



Written by [James Heiser](#) on April 12, 2010

Poll: Most Americans Believe Nation Now Weaker

If you think America is in decline and you are worried about the future, you're not alone. According to a report at FOXNews.com, a very solid majority of Americans — including both those who consider themselves Republicans and Democrats — are far more inclined to view the nation as weaker now than it has been.



[According to the FOXNews story:](#)

The poll also finds that three-quarters of voters think the United States is weaker today than it was 10 years ago. Moreover, almost all consider the current economic and unemployment conditions a “crisis.”

The 74 percent that thinks the country is weaker today includes sizable majorities of Democrats (61 percent), Republicans (87 percent) and independents (78 percent). Overall, far fewer voters — about one in five — believes America is stronger than a decade ago (19 percent). Democrats (31 percent) are three times more likely than Republicans and independents to feel that way.

Fifty-seven percent of voters think life for the next generation of Americans will be worse than life today. That's up significantly from 39 percent who thought so in 2002. Thirty-two percent think life will be better, down from 41 percent.

The poll is not simply a measure of confidence (or the lack thereof) in the U.S. economy; [many of the poll questions](#) concerned national-security issues such as President Obama's handling of terrorism, the conflict in Afghanistan, and tensions with Iran.

The decline in confidence in national strength is all the more remarkable because it comes in the aftermath of a vast expansion of federal power in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and a U.S. military budget that now encompasses [over 40 percent](#) of global military spending, [and 700 U.S. military bases in 120 nations](#).

When asked the question, “Compared to 10 years ago, do you think the country is stronger or weaker today?,” in the aftermath of two dozen questions on a wide variety of topics such as the economy, national defense, and healthcare, the nebulousness of the question certainly allows the person responding to the question a certainly latitude in defining national strength and weakness.

Whatever the personal criteria of those who were questioned, the response was a pessimism that crossed party lines: 61 percent of Democrats, 87 percent of Republicans and 78 percent of Independents agreement that the nation is weaker now than it was 10 years ago.

In the aftermath of the scientific poll, FOXNews is also soliciting responses in [an unscientific poll](#). In response to the question, “A Fox News poll released on Friday finds that 57 percent of voters think the next generation of Americans will be worse off. What do you think is the main reason a majority of



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voters feel this way?,” respondents are given six possible responses:

- “Our country is sinking under a mountain of debt that we are leaving behind for our children.”
- “I am very concerned about the leadership of our country. We are headed in the wrong direction.”
- “I think the new health care law will make things worse, not better, for the next generation of Americans.”
- “Our country has lost sight of the fundamental principles that led to the founding of this nation.”
- “The terrorist threat to our country is growing. It’s a dangerous world, and America is not getting safer.”
- “Other.”

An unscientific poll does not purport to be broadly representative of public opinion, but it is interesting to note the responses of those who have chosen to reply to the offered options. As of this writing, 45 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, “Our country has lost sight of the fundamental principles that led to the founding of this nation.” Issues perceived to be “hot button” topics — the healthcare law and terrorism — received only four percent and one percent, respectively.

Given the arguably more “conservative” readership of materials available through FOXNews.com, it is quite interesting that those who felt motivated to reply to the question were vastly more likely to identify the nation’s problems as a fundamental abandonment of the principles of the Founding Fathers — even the issue of the federal deficit gathered a mere 23 percent, by comparison.

In short, the scientific poll demonstrates that a clear majority of Americans believe their nation to be in decline, and the unscientific poll is trending toward identifying the cause of that decline to be based in an abandonment of fundamental principles that led to the founding of this nation. Among the questions that remain at this point are: Do the nation’s leaders — Republican and Democrat — understand this sentiment? Are they going to address these concerns?



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