

## **CNN LIVE FROM...**

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**LIN:** Well, Rumsfeld said that capturing bin Laden remains a priority. From Pakistan, Rumsfeld flew to Afghanistan today where he assured Afghan president Hamid Karzai of continued U.S. military support.

Well, we pay a lot of attention to opinion polls here in this country, Americans' opinion of the president, of the war, of public policy. But today we have data from a poll taken in mostly Muslim Pakistan, and the results are pretty interesting.

For example, nearly 1,500 adults were surveyed. A slight plurality has an overall favorable opinion of the United States, quite a difference from six months ago. When asked if they approved of bombing civilian targets to defend their religion, overwhelmingly, respondents did not -- again, a sizable shift. And overall support of Osama bin Laden appears to be on the wane, at least in Pakistan. There are many factors to remember when digesting these numbers.

Here to help us, Kenneth Ballen. He heads the nonprofit Terror Free Tomorrow, which took the survey. Kenneth, good afternoon to you.

**KENNETH BALLEEN, PRESIDENT, TERROR FREE TOMORROW:** Great to see you, Carol. Thanks for having me on.

**LIN:** Interesting, interesting survey. What do you make of it? Why the improving opinion of the America, the United States?

**BALLEEN:** Well, Carol, there's been a dramatic shift in public opinion, just as you pointed out, from last May. And the reason is American humanitarian assistance to Pakistani earthquake victims. 79 percent of the Pakistani people now say they think favorably of the United States because of that aid.

**LIN:** But, there was something bigger at play in Pakistan before that earthquake hit that was shaping public opinion there. U.S. policies, for example, in the Middle East and the sense of occupation in neighboring Afghanistan. So how did their feelings shift so easily when it just comes to money given to earthquake victims?

**BALLEEN:** Well, that's a very good point you're making. It shifted because of the earthquake assistance and only because of the earthquake assistance. It was American humanitarian aid on the ground. The assistance was more than just money, it reached the Pakistani people directly in need. Pakistanis still oppose U.S. policies in the war on terror, but they think better of the United States and in tandem, think worse of bin Laden and terrorism, because of American humanitarian assistance.

**LIN:** Now, why the changing opinion of bin Laden?

**BALLEN:** That is also very interesting. Unfavorable opinion on terrorist attacks went up, and against bin Laden went up too, at the exact same percentages that favorable opinion increased towards the United States. So opinion of bin Laden and the United States move in tandem. And that's a very interesting phenomenon, very unexpected. And it just shows how important opinion of the United States is to the war on terrorism. People don't support the radicals, don't support bin Laden, if they support the United States. The two numbers move in tandem.

**LIN:** Now, how do you conduct a poll in a country where the government only controls 5 percent of the territory? I mean, more than 90 percent are these lawless, tribal territories.

**BALLEN:** Well we were able to get into every province of Pakistan and able to ask the people what they thought. And it's a critical phenomenon to get in and really test Muslim opinion, to know what the people really think. It's also important to realize that the opinion of the people really makes a difference in the war on terror because if they're not supportive, it makes it harder to capture the terrorists -- Secretary Rumsfeld said we don't know whether bin Laden is alive or not. But unless we have the support of the people, it becomes very difficult for the government of Pakistan--or the United States-- to be able to capture him.

**LIN:** So were you in the northwest province, frontier province, as well, where Bin Laden is suspected to be hiding?

**BALLEN:** Yes. And the results there, interestingly enough, mirrored the rest of the country. We didn't see big shifts between the different provinces. They're pretty much the same across Pakistan-- and this shifted opinion away from Mr. Bin Laden. So let's hope this is a good sign.

**LIN:** You bet. How do you know they're telling the truth?

**BALLEN:** You know, you never know that in a poll whether people are telling the truth. The important thing is that the data in our latest poll can be compared against data in the last poll, which was six months ago. So, we can track the two polls, and compare the data from the same kind of sample size and methodology that was used before.

**LIN:** So, in conclusion, what does this add up to? Because public opinion can change.

**BALLEN:** Absolutely. Carol, we saw in Indonesia, public opinion shift dramatically away from the radicals, away from the terrorists and towards the United States after America gave tsunami aid. We've seen the same phenomenon in Pakistan. The opinion has shifted, it has moved towards the United States when we were able to get in directly on the ground and help people. This tells us something in terms of winning the war on terror. It tells us something beyond just our military or law enforcement actions. Humanitarian intervention by the United States can directly and dramatically weaken support for terrorists. If American efforts are focused on positive rebuilding and a vision for the future, the foot soldiers for bin Laden and radical Islam will desert. The message from Pakistan is that Islamist extremism can indeed be effectively defeated in Muslim hearts and minds.

**LIN:** Ken Ballen, thank you very much. Really interesting poll and analysis.

**BALLEN:** Thank you, Carol. I appreciate being here.