

THE PRESIDENT, CONGRESS, AND THE WAR IN IRAQ
May 18-23, 2007

The battle between George W. Bush and Congress over an Iraq war funding bill comes at a time when America's assessment of the war has never been worse. 76% of Americans say the war is going somewhat or very badly for the United States, and only 20% say the recent troop increase is making a positive difference.

Americans remain firmly in support of both setting benchmarks that the Iraqi government must meet as a condition for further funding of the war, and setting a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq - and more Americans than ever before say the United States should never have gotten involved in Iraq in the first place.

In addition, 72% of Americans say the U.S. is seriously off on the wrong track - the highest number ever recorded in the CBS News/New York Times Poll. President Bush's job approval rating is now at 30%, while Congressional job approval is at 36%.

THE WAR IN IRAQ

The number of Americans who say the war is going badly reached a new high this month, rising 10 points to 76% - with nearly half of all Americans (47%) saying the war is going very badly. Although positive assessment of the war rose somewhat in March and April, it has now reached its previous January low.

	HOW IS THE WAR GOING?			
	Now	4/2007	3/2007	1/2007
Well	23%	31%	29%	23%
Badly	76	66	69	75

This more negative view reflects a large shift among Republicans in their assessment of the war. A majority of Republicans - 52% - now say the war is going at least somewhat badly, up sixteen points from 36% in the middle of April. Nine in 10 Democrats and eight in 10 Independents agree.

Although on Tuesday Congress backed down from attaching a timetable for troop withdrawal as a condition for extending funding for the war, six in 10 Americans would like one - they continue to support setting a timetable that would see U.S. troops withdrawn from Iraq by the end of 2008.

SHOULD U.S. SET TIMETABLE FOR IRAQ WITHDRAWAL IN 2008?

	Now	4/2007
Yes	63%	64%
No	34	32

But while there will be no timetable for troop withdrawal attached to the pending funding bill, Congress has set requirements or benchmarks for the Iraqi government to meet as a condition for future funding of the war - a measure which has the support of a majority of Americans. 69% of Americans think Congress should attach benchmarks to the funding bill, while another 13% of Americans think that all funding for the war in Iraq should be cut off no matter what. 15% think Congress should allow all funding for the war without any benchmark conditions.

WHAT SHOULD CONGRESS DO ABOUT IRAQ WAR FUNDING?

Fund with benchmarks	69%
Allow all funding	15
Block all funding	13

Even a majority of Republicans - 62% - agree that continued funding for the war should be conditional on benchmarks for the Iraqi government.

Only one in five Americans thinks that the recent increase in the number of troops in Iraq is making a positive difference in the situation there - a five point drop from last month. Half of all Americans say it is having no impact, while another one in four Americans thinks the troop increase is making the situation worse.

THE TROOP INCREASE IS MAKING THE SITUATION IN IRAQ...

	Now	4/2007
Better	20%	25%
Worse	26	26
No impact	50	43

Republicans are far more positive than Democrats and Independents. 44% of Republicans think the troop increase is helping, as opposed to only 5% of Democrats and 17% of Independents.

In addition, fewer Americans than ever before believe the U.S. did the right thing in going to war with Iraq in the first place. Now only 35% of Americans say the U.S. did the right thing, down 9 points from April. Six in 10 say the U.S. should have stayed out.

DID U.S. DO THE RIGHT THING GOING TO WAR WITH IRAQ?

	Now	4/2007
Right thing	35%	44%
Should have stayed out	61	51

A majority of Republicans continues to think the U.S. did the right thing in going to war in Iraq. However, the percentage dropped nine points since last month, from 76% to 67%.

The war in Iraq remains the most important problem facing the country today, far ahead of the economy and jobs, rising gas prices, and immigration. The war has topped the list as the country's most important problem since January, 2006.



MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

	Now	4/2007
War in Iraq	31%	36%
Economy & jobs	8	9
Price of gas	7	3
Immigration	7	5

THE PRESIDENT, CONGRESS, AND THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

Americans are more pessimistic than ever before about whether or not the United States is headed in the right direction overall. 72% of Americans now believe the country has seriously gotten off on the wrong track - the highest number ever recorded since the CBS News/New York Times Poll began asking the question in 1983. Only 24% of Americans now say the country is headed in the right direction.

DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

	Now	3/2007
Wrong track	72%	69%
Right direction	24	25

Meanwhile, President Bush's job approval rating is now at 30%, two percentage points above the low reached in January. Disapproval is at 63%.

BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL RATING

	Now	4/2007	1/2007
Approve	30%	32%	28%
Disapprove	63	61	64

President Bush's approval ratings on handling specific issues are similar to last month's evaluations. Terrorism remains the President's strongest issue, but even here, fewer than half -- 42% -- approve. 36% approve of Bush's handling of the economy, while only about one in four Americans approve of his handling of immigration, foreign policy in general, and the war in Iraq. A majority of Americans disapprove of how the President is handling his job in each of these specific areas.

BUSH JOB APPROVALS

	Approve	Disapprove
Terrorism	42%	52
Economy	36%	56
Immigration	27%	60
Foreign Policy	25%	65
Iraq	23%	72

The public continues to have a dismal opinion of the Vice President as well. Only 13% of Americans have a favorable opinion of Dick Cheney, three points below a previous low of 16% set in January. Three times as many Americans view him unfavorably.



OPINION OF CHENEY

Favorable	13%
Unfavorable	39
Undecided/haven't heard enough	47

But while the President's job approval rating is low, Congress fares only slightly better. 36% of Americans approve of the way Congress is handling its job while 52% disapprove - similar to opinion last month.

APPROVAL OF CONGRESS

	Now	4/2007
Approve	36%	34%
Disapprove	52	54

A clear majority of Republicans and a slight majority of Independents disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job. Democrats are more positive, with 46% approving and 42% disapproving.

VIEWS OF THE PARTIES

In general, the Democratic Party continues to be far more attractive than the Republican Party to most Americans. A majority of Americans - 53% - have a favorable opinion of the Democratic Party, while only 38% can say the same for the Republican Party. Both parties are viewed slightly more favorably now than they were last month.

OPINION OF THE PARTIES

	Republican Party		Democratic Party	
	Now	3/2007	Now	3/2007
Favorable	38%	34%	53%	47%
Not favorable	56	58	42	43

Americans also choose the Democratic Party as more likely to make the right decisions about U.S. foreign policy, the war in Iraq, and immigration. Not surprisingly, Republicans differ with Democrats and Independents in this assessment.

WHICH PARTY IS BETTER ON...?

	Democratic	Republican
Foreign Policy	51%	31%
War in Iraq	51%	33%
Immigration	44%	32%

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1,125 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone May 18-23, 2007. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher. An oversample of African Americans was also conducted for this poll, for a total of 192 interviews among this group. The results were then weighted in proportion to the racial composition of the adult population in the U.S. Census. The margin of error for African Americans is plus or minus 7 percentage points.



CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL
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q1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President?

	**** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ****				Apr07b
	Total	**** Party ID ****			
	%	Rep	Dem	Ind	%
Approve	30	63	8	25	32
Disapprove	63	28	88	65	61
DK/NA	7	9	4	10	7

q2 Do you feel things in this country are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?

					Mar07a
Right direction	24	51	8	17	25
Wrong track	72	42	92	76	69
DK/NA	4	7	0	7	6

q3 What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?

					Apr07a
War in Iraq	31	23	38	31	36
Economy and Jobs	8	6	10	9	9
Gas/Heating Oil Crisis	7	9	8	5	3
Immigration	7	9	3	9	5
Health Care	5	2	7	5	5
Terrorism (general)	3	6	1	4	4
The President/G. W. Bush	3	0	5	3	3
Environment	3	4	3	3	2
Moral Values/Family Values	3	8	1	2	2
Poverty / Homelessness	3	2	4	3	2
Foreign Policy	3	0	5	2	4
Education	2	2	2	2	1
Crime	2	4	1	1	0
Other	15	19	7	17	19
DK/NA	5	6	5	4	5

q4 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling foreign policy?

Approve	25	57	6	18	32
Disapprove	65	32	88	69	59
DK/NA	10	11	6	13	9

q5 How about the economy? Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the economy?

					Apr07b
Approve	36	68	15	31	35
Disapprove	56	26	81	56	56
DK/NA	8	6	5	1	9



q6 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation with Iraq?

**** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ****

**** Party ID ****

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Apr07b
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	23	54	4	19	24
Disapprove	72	40	93	77	71
DK/NA	5	6	3	4	5

q7 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the campaign against terrorism?

Approve	42	77	20	35	42
Disapprove	52	19	75	55	51
DK/NA	6	4	5	10	7

q8 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the issue of immigration?

					Jun06a
Approve	27	41	20	23	33
Disapprove	60	47	66	64	56
DK/NA	13	12	14	13	11

q9 Is your opinion of Dick Cheney favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Dick Cheney yet to have an opinion?

					Mar07a
Favorable	13	31	1	10	18
Not favorable	39	14	57	41	48
Undecided	23	32	18	20	19
Haven't heard enough	24	22	23	28	14
Refused	1	1	1	1	1

q10 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?

					Apr07a
Approve	36	26	46	33	34
Disapprove	52	63	42	52	54
DK/NA	12	11	12	15	12

q11 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q12 - q29 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q30 In general, is your opinion of the Republican party favorable or not favorable?

					Mar07a
Favorable	38	80	13	31	34
Not favorable	56	19	85	58	58
DK/NA	6	1	2	11	8



q31 In general, is your opinion of the Democratic party favorable or not favorable?

**** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ****

**** Party ID ****

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Mar07a
	%	%	%	%	%
Favorable	53	20	87	45	47
Not favorable	42	77	11	44	43
DK/NA	5	3	2	11	10

q32 Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to make the right decisions about U.S. foreign policy?

Republican	31	70	5	25
Democratic	51	19	83	43
Both (vol.)	1	2	1	1
Neither (vol.)	5	2	4	9
DK/NA	12	7	7	22

q33 Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to make the right decisions about the war in Iraq?

					Mar06a
Republican	33	68	9	29	32
Democratic	51	19	82	46	45
Both (vol.)	2	4	1	3	1
Neither (vol.)	4	3	4	6	9
DK/NA	10	6	4	16	13

q34 Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to make the right decisions when it comes to dealing with immigration issues?

					May06a
Republican	32	61	11	30	29
Democratic	44	19	71	37	45
Both (vol.)	1	2	1	1	4
Neither (vol.)	7	7	5	9	5
DK/NA	16	11	12	23	17

q35 - q39 BLANK

q40 - q48 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q49 BLANK

q50 - q77 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q78 BLANK

q79 - q81 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q82 - q85 BLANK

q86 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE



q87 Looking back, do you think the United States did the right thing in taking military action against Iraq, or should the US have stayed out?

	**** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ****				Apr07a
	**** Party ID ****				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	%
Right thing	35	67	15	30	44
Stayed out	61	29	83	65	51
Don't know/No answer	4	4	2	5	5

q88 How would you say things are going for the U.S. in its efforts to bring stability and order to Iraq? Would you say things are going very well, somewhat well, somewhat badly, or very badly?

Very well	2	4	1	0	2
Somewhat well	21	42	8	17	29
Somewhat badly	29	35	24	29	30
Very badly	47	17	65	52	36
Don't know/No answer	1	2	2	2	3

q89 - q91 BLANK

q92 As you may know, the U.S. is sending more than 20,000 additional troops to Iraq. From what you have heard or read, would you say this troop increase is making the situation in Iraq better, making it worse, or is it having no impact on the situation in Iraq so far?

Making it better	20	44	5	17	25
Making worse	26	14	37	24	26
No impact	50	37	56	53	43
DK/NA	4	5	2	6	6

q93 Do you think the United States should or should not set a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq sometime in 2008?

					Apr07b
Should	63	42	81	61	64
Should not	34	56	16	34	32
DK/NA	3	2	3	5	4

q94 Which of these comes closest to your opinion? 1. Congress should block all funding for the war in Iraq no matter what; 2. Congress should allow funding, but only on the condition that the U.S. sets benchmarks for progress and the Iraqi government are meeting those goals; OR 3. Congress should allow all funding for the war without any benchmark conditions.

Block all	13	3	20	14
Fund with benchmarks	69	62	73	69
Allow all	15	32	5	13
Don't know/No answer	3	3	2	4

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	1125	



Total Republicans	296	328
Total Democrats	438	413
Total Independents	391	391