



CBS NEWS POLL  
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**AMERICANS ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT BARACK OBAMA'S PRESIDENCY  
 AND CABINET CHOICES  
 December 4-8, 2008**

Nine in ten Americans think the U.S. economy is in bad shape, a majority thinks it is getting worse, and more than eight in 10 think the country is off on the wrong track -- but Americans are nevertheless optimistic about the next four years with Barack Obama as President.

In addition, seven in 10 Americans approve of the people the President-elect has chosen for his incoming administration, and most think his choices will bring experience as well as change to Washington.

**OPTIMISM ABOUT THE NEXT PRESIDENCY**

Three in four Americans say they are optimistic about Obama's presidency - a higher number than any incoming president has received in the past thirty years.

**OPTIMISM ABOUT THE NEXT FOUR YEARS**

	Optimistic	Pessimistic
<b>Barack Obama (12/2008)</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>17</b>
Bill Clinton (1/1993)	70%	21
Ronald Reagan (1/1981)	69%	13
Jimmy Carter (1/1977)	69%	13
George H. W. Bush (1/1989)	68%	23
George W. Bush (1/2001)	64%	28

Optimism about the next president is also reflected in a growing sense of confidence about Obama's ability to make the right decisions about some key policy concerns. Large majorities of voters have confidence in Barack Obama to make the right decisions about the economy, protecting the country from terrorism, and the war in Iraq. Confidence among voters in Obama's ability to make the right decisions in each of these areas has increased substantially since before the election.

**CONFIDENCE OBAMA WILL MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS ABOUT...?**

(Among registered voters)

	Now	10/2008	9/2008
<b>The economy</b>			
Confident	77%	65%	64%
Not too confident	22	32	34

**CONFIDENCE OBAMA WILL MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS ABOUT...?**

(Among registered voters)

	Now	10/2008	9/2008
<b>Protecting the U.S. from terrorism</b>			
Confident	71%	--	60%
Not too confident	27	--	37
<b>The war in Iraq</b>			
Confident	68%	56%	56%
Not too confident	30	43	42

63% of Americans think Barack Obama will make a good president, including 29% who think he will be very good. Comparatively, only 42% of Americans thought George W. Bush would be a good president, and only 14% thought he would be a very good president, back in December 2000.

**OBAMA'S CABINET SELECTIONS**

Americans' optimism extends to Obama's choices for key posts in his administration. 72% of Americans approve of the choices Barack Obama has made for his Cabinet so far; just 12% disapprove. This is a much more positive reaction than in 2001; then, 58% approved of George W. Bush's cabinet appointments, 19% disapproved, and a quarter had no opinion.

**PRESIDENT-ELECT'S CABINET APPOINTMENTS**

	Obama	G.W. Bush
	Now	1/2001
Approve	72%	58%
Disapprove	12	19
Don't know enough	16	23

Democrats are nearly unanimous in their approval of Obama's choices, and nearly seven in ten independents also approve. Even nearly half of Republicans approve.

There is widespread approval for one of Obama's Cabinet choices -- his former Democratic primary opponent, Hillary Clinton. 72% of Americans approve of Obama nominating Clinton for Secretary of State. 89% of Democrats, 69% of independents, and 45% of Republicans approve of her selection.

**CLINTON AS SECY. OF STATE?**

	All	Dems	Reps	Inds
Approve	72%	89%	45%	69%
Disapprove	22	8	45	23

In fact, overall views of Clinton are very positive now. 55% of Americans have a favorable opinion of her -- the same as her previous high of 55% in January 1999, just after the House of Representatives had impeached her husband.

60% of women, and 49% of men, have a favorable view of Hillary Clinton.

73% think the people Obama has selected will bring the right kind of experience to government. And although many of Obama's choices have served in high-level government positions during the Clinton administration, 65% think they will bring new ideas to government.

**OBAMA'S CHOICES WILL BRING...**

	Yes	No
Right experience	73%	14
New ideas	65%	24

About a third of the public is very closely following news about Obama's Cabinet and other administration appointments. Republicans as well as Democrats are paying about the same amount of attention to Obama's choices.

**CHANGE**

Large majorities of Americans also think Obama will deliver on two of the major themes of his campaign - bringing different groups of Americans together and bringing about real change to Washington.

**IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, WILL BARACK OBAMA...?**

Bring Americans together	69%
Divide Americans	20
Bring real change to Washington	64%
Not bring real change	27

Still, few Americans - 21% - think Obama will be able to accomplish *all* the goals he set out in his campaign.

**IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, AND THE THREAT OF TERRORISM**

56% of Americans now think the war in Iraq is going at least somewhat well - the most positive assessment of the war since former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was captured in December 2003. Meanwhile, views of how the war is going in Afghanistan have become more negative. Now 62% of Americans think the war in Afghanistan is going at least somewhat badly.

**HOW ARE THINGS GOING FOR THE U.S. IN...?**

	Iraq		Afghanistan	
	Now	9/2008	Now	9/2008
Well	56%	46%	27%	31%
Badly	39	51	62	55

In the wake of the bombings in Mumbai, India, concern about the possibility of a terrorist attack in the next few months has risen slightly, though most Americans don't think it is likely that there will be another terrorist attack in the next few months.

**LIKELIHOOD OF TERROR ATTACK IN U.S. IN NEXT FEW MONTHS**

	Now	9/2008
Very likely	9%	7%
Somewhat	36	29
Not likely	53	60

**VIEWS OF THE OBAMAS, BIDEN**

Positive opinions of the president-elect are at their highest level to date; 55% of Americans now have a favorable opinion of him, and just 12% are not favorable.

**VIEWS OF BARACK OBAMA**

Favorable	55%
Unfavorable	12
Don't know/haven't heard enough	31

Americans' views of Michelle Obama are also up a bit compared to October. 40% now have a favorable view of the soon-to-be First Lady; 36% of voters held that view in October. Still, about half of Americans haven't heard enough about her to have an opinion.

**VIEWS OF MICHELLE OBAMA**

Favorable	40%
Unfavorable	10
Don't know/haven't heard enough	49

33% of the public have a favorable opinion of Joe Biden, with 15% unfavorable. Half have no opinion of him.

**PRESIDENT BUSH**

Meanwhile, outgoing President George W. Bush's job approval ratings remain low. 24% of Americans approve of the job he is doing, while 68% disapprove.

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This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1,390 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone December 4-8, 2008. Phone numbers were dialed from RDD samples of both standard land-lines and cell phones. 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.

**CBS NEWS POLL**  
**Americans are Optimistic about Obama's Presidency**  
**December 4-7, 2008**

q1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				Oct08i
	Total	*** Party ID ***			
	%	Rep	Dem	Ind	%
Approve	24	57	7	22	20
Disapprove	68	35	88	66	72
DK/NA	8	8	5	12	8

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?

					Oct08e
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
Right direction	12	20	8	12	11
Wrong track	83	74	89	82	85
DK/NA	5	6	3	6	4

q3 BLANK

q4 How would you rate the condition of the national economy these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?

Very good	1	2	0	0	1
Fairly good	8	12	5	9	10
Fairly bad	37	47	30	40	41
Very bad	54	38	65	50	48
DK/NA	0	1	0	1	0

q5 Do you think the economy is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Better	8	9	6	11	8
Worse	60	52	65	58	57
Same	29	38	25	28	32
DK/NA	3	1	4	3	3

q6-q8 RELEASED SEPARATELY

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

					Oct08i*
Favorable	55	20	79	48	50
Not favorable	12	33	3	10	35
Undecided	24	35	11	34	12
Haven't heard enough	7	11	6	6	1
Refused	2	1	1	2	2

\*Trend is among registered voters

q10 Is your opinion of Joe Biden favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Joe Biden yet to have an opinion?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

\*\*\* Party ID \*\*\*

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Oct08i*
	%	%	%	%	%
Favorable	33	8	53	25	43
Not favorable	15	38	3	15	21
Undecided	22	21	15	31	15
Haven't heard enough	29	33	28	28	21
Refused	1	0	1	1	0

\*Trend is among registered voters

q11 Is your opinion of Hillary Clinton favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Hillary Clinton yet to have an opinion?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep08b*
Favorable	55	25	76	48	51
Not favorable	22	52	5	23	35
Undecided	19	18	16	23	12
Haven't heard enough	4	6	2	5	2
Refused	0	0	1	1	0

\*Trend is among registered voters

q12 Is your opinion of Michelle Obama favorable, not favorable, undecided, or haven't you heard enough about Michelle Obama yet to have an opinion?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Oct08d*
Favorable	40	19	56	34	36
Not favorable	10	25	3	8	16
Undecided	20	24	16	21	17
Haven't heard enough	29	31	24	34	29
Refused	1	1	1	3	2

\*Trend is among registered voters

q13 BLANK

q14 Are you generally optimistic or pessimistic about the next four years with Barack Obama as President?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Nov08b
Optimistic	75	50	88	76	71
Pessimistic	17	38	7	15	17
Don't know/No answer	8	12	5	9	12

q15 What kind of President do you think Barack Obama will be -- a very good President, a good President, an average President, or a poor President?

Very good	29	6	47	20
Good	34	22	37	37
Average	23	44	9	28
Poor	7	16	2	6
DK/NA	7	12	5	9

q16 In the next four years, do you think Barack Obama's presidency will bring different groups of Americans together, or do you think it will divide them?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

\*\*\* Party ID \*\*\*

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Nov08b
	%	%	%	%	%
Bring groups together	69	45	84	67	69
Divide them	20	42	9	19	15
DK/NA	11	13	7	14	16

q17 Do you think Barack Obama will or will not be able to accomplish all the goals he set out in his campaign?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Nov08b
Will be able to	21	9	34	14	20
Will not be able to	60	80	45	64	48
Some, not all (vol.)	14	6	16	18	24
DK/NA	5	5	5	4	8

q18 When he is President, do you think Barack Obama will bring about real change in the way things are done in Washington, or won't he do that?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
Will	64	38	82	58
Will not	27	53	10	31
Don't know/No answer	9	9	8	11

q19 BLANK

q20 How confident are you in Barack Obama's ability to make the right decisions about the economy -- very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Reg. Voters	Oct08d*
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very confident	31	10	48	24	32	28
Somewhat confident	46	40	44	53	45	37
Not too confident	14	30	6	13	14	16
Not at all confident	7	17	2	7	8	16
Don't know/No answer	2	3	0	3	1	3

\*Trend is among registered voters

q21 How confident are you in Barack Obama's ability to make the right decisions about the war in Iraq -- very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Reg. Voters	Oct08d*
Very confident	28	9	45	19	28	28*
Somewhat confident	41	24	42	52	40	28
Not too confident	17	35	8	14	17	20
Not at all confident	12	30	3	11	13	23
Don't know/No answer	2	2	2	4	2	1

\*Trend is among registered voters

q22 How confident are you in Barack Obama's ability to make the right decisions when it comes to protecting the country from a terrorist attack--are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				Reg. Voters	Sep08c*
	Total	*** Party ID ***				
	Rep	Dem	Ind			
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very confident	29	11	44	24	30	28
Somewhat confident	43	31	46	48	41	32
Not too confident	16	33	6	16	17	20
Not at all confident	10	24	3	8	10	17
Don't know/No answer	2	1	1	4	2	3

\*Trend is among registered voters

q23 BLANK

q24 How closely have you been following news about the people Barack Obama has selected for positions in his administration? Have you been following that very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely, or not at all?

Very closely	34	32	36	32
Somewhat closely	47	44	50	45
Not too closely	15	20	10	17
Not at all	4	4	4	4
DK/NA	0	0	0	2

q25 From what you've heard or read, do you approve or disapprove of the Cabinet selections Barack Obama has made so far?

Approve	72	47	89	67
Disapprove	12	27	3	12
DK/NA	16	26	8	21

q26 Do you think the people Barack Obama has selected so far will bring the right kind of experience to government, or not?

Yes	73	50	90	67
No	14	32	3	14
Some, not others (vol.)	3	4	1	5
DK/NA	10	14	6	14

q27 Do you think the people Barack Obama has selected so far will bring new ideas to government, or not?

Yes	65	42	83	60
No	24	46	10	26
Some, not others (vol.)	3	2	2	6
DK/NA	8	10	5	8

q28 Do you approve or disapprove of Barack Obama nominating Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State?

Approve	72	45	89	69
Disapprove	22	45	8	23
DK/NA	6	10	3	8

q29 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?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

\*\*\* Party ID \*\*\*

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Oct08e
	%	%	%	%	%
Very well	11	21	6	9	10
Somewhat well	45	48	44	44	43
Somewhat badly	26	22	32	21	25
Very badly	13	4	13	18	18
DK/NA	5	5	5	8	4

q30 What is your impression of how the war in Afghanistan is going for the United States right now-very well, somewhat well, somewhat badly, or very badly?

					Sep08c
Very well	2	4	2	1	2
Somewhat well	25	40	18	23	29
Somewhat badly	44	39	45	46	32
Very badly	18	6	26	18	23
DK/NA	11	11	9	12	14

q31 BLANK

q32 How likely do you think it is that there will be another terrorist attack in the United States within the next few months - very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

					Sep08a
Very likely	9	17	5	7	7
Somewhat likely	36	40	33	36	29
Not very likely	38	32	39	40	43
Not at all likely	15	9	19	14	17
DK/NA	2	2	4	3	4

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	1390	
Total Registered Voters	1280	1244
Total Republicans	381	335
Total Democrats	559	599
Total Independents	450	455