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## Pakistanis Oppose US Terror Hunts

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Only a quarter of Pakistanis support their military working with U.S. forces to pursue terrorists inside Pakistan, and even fewer favor letting American forces mount such operations on their own, a poll released on Tuesday said.

In a broader measure of America's unpopularity in its erstwhile ally against terrorism, 19 percent of Pakistanis see the U.S. favorably -- half the number with a positive view of India, a bitter rival Pakistan has fought in three wars since 1947. The U.S.-backed Pakistani president, Gen. [Pervez Musharraf](#), is less popular than [Osama bin Laden](#), though both are far better liked than President Bush.

The survey was released by Terror Free Tomorrow, a bipartisan group that seeks to reduce support for international terrorism. Its advisory board includes presidential candidate Sen. [John McCain](#), R-Ariz., and Lee Hamilton, the former Democratic congressman from Indiana who helped lead a study of White House Iraq policy last year.

Ken Ballen, the group's president, said the poll was the most worrisome of 23 it has conducted in the Muslim world over the past three years because of the anti-American, pro-bin Laden feelings it found and the unpopularity of Musharraf, who leads the only Muslim nation with nuclear weapons.

"It's disturbing. It's almost like a perfect storm" of distressing findings, Ballen said.

By 49 percent to 40 percent, most Pakistanis said it is important to defeat al-Qaida, the [Taliban](#) and other terrorist groups. Most also said they support the Pakistani military on its own hunting al-Qaida and Taliban fighters inside the country.

But when it came to the U.S. launching unilateral missions against those groups inside Pakistan, only 13 percent voiced approval.

Pakistani officials have said they do not let the U.S. or others pursue militants inside their country. They objected last month when Sen. [Barack Obama](#), D-Ill., a presidential contender, said he would be willing to let American forces chase terrorists in Pakistan even without its consent.

Some U.S. military officials, however, have said they do not need Pakistan's approval for such operations near the mountainous border with Afghanistan, where bin Laden, the al-Qaida leader, and other leaders may be hiding.

By 46 percent to 26 percent, most view bin Laden favorably, including 70 percent who see him positively in the northwest province where he may have sanctuary. That compares to 37 percent in the country with favorable opinions of Musharraf, and nine percent for Bush.

In a measure of their distrust, 56 percent said the U.S. war on terrorism is driven by anti-Muslim goals like killing Muslims, taking their oil or ending their religion. Less than 10 percent suggested positive motivations like seeking global peace.

Three-fourths said suicide bombings are never or rarely justified.

The poll took place Aug. 18-29 in urban and rural areas in all four of the country's provinces, and involved face-to-face questioning of 1,044 adults by native Pakistani interviewers. It was conducted by D3 Systems of Vienna, Va., and the Pakistani Institute for Public Opinion.

On the Net:

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