



Split Decision on Obama's Handling of Situation in Libya Mideast Turmoil, U.S. Oil Companies Blamed for High Gas Prices

*** Complete Tables for Poll Appended ***

For Immediate Release: Thursday, April 21, 2011

Contact: Lee M. Miringoff
Barbara L. Carvalho
Mary E. Azzoli
Marist College
845.575.5050

This McClatchy-Marist Poll Reports:

As unrest in Libya continues, President Barack Obama has said that Moammar Gadhafi faces greater pressure to step down. But, when it comes to U.S. involvement in the region, do registered voters approve of how the president is handling the situation?

Registered voters nationally divide. 46% disapprove, 44% approve, and one in ten -- 10% -- are unsure.

"President Obama is walking a fine line on U.S. involvement in Libya," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "In the short run, he has a lot of convincing to do. Without greater support, in the long run, it's hard to imagine people won't increasingly question his policy in the region."

Partisan politics are in play on this question. More than six in ten Democratic voters -- 63% -- approve of how Mr. Obama is dealing with the issue while about two-thirds of Republican voters -- 66% -- disapprove. Nearly half of independents -- 48% -- are dissatisfied with how the president is handling the situation while 42% approve.

Clear Plan for U.S. Involvement in Libya?

Americans divide about whether or not President Obama has a clear idea about what he wants the United States to do in Libya. 47% do not think the president has a clear vision while 46% do. Seven percent are unsure.

Here, too, there is a partisan split. 69% of Democrats believe President Obama knows what he wants the U.S. to do in Libya while the same proportion of Republicans -- 69% -- say the president's vision is muddled. A majority of independents -- 53% -- think the president does not have a clear idea about what he wants America's role in Libya to be.

Do Americans, themselves, understand what the role of the United States is in Libya? Nearly six in ten -- 57% -- do not while 42% believe they have a clear idea about what the objective is. One percent is unsure. Looking at party, 58% of independents say they do not

have a clear idea about what the U.S. is trying to do in Libya. Republicans and Democrats divide. 50% of Republicans don't have a clear picture of the nation's objective while 48% do. Among Democrats, half -- 50% -- say they understand what America is trying to achieve in Libya while 46% do not.

The Great Divide: Voters Rate Obama's Handling of Foreign Policy

When it comes to how President Obama is handling foreign policy in general, registered voters also divide. 48% disapprove, and 46% approve. Six percent are unsure. There has been little change on this question since McClatchy-Marist last reported it in November. At that time, 47% disapproved of how the president was tackling foreign policy while 44% approved. Nine percent were unsure.

Mideast Turmoil, U.S. Oil Companies Blamed for High Gas Prices

As the price of gasoline skyrockets, Americans have no trouble pointing a proverbial finger. According to this McClatchy-Marist Poll, the turmoil in the Middle East and U.S. oil companies are the most to blame. 36% of U.S. residents think the volatility in the Middle East is at fault while 34% say U.S. oil companies are the culprits. 11% hold President Obama and the Democrats responsible, and 7% find fault with Congressional Republicans. Three percent of Americans blame state and local taxes, and one in ten -- 10% -- are unsure.

Democrats -- 44% -- and independents -- 39% -- are more likely to blame U.S. oil companies for the high price of gas while Republicans -- 37% -- are more likely to cite the turmoil in the Middle East.

"There's plenty of blame to go around for high fuel prices in the minds of Americans," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "Although this is an issue that hits close to home, right now it isn't being laid at President Obama's doorstep."

The high price of gas is taking its toll on drivers nationally. A majority -- 55% -- have changed their driving habits because of rising costs. 45% have not, and fewer than 1% are unsure.

There are regional differences. Majorities in the Midwest -- 61% -- West -- 57% -- and South -- 53% -- have altered their driving practices. In the Northeast, 48% have changed their habits while a slim majority -- 52% -- say they are hitting the road the same as always.

Older Americans -- 59% -- are more likely than younger residents -- 49% -- to have changed their driving practices because of the high price of gas.

How the Survey was Conducted

Nature of the Sample: National Poll of 1,274 Adults

This survey of 1,274 adults was conducted on April 10th through April 14th, 2011. Adults 18 years of age and older residing in the continental United States were interviewed by telephone. Telephone numbers were selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the nation. The exchanges were selected to ensure that each region was represented in proportion to its population. To increase coverage, this land-line sample was supplemented by respondents reached through random dialing of cell phone numbers. The two samples were then combined. Results are statistically significant within ± 3.0 percentage points. There are 1,084 registered voters. The results for this subset are statistically significant within ± 3.0 percentage points. There are 559 drivers. Results for this subset are statistically significant within ± 4.5 percentage points. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.

Nature of the Sample: Adults

Nature of the Sample - National Adults		
		National Adults
		Col %
National Adults		100%
Registered Voters		80%
Region	Northeast	19%
	Midwest	22%
	South	37%
	West	22%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	51%
	\$50,000 or more	49%
Race	White	67%
	African American	10%
	Latino	11%
	Other	11%
Race	White	67%
	Non-white	33%
Age	Under 45	40%
	45 or older	60%
Generation	Millennials (18-30)	20%
	Gen X (31-46)	24%
	Baby Boomers (47-65)	37%
	Silent-Greatest (Over 65)	19%
Gender	Men	49%
	Women	51%
Interview Type	Landline	74%
	Cell Phone	26%

Marist Poll National Adults: Interviews conducted April 10th through April 14th, 2011, N=1274 MOE +/- 3%.
 Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Nature of the Sample: Registered Voters

Nature of the Sample - Registered Voters		
		Registered Voters
		Col %
Registered Voters		100%
President Obama's April 13th Speech	Before	54%
	After	46%
Party ID	Democrat	35%
	Republican	27%
	Independent	36%
	Other	2%
Support Tea Party	Yes	28%
Political Ideology	Liberal	21%
	Moderate	39%
	Conservative	40%
Region	Northeast	20%
	Midwest	21%
	South	37%
	West	22%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	46%
	\$50,000 or more	54%
Race	White	70%
	African American	11%
	Latino	9%
	Other	10%
Race	White	70%
	Non-white	30%
Age	Under 45	34%
	45 or older	66%
Generation	Millennials (18-30)	14%
	Gen X (31-46)	24%
	Baby Boomers (47-65)	39%
	Silent-Greatest (Over 65)	22%
Gender	Men	50%
	Women	50%
Interview Type	Landline	79%
	Cell Phone	21%

Marist Poll National Registered Voters: Interviews conducted April 10th through April 14th, 2011, N=1084 MOE +/- 3%. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Nature of the Sample: National Drivers

Nature of the Sample - National Drivers		
		National Drivers
		Col %
National Drivers		100%
Registered Voters		100%
Region	Northeast	19%
	Midwest	19%
	South	40%
	West	22%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	47%
	\$50,000 or more	53%
Race	White	68%
	African American	9%
	Latino	11%
	Other	12%
Race	White	68%
	Non-white	32%
Generation	Millennials (18-30)	21%
	Gen X (31-46)	26%
	Baby Boomers (47-65)	36%
	Silent-Greatest (Over 65)	18%
Age	Under 45	42%
	45 or older	58%
Gender	Men	54%
	Women	46%
Interview Type	Landline	74%
	Cell Phone	26%

Marist Poll National Drivers: Interviews conducted April 10th through April 14th, 2011, N=559 MOE +/- 4.5%. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

President Obama's Handling of the Situation in Libya

Asked of Registered Voters:

Question Wording: Do you approve or disapprove of how President Barack Obama is handling the situation in Libya?

		Registered Voters		
		Do you approve or disapprove of how President Barack Obama is handling the situation in Libya?		
		Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
Registered Voters		44%	46%	10%
Party ID	Democrat	63%	28%	9%
	Republican	26%	66%	8%
	Independent	42%	48%	10%
Tea Party Supporters		32%	62%	6%
Political Ideology	Liberal	59%	33%	8%
	Moderate	52%	40%	8%
	Conservative	30%	60%	10%
Region	Northeast	42%	49%	9%
	Midwest	43%	49%	8%
	South	46%	45%	9%
	West	44%	44%	12%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	43%	46%	10%
	\$50,000 or more	47%	45%	8%
Education	Not college graduate	39%	50%	10%
	College graduate	51%	40%	9%
Age	Under 45	53%	38%	9%
	45 or older	40%	50%	10%
Generation	Millennials (18-30)	52%	38%	10%
	Gen X (31-46)	52%	38%	10%
	Baby Boomers (47-65)	42%	52%	6%
	Silent-Greatest (Over 65)	37%	49%	14%
Race	White	39%	50%	11%
	Non-white	56%	37%	7%
Gender	Men	46%	47%	7%
	Women	43%	46%	12%
Interview Type	Landline	42%	48%	10%
	Cell Phone	54%	40%	7%

Marist Poll National Registered Voters: Interviews conducted April 10th through April 14th, 2011, N=1084 MOE +/- 3%. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

President Obama Clear Idea About U.S. Involvement in Libya

Asked of National Adults:

Question Wording: Do you think President Obama has a clear idea about what he wants the U.S. to do in Libya, or not?

		National Adults		
		Do you think President Obama has a clear idea about what he wants the U.S. to do in Libya, or not?		
		Yes	No	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
National Adults		46%	47%	7%
Registered Voters		47%	48%	6%
Party ID	Democrat	69%	24%	6%
	Republican	27%	69%	4%
	Independent	43%	53%	4%
Tea Party Supporters		28%	68%	4%
Political Ideology	Liberal	66%	29%	5%
	Moderate	57%	38%	5%
	Conservative	31%	64%	5%
Region	Northeast	46%	49%	5%
	Midwest	45%	51%	5%
	South	46%	47%	7%
	West	47%	42%	10%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	43%	47%	10%
	\$50,000 or more	48%	47%	5%
Education	Not college graduate	44%	50%	6%
	College graduate	50%	43%	7%
Age	Under 45	49%	43%	8%
	45 or older	44%	51%	5%
Race	White	44%	50%	6%
	Non-white	51%	40%	9%
Gender	Men	47%	48%	4%
	Women	45%	46%	9%
Interview Type	Landline	45%	50%	6%
	Cell Phone	49%	41%	10%

Marist Poll National Adults Split Sample: Interviews conducted April 10th through April 14th, 2011, N=645 MOE +/- 4%. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Understand U.S. Involvement in Libya

Asked of National Adults:

Question Wording: Do you have a clear idea about what the U.S. is trying to do in Libya, or not?

		National Adults		
		Do you have a clear idea about what the U.S. is trying to do in Libya, or not?		
		Yes	No	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
National Adults		42%	57%	1%
Registered Voters		46%	52%	2%
Party ID	Democrat	50%	46%	3%
	Republican	48%	50%	1%
	Independent	42%	58%	<1%
Tea Party Supporters		46%	53%	1%
Political Ideology	Liberal	62%	36%	2%
	Moderate	46%	51%	2%
	Conservative	42%	57%	1%
Region	Northeast	44%	52%	5%
	Midwest	34%	64%	1%
	South	40%	59%	1%
	West	51%	49%	<1%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	30%	68%	2%
	\$50,000 or more	54%	46%	1%
Education	Not college graduate	36%	62%	2%
	College graduate	51%	48%	1%
Age	Under 45	36%	62%	2%
	45 or older	45%	53%	1%
Race	White	41%	57%	1%
	Non-white	41%	57%	2%
Gender	Men	45%	54%	2%
	Women	39%	60%	1%
Interview Type	Landline	44%	54%	2%
	Cell Phone	35%	65%	<1%

Marist Poll National Adults Split Sample: Interviews conducted April 10th through April 14th, 2011, N=645 MOE +/- 4%. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

President Obama's Handling of Foreign Policy

Asked of Registered Voters:

Question Wording: Do you approve or disapprove of how President Barack Obama is handling foreign policy?

		Registered Voters		
		Do you approve or disapprove of how President Barack Obama is handling foreign policy?		
		Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
Registered Voters		46%	48%	6%
Party ID	Democrat	72%	22%	6%
	Republican	16%	79%	5%
	Independent	46%	48%	6%
Tea Party Supporters		21%	75%	4%
Political Ideology	Liberal	66%	26%	8%
	Moderate	54%	42%	5%
	Conservative	28%	66%	6%
Region	Northeast	46%	44%	9%
	Midwest	48%	48%	5%
	South	45%	50%	5%
	West	48%	46%	6%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	45%	47%	8%
	\$50,000 or more	47%	49%	4%
Education	Not college graduate	42%	50%	7%
	College graduate	52%	44%	4%
Age	Under 45	56%	40%	4%
	45 or older	42%	52%	6%
Generation	Millennials (18-30)	56%	36%	8%
	Gen X (31-46)	52%	46%	2%
	Baby Boomers (47-65)	45%	50%	5%
	Silent-Greatest (Over 65)	38%	53%	8%
Race	White	40%	54%	6%
	Non-white	62%	32%	7%
Gender	Men	48%	47%	5%
	Women	45%	48%	7%
Interview Type	Landline	45%	49%	7%
	Cell Phone	52%	43%	5%

Marist Poll National Registered Voters: Interviews conducted April 10th through April 14th, 2011, N=1084 MOE +/- 3%. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

President Obama's Handling of Foreign Policy (Over time)

Asked of Registered Voters:

Question Wording: Do you approve or disapprove of how President Barack Obama is handling foreign policy?

	Registered Voters		
	Do you approve or disapprove of how President Barack Obama is handling foreign policy?		
	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
	Row %	Row %	Row %
April 2011	46%	48%	6%
November 2010	44%	47%	9%
June 2009	54%	32%	14%
April 2009	55%	24%	21%

Marist Poll National Registered Voters

Blame for High Gasoline Prices

Asked of National Adults:

Question Wording: What do you think is most to blame for the high cost of gas today:

		National Adults					
		What do you think is most to blame for the high cost of gas today:					
		President Obama and the Democrats	U.S. oil companies	The turmoil in the Middle East	State and local taxes	The Republicans in Congress	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
National Adults		11%	34%	36%	3%	7%	10%
National Drivers		11%	33%	36%	3%	6%	10%
Registered Voters		10%	38%	33%	3%	7%	9%
Party ID	Democrat	3%	44%	34%	3%	13%	5%
	Republican	22%	24%	37%	2%	<1%	14%
	Independent	10%	39%	33%	4%	7%	8%
Tea Party Supporters		22%	27%	38%	2%	4%	8%
Political Ideology	Liberal	3%	49%	30%	1%	9%	8%
	Moderate	6%	39%	40%	2%	5%	7%
	Conservative	20%	29%	30%	5%	6%	10%
Region	Northeast	9%	29%	38%	5%	9%	11%
	Midwest	15%	31%	34%	2%	8%	10%
	South	11%	36%	34%	3%	3%	13%
	West	8%	36%	38%	4%	9%	4%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	10%	34%	34%	4%	8%	11%
	\$50,000 or more	11%	38%	36%	4%	5%	6%
Education	Not college graduate	12%	33%	35%	4%	7%	9%
	College graduate	9%	36%	37%	3%	5%	10%
Age	Under 45	6%	35%	45%	2%	6%	5%
	45 or older	14%	33%	30%	4%	6%	13%
Race	White	14%	33%	36%	3%	3%	10%
	Non-white	4%	36%	35%	4%	12%	9%
Gender	Men	10%	36%	33%	3%	8%	9%
	Women	11%	32%	38%	3%	5%	10%
Interview Type	Landline	13%	36%	31%	3%	6%	12%
	Cell Phone	5%	29%	49%	4%	8%	4%

Marist Poll National Adults Split Sample: Interviews conducted April 10th through April 14th, 2011, N=629 MOE +/- 4%. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Change in Driving Habits Due to High Gasoline Prices

Asked of National Drivers:

Question Wording: Have you changed your driving habits because of the high gas prices?

		National Drivers		
		Have you changed your driving habits because of the high gas prices?		
		Yes	No	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
National Drivers		55%	45%	<1%
Registered Voters		53%	47%	<1%
Party ID	Democrat	54%	46%	<1%
	Republican	55%	45%	1%
	Independent	50%	50%	<1%
Tea Party Supporters		67%	33%	1%
Political Ideology	Liberal	46%	54%	<1%
	Moderate	50%	50%	<1%
	Conservative	59%	41%	<1%
Region	Northeast	48%	52%	<1%
	Midwest	61%	39%	<1%
	South	53%	47%	<1%
	West	57%	43%	<1%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	65%	35%	<1%
	\$50,000 or more	44%	56%	<1%
Education	Not college graduate	64%	36%	<1%
	College graduate	41%	59%	<1%
Age	Under 45	49%	51%	<1%
	45 or older	59%	41%	<1%
Race	White	55%	45%	<1%
	Non-white	53%	47%	<1%
Gender	Men	54%	46%	<1%
	Women	55%	45%	<1%
Interview Type	Landline	54%	46%	<1%
	Cell Phone	57%	43%	<1%

Marist Poll National Drivers Split Sample: Interviews conducted April 10th through April 14th, 2011, N=559 MOE +/- 4.5%. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.