

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Geoff Garin and Bill McInturff
DATE: July 15, 2008
RE: Results Of Military Officers Survey

On behalf of the Center for U.S. Global Engagement, the bipartisan polling team of Peter D. Hart Research Associates (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R) recently conducted a survey among 606 commissioned U.S. military officers, including 499 active duty officers and 107 officers who retired after the 9/11/2001 attacks. The survey was conducted from June 24 to 30, 2008, and included a combination of telephone and Internet interviews. This memorandum highlights a few of the most notable findings that emerge from this unique and compelling survey, which explored officers' attitudes toward the United States' use of military and non-military tools to enhance our national security.

Summary of Findings:

- Today's military officers believe we face very different security challenges than we did during the Cold War and must use different tools and strategies to address those challenges.
- A significant majority of officers surveyed embrace a new paradigm in which strengthened diplomacy and development assistance are important companions to traditional military tools for achieving America's national security goals.
- A majority of officers serving in the post-9/11 era have seen the benefit of non-military tools such as development assistance and diplomacy firsthand, particularly those deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan.
- These poll results suggest the next Commander in Chief must understand that a strong military alone is not enough to protect America and that military officers believe we must also improve diplomatic relations and do more to promote stability in the world by improving health, education, and economic opportunity in other countries.

Key Results by the Numbers:

- Eighty percent (80%) of all officers surveyed say that non-military tools such as diplomacy, food aid, and support for health, education, and economic development programs are very (43%) or fairly important (37%) to helping the United States achieve its national security objectives.
- Eighty-four percent (84%) of officers say that strengthening non-military tools such as diplomacy and development efforts should be *at least* equal to strengthening military efforts when it comes to improving America's ability to address threats to our national security.

- Similarly, officers are nearly as likely to say the United States is doing too little to strengthen its use of non-military tools (52%) as to say we are doing too little to strengthen our military capabilities (57%).
 - *Active duty* officers are as likely to say that we are doing too little to strengthen and improve our use of non-military national security tools (54%) as they are to say we are doing too little strengthen and improve our use of military tools (55%); 59% of the highest-ranking officers say that we are doing too little to strengthen and improve our use of non-military tools.
- Eighty-two percent (82%) say the tools and strategies needed to deal with our current national security challenges are different from the tools and strategies we used successfully during the Cold War, including 52% who say we need to be using *very* different tools today.
 - The national security threats most frequently volunteered as very important were Terrorism (41%) and Islamic extremism/Al Qaeda (14%).
- In evaluating steps the United States could take to achieve our strategic goals and improve national security, officers in our survey rank “strengthening our diplomatic efforts and cooperation with other countries” (83% very/fairly high priority) on par with “increasing counter-insurgency training for our troops” (87%) and “improving our military’s rapid response capabilities” (81%).
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of all officers surveyed agree that “a strong military alone is not enough to protect America; we also need to improve diplomatic relations and do more to promote stability in the world by improving health, education, and economic opportunity in other countries,” including 50% who *strongly* agree with this statement.
- Eighty-six percent (86%) of the highest-ranking officers (O-4 and higher) also agree that, “even though we are the world’s only super power, we can’t do everything on our own; expanding our commitment to diplomacy and increasing foreign assistance is a cost-effective way to improve America’s image and win more friends and allies” (46% strongly agree).
- Sixty-three percent (63%) of all officers surveyed say they have *personally experienced* the benefit of non-military tools in making their military assignments more effective or more efficient, including 72% of those who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan.
- Seventy-seven percent (77%) of officers surveyed believe that the degree to which America is respected by people overseas makes a great deal (44%) or a fair amount (33%) of difference to the effectiveness of our military overseas.
 - Just 8% say that we are very well respected by people in other countries today, while 52% say we are somewhat well respected and 40% say we are not that well respected.
- A 62% majority of officers surveyed rate “restoring respect for America around the world by playing a positive leadership role in addressing major global challenges” as a very important goal (a rating of eight to 10 on a one-to-10 scale), only slightly below the proportion (70%) who rate “dealing forcefully with countries that threaten our security interests or that support terrorist organizations” as a very important goal.