



TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

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DT: OCTOBER 15th, 2010

**RE: UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION – INDEX OF PUBLIC OPINION ON
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND THE UNITED NATIONS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

National research conducted in October 2010 by Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research, on behalf of the United Nations Foundation, shows:

- Americans' perception of the United Nations has stabilized at a favorable level over the course of 2010.
 - A majority of Americans (59%) say they have a favorable image of the United Nations, while only 29% say they have an unfavorable image. This is consistent with the last national track in April 2010 in which the UN's image was 60% favorable/30% unfavorable.
 - The UN's favorable image is being driven by the perceived ability of the organization to resolve conflicts, keep peace around the world, provide humanitarian and disaster relief, and because the UN is viewed as a place that serves as a forum for discussion and resolution of issues for countries around the world.
- There is significant recognition of the contemporary relevance of the United Nations, with two-thirds of Americans (68%) say they believe the United Nations is still needed today.
 - Majorities of Democrats (85%), Independents (57%), and Republicans (55%) agree with this assessment.

- More than six out of ten Americans (63%) favor the United States paying our dues to the United Nations on time and in full, while 31% oppose.
 - Majorities of Democrats and Independents favor paying our UN dues on time and in full, while Republicans are more closely divided.
- There is greater support for the United States paying our peacekeeping dues to the United Nations on time and in full (72% favor/23% oppose).
 - Majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans support the U.S. paying our UN peacekeeping dues on time and in full.
- Americans believe the United Nations has a number of important functions it serves in the world today from improving access to safe drinking water in poor, developing countries to building peace in countries emerging from conflict.
 - When asked how supportive the United States should be of each of these 14 roles and functions the United Nations serves, the percentage of Americans saying the U.S. should be supportive of each goal tested ranges from 75% to 91% supportive. This is a significant level of overall support for the roles and functions the UN serves.
 - Looking more closely at the intensity of support, a majority of Americans (52% to 61%) believe the U.S. should be “very supportive” of seven of the 14 UN functions tested.
- Once Americans hear about these different functions and roles the United Nations, support for the United States paying our dues on time and in full shifts from 63% favor/31% oppose to 79% favor/19% oppose.
- The international news environment has shifted over the course of the last six months back to a focus on war.
 - We ask respondents what they remember seeing, reading, or hearing in the past two to three months about international news stories happening outside of the United States. Voter recall has shifted from natural disaster news stories (22%) and Iran (20%) to a focus on the wars in Afghanistan (30%) and Iraq (14%).

DETAILED FINDINGS:

How do Americans perceive the United Nations today?

- Americans' perception of the United Nations has stabilized at a favorable level over the course of 2010.

	<i>United Nations Image</i>	
	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
June 2009	54%	35%
October 2009	50%	36%
April 2010	60%	30%
October 2010	59%	29%

Respondents mention a number of things about the United Nations that give them a favorable impression of the organization:

- The UN keeps peace in the world and works towards world peace.
- The UN is a place for countries around the world to come together and meet.
- It serves as a mediator and forum for global issues and discussion.
- The UN does good around the world through their humanitarian efforts.
- The UN helps with conflict resolution and is a place to deal with difficult situations and countries.
- The humanitarian and disaster relief efforts of the UN.
- It is an organization that is needed today.
- The UN helps establish and keep good international relations.
- The UN provides military support.
- The UN monitors the world's nuclear weapons.
- The UN works for human rights around the world.
- The UN is trying to end the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- The UN is working to improve world health.

As in previous tracks there are differences in how respondents perceive the United Nations based on specific demographic characteristics:

- Gender – Women (67% favorable) have a more favorable opinion of the UN than men (51% favorable).
- Age/Gender – Younger men age 18-54 (56% favorable) have a more favorable opinion of the UN than older men age 55+ (42% favorable).
- Party Identification – Democrats (77% favorable) and Independents (52% favorable) are more favorable opinion of the UN than Republicans (42% favorable).

- There is significant recognition of the contemporary relevance of the United Nations. Two-thirds of Americans (68%) believe the United Nations is still needed today; majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans feel this way.

UN IS...STILL NEEDED TODAY/OUTLIVED IT'S USEFULNESS

	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independents</u>	<u>Democrats</u>
June 2009	52%/45%	61%/35%	87%/11%
October 2009	48%/46%	64%/26%	85%/9%
April 2010	55%/39%	53%/41%	84%/8%
October 2010	55%/39%	57%/33%	85%/8%

- More than six out of ten Americans (63%) favor the United States paying our dues to the United Nations on time and in full, while 31% oppose.
 - Majorities of Democrats and Independents favor paying our UN dues on time and in full, while Republicans are more closely divided.

Pay UN General Dues On Time/In Full

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Republicans	50%	43%
Independents	58%	37%
Democrats	77%	19%

- There is greater support, particularly among Republicans, for the United States paying our peacekeeping dues to the United Nations on time and in full (72% favor/23% oppose).
 - Majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans support the U.S. paying our UN peacekeeping dues on time and in full.

Pay UN Peacekeeping Dues On Time/In Full

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Republicans	62%	35%
Independents	64%	29%
Democrats	85%	10%

- Americans believe the United States should be supportive of many of the core functions of the United Nations. When asked how supportive the United States should be of the 14 roles and functions the United Nations serves that we tested, the percentage of Americans saying the U.S. should be supportive of each goal ranges from 75% to 91% supportive. This is a significant level of overall support for the roles and functions the UN serves.
 - Looking more closely at the intensity of support, a majority of Americans (52% to 61%) believe the U.S. should be “very supportive” of seven of the 14 UN functions.
 - The table below shows all 14 items we tested with the percentage of respondents saying the U.S. should be “very supportive” in one column and the total supportive percentage (“very/somewhat supportive”) in the other column.

<i>Summary of U.S. Should Be Supportive UN Projects</i>	<i>Very Supportive</i>	<i>Total Supportive</i>
Improving the access to safe drinking water in poor, developing countries.	61%	91%
Helping to reverse the spread of HIV and malaria and other major diseases around the world.	60%	90%
Working to better the lives of adolescent girls around the world by helping assure girls have access to quality education and health care, adequate livelihoods, and freedom from violence and harmful practices.	59%	90%
Promoting gender equality, women’s rights, and the advancement of women and girls around the world.	53%	87%
Strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world and resolving situations of human rights violations.	53%	85%
Providing leadership and aid in humanitarian crisis situations.	52%	91%
Helping to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger around the world.	52%	85%
Delivering humanitarian aid around the world.	49%	90%
Improving the health situation in poor, developing countries.	46%	88%
Preventing and resolving deadly conflict around the world.	44%	80%
Building peace in countries emerging from conflict.	39%	83%
Taking the lead in efforts to address climate change.	35%	64%
Improving the access to clean cooking stoves in poor, developing countries to help prevent deaths from toxic indoor cooking smoke.	34%	75%
Establishing common standards of practice for international trade, business, and international law.	34%	75%

Although there are broad similarities by party, there are some interesting differences in terms of looking at the top five UN functions that Americans say the U.S. should be most supportive. The table below shows the top five for each by party, highlighting those items which only appear in the top five for that particular audience.

U.S. Supportive of UN Role – BY PARTY - % Very Supportive		
<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Independents</u>	<u>Democrats</u>
Helping reverse the spread of HIV/AIDs and other major diseases (50%)	Improving access to safe drinking water (56%)	Helping reverse the spread of HIV/AIDs and other major diseases (74%)
Improving access to safe drinking water (49%)	Bettering the lives of adolescent girls around the world (55%)	Improving access to safe drinking water (74%)
Providing leadership and aid in humanitarian crisis situations (47%)	Helping reverse the spread of HIV/AIDs and other major diseases (49%)	Bettering the lives of adolescent girls around the world (73%)
Strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world and resolving situations of human rights violations (46%)	Promoting gender equality, women’s rights, and advancement of women (48%)	Helping to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger around the world (70%)
Bettering the lives of adolescent girls around the world (45%)	Strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world and resolving situations of human rights violations (46%)	Promoting gender equality, women’s rights, and advancement of women (64%)

- Once Americans hear these different functions and roles the United Nations serves, support for the United States paying our dues on time and in full shifts from 63% favor/31% oppose to 79% favor/19% oppose.
 - Half of the respondents were asked this question before hearing the functions and roles the UN serves, and the other half of respondents were asked after hearing this information about the UN.

- The difference among Republicans and Democrats is particularly noteworthy.

Generic UN Dues On Time/In Full

	<u>Before</u> <u>Favor/Oppose</u>	<u>After</u> <u>Favor/Oppose</u>
Republicans	50%/43%	67%/32%
Independents	58%/37%	68%/26%
Democrats	77%/19%	94%/3%

What do voters recall as important news stories over the past few months?

- The international news environment has shifted over the course of the last six months back to a focus on war.
 - We ask respondents what they remember seeing, reading, or hearing in the past two to three months about international news stories happening outside of the United States. Voter recall has shifted from natural disaster news stories (22%) and Iran (20%) to a focus on the wars in Afghanistan (30%) and Iraq (14%). The table on the following page shows the trend over time on the top news stories Americans recall.

<u>Top International New Stories</u>			
<u>June 2009</u>	<u>October 2009</u>	<u>April 2010</u>	<u>October 2010</u>
Iran – 42% (specifically related to elections/unrest, nuclear technology)	Afghanistan – 34% (specifically related to the resurgence and attacks, as well as the elections/recount, and U.S. soldiers killed)	Natural Disasters/Impact – 22% (earthquakes and devastation in Haiti, earthquakes in Chile and Japan, Indonesia quake and landslide)	Afghanistan War – 30% (specifically related to the war, attacks, U.S. soldiers killed)
North Korea – 35% (Missile test/nuclear weapons program)	Iran – 31% (specifically related to nuclear technology, elections, and generally in the news)	Iran – 20% (specifically related to development nuclear program and sanctions)	Iraq War – 14%
Iraq War – 10%	Iraq War – 18%	Afghanistan War – 12%	Iran – 12% (in general and specifically related to their nuclear program)
Resurgence in Afghanistan and Pakistan – 6%	North Korea – 8% (Missile test/nuclear weapons program)	Iraq War – 12%	Terror Alert in Europe/Eiffel Tower Bomb – 11%
Israel, lack of support/tension with Iran & Palestine – 5%	Natural Disasters – 6% (Earthquakes/Tsunamis Indonesia)	U.S. Nuclear Arms Summit – 9%	Pakistan – 7%

METHODOLOGY:

Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates conducted a national telephone survey of 900 registered voters (765 with landline voters; 135 with cell phone dominant voters), October 4-10, 2010, on behalf of the United Nations Foundation. The purpose of the survey was to track American attitudes toward international issues and the United Nations. The margin of error on a sample of 900 interviews is $\pm 3.27\%$.

We have previously conducted research for the Foundation in 2009 and 2010 on international issues. This memo references these surveys, but the key findings included in this memo are from the October 2010 research.