

John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart  
**Trends in Public Opinion on Terrorism**

Posted at [politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/terrorpolls.pdf](http://politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/terrorpolls.pdf)  
May 14, 2020

Public opinion trend data on terrorism as discussed in

**1:** John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, *Chasing Ghosts: The Policing of Terrorism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), chapter 2

**2:** John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, "Public Opinion and Counterterrorism Policy," Washington, DC: Cato Institute White Paper, February 20, 2018. [www.cato.org/publications/white-paper/public-opinion-counterterrorism-policy](http://www.cato.org/publications/white-paper/public-opinion-counterterrorism-policy)

This file is routinely updated, and includes additional public opinion material as well

Earlier postings: September 28, 2015, December 8, 2015, January 5, 2016, March 14, 2016, May 30, 2016, July 16, 2016, December 5, 2016, January 20, 2017, May 1, 2017, February 26, 2018, March 22, 2018, July 3, 2018, January 2, 2019

The data in this file are also relevant to the discussions in

John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, "The Terrorism Delusion: America's Overwrought Response to September 11," *International Security*, Summer 2012  
[politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/absisfin.pdf](http://politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/absisfin.pdf)

John Mueller, "Never have so few been able to frighten so many," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 9, 2012  
[articles.philly.com/2012-09-09/news/33714781\\_1\\_terrorism-major-attack-poll-respondents](http://articles.philly.com/2012-09-09/news/33714781_1_terrorism-major-attack-poll-respondents)

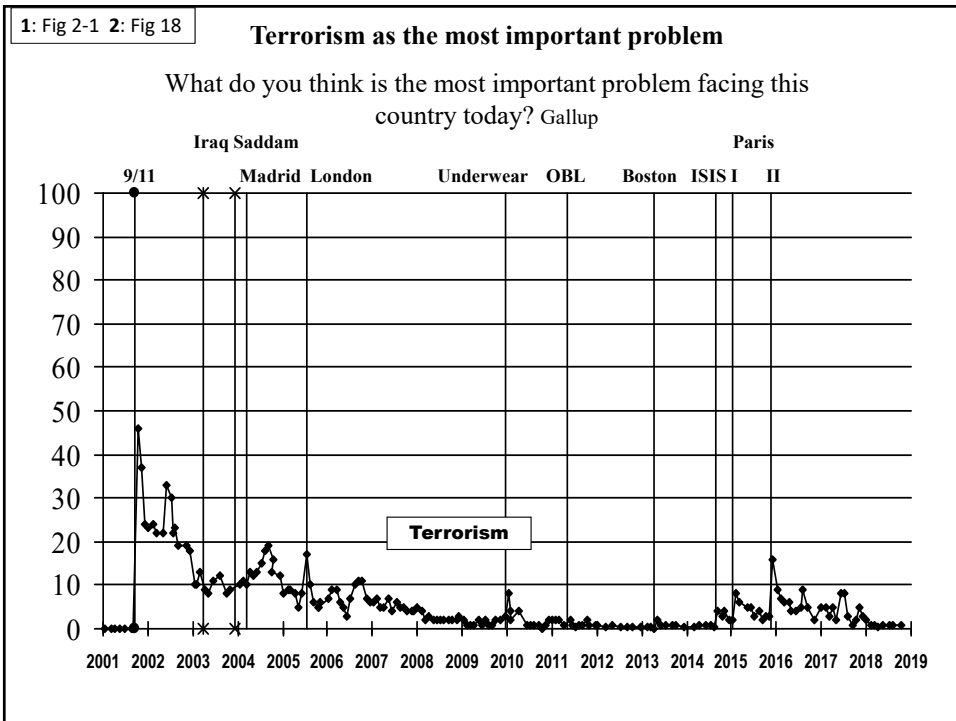
John Mueller and Mark Stewart, "Terrorism In the American Psyche: Why Fears of Attacks are So Overblown," *foreignaffairs.com*, December 10, 2015  
[politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/TNIfearopinionFAfin.pdf](http://politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/TNIfearopinionFAfin.pdf)  
[www.cato.org/publications/commentary/terrorism-american-psyche](http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/terrorism-american-psyche)

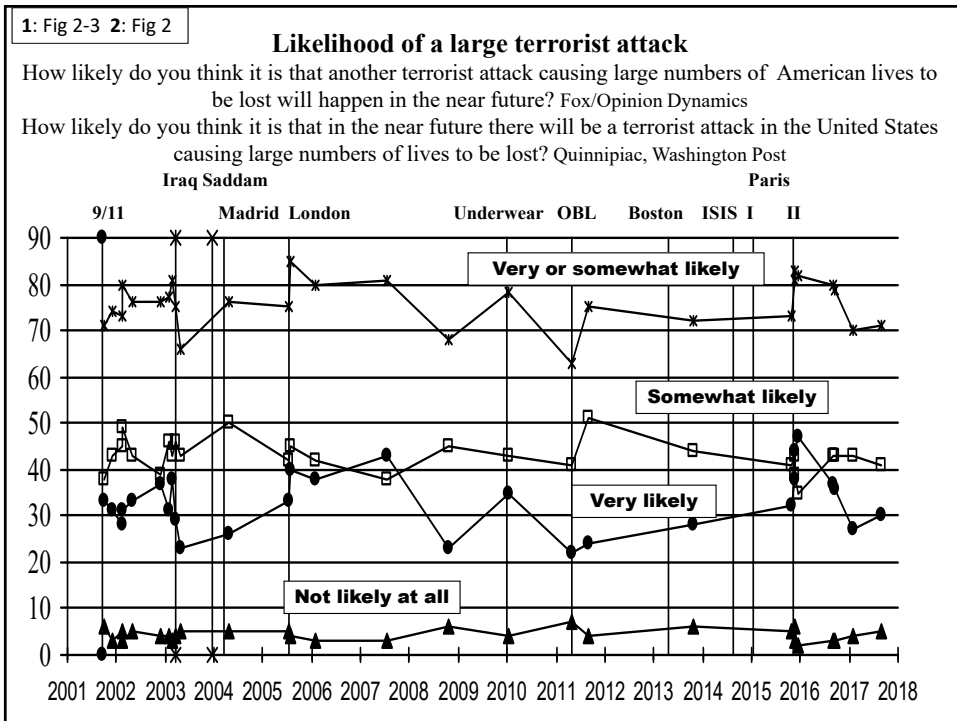
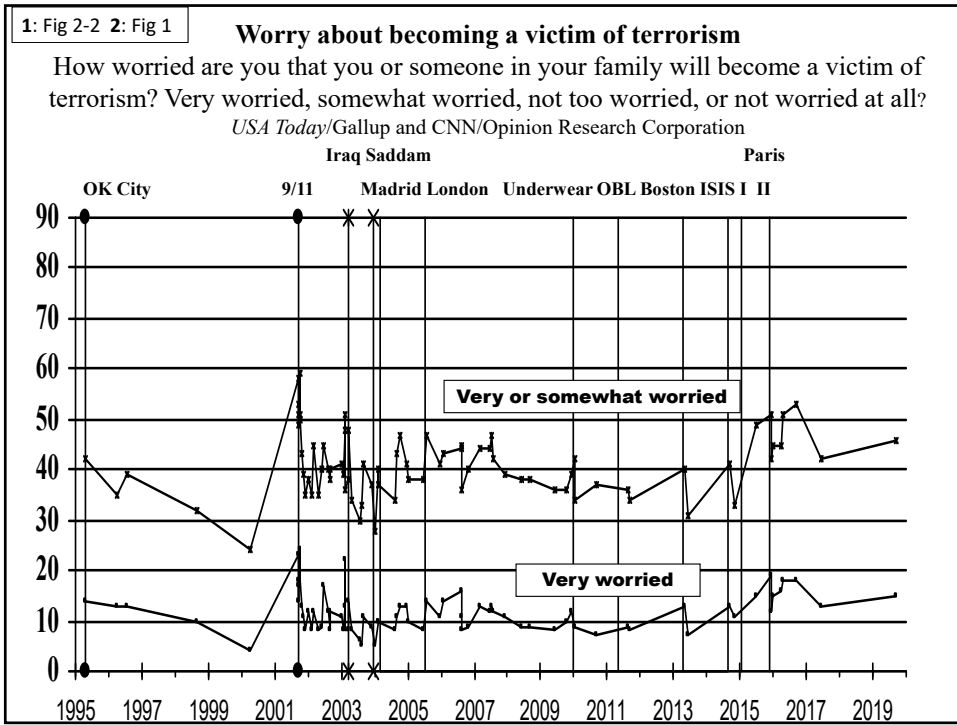
John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, "American Public Opinion on Terrorism Since 9/11: Trends and Puzzles," March 8, 2016, presented at the National Convention of the International Studies Association, Atlanta, Georgia, March 17, 2016  
[politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/tpoISA16.pdf](http://politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/tpoISA16.pdf)

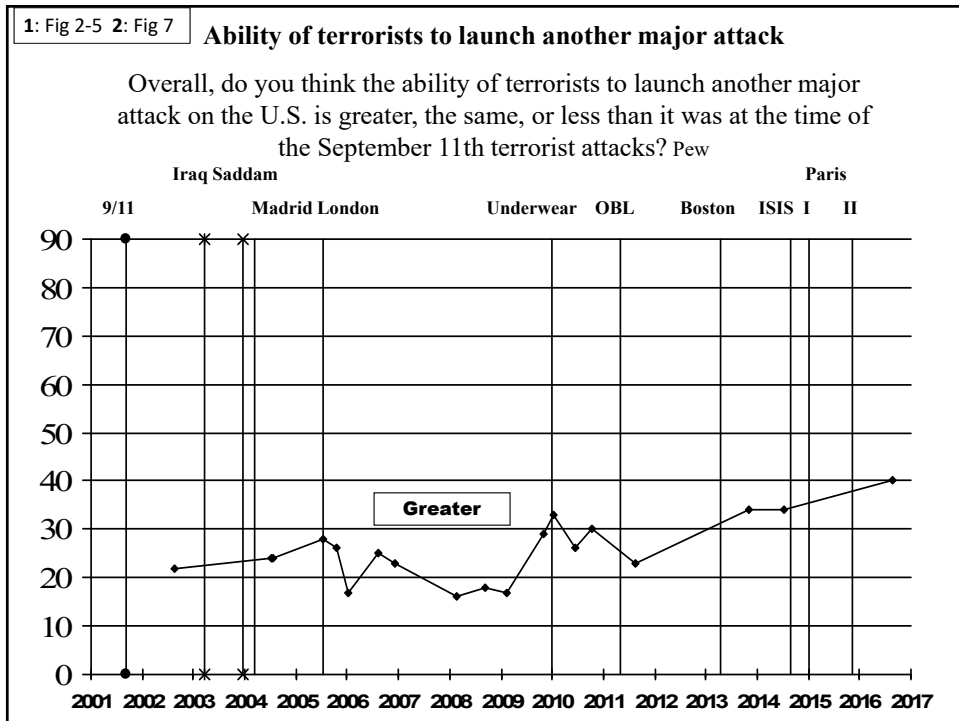
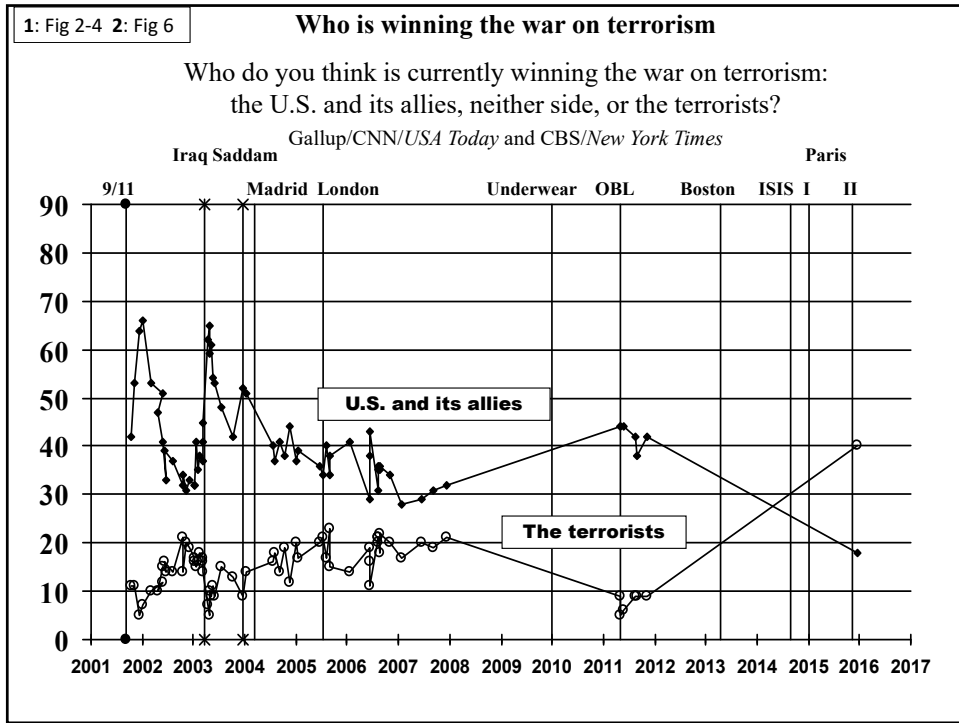
John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, "Why are Americans still so afraid of Islamist terrorism?" *washingtonpost.com*, Monkey Cage, March 23, 2018  
[politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/tpoCatoPAMCageWPfin](http://politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/tpoCatoPAMCageWPfin)  
[www.cato.org/publications/commentary/why-are-americans-still-so-afraid-islamist-terrorism](http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/why-are-americans-still-so-afraid-islamist-terrorism)

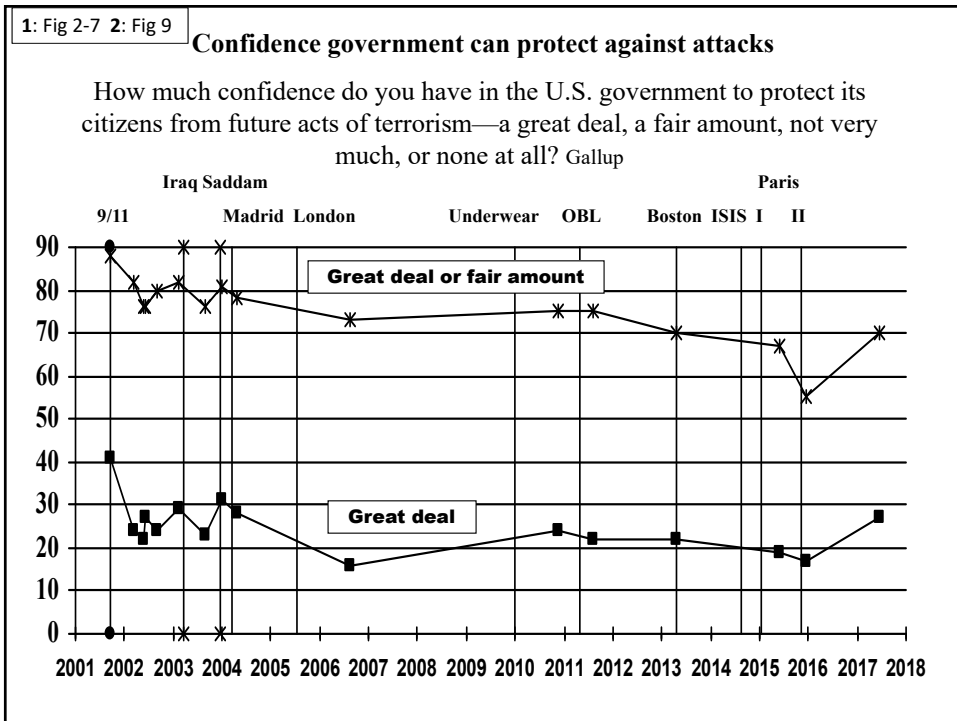
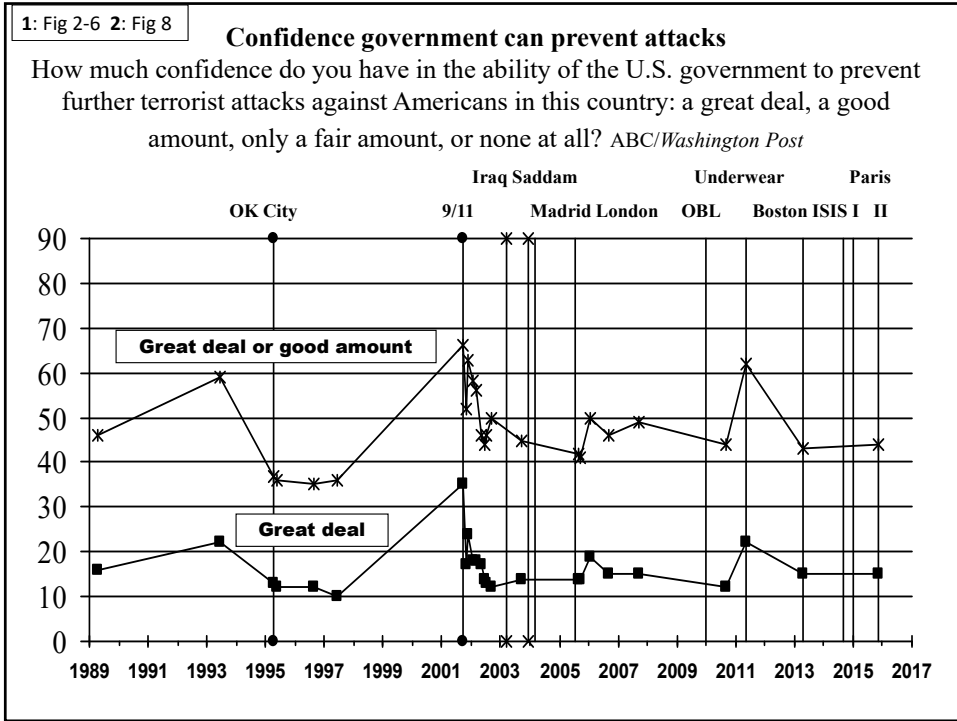
John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, "Terrorism and Bathtubs: Comparing and Assessing the Risks," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, published online October 29, 2018  
[politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/bathtubsfin.pdf](http://politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/bathtubsfin.pdf)

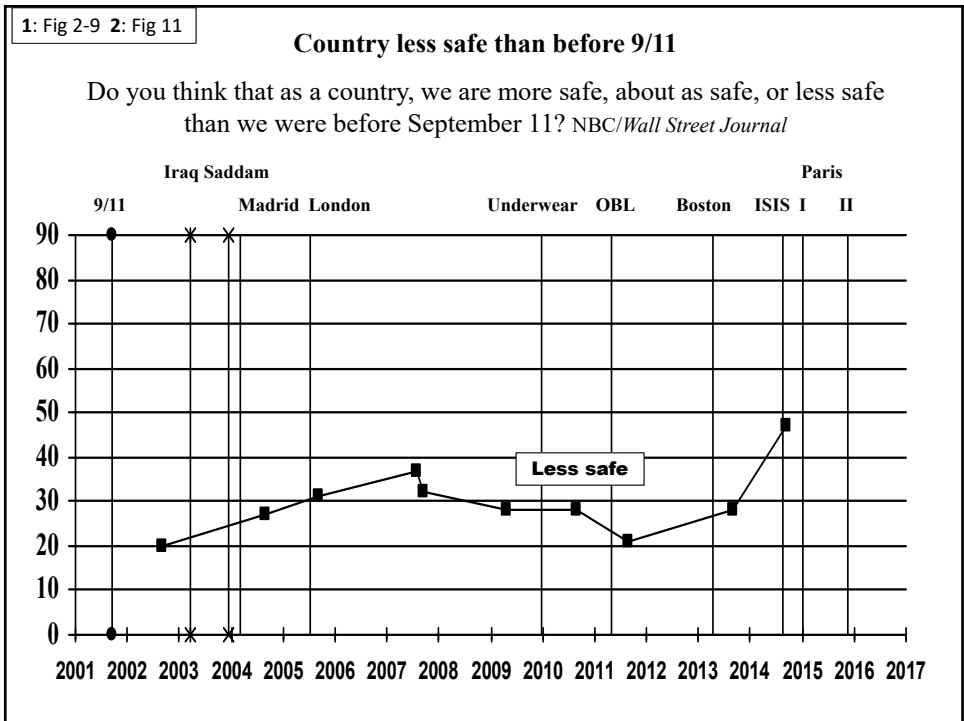
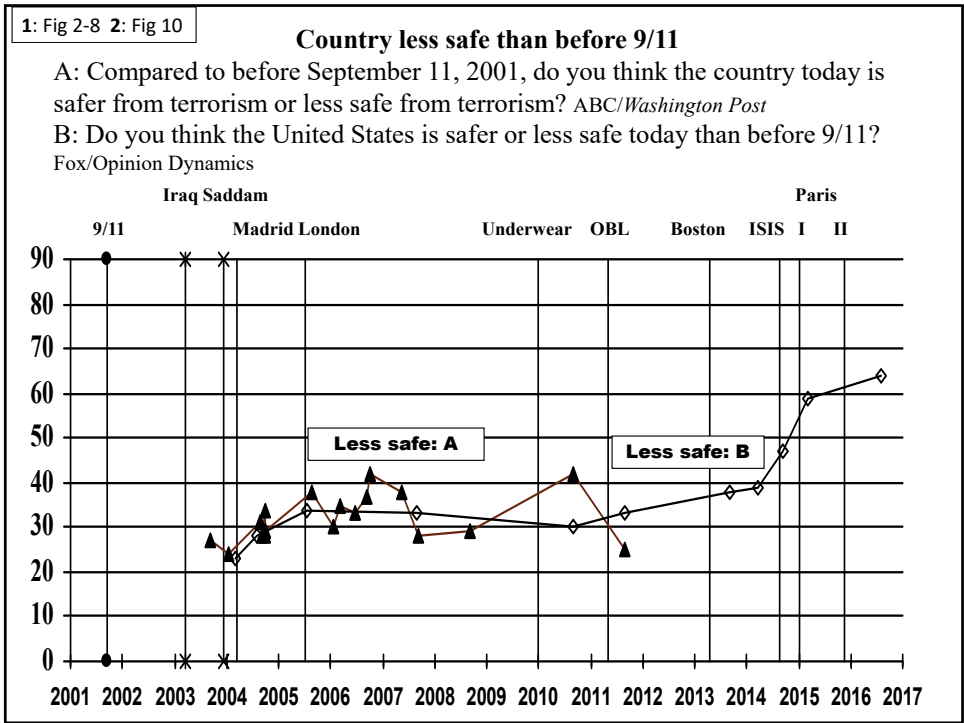
OK City: Terrorist bombing in Oklahoma City, April 19, 1995  
 9/11: Terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001  
 Iraq: Beginning of the Iraq War, March 20, 2003  
 Saddam: Capture of Saddam Hussein, December 13, 2003  
 Madrid: Terrorist bombings in Madrid, March 11, 2004  
 London: Terrorist bombings in London, July 7, 2005  
 Underwear: Underwear bomber, December 25, 2009  
 OBL: Killing of Osama bin Laden, May 2, 2011  
 Boston: Terrorist bombings at Boston Marathon, April 15, 2013  
 ISIS: First beheading of an Americans by ISIS, August 19, 2014  
 Paris I: Charlie Hebdo shootings, January 15, 2015  
 Paris II: Multiple shootings, November 13, 2015, followed by the San Bernardino shootings 20 days later

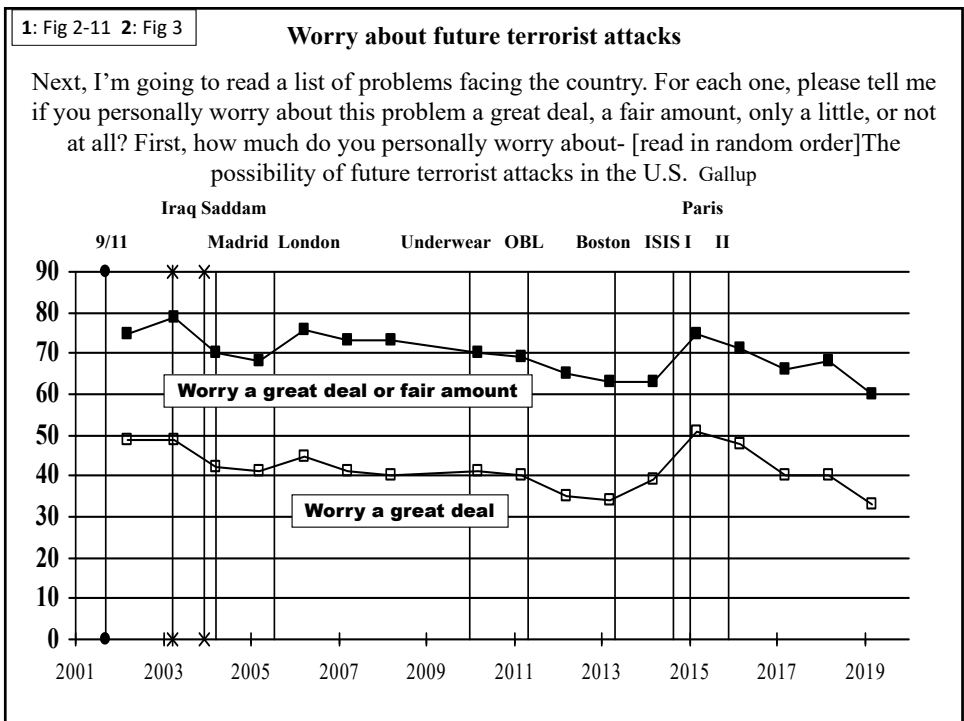
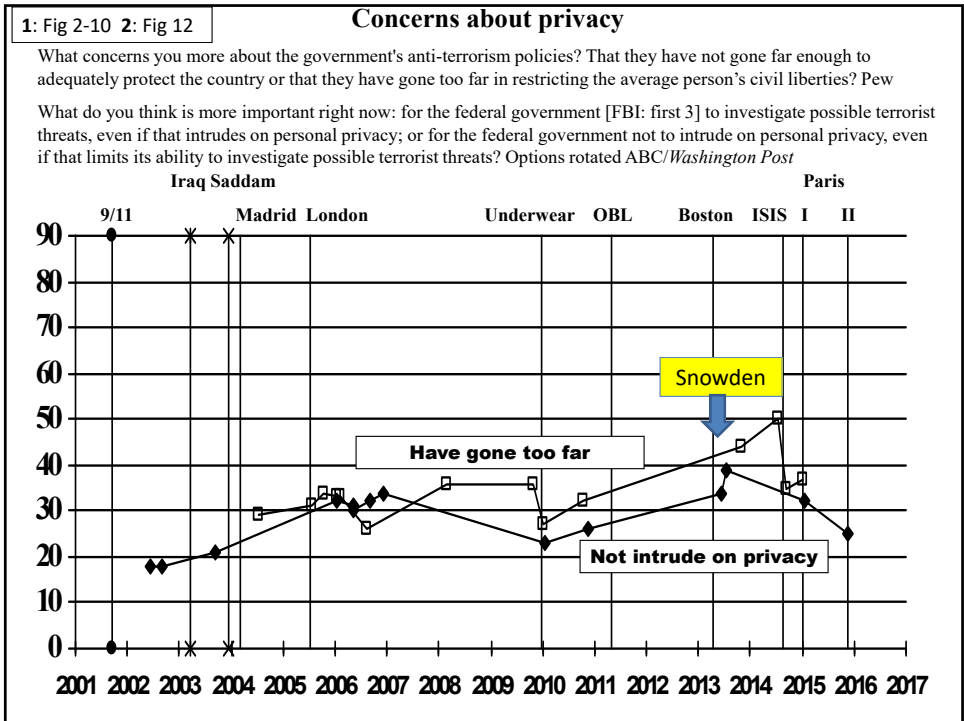


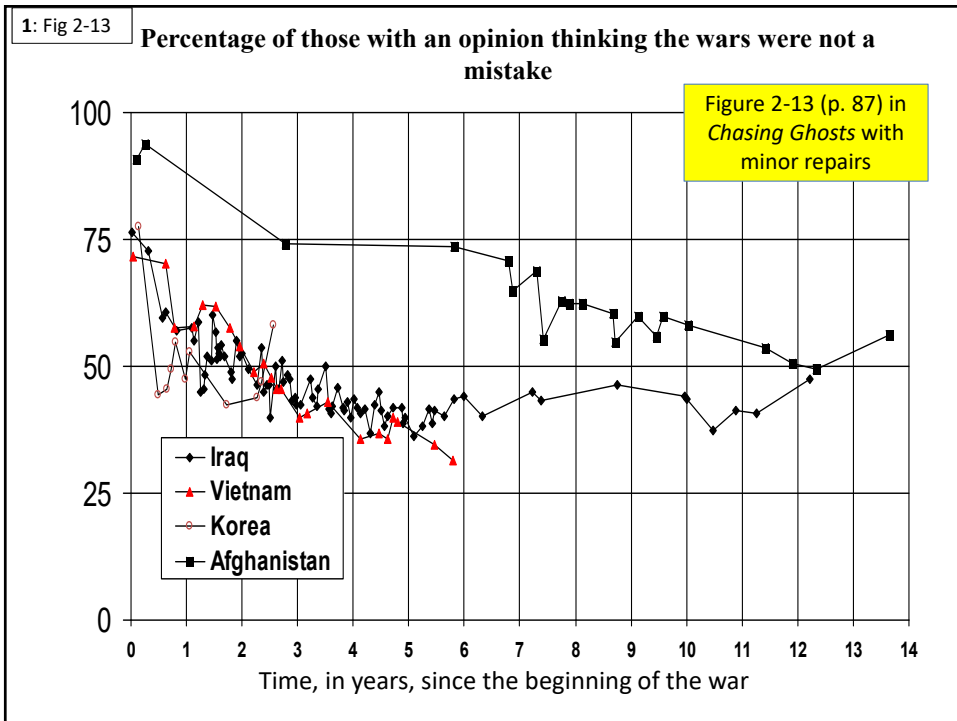
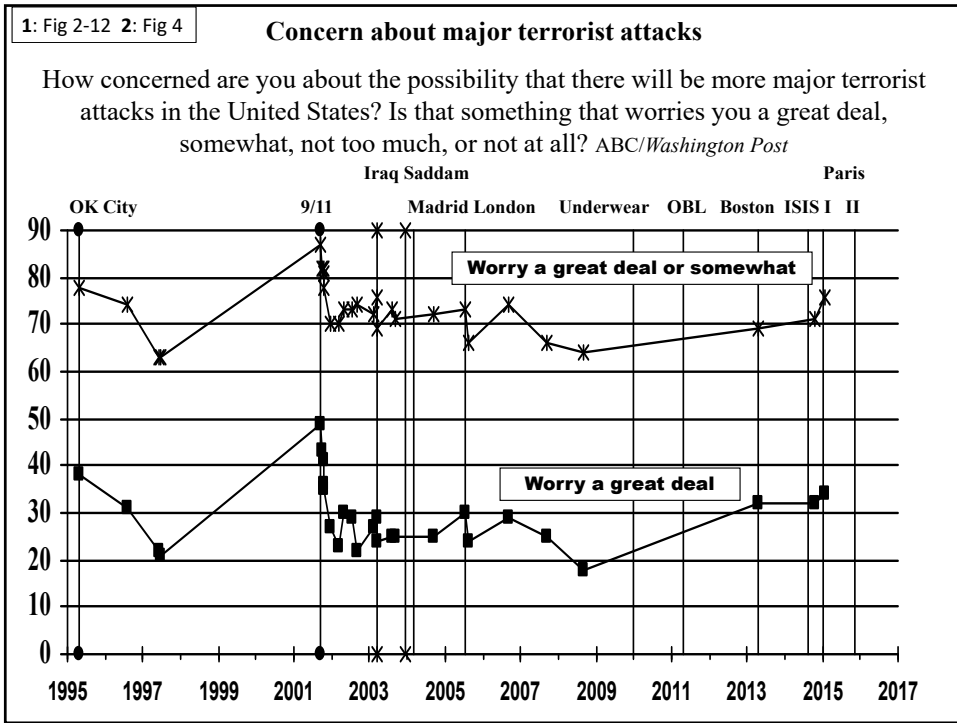




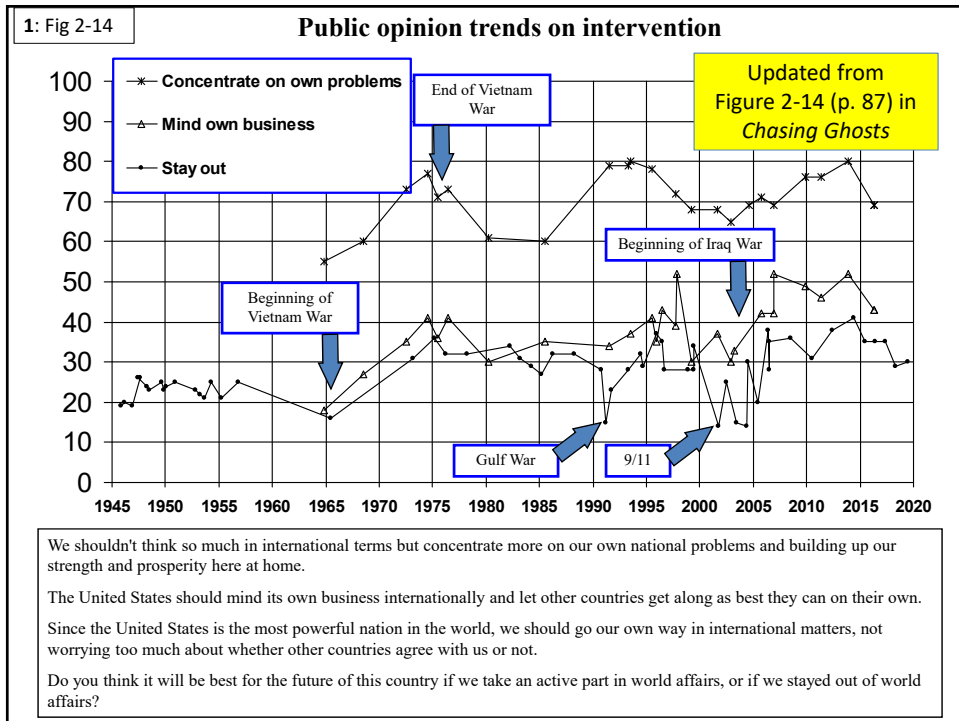
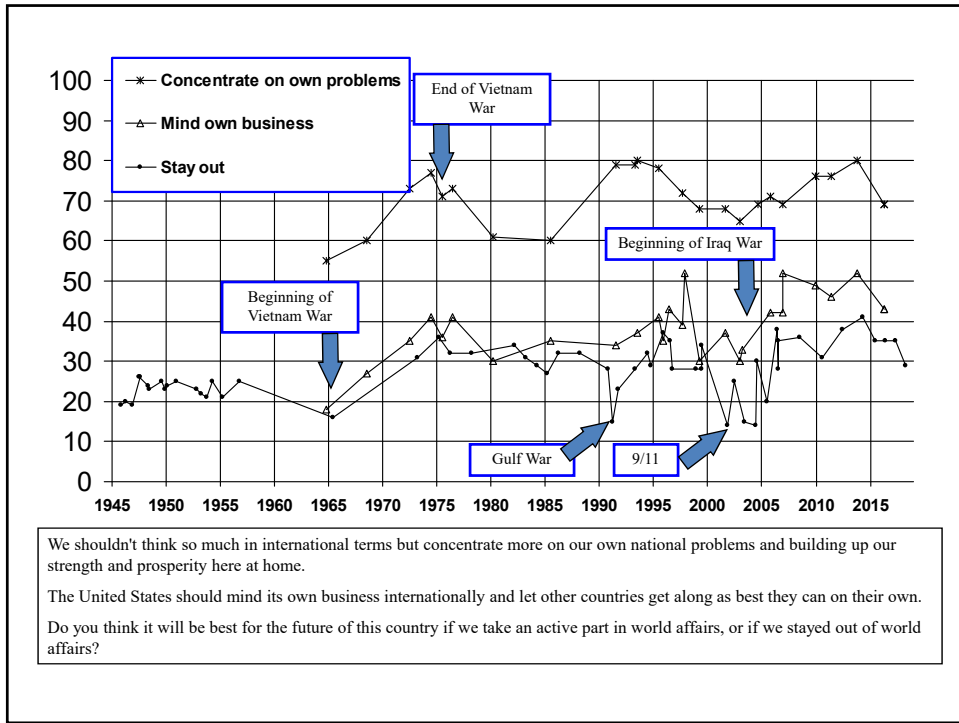


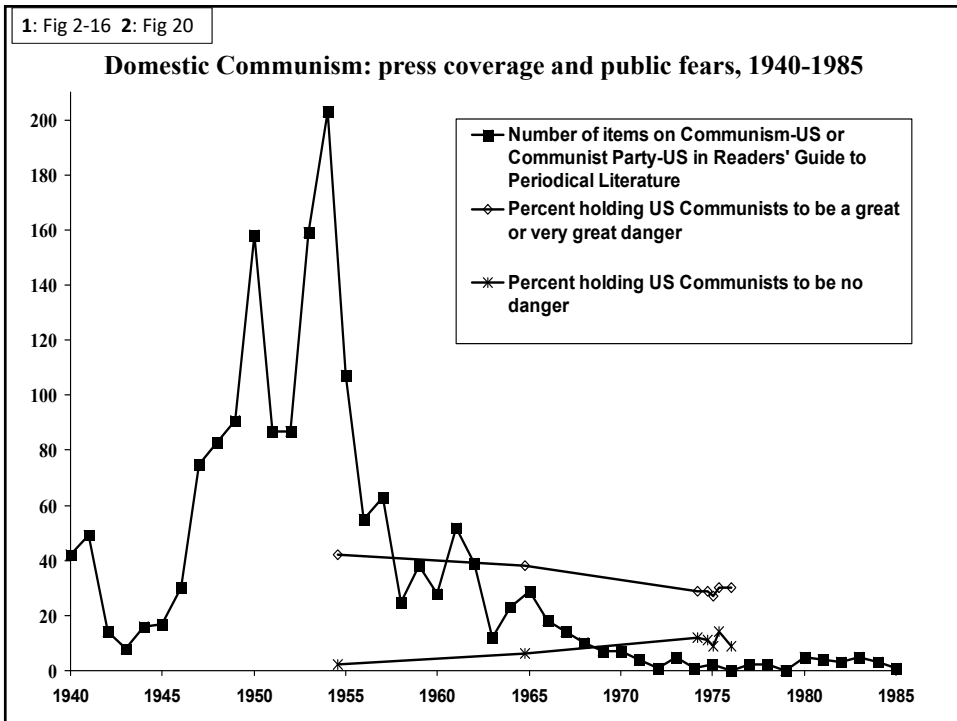
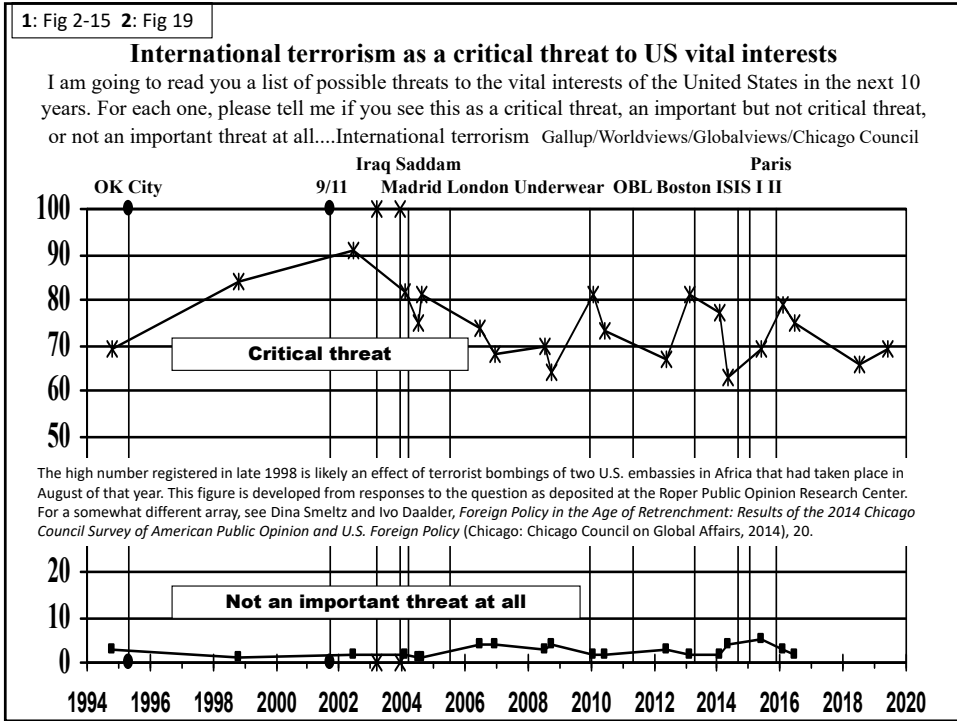


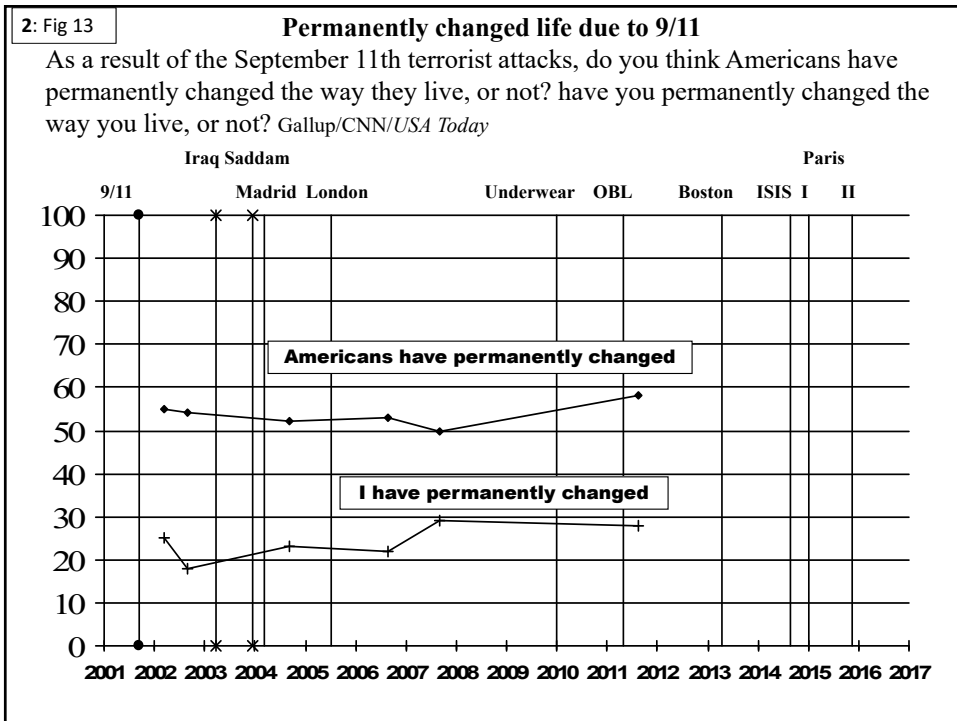
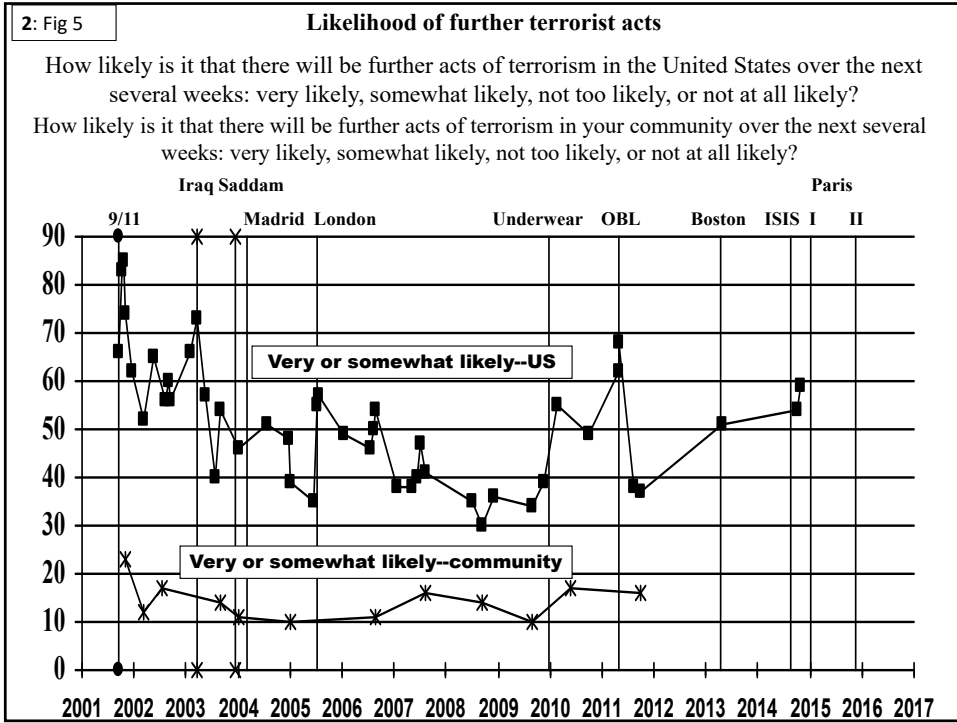


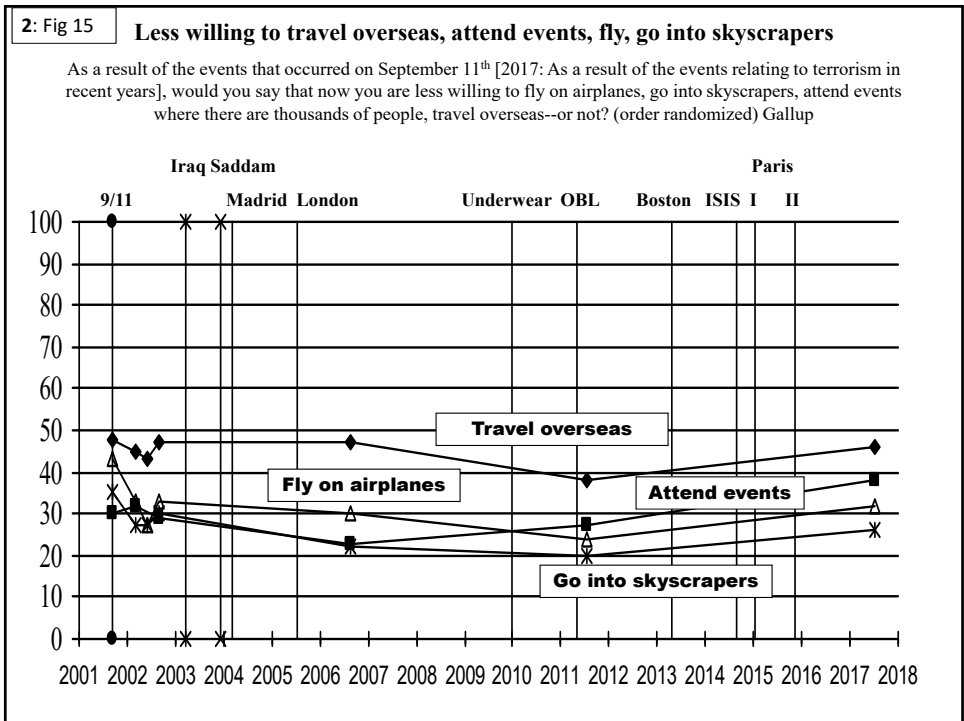
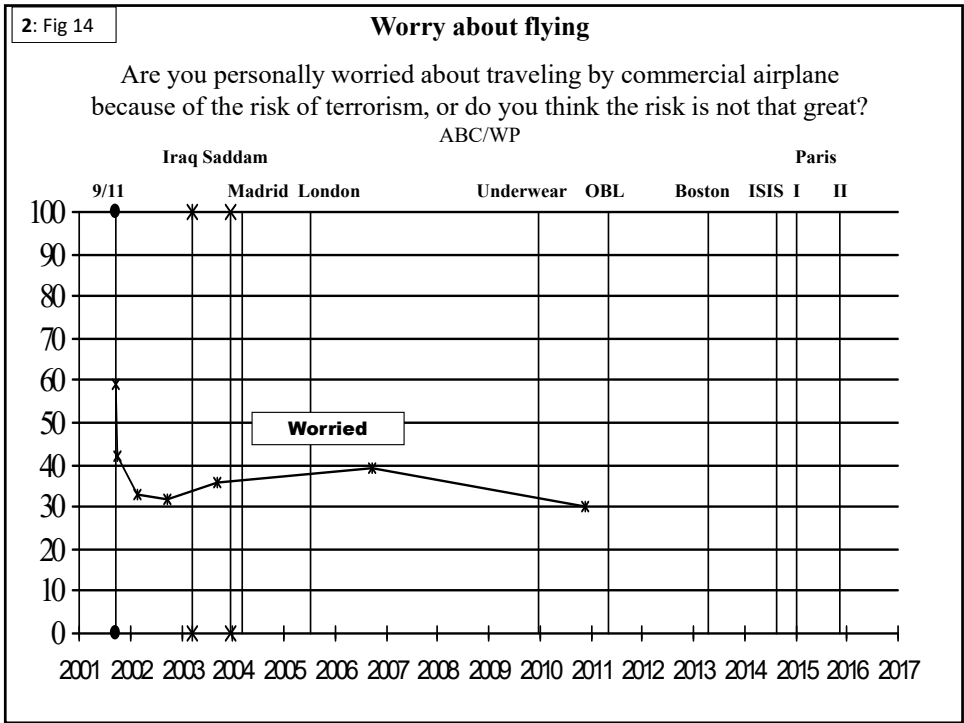


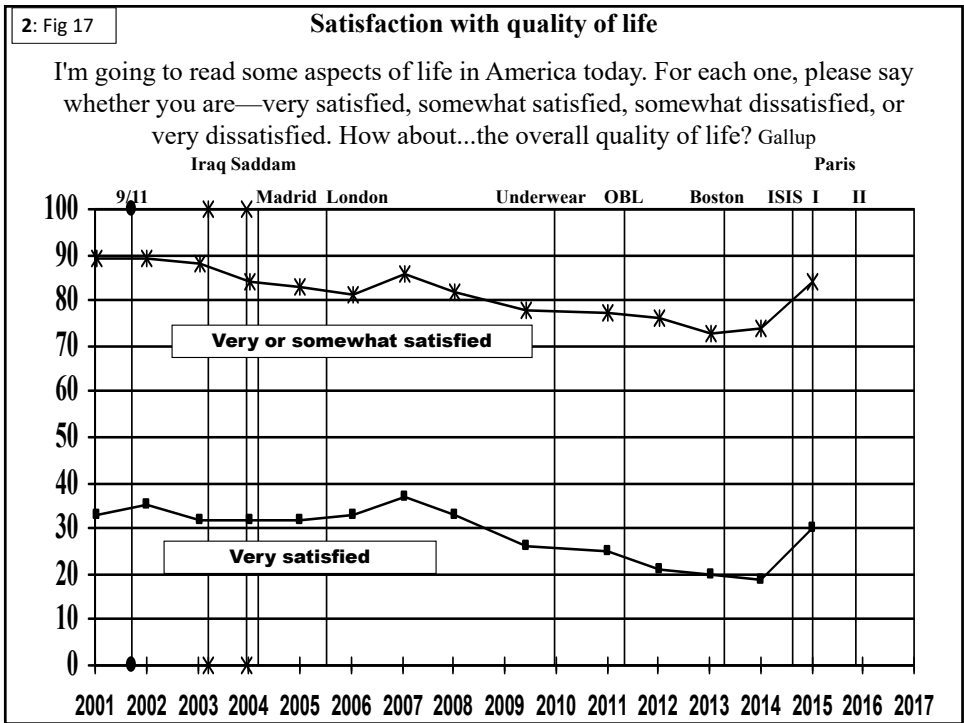
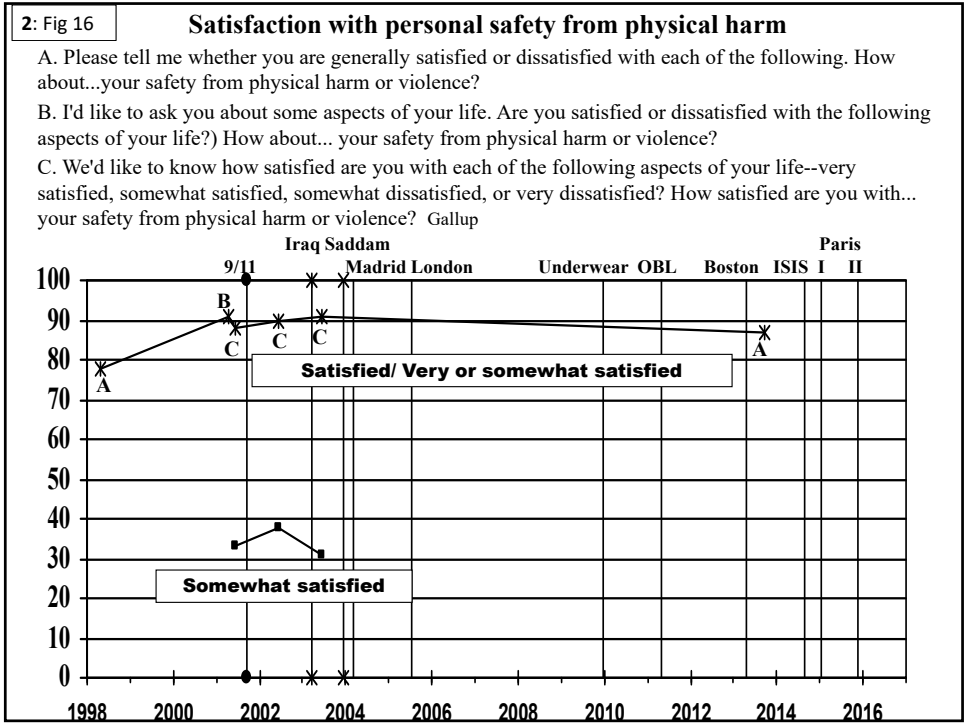












2: Tab 1

	8/2002	8/2005
Life did not change on 9/11	31	24
Life changed on 9/11, but now completely back to normal	11	13
Life changed on 9/11, but will completely return to normal	24	19
Life changed on 9/11, and will never completely return to normal	32	42

—Gallup

2: Tab 2

**How worried are you that you or someone  
in your family will be a victim of a...**

	<u>Apr 2016</u>		<u>Sept 2016</u>	
	terrorist attack	violent crime	terrorist attack	violent crime
<b>Very worried</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Somewhat worried</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Not too worried</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Not worried at all</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>

—PRRI

2: Tab 2

### How worried are you about being the victim of...

	<u>Jan 2016</u>		<u>Sept 2016</u>	
	a terrorist attack	gun violence	a terrorist attack	gun violence
<b>Very worried</b>	23	21	17	18
<b>Somewhat worried</b>	26	21	25	18
<b>Not too worried</b>	26	26	26	28
<b>Not worried at all</b>	24	32	31	36

—Kaiser

2: Tab 2

### How worried are you that you or someone you love will be the victim of...

	<u>Oct 2015</u>		<u>Dec 2016</u>	
	a terrorist attack	gun violence	a terrorist attack	gun violence
<b>Very worried</b>	9	17	13	17
<b>Fairly worried</b>	16	15	16	15
<b>Only slightly worried</b>	35	31	36	34
<b>Not really worried at all</b>	40	37	34	33

—Wall Street Journal

2: Tab 3

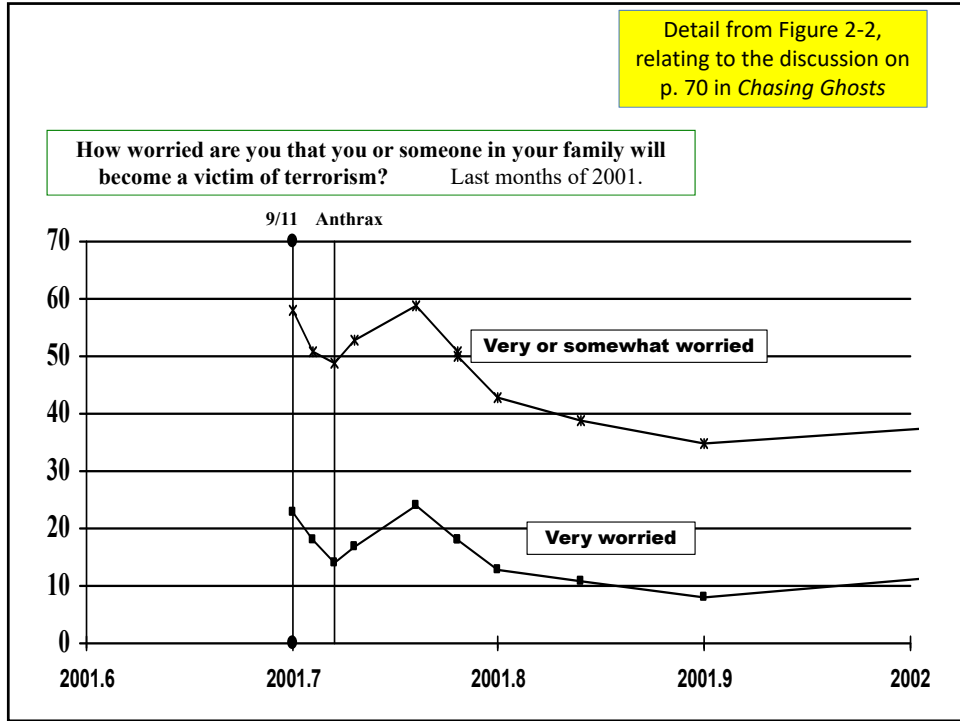
**Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with this statement:  
ISIS (Islamic militants operating in Syria and Iraq) is a serious threat to the existence or survival of the US.**

**52% Agree strongly  
25 Agree somewhat  
13 Disagree somewhat  
9 Disagree strongly  
1 Not sure**

**TIPP/Investor's Business Daily Poll, March 28-April 2, 2016  
Asked of those who are following news stories about ISIS very or somewhat closely (83% of the sample)**

**Additional material**

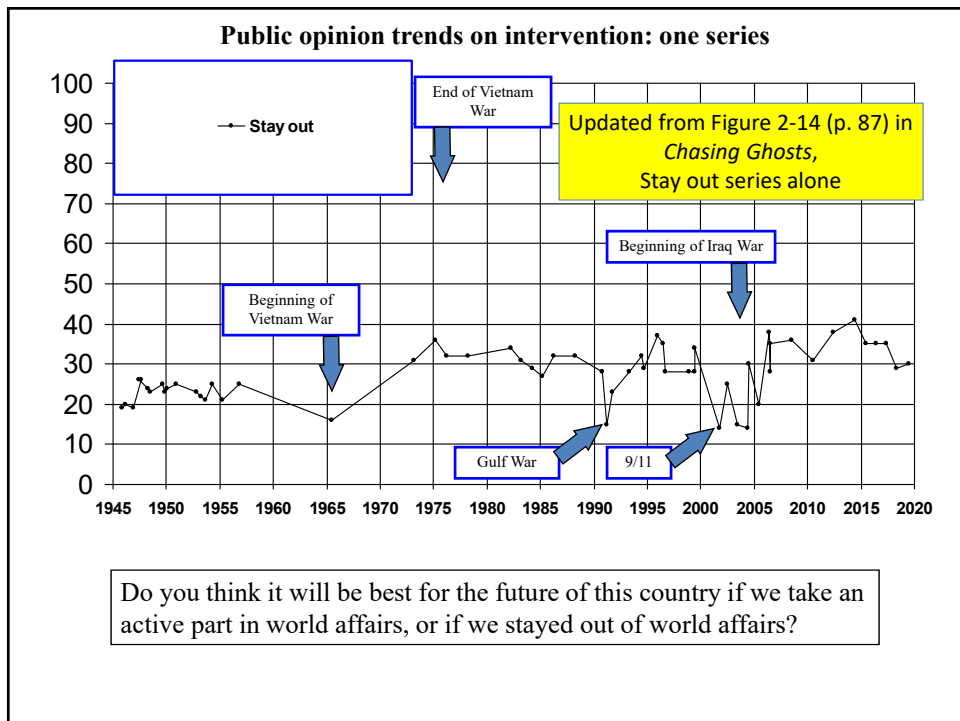
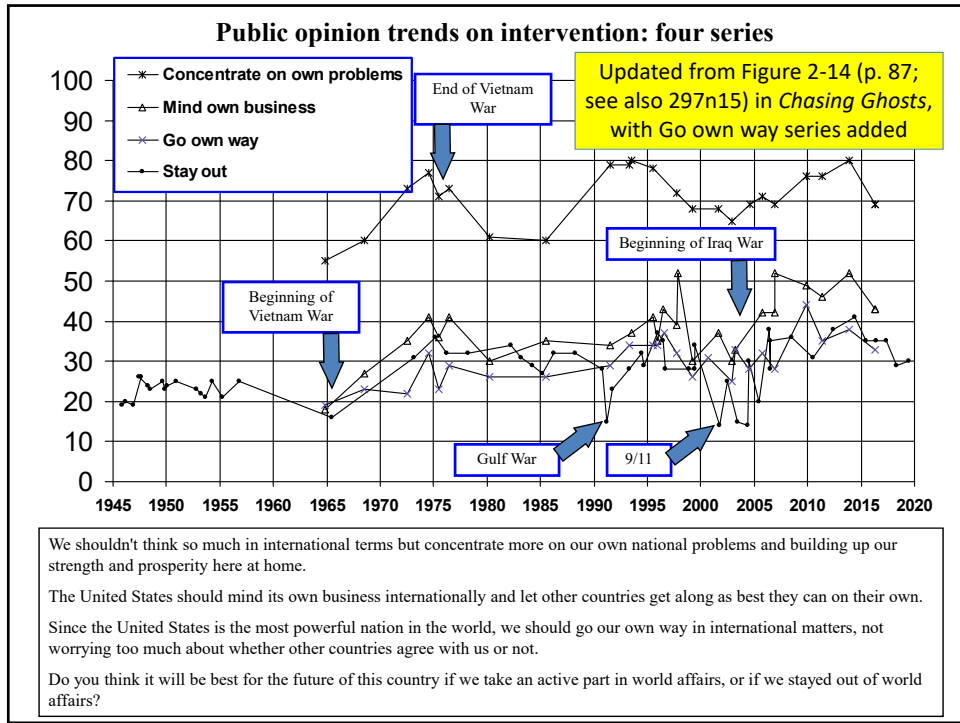


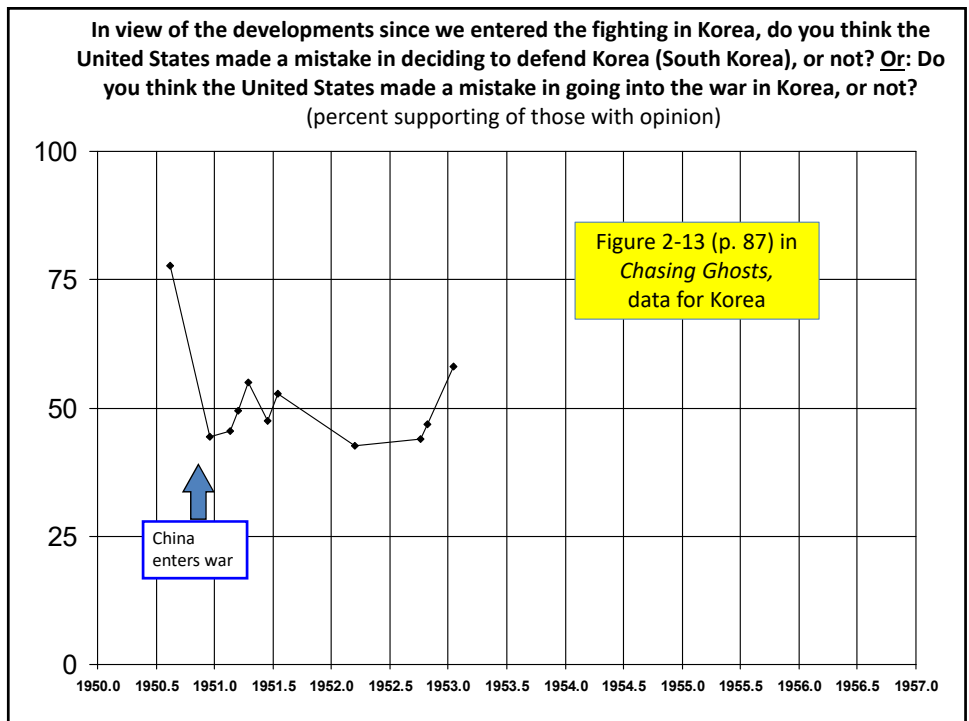
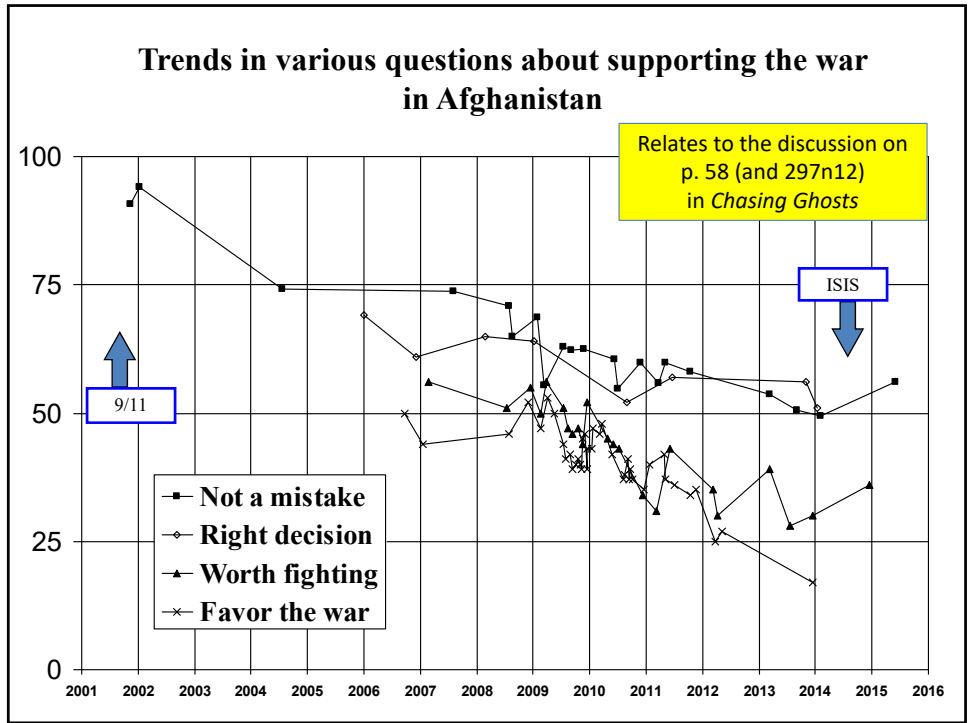


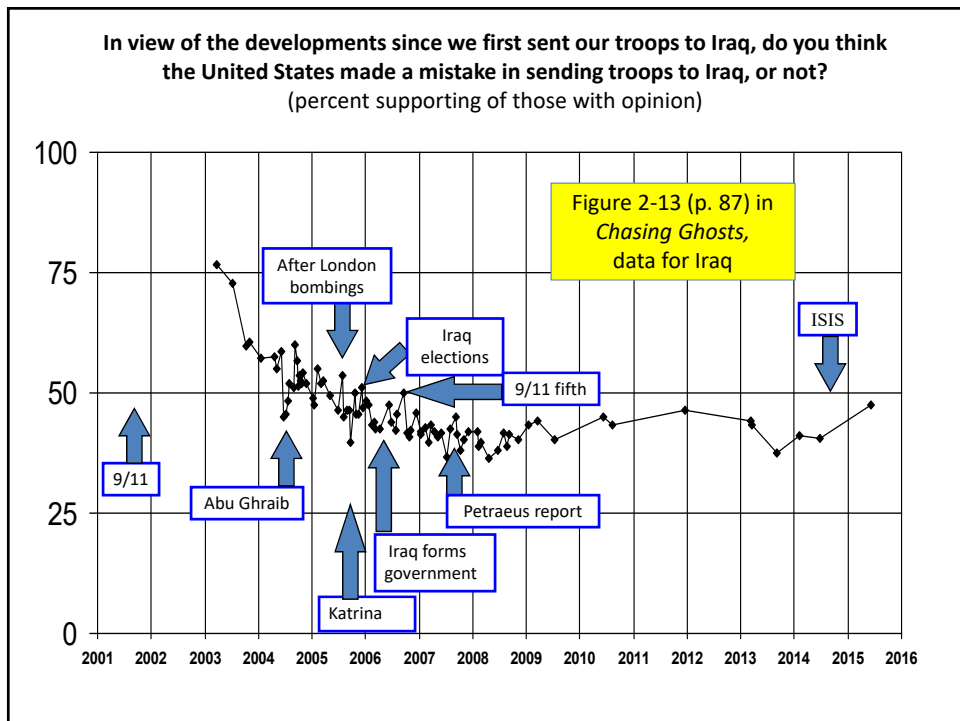
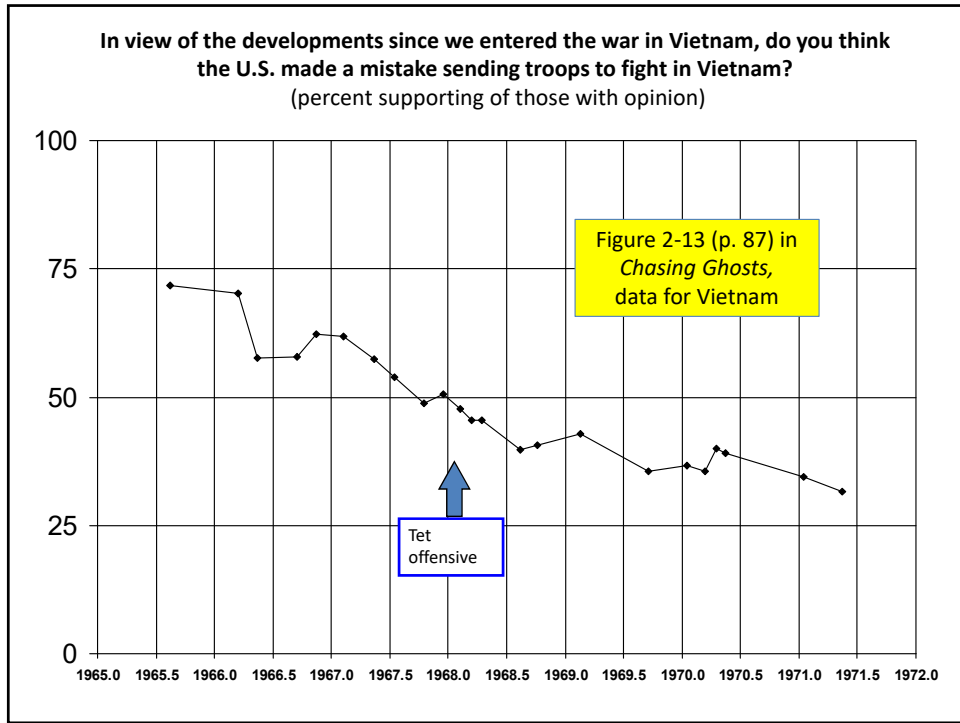
Relates to the discussion on  
p. 60 (and 298n19)  
in *Chasing Ghosts*

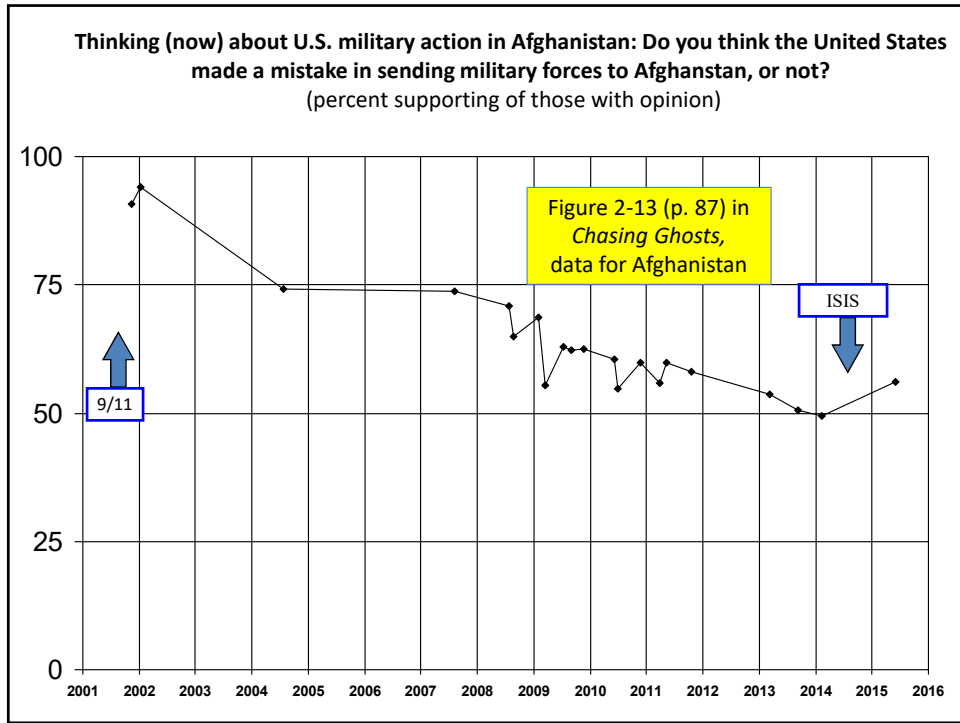
Do you approve or disapprove of the presence of US troops in Bosnia?

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know		
US troops sent in →	1995 Dec 6-7	36	57	7	1000
	1995 Dec 15-18	41	54	6	1000
	1996 Jan 5-7	36	58	6	1000
	1996 Jan 10-11	41	50	9	1000
	1996 May 28-29	42	51	7	1019
	1996 Jun 12-13	44	45	11	1004
	1997 Feb 5-6	40	54	6	1227
	1997 Jun 26-29	39	53	8	1013
	1997 Nov 12-16	50	42	8	1200
	1997 Dec 18-21	49	43	8	1005
	1998 Jan	43	50	7	1218
	1999 Jan	53	43	5	1004
	1999 Mar 24-28	57	34	9	1488









Relates to the discussion in p. 297n11 in *Chasing Ghosts*

### Public opinion changes, 2007-2008

Surge making things better	30 to 46
Surge having no impact	51 to 32
US making significant progress	36 to 46
US winning the war	21 to 37
Favor the war	34 to 33
War as been worth it	36 to 36
War was the right decision	42 to 39
Stay as long at it takes	26 to 26
Approve Bush handing of war	33 to 34

