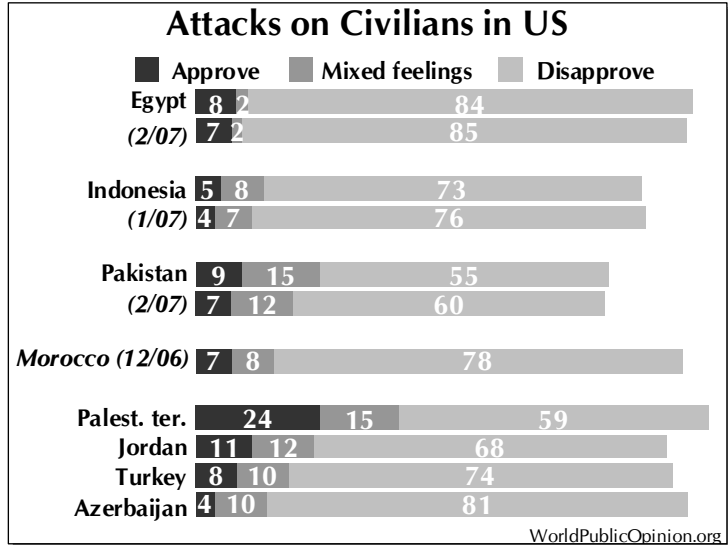
Contrary to the al Qaeda case that governments that are not Islamist and are supported by the US—especially Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Pakistan--are viewed as illegitimate by their own people, majorities or pluralities throughout the Muslim world assume that the populations of these countries view their government as legitimate. Views are mixed about whether governments such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan should receive military aid from the United States. ....30

FINDINGS

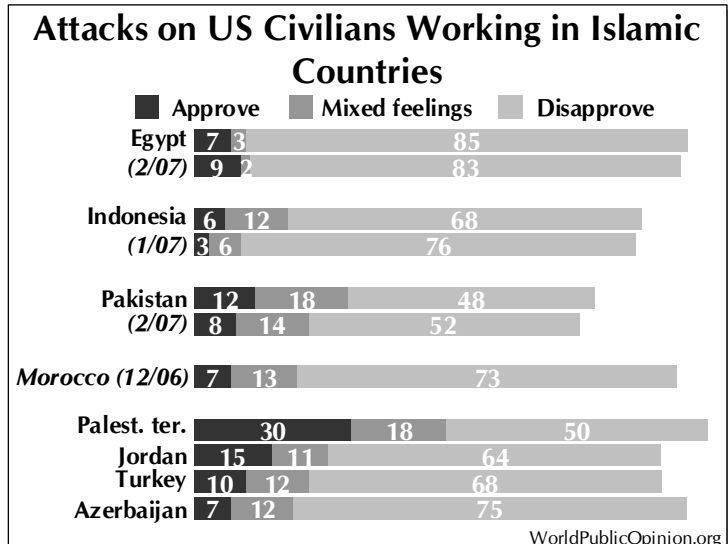
**I. Rejection of Attacks on American Civilians**

Large majorities denounce attacks on American civilians, whether in the US or in a Muslim country, though there has been some softening in the numbers who hold this view strongly. Most reject the argument that such attacks are the only way to get the US to listen to the Islamic people and a growing percentage perceive them as an ineffective method for achieving political ends. As a general principle large majorities reject the use of violent methods such as bombings and assassinations to achieve political goals.

Large majorities in many of the countries polled specifically denounce the use of attacks on American civilians, whether in the US or in a Muslim country. Asked whether they approved, disapproved, or had mixed feelings about attacks on civilians in the United States, 84 percent disapproved of such attacks in Egypt, 73 percent in Indonesia, and 55 percent in Pakistan. Attacks on “US civilians working for US companies in Islamic countries” are also rejected though a by a slightly lower margin: 85 percent of Egyptians disapproved, as did 68 percent of Indonesians and 48 percent of Pakistanis.



However, this rejection of attacks on civilians has softened somewhat since 2007 in Indonesia and Pakistan. In Indonesia, 48 percent now disapprove *strongly* of attacks on civilians in the US—down 10 points; and in Pakistan overall disapproval has dropped 3-4 points on both questions.



These questions were also asked in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories. Rejection of attacks on civilians in the US was strongest among Azerbaijanis (81%), followed by Turks (74%), Jordanians (68%), and Palestinians (59%). Rejection of attacks on US civilians working in Muslim countries was very similar (Azerbaijanis 75%, Turks 68%, Jordanians 64%, Palestinians 50%).

**February 25, 2009**

Attacks on civilians in Europe are not viewed differently from attacks on civilians in the US. Egyptians, Indonesians and Pakistanis all rejected such attacks by majorities: 85 percent in Egypt, 72 percent in Indonesia, and 51 percent in Pakistan.

Large majorities also reject the argument that US recalcitrance relative to the Islamic people justifies making an exception to the norm against attacking civilians. In Egypt and Indonesia, respondents were presented the following argument and asked if they agreed or disagreed: “Though it is generally wrong to attack civilians, attacks against US civilians are sometimes justified because it is the only way to get the American government to stop and listen to the concerns of the Islamic people.” In Egypt, 78 percent disagreed (72% strongly); only 14% agreed (4% strongly). In Indonesia, 64 percent disagreed (41% strongly); only 17 percent agreed (5% strongly).

There seems to a growing belief that attacks on civilians are ineffective. Asked whether “attacks against civilians, as a tactic in conflict” are “often effective to change the situation, only sometimes effective...or hardly ever effective,” the number in Egypt saying they are hardly ever effective rose from 35 percent in 2007 to 52 percent, with just 16 percent now saying they are often effective and 26 percent saying only sometimes. Similarly in Indonesia those saying that they are hardly ever effective rose from 42 to 50 percent, with 5 percent now saying they are often effective and 14 percent saying only sometimes. Pakistanis were unchanged from last year: 49 percent say such attacks are hardly ever effective, with 11 percent calling them often effective and 13 percent saying only sometimes.

Terrorism per se is seen as a problem. Asked to say to what extent they see terrorism as a problem in their country—a very big problem, a moderate problem, a small problem, or not a problem—large majorities of Egyptians and Indonesians, and an overwhelming majority of Pakistanis, call terrorism a “very big problem.” In Egypt, 57 percent said terrorism is a very big problem; 18 percent called it a moderate (9%) or small (9%) problem; and about a fifth (22%) said it was not a problem. In Indonesia, nearly three in four (72%) called terrorism a very big problem; 26 percent thought it was moderate (21%) or small (5%); only 1 percent called it nonexistent. In Pakistan, a striking 90 percent said terrorism was a very big problem (6% moderate, 1% small, 1% not a problem). While Egyptian and Indonesian responses to this question are essentially unchanged from 2007, the number of Pakistanis viewing terrorism as a very big problem has gone up 11 percent.

As a general principle, majorities take a negative view toward the use of violence to achieve political ends even when attacks on civilians are not highlighted. Respondents were asked a broad and explicit question: “In general, how justified are violent attacks, such as bombings and assassinations, that are carried out in order to achieve political or religious goals—strongly justified, justified, weakly justified, or not justified at all?” Eighty-three percent in Egypt and 89 percent in Indonesia said these methods are not justified at all; 2 percent in Egypt and less than 1 percent in Indonesia called them strongly justified. In Pakistan, 67 percent said these methods are not justified at all; 12 percent called them weakly justified (6%) or justified (6%); and 13 percent called them strongly justified.

There have been some shifts in views on this question since 2007, but not in a unified direction. In Pakistan, those saying “not justified at all” have dropped 9 points, while those calling them strongly justified have grown from 1 percent to 13 percent. However, the percentage of Indonesians calling such attacks completely unjustified has grown (84% to 89%) and Egyptian responses have not changed significantly.

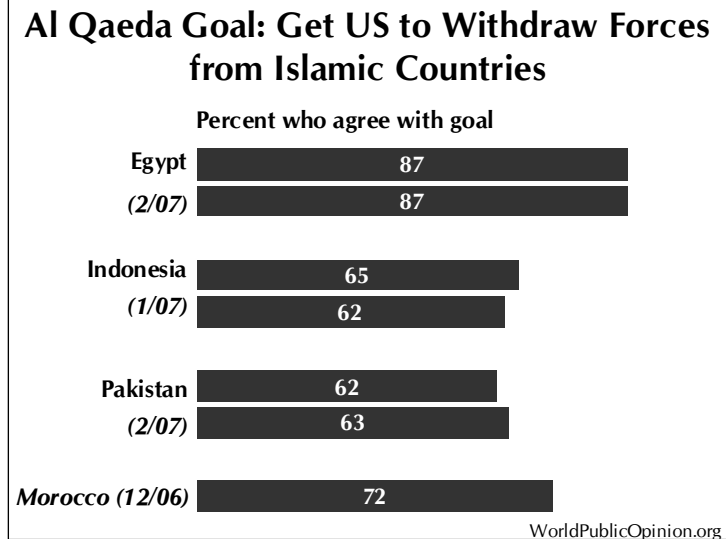
It should be noted though, that it is likely that respondents were thinking more in terms of attacks on civilians, because (as discussed below) attacks on US military forces are widely endorsed.



## 2. Opposition to US Military Presence in Muslim Countries

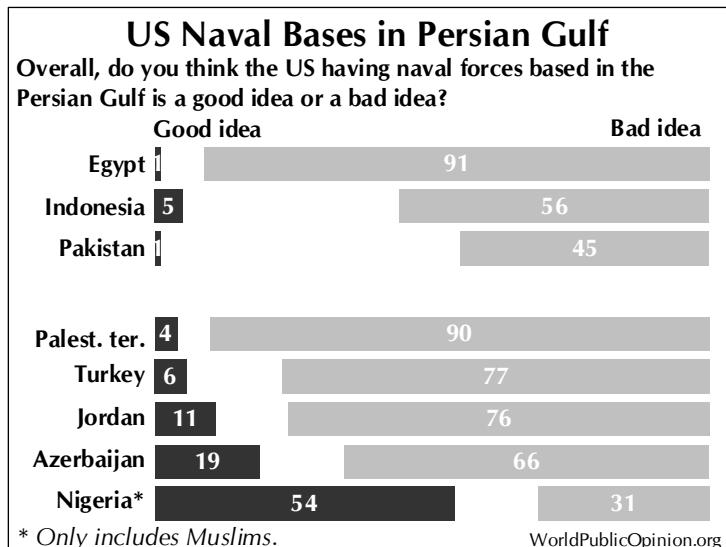
Large majorities endorse the al Qaeda goal of pushing the US to remove all of its military forces from Muslim countries and oppose US naval forces in the Persian Gulf. Even if the government has requested the US forces, majorities or pluralities oppose their presence. If the US were to withdraw troops from Iraq, very few assume that there would be an increase in the likelihood of attacks on the US homeland.

In a variety of questions Muslims expressed their opposition to US military presence in Muslim countries. Asked about the goal of al Qaeda to “push the US to remove its bases and its military forces from all Islamic countries,” large majorities endorse this goal—including 87 percent of Egyptians (83% strongly), 64 percent of Indonesians (21% strongly), and 60 percent of Pakistanis (38% strongly). These strong views show little change since 2007. In December 2006 Moroccans were asked this question and 72 percent endorsed the goal (37% strongly).



Nearly as many also confirmed that they believe that this is an al Qaeda goal: 71 percent said it was in Egypt, as did 61 percent in Indonesia and a 54 percent majority in Pakistan (only 8 percent thought it was not; the rest did not answer). These perceptions of al Qaeda are virtually unchanged since 2007.

Asked specifically about the US naval forces based in the Persian Gulf, there is widespread opposition across the Muslim world, though it is strongest in the Middle East. Eight Muslim publics were asked “Overall, do you think having US naval forces based in the Persian Gulf is a good idea or a bad idea?” On average, 66 percent said it was a bad idea; only 13 percent called it a good idea. Opposition was largest in Egypt (91%) and among the Palestinians (90%), followed by Turkey (77%), Jordan (76%), Azerbaijan (66%), and Indonesia (56%). In Pakistan opposition was lower (a 45% plurality) but only 1 percent said it was a good idea; a remarkably high 54 percent did not provide an answer. Nigerian Muslims were the only public with a positive view—54 percent said US forces in the Persian Gulf are a good idea and 31 percent a bad idea.

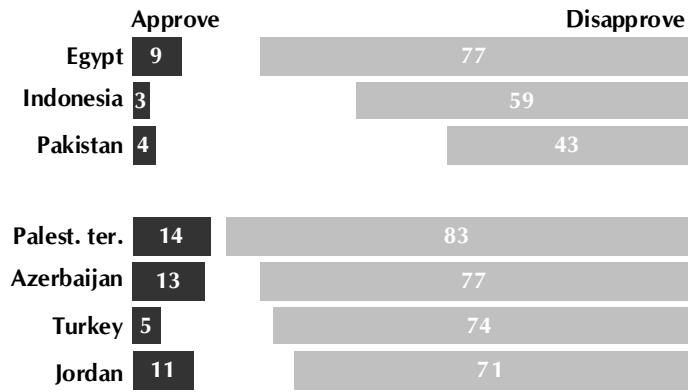


February 25, 2009

In all eight Muslim publics large majorities perceive other people in the Middle East as viewing the bases negatively—a perception apparently borne out by the results in this study. Respondents were asked, “What about the people in the Middle East? Do you think the majority of them approve or disapprove of the US having naval forces based in the Persian Gulf?” On average, 71 percent thought majorities in the Middle East disapprove of US bases in the Gulf; only 14 percent thought they approve. This perception was strongest in nations in or near the Middle East—83 percent in the Palestinian territories; 77 percent in Egypt and Azerbaijan; 74 percent in Turkey; and 71 percent in Jordan.

**Perception of Public Attitudes in Middle East**

What about the people in the Middle East? Do you think the majority of them approve or disapprove of the US having naval forces based in the Persian Gulf?



WorldPublicOpinion.org

It does not appear that views of US military presence are affected by the approval of the host government. Even if the government has requested the US forces, majorities or pluralities oppose their presence. Respondents were offered two statements about the hosting of US forces by a Muslim country’s government. “When requested by the government of a Muslim country,” said the first, “the presence of Western troops can be helpful for security and stability.” The second statement said that “Even when requested by the government of a Muslim country, the presence of Western troops in a Muslim country is a bad idea.” The second statement was preferred in all of the seven publics who heard the question. It was selected by majorities in Egypt (86%), Jordan (63%), the Palestinian territories (59%), Turkey (56%) and Indonesia (51%). It was selected by pluralities in Pakistan (49% to 16%) and Azerbaijan (49% to 32%). It is noteworthy, however, that Palestinians had the largest minority seeing US troops as an acceptable presence under the right conditions (33%).

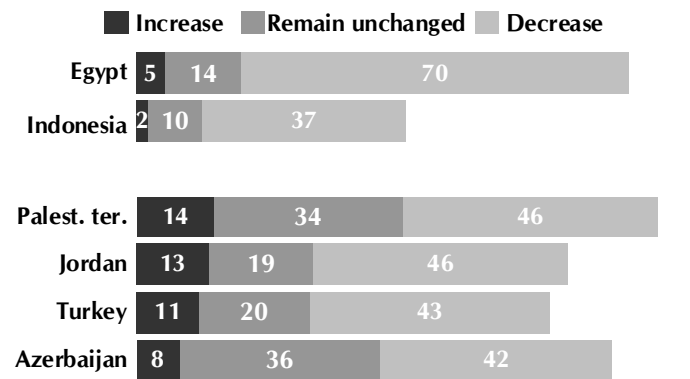
**The Assumed Effect of Withdrawing from Iraq on Likelihood of Attacks on US Homeland**

An oft-repeated concern in American discourse has been that if the United States were to withdraw its forces from Iraq, where it is now engaging al Qaeda forces, al Qaeda forces would then be freed up to “follow” the US troops back to the US, increasing the likelihood of attacks on American civilians there. Very small numbers of those polled concurred with this analysis.

Seven Muslim publics were asked, “If the US were to withdraw its military force from Iraq, do you think the likelihood that al Qaeda would commit attacks against civilians inside

**Effect of US Withdrawal from Iraq**

If the US were to withdraw its military force from Iraq do you think the likelihood that al Qaeda would commit attacks against civilians inside the US would:



WorldPublicOpinion.org

the US would increase, decrease, or remain unchanged?” In all publics, only very small numbers said that the likelihood would increase ranging from 2 percent in Indonesia to 14 percent in the Palestinian territories.

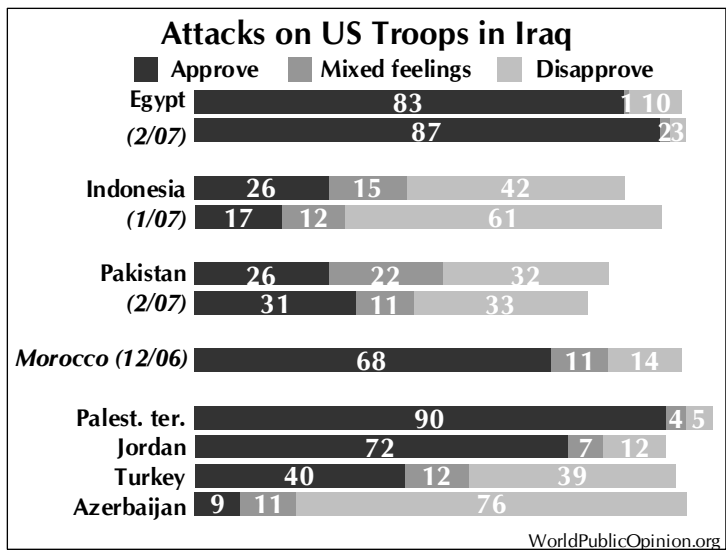
The most common answer was that the likelihood would decrease. This was a majority position in Egypt (70%). In all other cases it ranged from 37 percent (Indonesia) to 46 percent (Jordan and the Palestinian territories).

Substantial numbers also said that the likelihood would remain unchanged ranging from 10 percent in Indonesia to 36 percent in Azerbaijan.

**3. Attacks on US Troops Based in Muslim Countries**

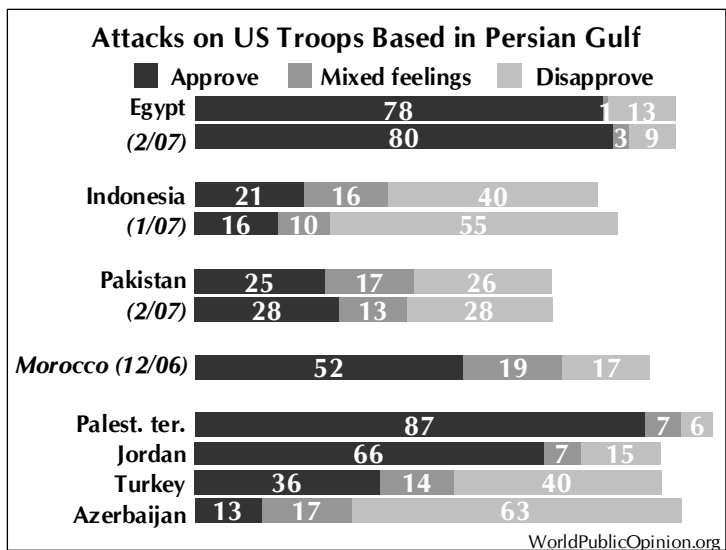
**Significant numbers--majorities in some nations--approve of attacks on US troops based in Muslim countries, presumably as a means to apply pressure for their removal.**

Significant numbers approve of attacks on US troops based in Muslim countries--in some cases even a majority. Presumably this is seen as a means to apply pressure for their removal. In separate questions respondents were asked about their views of attacks on US troops based in Iraq, the Persian Gulf, and Afghanistan. Large majorities approved of attacks in Egypt, the Palestinian territories, Jordan and Morocco. Views were mixed in Pakistan and Turkey. Majorities disapproved in Indonesia and Azerbaijan.



*Majorities Supporting Attacks*

A strong majority of Egyptians support attacks against US military troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf states. When asked about their feelings regarding attacks in Iraq, a majority of Egyptians (83%) approved such attacks while only 10% disapproved. For attacks in Afghanistan, 83% approved and 9% disapproved. A slightly smaller percentage (78%) approved of such attacks in the Persian Gulf and 13% disapproved. The only significant change in responses from 2007 is the increase of Egyptians disapproving of attacks in Iraq (up from 3%) and



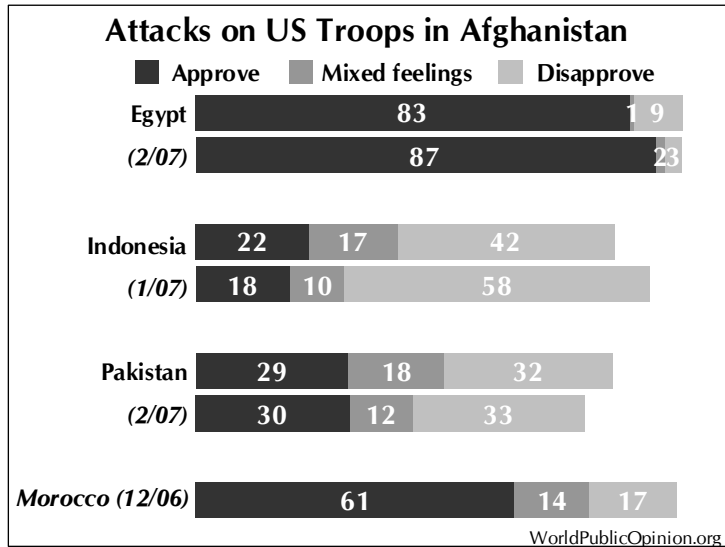
February 25, 2009

Afghanistan (up from 3%).

The Palestinian territories approved most strongly of attacks against US military troops in Iraq with 90% approving. Eighty-seven percent approved of attacks on US troops based in the Persian Gulf states.

Nearly three-quarters of Jordanians (72%) approved of attacks against US military troops in Iraq and only 12% disapproved. A lesser majority (66%) approved of attacks in the Persian Gulf states while 15 percent disapproved.

In 2007, 68% of Moroccans approved of attacks against US military troops in Iraq while 14% disapproved. Sixty-one percent said they approved of such attacks in Afghanistan and 17% disapproved. For attacks in the Persian Gulf, about half of Moroccans (52%) approved and 17% disapproved.



#### Mixed Views

Slightly more Pakistanis disapproved than approved of attacks against US military troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf states. Approximately one-fourth of Pakistanis (26%) approved of attacks on US troops in Iraq while one-third (32%) disapproved. For US troops in Afghanistan, 29% of Pakistanis said they approved of attacks, while 32% disapproved. Almost equal percentages approved (25%) and disapproved (26%) of attacks in the Persian Gulf states. Since 2007, attitudes in Pakistan regarding attacks on US troops have remained relatively stable. The only significant change is the decrease in those who approve of attacks in Iraq (down from 31% to 26%).

In Turkey those who approved or disapproved of attacks against US military troops were nearly equal. For troops in Iraq, 40% approved of attacks and 39% disapproved. For attacks in the Persian Gulf states, 36% said they approved and 40% disapproved.

#### Lean Against Attacks

Only about one in four Indonesians approve of attacks against US military troops in all questions, but less than half disapprove. Twenty-six percent of Indonesians approved of attacks in Iraq while four in ten disapproved (42%). When asked about attacks in Afghanistan, 22% said they approved and 42% disapproved. For attacks in the Persian Gulf states, 21% approved and two-fifths (40%) disapproved.

Indonesian views, while relatively benign, have actually grown significantly less opposed to attacks on US troops. Opposition to attacks in Iraq dropped 19 points (from 61 to 42%) while approval rose nine points (from 17 to 26%). For US troops in Afghanistan, Indonesian disapproval of attacks dropped from 58 to 42 percent and for troops in the Persian Gulf disapproval dropped from 55 to 40 percent. This may be related to a fading with time of the good will heightened by the US military's emergency assistance after the tsunami of 2004.

Azerbaijanis were the least supportive of attacks against US military troops. In Azerbaijan only 9% of respondents said they approved of attacks troops in Iraq while over three-quarters (76%) disapproved. For US troops based in the Persian Gulf states, 13% approved of attacks and 63% disapproved.

**Hypothetical: Reaction if US Troops Fight a Local Insurgency**

Respondents were posed a hypothetical question, in which they were to imagine a scenario in which American troops were sent to their country “to fight insurgents.” They were then asked how they would feel about attacks on those troops. Consistent with their other answers about attacks on US troops, a majority of Indonesians (66%) thought they would disapprove (14% would approve, 8% mixed feelings). The most common answer among Pakistanis was that they would disapprove (38%), but nearly as many said they would approve (16%) or would have mixed feelings (19%). (This question was not permitted in Egypt.)

Respondents were asked how they would regard “attacks on US civilians working for US companies” in such a situation. Eighty-seven percent of Egyptians said they would disapprove of such attacks (82% strongly), as did 78 percent of Indonesians (59% strongly) and a 47 percent plurality of Pakistanis. Approval for such attacks on civilians ranged only 5-9 percent. Mixed feelings ranged from 3 percent in Egypt, to 7 percent in Indonesia, to 18 percent in Pakistan.

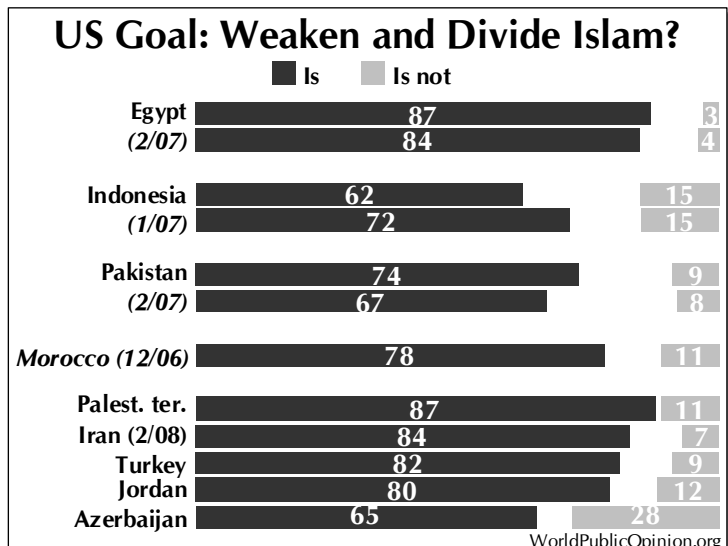
**4. Perception of US Goals in Relation to Muslim World**

**Opposition to US military presence appears to be related to largely negative views of US goals in relation to the Muslim world. Most perceive the US as seeking to weaken and divide Islam and to maintain control over Middle East oil. Less than half perceive that US as seeking to protect them from extremists or as genuinely trying to promote democracy. In regard to Israel, most believe that the US is seeking to further the expansion of Israel, while views are mixed on whether the US is seeking to bring about a Palestinian state. Majorities also perceive that the US is seeking to prevent further terrorist attacks against the US.**

Opposition to US military presence appears to be related to largely negative views of US goals in relation to the Muslim world.

**Perception of US Goals Re Islam**

There is a widespread majority belief that the United States seeks “to weaken and divide the Islamic world,” and this belief seems at least as strong now as it was two years ago. In Egypt 87 percent said they thought this was a US goal (82% definitely a goal). In Indonesia, 62 percent said so, though they were less categorical about it (22% definitely a goal). In Pakistan, 74 percent said it is a US goal (55% definitely). In late 2006 78 percent of Moroccans said this was a US goal (49% definitely).



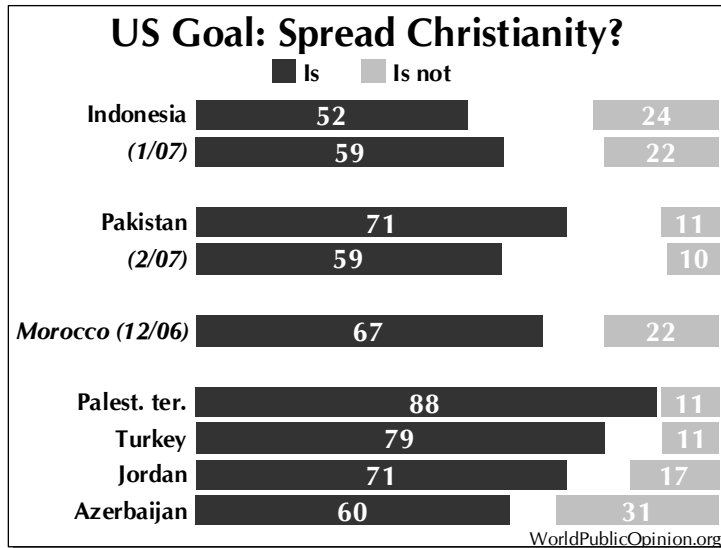
**February 25, 2009**

This question was also asked in four other Muslim nations. Large majorities everywhere saw weakening and dividing Islam as a US goal: 87 percent in the Palestinian territories, 82 percent in Turkey, 80 percent in Jordan, and 65 percent in Azerbaijan.

In Egypt and Pakistan, these majorities have remained stable since 2007. In Indonesia, however, those seeing this as a US goal have diminished 10 points (from 72% to 62%) and those saying they are unsure have increased.

Just as majorities assume that the United States wants to weaken Islam, they see it as more than plausible that it is a US goal “to spread Christianity in the Middle East.” Asked whether they thought this was probably or definitely a US goal, 52 percent in Indonesia and 71 percent in Pakistan thought that it was. (This question was not permitted in Egypt.) In late 2006 67 percent of Moroccans concurred.

In four other Muslim publics, large majorities in each called spreading Christianity a US goal. Eighty-eight percent thought so in the Palestinian territories, 79 percent in Turkey, 71 percent in Jordan, and 60 percent in Azerbaijan.

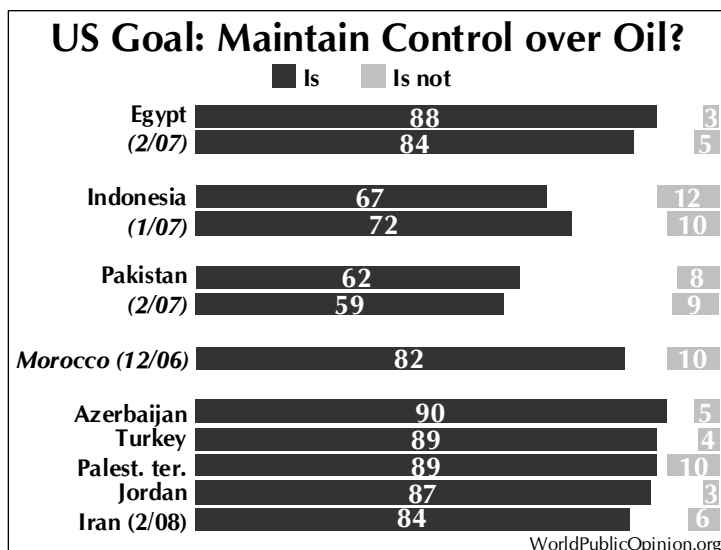


Since 2007, this belief has declined in Indonesia but grown substantially in Pakistan. In Indonesia the numbers thinking this is a US goal have declined 7 points. In Pakistan, though, those thinking this have grown 12 points—from 59 to 71 percent—and those thinking it “definitely” a goal have gone from 36 to 52 percent.

**Perception of US Goals Re Maintaining Control of Mideast Oil**

The belief that it is a US goal to “maintain control over the oil resources of the Middle East is so widespread as to be consensual, and is especially strong in Middle Eastern countries. This is seen as a US goal by 88 percent in Egypt, 67 percent in Indonesia and 62 percent in Pakistan. In late 2006 82 percent of Moroccans agreed.

This question was also asked in four other countries in or near the Middle East, and in each the belief that the US holds maintaining control of Middle Eastern oil as a goal was especially strong. Ninety percent said



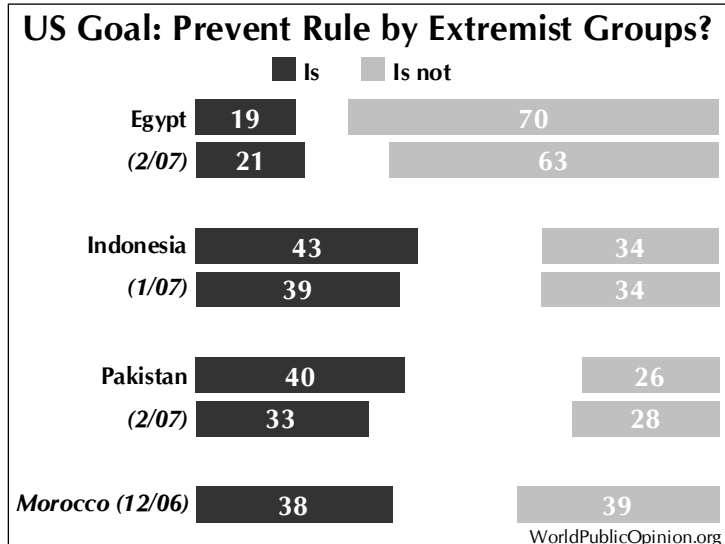
it was a US goal in Azerbaijan (definitely, 74%); 89 percent said so in the Palestinian territories (definitely, 70%); 89 percent said so in Turkey (definitely, 77%); and 87 percent said so in Jordan (definitely, 82%).

Since 2007, the numbers holding this belief have increased slightly in Egypt, and those saying it is “definitely” a goal have risen from 75 to 83 percent. In Indonesia the belief has declined slightly--by five points. In Pakistan the belief has grown slightly, but more significantly, those saying control of oil is “definitely a goal” has increased 7 points—from 38 to 45 percent.

**Perception of US Goals Re Protecting Muslim Countries from Extremists**

More benign views of US goals are given little credence, even if they are not simply rejected. Respondents were asked whether it was a US goal “to ensure that [our country] does not fall into the hands of extremist groups.” In none of the countries asked did even half perceive this as a US goal, but views also varied substantially.

Only in Egypt were views unequivocal: there 70 percent said this is not a US goal (definitely not, 56%)—up 7 points from 2007.



On the other hand modest pluralities in Indonesia (43 to 34%) and Pakistan (40 to 26%) said that it is a goal. In late 2006 views were divided in Morocco.

**Perception of US Goals Re Democracy in Muslim Countries**

In all Muslim publics polled, majorities see US support for democracy in their countries as something which is conditional at best. Respondents were offered three alternatives:

- The US favors democracy in Muslim countries whether or not the government is cooperative with the US
- The US favors democracy in Muslim countries, but only if the government is cooperative with the US
- The US opposes democracy in Muslim countries



February 25, 2009

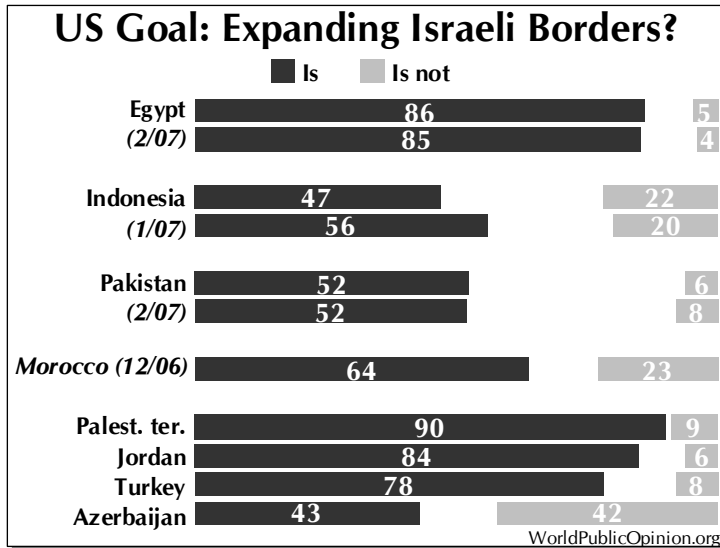
Those saying the US favors democracy unconditionally were very few in all nations ranging from 6 percent in Jordan to 13 percent in Indonesia. On the other hand, those saying the US simply opposes democracy in Muslim countries never elicited a majority: numbers ranged from 25 percent in Pakistan and Azerbaijan to 37 percent in Egypt. The most common response was that the US favors democracy only if the government is cooperative--ranging from 36 percent in Pakistan to 59 percent in Azerbaijan.

Perhaps the key point is that in all seven nations, large majorities shunned the view that the US is genuinely pursuing democracy: 84 percent in Azerbaijan, 81 percent in Jordan, 79 percent in Egypt and Turkey, 73 percent in the Palestinian territories, and 61 percent in Indonesia and Pakistan.

**Perception of US Goals Re Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

Majorities think that the US favors the expansion of Israel’s national territory, while views are mixed as to whether the US really has the goal of bringing about a Palestinian state.

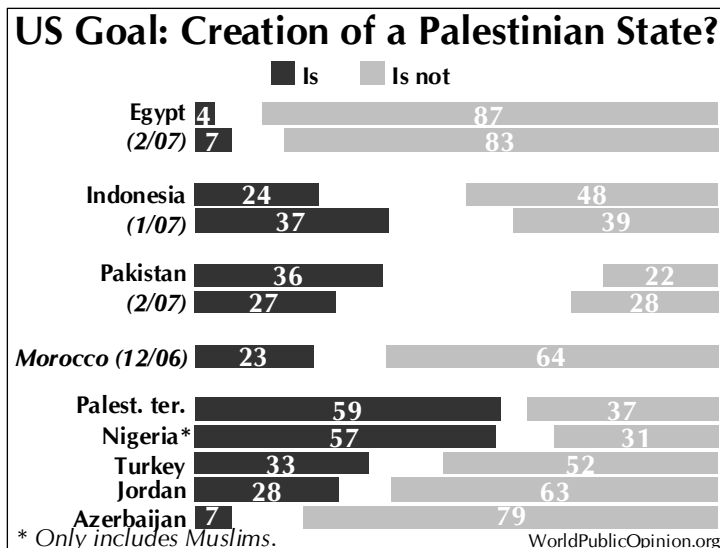
The assumption that it is a US goal to “expand the geographic borders of Israel” is a widespread view among most Muslim nations polled. In the Middle East large majorities hold this view, including in Egypt (86%) the Palestinian territories (90%), and Jordan (84%). This is also a strong majority belief in Turkey (78%) and in late 2006 64 percent of Moroccans expressed this view. However, only a modest majority of Pakistanis holds this view (52%—though only 6% said it is not a goal), as does a plurality of Indonesians (47 to 22%), while Azerbaijanis are divided.



The view that the US favors the expansion of Israel has diminished in Indonesia by 9 points since 2007, but in Egypt and Pakistan there has been no change.

Asked whether it is a US goal “to see the creation of an independent and economically viable Palestinian state,” across eight Muslim publics, five publics said no (4 majorities, 1 plurality) while three said yes (2 majorities, 1 plurality).

The creation of a Palestinian state was seen as not a US goal by majorities in Egypt (87%), Azerbaijan (79%), and Jordan (63%), and Turkey (52%), as well as by a plurality in Indonesia (48% to 24%). In late 2006





Moroccans said it was not a goal (64%).

Interestingly, among those saying yes were the Palestinians themselves: 59 percent of them called a Palestinian state a US goal, while 37 percent said it was not (though they also had the largest majority saying that the US favors the expansion of Israel). Also, in Pakistan a 36 percent plurality thought it was a goal (22% disagreed), as did a majority of Nigerian Muslims (57%).

There have been some shifts in views on this question since 2007. Indonesians—who earlier were divided on the subject, with 39% thinking it was not a goal and 37% that it was—have shifted to a plurality thinking that the US does *not* intend a Palestinian state. Pakistanis were divided on the subject before too (28% no, 27% yes), but have shifted 9 points toward the view that such a state *is* a US goal. Egyptians have not changed significantly.

**Perception of US Goals Re Preventing Terrorist Attacks**

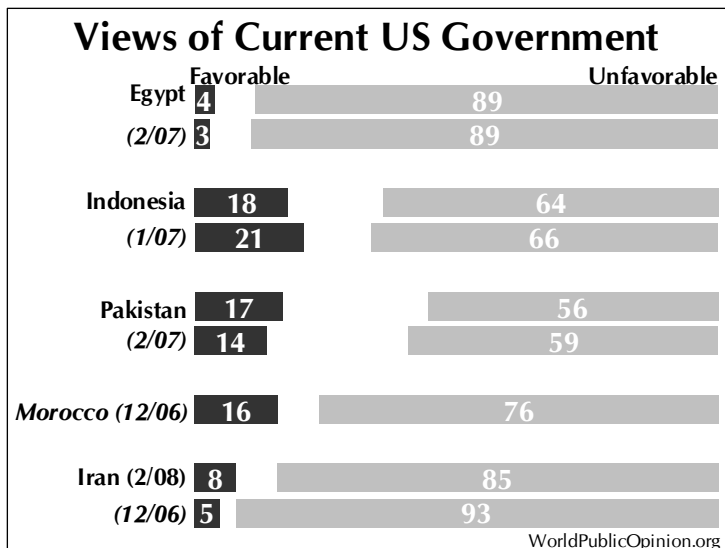
The understanding that the US has a goal of “prevent[ing] more attacks such as those on the World Trade Center in September 2001” is something that coexists for many Muslims with their other beliefs about US goals discussed above. Asked whether preventing 9/11-type attacks was a US goal, 64 percent in Egypt said that it was (definitely, 55%), while only 27 percent said it was not a goal (definitely not, 22%). Likewise, in Indonesia 62 percent said this was a goal of the US (definitely, 24%), while only 15 percent said it was not. In Pakistan, a 39 percent plurality called it a US goal (definitely, 20%); 21 percent said it was not, and 39 percent did not answer. In late 2006 71 percent of Moroccans said it was a goal.

This understanding of the US’s primary declared goal in its anti-terrorist efforts has grown in Egypt and Pakistan since 2007. In Egypt, those saying it is *definitely* a goal have increased 19 points, from 36 to 55 percent. In Pakistan, those seeing it as a US goal have grown from 31 to 39 percent, and those saying it is definitely a goal have doubled (10 to 20%).

**5. General Views of the United States**

**Views of the US government continue to be quite negative. The US is widely seen as hypocritically failing to abide by international law, not living up to the role it should play in world affairs, disrespectful of the Muslim people, and using its power in a coercive and unfair fashion. The US is seen as having extraordinary powers over world events, though views are more mixed on how much Muslim publics’ own governments accommodate the US. Views of the American people and culture are not as negative as for the American government, but are still largely negative.**

Views of the US continue to be quite negative with little sign of improvement. Eighty-nine percent of Egyptians said they have an unfavorable opinion of “the current US government” (i.e., the Bush administration in late 2008)—with 85 percent saying “very unfavorable.” Sixty-four percent of Indonesians said the same (though only 15% said “very unfavorable”), as did 56 percent of Pakistanis (very, 39%). Only 4



**February 25, 2009**

percent of Egyptians, 18 percent of Indonesians, and 17 percent of Pakistanis took a favorable view of the US government. The differences from 2007 are negligible in all three countries.

The US is widely seen as hypocritically failing to abide by international law while pressing other countries to do so. Respondents were asked to choose between two statements:

The US has been an important leader in promoting international laws, and sets a good example by following them, [or]

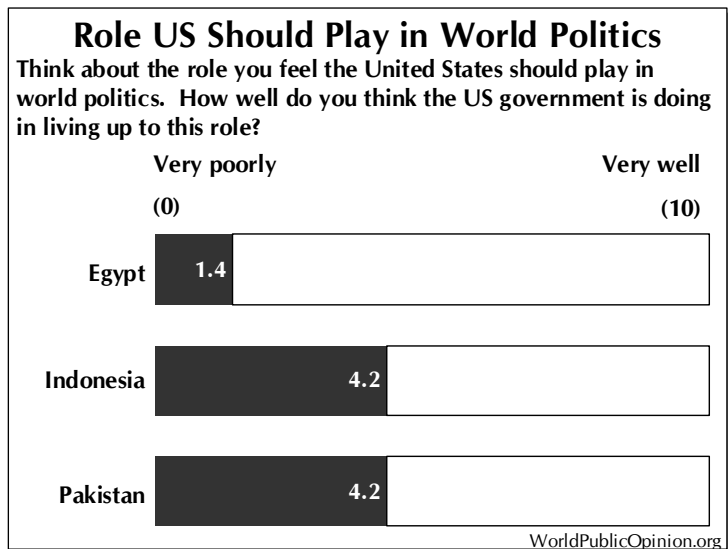
The US tries to promote international laws for other countries, but is hypocritical because it often does not follow these rules itself.



Majorities in Egypt, Indonesia and Pakistan saw the US as hypocritical about international law. In Egypt, two thirds (67%) thought so, while 20 percent saw the US as showing leadership. In Indonesia a lesser majority of 55 percent thought the US is hypocritical; only 12 percent thought the US has shown leadership. In Pakistan, four out of five respondents (78%) saw the US as hypocritical (shows leadership, 20%).

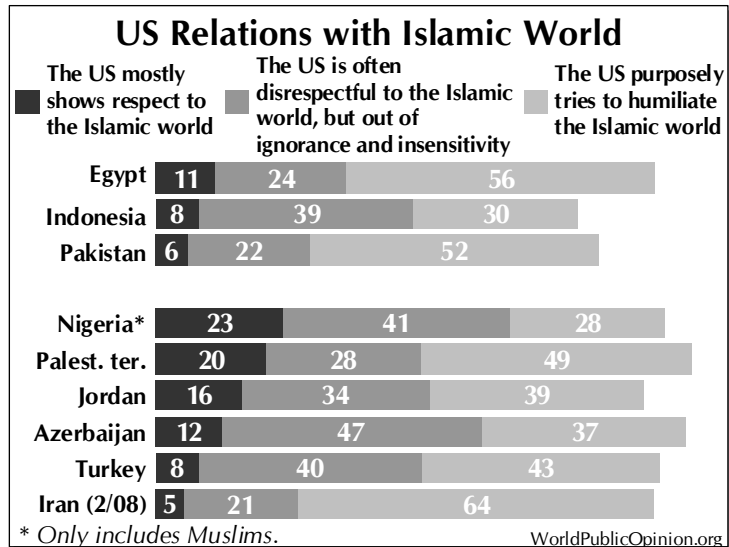
Among the five other Muslim publics asked this question, four saw the US as hypocritical by substantial majorities, while one was divided. Eighty-one percent of Turks said the US is hypocritical, and only 6 percent saw it as a leader on international law. Most Azerbaijanis (78%) also said the US is hypocritical about international law. Seventy-two percent of Palestinians held the same view, although a relatively high 27 percent saw the US as showing leadership. In Jordan, 64 percent said the US is hypocritical (leader: 19%). Nigerian Muslims were divided; 48 percent said the US is hypocritical and 45 percent that it has been a leader on international law.

Few Muslims see the United States as living up to the role it should play in world affairs. Respondents were asked to “think about the role you feel the United States should play in world politics. How well do you think the US government is doing in living up to this role?” and were offered a 0-to-10 scale, with 0 meaning “very poorly” and 10 meaning “very well.” In Egypt the average rating was only 1.4. Seventy-seven percent gave a rating below 5, and 63 percent gave the US a zero; only 8 percent gave a rating above 5 (5: 6%). Indonesian



and Pakistani views were much more temperate. The Indonesian average rating was 4.2. Forty percent of Indonesians rated the US below 5, while 19 percent gave a rating above 5 (5: 11%; 30% did not answer). In Pakistan, the average was also 4.2: 38 percent rated the US below 5 and 28 percent rated it above 5 (5: 9%).

The US is perceived as showing a disrespect toward Muslim countries that many think is purposeful. Given three options, only 12 percent on average across nine Muslim publics said “the US mostly shows respect to the Islamic world.” A substantial one in three (33% on average) said this is not intentional, saying “The US is often disrespectful to the Islamic world, but out of ignorance and insensitivity.” However, 44 percent thought “the US purposely tries to humiliate the Islamic world.” Thus 77 percent on average said the US was disrespectful.



Among Egyptians, a 56 percent majority said the US purposely tries to humiliate the Islamic world (not intentional, 24%; shows respect, 11%). In Indonesia, the most common answer was that US disrespect was unintentional (39%), while 30 percent thought it was purposeful (shows respect: 8%). Pakistanis answered similarly to Egyptians, with a 52 percent majority seeing purposeful disrespect, another 22 percent disrespect out of insensitivity, and 6 percent seeing the US as mostly respectful.

Among the six other Muslim publics asked this question, Iranians were by far the most negative toward the US, with 64 percent saying it purposely humiliates the Islamic world (not intentional, 21%; shows respect, 5%). Palestinians were a distant second, with only 49 percent saying the US purposely humiliates the Islamic world (not intentional, 28%; shows respect, 20%). Comparably negative were Turks, 43 percent of whom said the US shows intentional disrespect, while 40 percent thought it was not intentional (shows respect, 8%)—followed by Jordanians, 39 percent of whom saw intentional disrespect, while 34 percent thought it was not intentional (shows respect, 16%). In two other publics—Azerbaijanis and Nigerian Muslims—the most common answer was that the US was often disrespectful, but out of insensitivity (47% and 41%, respectively).

In a separate WPO poll a majority of respondents in six Muslim countries said that that the US uses its power in a coercive and unfair fashion. Asked, “In our government’s relations with the US, do you think the US more often treats us fairly or abuses its power to make us do what the government wants?” Majorities said that the US abuses its power coercively in the Palestinian territories (91%), Turkey (87%), Egypt (66%), Azerbaijan (63%), Indonesia (57%), and Jordan (51%). The only countries to have more than 10 percent saying that the US treats them fairly were Jordan (31%), Egypt (30%), and Azerbaijan (26%).

**Extreme Images of US Power**

The United States is seen as having extraordinary powers over world events. When respondents were asked “How much of what happens in the world today would you say is controlled by the United States—very little, some, most, or nearly all?” majorities in Egypt, Indonesia and Pakistan said the

**February 25, 2009**

US controls most or nearly all events on the world scene. In Egypt 84 percent believed this, with almost half (46%) saying the US controls nearly all world events. In Indonesia 52 percent agreed, but 40 percent limited this to “most events” while 18 percent said “nearly all” (some, 22%; very little, 6%). In Pakistan 61 percent thought the United States controls most (33%) or nearly all (28%) of world events; only 15 percent thought this was true of just some (10%) or very little (5%) of world events.

Though Egyptians’ image of US control is virtually unchanged since

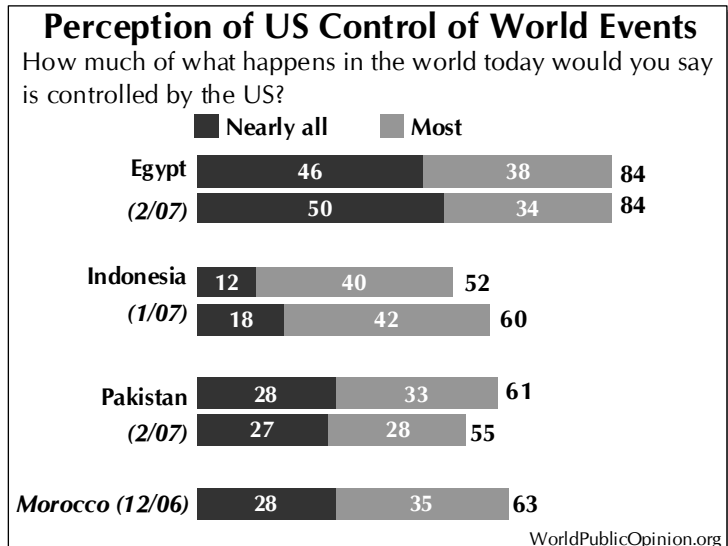
2007, Indonesians believe in this image slightly less and Pakistanis believe in it slightly more. Sixty percent of Indonesians thought in 2007 that the US controlled most or nearly all world events, but this has since declined by 8 points. On the other hand, in 2007 55 percent of Pakistanis thought the United States had this degree of control; in the current poll, this belief is up 6 points.

But, though respondents say the US has extraordinary power and that it uses this power coercively, when respondents were confronted directly with the question of whether their government actually submits to US pressure out of fear of US military power, responses were more mixed. Respondents were asked: “How much, if at all, do you think our government adjusts its policies out of fear that the US might otherwise use military force against it--not at all, just a little, some, or a lot?” The results show that many have a nuanced picture of how their government sometimes fends off the hegemon in practice. Nowhere did a majority say that their government adjusts its policies some or a lot out of fear of the United States, though majorities in most cases said that it did so at least a little.

In Indonesia, 41 percent thought their government adjusts its policies some (33%) or a lot (8%) out of fear of the US; 17 thought this happens just a little (17%), while 11 percent said not at all (11%); and 31 percent did not venture an opinion. In Pakistan—which frequently receives US airstrikes within its western frontier--a higher 47 percent thought their government adjusts its policies some (28%) or a lot (19%), while 10 percent thought this happens just a little, while 9 percent said not at all (9%). The question was not permitted in Egypt.

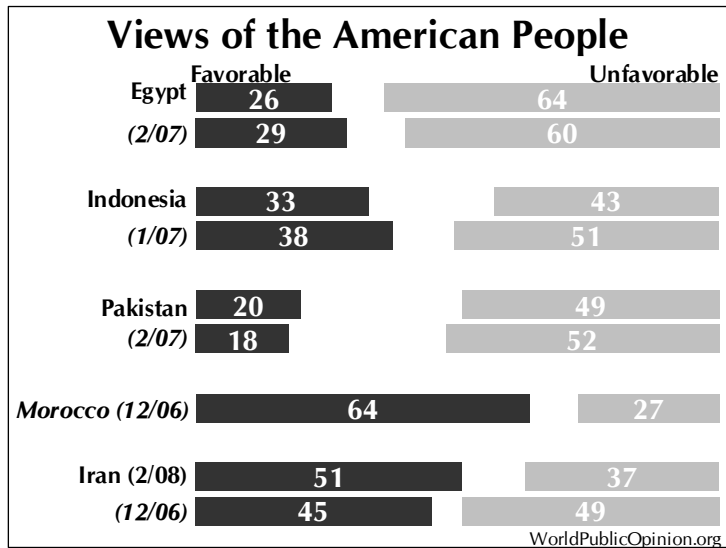
Among the four other predominantly Muslim nations asked this question, only two leaned toward thinking their governments adjusted their policies some or a lot out of fear of the United States. Turks and Azerbaijanis did lean toward thinking that fear of the US influences government policy. Forty-nine percent of Turks said this takes place some (31%) or a lot (18%); while 14 percent said only a little, and 13 percent not at all (13%). In Azerbaijan, 47 percent said this takes place some (30%) or a lot (17%), while 20 percent said it occurs just a little, 14 percent not at all.

The numbers reporting such accommodation were lower in the Palestinian territories and Jordan. In the Palestinian territories, 42 percent thought this happened some (28%) or a lot (14%); only a little (36%) or not at all (18%). Jordanians were similar to Palestinians: about a third said it did so some (16%) or a lot (18%), while 22 percent said only a little and 26 percent not at all.



**Views of America’s People, Culture, and Freedom of Expression**

Views of the American people and culture are not as negative as for the American government, but are still largely negative. In Egypt, 64 percent have an unfavorable view (57% very) of the American people; 26 percent have a favorable view. In Indonesia a plurality of 43 percent sees the American people negatively, though those saying “very” are only 8 percent; 33 percent have a favorable view. In Pakistan, 49 percent are unfavorable (32% very); 20 percent have a favorable opinion of the American people.



These views have changed little since 2007, apart from having worsened slightly in Egypt. There unfavorable views have risen from 60 to 64 percent, but *very* unfavorable views have gone up 9 points.

This question was also asked in Iran in early 2008. There a bare majority of 51 percent viewed the American people favorably, up from 45 percent in late 2006. Those with an unfavorable view diminished from 49 percent in 2006 to 37 percent in 2008.

On American culture, majorities have unfavorable views in all three countries asked. In Egypt, 60 percent have an unfavorable view—55 percent very unfavorable—of American culture, while 29 percent have a favorable view. In Indonesia, a very large majority—86 percent—express an unfavorable view, but this majority is evenly divided between a somewhat unfavorable and very unfavorable opinion (43% each). In Pakistan, 55 percent take an unfavorable view of American culture (39% very), but only 12 percent view it favorably—a third expressed no opinion.

Since 2007, negative views of American culture have intensified in two out of three countries. In Egypt, those taking a *very* unfavorable view have increased slightly, by 7 points. In Indonesia, those saying “very unfavorable” have risen 21 points from 22 percent to 43 percent. In Pakistan, however, those taking a very unfavorable view have declined 7 points—though people with a favorable view remain rare (12%; 11% in 2007).

Attitudes toward the laws permitting freedom of expression in the US remain rather negative. In the current poll, a 48 percent plurality of Egyptians viewed these laws unfavorably (43% very), while 42 percent were favorable (28% very). In Indonesia, 57 percent were negative and only 33 percent were positive. Forty-four percent of Pakistanis had an unfavorable view, while 23 percent were favorable.

Indonesian views of US laws permitting freedom of expression have, however, shifted in a positive direction. The numbers with a favorable view of these laws have doubled from 17 percent in 2007 to 33 percent in the current poll, while the 57 percent majority that is unfavorable has declined from 73 percent.

6. Views of al Qaeda

Views of al Qaeda are complex. Majorities agree with nearly all of al Qaeda’s goals to change US behavior in the Muslim world, to promote Islamist governance, and to preserve and affirm Islamic identity. However, consistent with the general rejection of attacks on civilians, only minorities say they approve of al Qaeda’s attacks on Americans as well as its goals, suggesting that many may feel ambivalence. Consistent with this possible ambivalence, views of Osama bin Laden are mixed. The tension between support for al Qaeda’s goals and discomfort with attacks on civilians may contribute to the widespread denial that al Qaeda was behind the 9/11 attacks (something that increasing numbers see as having been negative for the Muslim world).

Support for Al Qaeda’s Goals

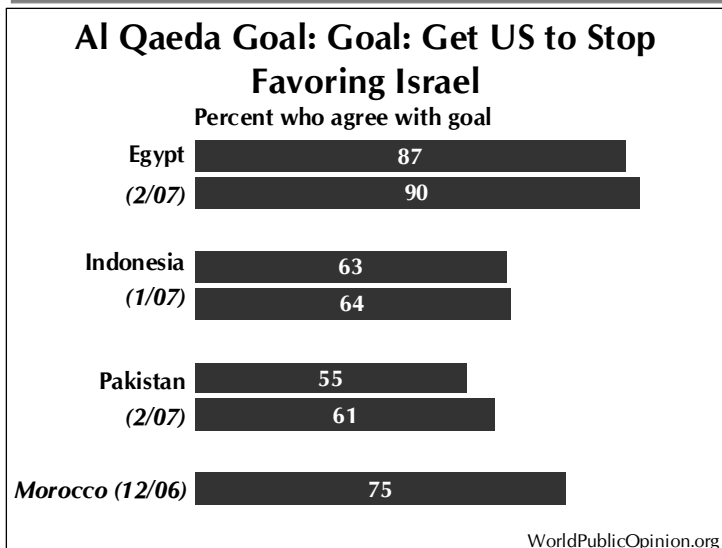
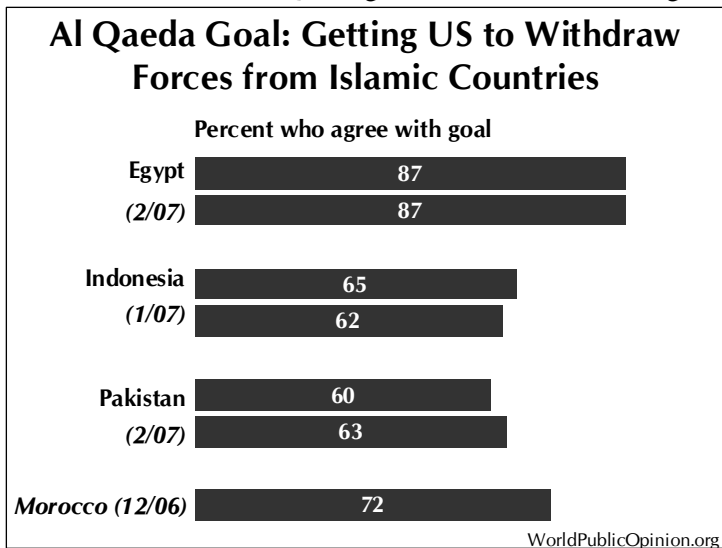
In Egypt, Indonesia and Pakistan, majorities say they agree with many of al Qaeda’s goals—from pushing the United States out of the Islamic world to establishing a new Caliphate—and in most cases majorities are aware that these goals are those of al Qaeda.

This study repeated its 2007 questions asking about seven different goals that have been expressed in statements of al Qaeda. These goals can be divided into ones related to changing US behavior in the Muslim world, to promoting Islamist governance, and to preserving and affirming Islamic identity. In nearly all cases majorities agreed that these were indeed al Qaeda goals as well as endorsing the goals.

Goals: Changing US Behavior in the Muslim World

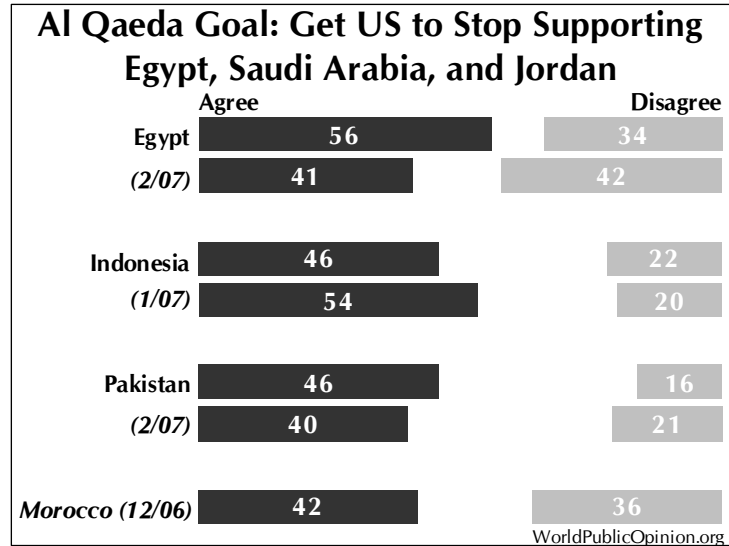
A primary al Qaeda related to US behavior is **“to push the US to remove its bases and its military forces from all Islamic countries.”** This goal was endorsed by large majorities (Egypt 87%, Indonesia 64%, Pakistan 60%), and rejected by no more than 16 percent anywhere. In late 2006, 72 percent of Moroccans also endorsed this goal. Majorities also affirmed that this was probably an al Qaeda goal (Egypt 71%, Indonesia 61%, Pakistan 54%; Morocco 2006, 78%). There were no significant changes from 2007.

Another such goal is **“to push the United States to stop favoring Israel in its conflict with the Palestinians.”** Eighty-seven percent of Egyptians, 63 percent of Indonesians, and 55 percent of Pakistanis said they agreed with this goal—as did 75 percent of Moroccans in late 2006. Seventy-one



percent of Egyptians thought this was likely an al Qaeda goal, as did 58 percent of Indonesians and 50 percent of Pakistanis (41% of Pakistanis did not answer). In 2006 76 percent of Moroccans saw this as an al Qaeda goal. Views have been largely stable since 2007 except that the number of Pakistanis agreeing with this goal has dropped six points, with a corresponding increase in the number not providing an answer.

The only goal to not receive strong support was **“to push the US to stop providing support to such governments as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan.”** (In Egypt, only Saudi Arabia and Jordan were mentioned in the question.) Responses to this question have also changed substantially since 2007. Among Egyptians, 56 percent said they agreed with this goal--up 15 points from 2007—while 34 percent disagreed. In Indonesia and Pakistan, only pluralities approved (46% in each country). Since 2007 support has risen in Pakistan by 6 points, but has fallen in Indonesia by 8 points. In late 2006 a modest Moroccan plurality agreed, 42 to 36 percent.



This was also the only goal that had less than a majority affirming that it indeed was an al Qaeda goal, and responses have been quite unstable relative to 2007. Agreement was 49 percent in Egypt (up from 33% in 2007); 43 percent in Pakistan (up from 31%); and 40 percent in Indonesia (down from 53%). In late 2006 51 percent of Moroccans thought this was an al Qaeda goal, while 28 percent thought it was not.

*Goals: Promoting Islamist Governance*

The long-term goal for Islamist governance held out by al Qaeda’s ideology is **“to unify all Islamic countries into a single Islamic state or Caliphate.”** Seventy percent of Egyptians, 69 percent of Pakistanis, but only 35 percent of Indonesians said they agreed with this goal. In late 2006, 71 percent of Moroccans were in agreement.

Indonesians appear to have shifted significantly since 2007 on the subject of a Caliphate. Agreement with the goal has dropped 15 points, from 50 to 35 percent; disagreement has risen 10 points from 39 to 49 percent. In Egypt and Pakistan, however, there has no significant change.

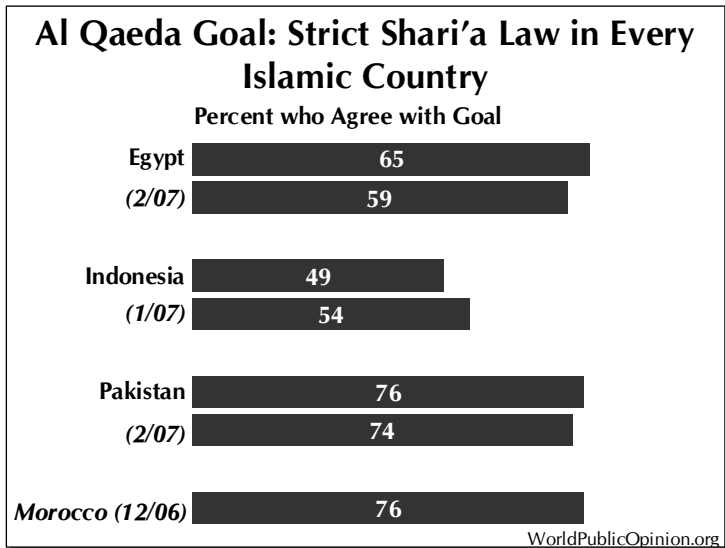
Fifty-six percent of Egyptians, 61 percent of Pakistanis and 50 percent of Indonesians regard an eventual Caliphate as a goal of al Qaeda. In late 2006, 67 percent of Moroccans thought this as well. In Indonesia—where fewer agree with the goal than did before—fewer see it as an al Qaeda goal as well (this view has dropped 9 points). In Pakistan, on the other hand, the view that the Caliphate is an al Qaeda goal has gone up sharply since 2007, from 44 to 61 percent.

Another al Qaeda goal for Islamist governance is **“to require a strict application of Shari’a law in every Islamic country.”** In Egypt 81 percent said they agreed with this goal. Pakistanis were similar at 76 percent; Indonesians, however, agreed by only a narrow plurality: 49 percent supported the goal

February 25, 2009

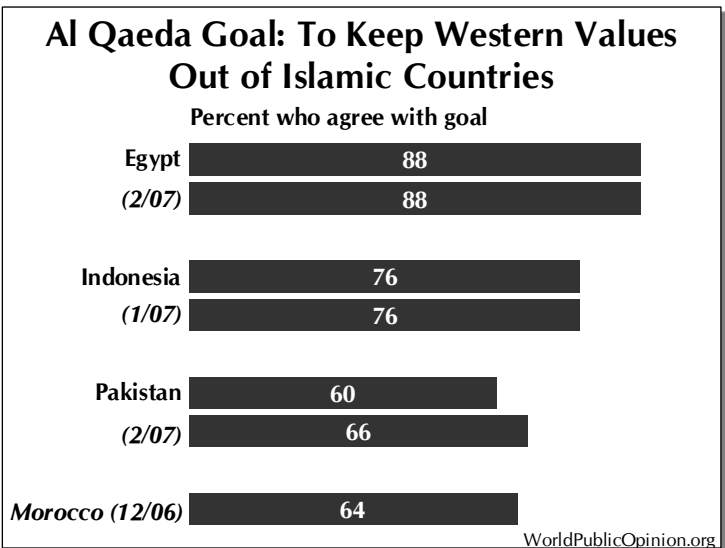
(just 14% strongly), while 42 percent disagreed. Compared to 2007 Indonesian support for this goal has dropped 5 points, while among Egyptians those saying they agree strongly has risen 6 points (59 to 65%). In Morocco in late 2006, 76 percent agreed.

When asked whether they thought this is an al Qaeda goal, majorities in the three countries asked said that it is: 57 percent in Egypt, 53 percent in Indonesia, and 68 percent in Pakistan (where this understanding has grown 15 points.) In Morocco in late 2006, 74 percent saw strict Shari'a as an al Qaeda goal.



*Goals: Preserving and Affirming Islamic Identity*

When asked whether they agree with the goal “to keep Western values out of Islamic countries,” majorities in Egypt, Indonesia and Pakistan said they did, in largely the same numbers as they had in 2007 (88% in Egypt, 76% in Indonesia, 60% in Pakistan). In Morocco in late 2006, 64 percent agreed and 21 percent disagreed. However, in no country asked in 2008 did more than 14 percent disagree with this goal.



Similarly, majorities in these three countries continue to support the goal “to stand up to America and affirm the dignity of the Islamic people.”

Eighty-six percent of Egyptians, 69 percent of Indonesians, and 56 percent of Pakistanis agreed with this goal (in Pakistan 30% did not answer). Nowhere did more than 15 percent disagree in 2008. (In 2006, Moroccans agreed with the goal by 69 to 19 percent.)

**Conflicted Feelings about Al Qaeda**

While many Muslims agree with many al Qaeda goals toward the US and widely share their generally negative views of the US government, as discussed above, most also disapprove of attacks on American civilians. This suggests that many Muslims may have conflicted feelings about al Qaeda.

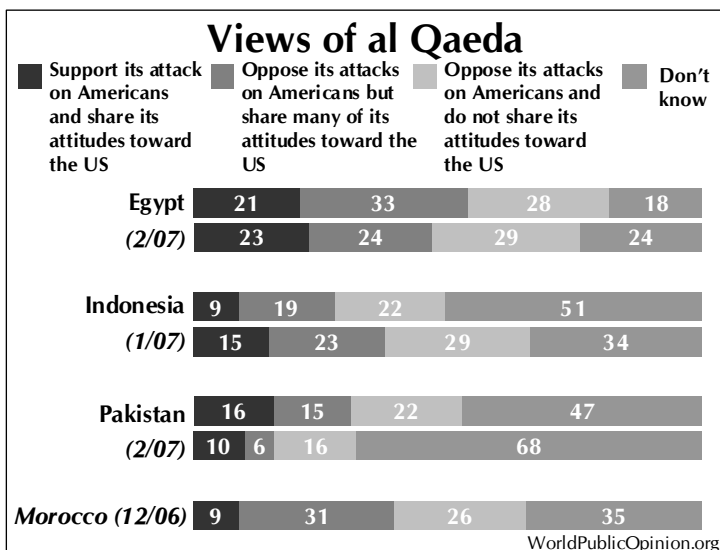
To explore this possibility further, respondents were presented a question that differentiated between al Qaeda’s stance toward America and its attacks on Americans. It offered three alternatives:



- I support al Qaeda’s attacks on Americans and share its attitudes toward the US
- I oppose al Qaeda’s attacks on Americans but share many of its attitudes toward the US
- I oppose al Qaeda’s attacks on Americans and do not share its attitudes toward the US

Across Egypt, Indonesia and Pakistan, no more than a fifth—on average just 15 percent said they supported al Qaeda’s attacks and also shared its attitudes. On the other hand less than three in ten—on average 24 percent—said they opposed the attacks and rejected the attitudes toward the US as well.

As many as a third—on average 22 percent—said that on one hand they opposed al Qaeda’s attacks but on the other opposed shared al Qaeda’s attitudes toward the US. Also large numbers—on average 39 percent—declined to answer: another possible indicator of internal conflict, as many people have difficulty sorting out and expressing conflicting attitudes.



In Egypt, 33 percent said they opposed al Qaeda’s attacks on Americans but shared its attitudes toward the US, while 21 percent supported the attacks as well; 28 percent rejected both. In Indonesia, 19 percent said they opposed the attacks but shared the attitudes, but only 9 percent supported the attacks as well; 22 percent rejected both (51% did not answer). And in Pakistan, 15 percent opposed the attacks but shared the attitudes; 16 percent supported the attacks as well; and 22 percent rejected both (47% did not answer). Moroccans were asked this question in late 2006; 31 percent opposed the attacks but shared the attitudes, 9 percent supported the attacks as well, and 26 percent rejected both.

Since 2007, in Egypt the number who opposed al Qaeda’s attacks but share its attitudes toward the US has risen 9 points, while the other attitudes have remained stable. Among Indonesians, those supporting the attacks and sharing the attitudes have dropped from 15 to 9 percent. In Pakistan the distribution of attitudes has changed little, but more were willing to answer the question than in 2007.

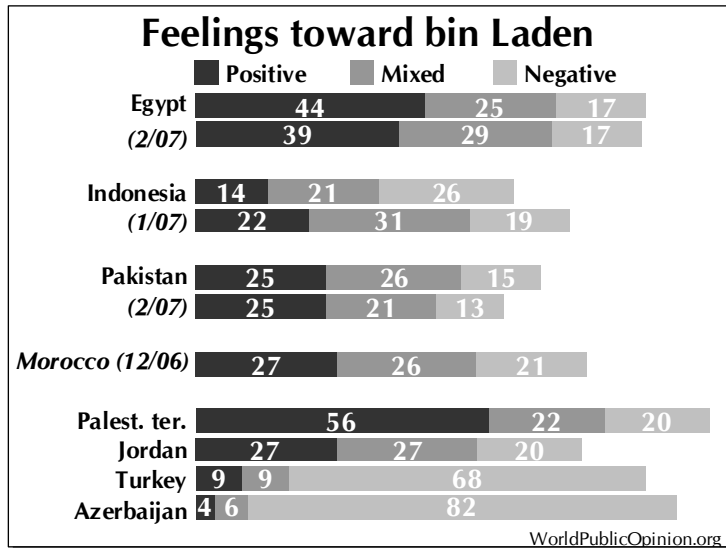
**Divided Feelings about Bin Laden**

Consistent with the pattern of ambivalence about al Qaeda, views of Bin Laden are quite divided. Respondents were asked whether their feelings toward Osama bin Laden were positive, negative or mixed. In Egypt, 44 percent said they viewed him positively, 17 percent negatively, and 25 percent had mixed feelings. In Indonesia, a much lower 14 percent expressed positive feelings and 26 percent negative feelings (mixed, 21%; 39% did not answer). In Pakistan—where bin Laden is thought by some to reside—a quarter (25%) had positive feelings toward him while 15% had negative feelings (mixed, 26%; 34% did not answer). In late 2006 Moroccans showed no fixed view, with 27 percent positive, 21 percent negative, and 26 percent mixed.

February 25, 2009

Compared to 2007, Indonesia was notably more negative in 2008 toward bin Laden, with positive feelings dropping 10 points (from 24 percent to 14 percent), and negative feelings rising 7 points. Egyptian and Pakistani opinion was essentially unchanged.

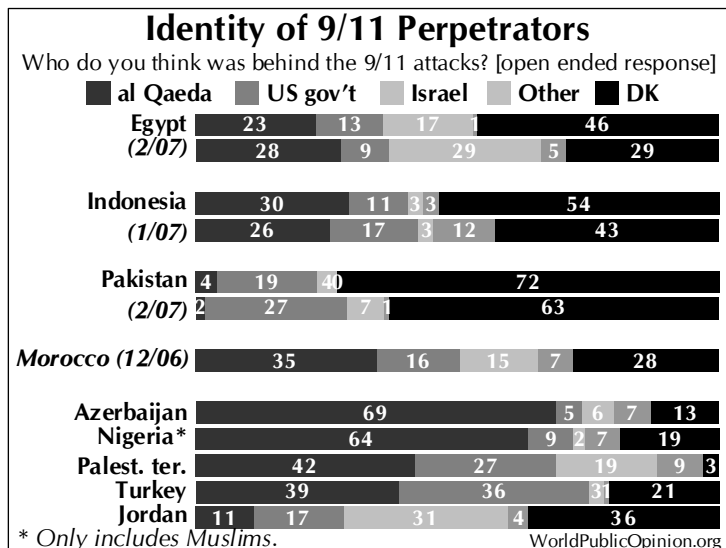
Four other publics were asked this question: Jordanians, Palestinians, Turks and Azerbaijanis. Jordanians showed a similar pattern with no dominant position: 27 percent positive, 20 percent negative, and 27 percent mixed. However the Palestinians were the one public to have a majority favorable about bin Laden (56%), while 20 percent were negative and 22 percent mixed. Turks and Azerbaijanis, on the other hand were sharply negative. Sixty-eight percent of Turks felt negatively toward bin Laden and a striking 82 percent of Azerbaijanis were also negative.



### Views of the September 11 Attacks

The conflicted feelings about al Qaeda—support for its goals coupled with rejection of its attacks on civilians—may help explain one of the most curious phenomena found in this study: the widespread rejection of the idea that al Qaeda was behind the September 11 attacks.

Respondents were asked “Who do you think was behind the 9/11 attacks?” and responded in open-ended fashion, without options being provided. Among seven nations, in only one (Azerbaijan) did a majority give a response that either named al Qaeda or alluded to it, such as referring to Islamic extremists or militants; and in some nations only very small numbers gave such an answer. At the same time, overall, no actor was cited more frequently, and very large numbers—in some cases majorities—did not provide an answer.



What this suggests is that many Muslims may feel tension or cognitive dissonance between their support for al Qaeda’s goals and disapproval of attacks on civilians. To alleviate this tension they may then avoid or discount information that points to al Qaeda (even the videos in which al Qaeda leaders claim responsibility) and seek out information that casts doubts on al Qaeda’s culpability and offers alternative theories.

The lowest numbers identifying Islamic extremists were found in Pakistan, with just 4 percent. This was followed by Jordan (11%), Egypt (23%), Indonesia (30%), Turkey (39%), and the Palestinian territories (42%). The one majority was in Azerbaijan (69%). In Morocco in late 2006 45 percent gave this answer. Compared to 2007 there was a slight increase in Indonesia and a slight decrease in Egypt.

The second most frequent answer was that the US government was behind the attacks. Interestingly the highest number giving this answer was in the US ally Turkey (36%), followed by the Palestinian territories (27%), Jordan (17%), Egypt (13%), Indonesia (11%) and Azerbaijan (5%). In late 2006 16 percent of Moroccans gave this answer. Compared to 2007 there was an 8-point drop in Pakistan, a 6 point drop in Indonesia and a 4 point increase in Egypt.

The third most common answer was Israel, cited by Jordanians (31%), Palestinians (19%), Egyptians (17%), and small numbers of Azerbaijanis (6%), Pakistanis (4%), Indonesians (3%), and Turks (3%). In 2007 7 percent of Moroccans gave this answer. Compared to 2007 the only significant change is a 12-point drop in Egypt.

Another possible indicator of inner conflict and avoidance is the failure to answer, which was remarkably widespread given the saliency of this event for many Muslims. The failure to answer reached as high as 72 percent in Pakistan, 54 percent in Indonesia and 46 percent in Egypt. Large numbers were also found in Jordan (36%), and Turkey (21%), with relatively lower numbers in Azerbaijan (13%), and the Palestinian territories (3%).

Remarkably, since 2007, in all three tracking countries there has been an extraordinary *increase* in the numbers *declining to say* who they think is responsible for 9/11—something not seen in other trend questions. In Egypt non-responses have risen 17 points; in Indonesia, 11 points; and in Pakistan, 9 points—though on many other quite controversial questions, Pakistanis were more forthcoming in 2008 than in 2007. This suggests that, rather than the passage of time allowing greater distance and deliberation, an avoidance and denial mechanism may have grown more habitual.

A growing majority Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan say that the effect of 9/11 has been negative for the people of the Islamic world. Seventy-four percent of Egyptians called it negative (61% very), as did 58 percent of Indonesians (38% very), and a 46 percent plurality in Pakistan (30% very; only 11% called it positive). In Egypt this negative judgment has grown by 14 points since 2007; in Indonesia those saying “very negative” have grown by 16 points. In Morocco in late 2006, 62 percent called the effect negative (39% very).

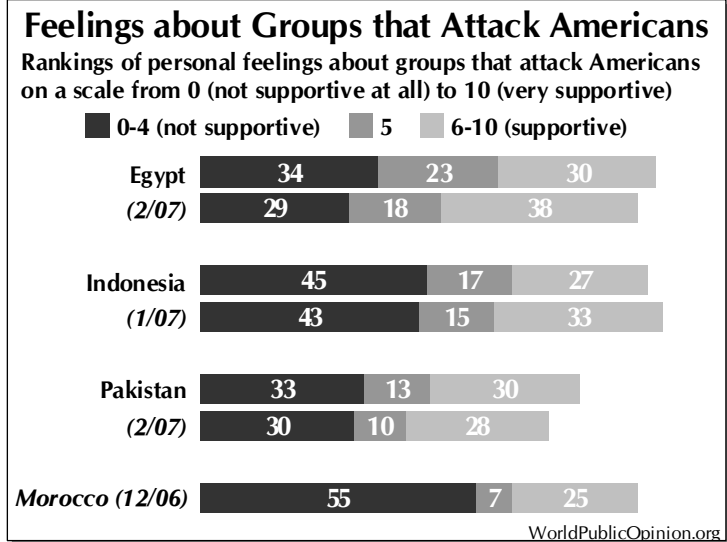
### ***7. Views of Groups That Attack Americans***

**In regard to the generic category of groups that attack Americans, views are divided. Only small numbers in all countries say they would speak favorably of such groups or would approve if a family member were to join such a group. However, significant numbers say they would at least have mixed feelings if a family member were to join such a group and more people say they express approval of such groups to others than say they express disapproval.**

Consistent with this possible ambivalence about al Qaeda, respondents tended to show divided feelings about the general category of Muslim groups that attack Americans. Respondents were asked how they felt about “groups in the Muslim world that attack Americans” on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning not all supportive and 10 meaning very supportive. It should be noted that the question did not specify whether these would be attacks on civilians or military forces, because in fact such groups tend to do some of both.

Responses were divided. The numbers giving a score above 5 were never a majority (Egypt 30%, Indonesia 27%, Pakistan 30%). However in no case did a majority give scores below 5 (Egypt 34%, Indonesia 45%, Pakistan 33%). Substantial numbers gave a score of 5, reflecting ambivalence (Egypt 23%, Indonesia 17%, Pakistan 13%). On average across all three countries the mean response was 4.3.

These attitudes show remarkable stability: the only substantial change over 2007 is that in Egypt the numbers giving a score above 5 have dropped eight points.



Interestingly there is a tendency to perceive that others are more supportive of such groups than oneself. Asked how the average person in their country would rate groups that attack Americans, the mean score across the three countries was 4.9. When rating themselves the mean across the three countries was somewhat lower at 4.3. This suggests that many assume such militant groups benefit from somewhat wider sympathies in these countries than they actually do.

In a different question respondents were asked: “Thinking about groups in the Muslim world that attack Americans, would you say you disapprove of all these groups, approve of some but disapprove of others, or approve of all or most of these groups?”

In Egypt a majority (52%) said they approved of some groups that attack Americans; another 9 percent approved of most such groups, while 29 percent disapproved of all of them. In Indonesia, a much lower 28 percent approved of some groups (approve most, 5%); a plurality of 47 percent disapproved of all of them. In Pakistan, 24 percent approved of some groups and other 17 percent of most groups, making 41 percent who approved to some degree. Twenty-two percent disapproved of all of them (37% did not answer). In Morocco in late 2006, 35 percent approved of some groups (approve most, 3%), but a 44 percent plurality disapproved of all of them.

Since 2007 there have been some significant changes on this question. Egypt’s disapproving minority has grown from 21 to 29 percent, but the numbers approving (in whole or in part) have remained stable. In Indonesia, disapproval has declined from a 52 percent majority to a 47 percent plurality, while those approving (in whole or in part) have gone up, from 23 to 33 percent. Pakistan has seen the most dramatic changes: the disapproving minority has declined 12 points (from 34 to 22%) and those approving (in whole or in part) have risen 29 points (from 12 to 41%). These changes in Indonesian and Pakistani opinion are worthy of concern. They do not appear in the trend question (discussed just above) that names al Qaeda. This suggests that Indonesian and Pakistani sympathies for Islamist militant groups are growing, but are free-floating; they are not intrinsically attached to al Qaeda.

The question about “groups in the Muslim world that attack Americans” was also asked to four other Muslim publics. In the Palestinian territories—the most supportive of all—a 53 percent majority

approved of at least some groups, while another 30 percent approved of most; only 14 percent disapproved of all such groups. In Jordan, 42 percent approved of some groups and another 20 percent approved of most; 21 percent disapproved. Turks were divided between the 42 percent approving of some (32%) or most (10%) such groups, and the 45 percent who disapproved of all of them. Azerbaijanis were the most disapproving—as they were of al Qaeda in the question discussed just above. Eighty-one percent disapproved of all such groups.

Those who said they approved of at least some groups that attack Americans (or would not answer) were also asked a number of questions to gauge their level of support. Respondents were asked whether they sometimes “speak favorably to your family and friends about groups that attack Americans.” Eighteen percent of Egyptians and Indonesians, as well as 14 percent of Pakistanis, said they would (up from just 5% in 2007). In 2007 12 percent of Moroccans said they would. (All percentages are of the full sample.)

Respondents in three countries were asked (again excluding Egypt) whether they would approve if a family member were to join a group that attacks Americans. In Indonesia these numbers were quite low—just 10 percent said they would approve (4%) or have mixed feelings (6%). This was virtually unchanged from 2007. Similarly, in Morocco in late 2006 just 15 percent said they would approve (3%) or have mixed feelings (12%).

However, in Pakistan a substantial and growing number said they would at least have mixed feelings. This year 35 percent said they would either approve (13%) or have mixed feelings (22%). This is up 20 points from 2007, when 15 percent said they would approve (5%) or have mixed feelings (10%).

Another important question is whether those who disapprove of such groups express their disapproval. Those that said they disapproved were asked whether they “sometimes speak to your family and friends expressing your disapproval of groups that attacks Americans.” Only small numbers said they would—in Egypt 5 percent, in Indonesia 12 percent (down from 21% in 2007), and in Pakistan 10 percent. In late 2006 11 percent of Moroccans said they would speak about such feelings.

In every country the numbers saying they would express disapproval of such groups to others was lower than the number saying they would express approval. This may contribute to the effect—discussed above—whereby people tend to perceive that approval of groups that attack Americans is higher than it is in fact.

### ***8. Islamist Groups and Shari'a***

**Majorities say Islamist groups should be allowed to participate in the political process by organizing political parties and running candidates in elections and reject the argument that such groups should be excluded because they are not genuinely democratic. The Islamist goal of giving Shari'a a larger role in Islamic society is viewed positively. Views are more mixed, however, on whether people would like to see a greater role for Shari'a in their country, and among those who do prefer a greater role views vary as to whether this greater role should emphasize the enforcement traditions or social welfare.**

It appears that most in the Islamic world support the idea of Islamist parties being free to compete in elections. This may follow from their broader support for democratic governance.

**February 25, 2009**

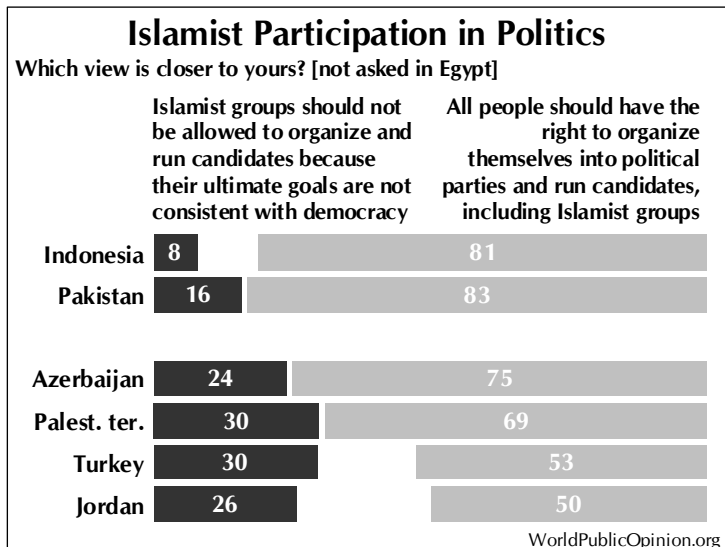
On the fraught question of Islamist political parties, across six countries, five majorities and a plurality supported including such parties in electoral processes. In no country did more than 30 percent oppose Islamist parties' participation. (This question was not permitted in Egypt.)

Respondents were reminded that "In some countries there is a debate about whether Islamist political groups should be allowed to organize parties and run candidates in elections," and then asked to choose between two statements:

All people should have the right to organize themselves into political parties and run candidates, including Islamist groups.

Islamist groups should not be allowed to organize and run candidates because their ultimate goals are not consistent with democracy.

Indonesia and Pakistan each have many legal political parties often described as Islamist. An overwhelming 81 percent in Indonesia and 83 percent in Pakistan said Islamist political groups should participate in elections. Only 8 percent in Indonesia and 16 percent in Pakistan thought such groups should be barred.



The same question was asked in Azerbaijan, the Palestinian territories, Turkey and Jordan. Three in four Azerbaijanis (75%) said Islamist political groups should participate in elections; 24 percent were opposed.

There is currently no significant Islamist party that is permitted to function in Azerbaijan.

In the Palestinian territories, 69 percent agreed with the participation of Islamist parties, while 30 percent disagreed. Hamas—one of the two major political parties there—presents itself as an Islamist party.

In Turkey, a modest majority—53 percent—supported Islamist party participation in elections; 30 percent disagreed. As of this writing, the Justice and Development Party (in Turkish, AKP), a moderate Islamist party that seeks entry for Turkey into the European Union, is the governing party in Turkey, which is constitutionally a secular state. Turkish polling through 2008 showed the AKP to be the most popular party as well.

Jordanians showed a more tenuous willingness to see Islamist parties contend in elections, with a 50 percent plurality agreeing and 26 percent disagreeing (24% did not answer). Jordan has an Islamist party, the Islamic Action Front, which has significant representation in Parliament.

The view that Islamists should be permitted to organize parties and run candidates in elections seems congruent with the levels of support for democracy in general found in the 2007 poll. At that time, when asked if "a democratic political system" is a good or bad "way of governing this country," majorities in all four countries polled said democracy was a good way to govern there. Support was

highest in Egypt at 82 percent (52% very good). Majorities were more moderate in Indonesia (65%) and Morocco (61%), and modest in Pakistan (51%). However, in no country did more than 24 percent disapprove of democracy as a system for their country.

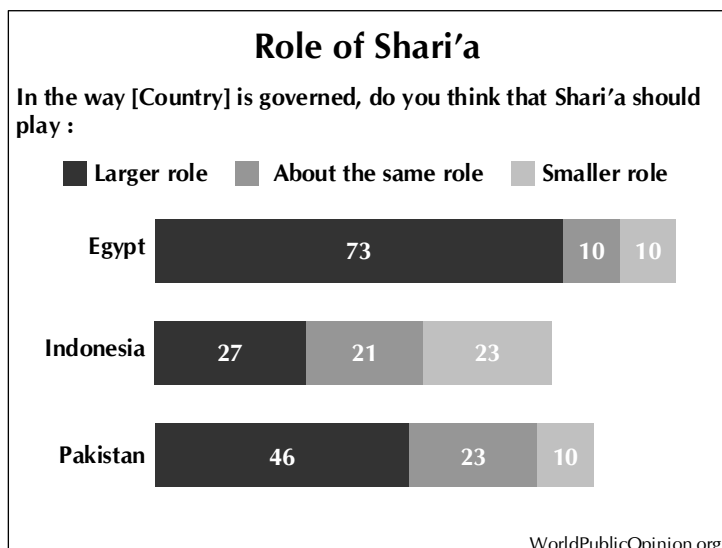
**Attitudes toward Shari’a**

The Islamist goal of giving Shari’a a larger role in Islamic society is viewed positively in Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia, at the same time as this is widely recognized to be a goal of al Qaeda. However, support for promoting Shari’a in general in the Islamic world is stronger than support for giving Shari’a a larger role in governing one’s own country.

In Egypt 81 percent said they agreed with the al Qaeda goal of “requir[ing] a strict application of Shari’a law in every Islamic country” (65% strongly); only 12 percent disagreed. Pakistanis were similar with 76 percent agreeing with this goal (52% strongly); 5 percent disagreed. Indonesians, however, agreed by only a narrow plurality: 49 percent supported the goal (just 14% strongly), while 42 percent disagreed. In Morocco in late 2006, 76 percent agreed.

There have been some slight shifts in attitudes toward this goal relative to 2007. Support has dropped 5 points in Indonesia and risen 3 points in Egypt.

Views are mixed on the question of whether Shari’a should play a larger role than it does today. Asked “In the way [this country] is governed, do you think that Shari’a should play a larger role, a smaller role, about the same role as it plays today?” a majority of Egyptians (73%) favored a greater role, as did a plurality of Pakistanis (46%). However in Indonesia just 27 percent favored a greater role, while 23 percent favored a smaller role and 21 percent the same role.



Probing further, the study asked those who did want a larger role for Shari’a in the governance of their country what aspects of Shari’a they thought it important for the government to apply. Respondents were asked four questions about social, moralistic, and punitive aspects of Shari’a.

In Egypt, moralistic and punitive aspects of Shari’a were rated a bit above the social aspect by Shari’a supporters. Sixty-eight percent (of the full sample) said “policing moral behavior” was “very important for the government to do”; 64 percent said this about “applying traditional punishments for crimes, such as stoning adulterers”; 62 percent said this about “policing women’s dress”; while 59 percent said it about “providing welfare to the poor.”

In Indonesia, where only about a quarter wanted a larger role for Shari’a, the social aspect got most emphasis from this group. Twenty-four percent (of the full sample) thought the poor’s welfare was an important aspect of Shari’a; 21 percent said this about policing moral behavior; 19 percent said this about women’s dress; and just 15 percent said this about applying traditional punishments.

In Pakistan, where a bit under half wanted a larger role for Shari'a, 36 percent saw providing welfare to the poor as a very important aspect for the government to apply; 32 percent said this about women's dress; 29 percent said this about moral behavior; and 26 percent said this about applying traditional punishments.

### ***9. Views of Governments of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Pakistan***

**Contrary to the al Qaeda case that governments that are not Islamist and are supported by the US—especially Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Pakistan—are viewed as illegitimate by their own people, majorities or pluralities throughout the Muslim world assume that the populations of these countries view their government as legitimate. Views are mixed about whether governments such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan should receive military aid from the United States.**

Al Qaeda often portrays the governments of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Pakistan as essentially puppets of the United States that would not last without US aid because they are seen as illegitimate in the eyes of their own people.

To determine if people in the Muslim world found this argument persuasive, respondents were asked whether they thought the governments of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan and Indonesia “are seen as legitimate or not legitimate by the majority of the people in their country.” Respondents were asked about three to four countries, but were never asked this question about their own country. These questions were asked in Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, Jordan, the Palestinian territories, Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Majorities in five nations and pluralities in two believed that Saudi Arabians view their government as legitimate. This view was shared by majorities in Egypt (80%), Jordan (69%), Pakistan (61%), the Palestinian territories (58%), and Indonesia (57%). Pluralities agreed in Azerbaijan (40 to 14%) and Turkey (37 to 25%). (Those giving no answer were in the 30 percent range in most countries.)

More people than not believe Egyptians view their government as legitimate as well; this was a plurality view, except for majorities in the nations nearest Egypt. Thus 68 percent of Palestinians think Egypt's government is seen as legitimate (not, 29%), and 53 percent of Jordanians think this (not, 25%). An Indonesian plurality holds the same view (47% to 11%); likewise in Pakistan (43% to 6%), Azerbaijan (42% to 9%), and Turkey (38% to 22%).

In Pakistan's case, pluralities in five of six nations asked thought most Pakistanis see their government as legitimate, though many did not answer. (Polling was conducted in late summer, when the current Zardari government was about six months old.) The largest plurality was in the Palestinian territories (50% to 43%), followed by Indonesia (39% to 16%), Egypt (38% to 13%), Jordan (37% to 25%), and Azerbaijan (32 to 14%). Turks were divided 29 to 29 percent; 42 percent gave no response.

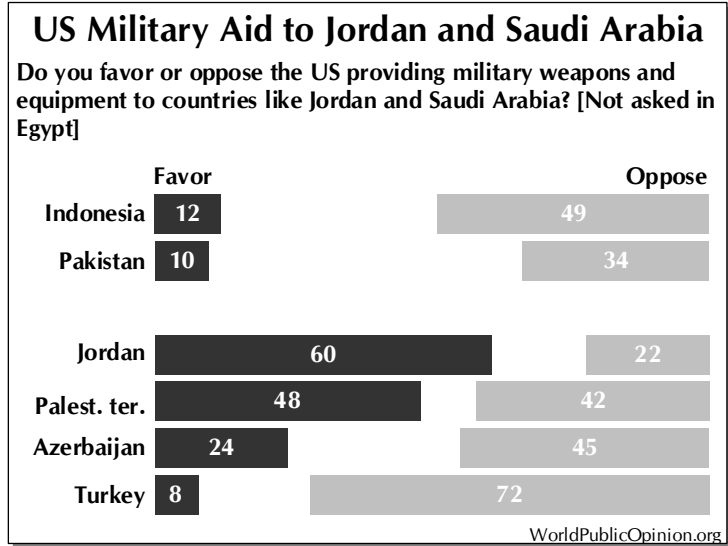
Perceptions of Indonesia were similar to those of Pakistan, with pluralities—Turkey excepted—believing an Indonesian majority sees its government as legitimate. Again, the largest plurality was in the Palestinian territories (47% to 41%), followed by Jordan (43% to 14%), Egypt (40% to 9%), Pakistan (37% to 6%), and Azerbaijan (30% to 13%). Turks were again divided, 28 to 27 percent.



**US Military Aid to Saudi Arabia, Jordan**

Another al Qaeda criticism is that governments of countries such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia are illegitimate because they receive military aid from the US. The study asked respondents in six nations whether they “favor or oppose the US providing military weapons and equipment to countries like Jordan and Saudi Arabia.”

This question did not prove to be the litmus test for garden-variety anti-Americanism that might have been expected. Four publics were opposed, but only one by a majority; two were in favor (one majority, one plurality).



Turks were alone in expressing strong majority opposition to US military aid to “countries like Jordan and Saudi Arabia,” with 72 percent against and only 8 in favor. More mildly opposed were Indonesia (49% to 12%); Azerbaijan (45% to 24%); and Pakistan (34% to 10%; 57% did not answer).

On the other side of the issue, the Palestinians were mildly favorable to such US aid (48% to 42%), and the Jordanians—whose country was mentioned in the question—were favorable by almost three to one (60% to 22%). Interestingly, the act of a Muslim country receiving US military aid is not seen as inherently negative even by many with strong complaints about US policies.

WORLDPUBLICOPINION.ORG

A PROJECT MANAGED BY  
THE PROGRAM ON INTERNATIONAL POLICY ATTITUDES  
1779 MASSACHUSETTS AVE. NW, SUITE 510,  
WASHINGTON, DC 20036  
PHONE: 202-232-7500, FAX: 202-232-1159  
INFO@PIPA.ORG  
[HTTP://WWW.WORLDPUBLICOPINION.ORG](http://www.worldpublicopinion.org)