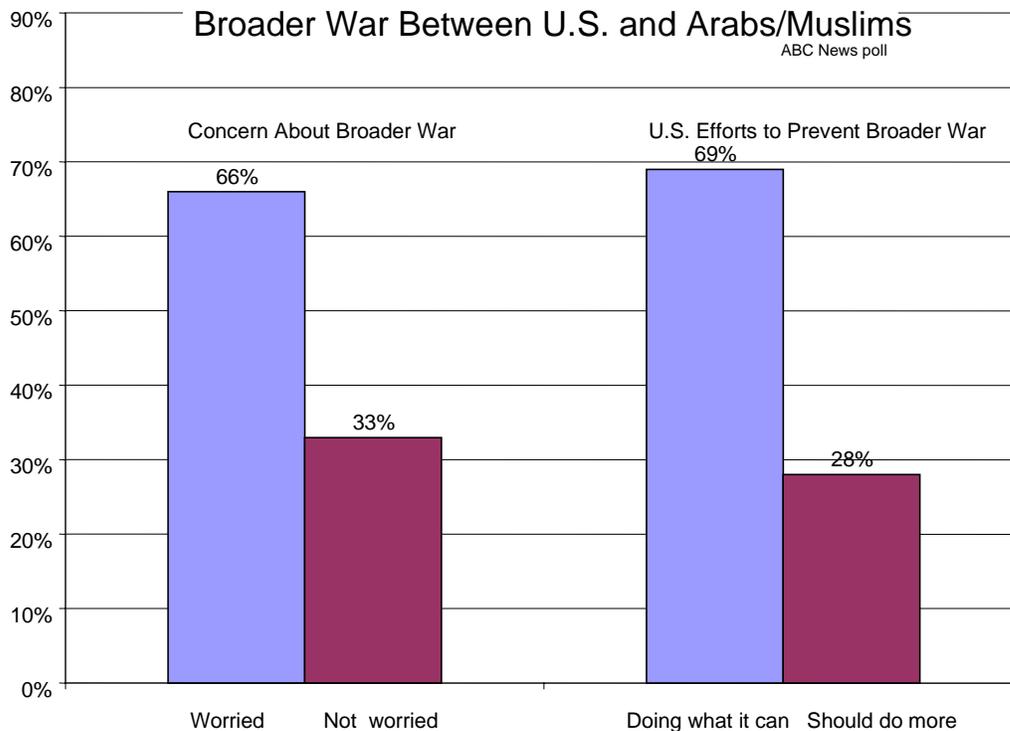


ABC NEWS POLL: U.S. VIEWS OF THE MUSLIM WORLD
FOR RELEASE AFTER 10 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 11, 2001

2/3 Worry of U.S.-Islam War; Way to Prevent it Isn't Clear

Two-thirds of Americans express concern that the war on terrorism could escalate into a broader conflict pitting the United States and its allies against the world's Muslims and Arabs. But how to prevent it doesn't seem clear.

Seven in 10 in an ABC News poll say the United States already is doing all it reasonably can to prevent a U.S-Islam war. As many also say the United States is doing enough to try to improve its overall image in the Muslim world. And eight in 10 oppose pulling back U.S. support for Israel, despite its negative impact in Muslim and Arab eyes.



Clearly the relationship needs work: A majority of Americans, 55 percent, believe that most Muslims and Arabs around the world have a negative opinion of the United States. And fewer than half of Americans, 47 percent, have a favorable opinion of Islam, while 39 percent view it negatively.

There are plenty of openings for discussion, though. Nearly four in 10 Americans say U.S. relations with the Arab and Muslim nations are now more important than are U.S. relations with Israel (36 percent say relations with Israel are more important). And a majority, 55 percent, favors U.S. recognition of Palestine as an independent nation.

Moreover, Americans almost unanimously reject the notion that the terrorists who attacked the United States on Sept. 11 are anywhere close to the mainstream of Islamic teachings. Eighty-seven percent say, instead, that they're "part of a radical fringe."

It's also worth noting that a wide U.S.-Islam conflict is not seen as inevitable by any means. While 66 percent are concerned it might happen, just 25 percent express a "great deal" of worry about it.

Broader war pitting U.S. vs Islam?	Worried 66%	Worried a "great deal" 25
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THY NEIGHBOR – Lack of familiarity is part of the problem. Nearly two-thirds of Americans say they don't have a good basic understanding of the teachings and beliefs of Islam. (Muslims account for an estimated 20 percent of the world's population, but only about one percent of Americans.) In addition, 58 percent of Americans say they don't personally know any Muslims.

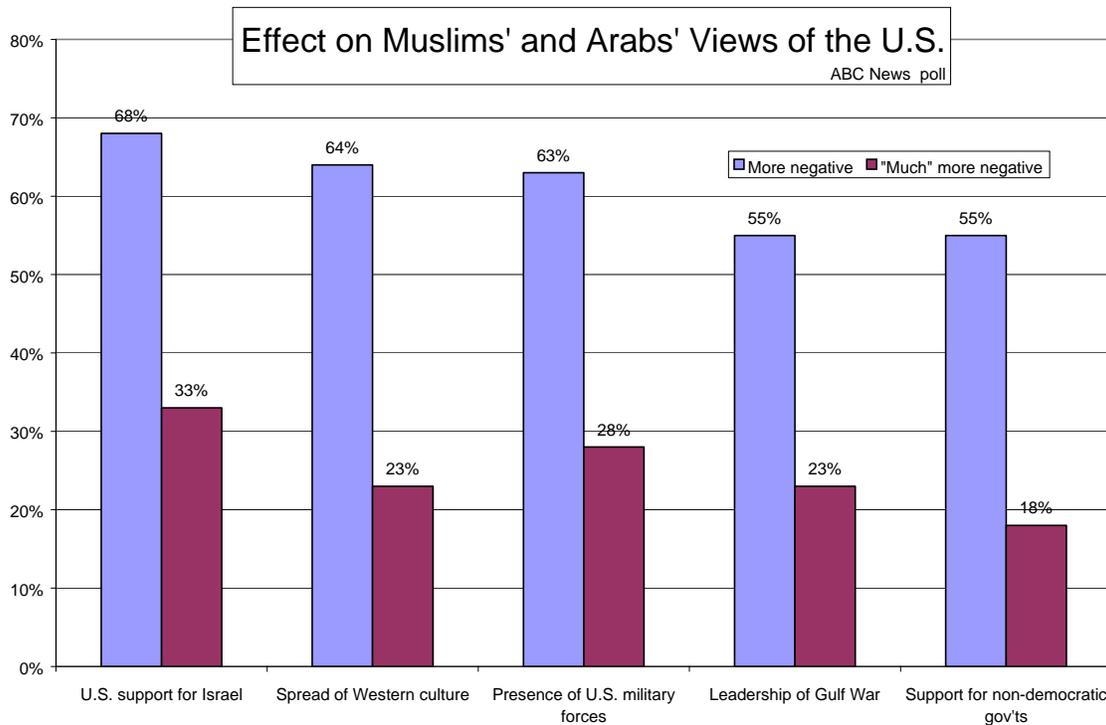
And in a significant finding, people who know a Muslim, or feel they're familiar with the religion, are much more likely to view it favorably. Familiarity, it appears, breeds respect.

	View of Islam:	
	Favorable	Unfavorable
All Americans	47%	39
Know a Muslim	59	30
Don't know a Muslim	39	46
Familiar with Islam	62	34
Unfamiliar with Islam	40	42

DAMAGE – Americans do express the view that a variety of U.S. policies have damaged relations with the Muslim and Arab worlds. Topping the list, 68 percent think U.S. support for Israel has given most Muslims and Arabs a more negative opinion of the United States.

More than six in 10 also think the spread of Western culture and the presence of U.S. military forces in Arab countries have hurt the United States in most Muslims' and Arabs' eyes. And 55 percent think the U.S. image has been hurt by its leadership of the Persian Gulf War and its support for non-democratic governments in Arab and Muslim countries.

Considerably fewer, however, go so far as to say that these policies have created a “much more” negative opinion of the United States than would exist otherwise.



	More negative	"Much" more negative
U.S. support for Israel	68%	33
Spread of Western culture	64	23
Presence of U.S. military forces	63	28
Leadership of Gulf War	55	23
Support for non-democratic gov'ts	55	18

ISRAEL – While support for Israel leads the list of irritants, Americans aren’t inclined to change it. Just 13 percent say the United States should decrease its support for Israel, while 81 percent say that support should either remain the same (68 percent) or be increased (13 percent.)

Fifty-two percent also say their sympathies are more with Israel than with the Palestinian Authority, while just 14 percent sympathize more with the Palestinians. Nonetheless, as noted above, 55 percent do favor recognition of Palestine as a sovereign state.

FROM HERE – The most hopeful sign in this poll is the fact that Americans have more favorable views of Islam when they know more about it. At the same time, the majority’s view that the United States is unpopular with Arabs and Muslims is not accompanied by broad support for new measures to change that.

In U.S. public opinion, the security of the United States clearly comes first. That's why, even among those who have a "great deal" of concern about a broader U.S.-Islam war, 89 percent support the air strikes against Afghanistan, 70 percent support the use of ground troops there, and 88 percent support strikes against other nations that harbor terrorists.

	Concern about U.S.-Islam war:	
	Worried a "great deal"	Less worried
Support air strikes	89%	94
Support us of ground troops	70	77
Support strikes elsewhere	88	87

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Oct. 8-9, 2001, among a random national sample of 1,009 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Field work by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:
<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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Here are the full results (*=less than 0.5 percent)

11. On another subject, in the Middle East, are your sympathies more with (Israel) or more with (the Palestinian Authority)?

	Israel	Palestinian Authority	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
10/9/01	52	14	7	15	11

Compare to:

On another subject, in the Middle East situation, are your sympathies more with Israel or more with the Arab nations?

	Israel	Arab nations	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
9/15/91	57	20	14	10
4/3/89	69	16	10	4
6/23/86	62	13	13	13
7/1/85	49	11	18	22
9/26/83	49	13	14	24
3/2/83	52	16	13	19
1/22/83	47	17	15	21
9/26/82	48	27	12	13
8/17/82	52	18	16	13
3/8/82	55	18	13	14

12. Do you think the United States should increase its support for Israel, decrease its support for Israel or keep it about the same?

	Increase	Decrease	Keep the same	No opinion
10/9/01	13	13	68	6

13. Do you think the United States should or should not recognize Palestine as an independent nation?

	Should	Should not	No opin.
10/9/01	55	28	17

14. What do you feel is more important at this time - U.S. relations with (Israel), or U.S. relations with (the Arab nations)?

	Israel	Arab nations	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
10/9/01	36	39	14	3	9

15. On another subject, do you feel you do or do not have a good basic understanding of the teachings and beliefs of Islam, the Muslim religion?

	Yes	No	No opin.
10/9/01	34	65	1

16. Would you say you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of Islam?

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opin.
10/9/01	47	39	13

17. Thinking of the terrorists who attacked the United States last month, do you think their views are close to the mainstream teachings of Islam, or do you think they're part of a radical fringe?

	Mainstream	Radical fringe	No opin.
10/9/01	7	87	5

18. Do you think most Arabs and Muslims around the world have a positive opinion or a negative opinion of the United States?

	Positive	Negative	No opin.
10/9/01	36	55	9

19. Do you think Arabs and Muslims around the world have a more POSITIVE or more NEGATIVE opinion of the United States because of (READ ITEM)?

10/9/01

	More pos.	NET	----More negative---- Much more	Somewhat more	No diff. (vol.)	No. opin
a. U.S. support for Israel	20	68	33	35	2	10
b. The U.S. role in leading the Persian Gulf War against Iraq	32	55	23	32	5	9
c. U.S. support for non-democratic governments in Arab and Muslim countries	23	55	18	37	5	16
d. The presence of U.S. military forces in Arab and Muslim countries	26	63	28	35	3	8

e. The spread of Western culture in Arab and Muslim countries

	21	64	23	41	4	11
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20. Do you think the United States IS or IS NOT doing enough to try to improve its image among Arabs and Muslims around the world?

	Doing enough	Not doing enough	No opin.
10/9/01	70	25	6

21. How worried are you that the U.S. war on terrorism will grow into a broader war between (the U.S. and its allies) on one side, and (Arabs and Muslims) on the other side? Is that something that worries you a great deal, somewhat, not too much or not at all?

	-----Worried-----			-----Not worried-----			No
	NET	Grt.deal	Somewhat	NET	Not much	None	op.
10/9/01	66	25	41	33	22	11	1

22. Do you think the United States is doing all it reasonably can do to try to prevent this from becoming a broader war between (the U.S. and its allies) on one side and (Arabs and Muslims) on the other side, or do you think it should do more?

	US doing all it can	US should do more	No opin.
10/9/01	69	28	3

25. Have last month's terrorist attacks made you personally more suspicious of people who you think are of Arab descent, or not?

	Yes	No	No opin.
10/9/01	38	60	1
9/13/01*	43	56	1

*"Do you think the attacks this week will make you personally more suspicious..."

26. Do you personally know anyone who is a Muslim, or not?

	Yes	No	No opin.
10/9/01	41	58	1

END