



CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL  
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**THE NATIONAL ECONOMY AND THE WAR IN IRAQ**  
 February 20-24, 2008

The economy remains the country's most important problem, and most Americans think the condition of the national economy is bad and getting worse. But while Americans are pessimistic about the national economy as a whole - and many are concerned about losing their jobs in the future - eight in 10 Americans also still feel good about their own personal finances.

The President's approval rating on the economy remains low, but his job approval has improved slightly over the last month, and approval of his handling of the war in Iraq has risen five points since December. 43% now think the war in Iraq is going well - the highest number in a year and a half.

**THE NATIONAL ECONOMY**

The number of Americans who say the economy is in bad shape has leveled off in the past month, though that number remains high. Seven in 10 Americans believe the economy is in bad shape, including one in four who think it is in very bad shape. Americans' assessment of the economy has declined steadily over the past twelve months: last February Americans felt the condition of the economy was good by a margin of nearly two to one.

		CONDITION OF THE ECONOMY				
		Now	2/3/2008	1/2008	10/2007	2/2007
Good	29%	28%	38%	50%	62%	
Bad	70	71	61	49	35	

Most Americans - 63% - think the economy is getting worse. Only 3% think the economy is getting better, while a third think the economy is staying about the same.

THE ECONOMY IS...		
	Now	2/3/2008
Getting better	3%	6%
Getting worse	63	67
The same	32	26

The economy remains the most important problem facing the country today, though the number of people who pick it is down slightly from the beginning of the month. The economy continues to surpass the war

in Iraq by double digits as the country's top problem, while health care is a distant third.

**MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM**

	Now	2/3/2008	1/2008	12/2007
Economy and Jobs	33%	38%	23%	12%
War in Iraq	20	21	22	25
Health Care	7	6	7	7

**AMERICANS AND THEIR PERSONAL FINANCES**

But while Americans are gloomy about the economic condition of the nation as a whole, most Americans believe they personally are still faring well financially. Nearly eight in 10 Americans think their personal financial situation is at least somewhat good; only one in five say their financial situation is bad.

**FINANCIAL CONDITION OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD**

	Now	4/2007
Good	78%	83%
Bad	21	17

38% of Americans make enough to save money and buy extras - up five percentage points from the beginning of the month - while 46% make just enough to make ends meet, and 13% of Americans are falling behind financially. Most Americans making over \$50,000 a year say they can save money, while Americans making under \$50,000 cannot.

**IS YOUR INCOME...?**

	Now	2/3/2008	4/2007
Enough to buy extras	38%	33%	41%
Just enough to pay bills	46	46	48
Not enough to pay bills	13	21	11

Though they may not be saving or buying extras, three out of four Americans who are making just enough to get by still feel their current financial situation is at least fairly good.

Americans feel less secure, however, when looking ahead in terms of job security. Most Americans are at least somewhat concerned about someone in their household losing their job in the next twelve months - including 29% who are very concerned.

**CONCERN ABOUT LOSING YOUR JOB**

	Now	1/2006
Very	29%	22%
Somewhat	27	27
Not at all	43	51

Most Americans who are making just enough to pay their bills - or struggling to pay them - are concerned about losing their jobs. Most Americans who are able to save and buy extras are not concerned.

Americans with lower annual household incomes are more concerned than those making more.

Americans are not as concerned about the current housing and mortgage crisis affecting them personally. Although nearly one out of two Americans have mortgages on their homes, most are not concerned about their ability to pay off their mortgages.

**CONCERN ABOUT PAYING MORTGAGE**

(Among those with mortgages)

Very	13%
Somewhat	24
Not at all	63

**AMERICANS AND PERSONAL DEBT**

When looking at other kinds of debt, most Americans are not comfortable with having personal debt other than a mortgage or a car payment -- 53% say they are uncomfortable. Americans making less than \$50,000 are uncomfortable, while Americans making over \$50,000 are divided.

**HOW COMFORTABLE ARE YOU WITH HAVING DEBT?**

	All	<u>Income</u> Under 50k	50K+
Comfortable	39%	28%	46%
Uncomfortable	53	65	48

This is not improving over time: most Americans say they feel the same about their ability to pay their debts this year as they felt last year.

**YOUR ABILITY TO PAY OFF DEBTS: COMPARED TO LAST YEAR, ARE YOU...**

More comfortable	18%
Less comfortable	20
The same	52

**PRESIDENT BUSH, THE ECONOMY, AND THE WAR IN IRAQ**

The public perception of how President Bush is handling his job has improved slightly since the beginning of the month, when it equaled an all-time low of 27% first reached last summer. The President's job approval rating is now at 30%, while more than six in 10 Americans disapprove.

**BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL RATING**

	Now	2/3/2008
Approve	30%	27%
Disapprove	64	65

In spite of an economic stimulus package that will include rebates for many Americans, there has been little change in how American's view President Bush's handling of the economy - 27% approve. There has been change, however, in his approval rating for the war in Iraq. 31% now approve of how he is handling the war, up five points from December.

**BUSH'S JOB APPROVALS**

	Now	12/2007
War in Iraq	31%	26%
Economy	27%	26%

The president's slightly improving standing on how he is handling the war in Iraq may reflect a growing optimism about the situation there. 43% of Americans now believe things are going at least somewhat well for the U.S. in Iraq - up five points since the beginning of the month and the highest rating since the summer of 2006. This number has slowly but steadily increased over the past six months, and it is now almost double its all-time low reached last June.

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

	Now	2/3/2008	9/2007	6/2007
Well	43%	38%	33%	22%
Badly	54	59	64	77

A majority of Americans who think the war is going well - 54% - approve of the way the President is handling his job overall.

Most Americans, however still think the war is going badly, including one in four who say it is going very badly. Six in 10 Americans think the United States should never have gotten involved in Iraq in the first place.

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

	Now	1/2008
Right thing	38%	36%
Should've stayed out	58	58

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This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1266 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone February 20-24, 2008. 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.

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**The National Economy and the War in Iraq**  
**February 20-24, 2008**

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

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				Jan08e
	Total	*** Party ID ***			
	%	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	%
Approve	30	65	5	31	27
Disapprove	64	26	93	61	65
DK/NA	6	9	2	8	8

q2 What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jan08e
Economy / Jobs	33	31	35	32	38
War in Iraq	20	14	29	17	21
Health Care	7	6	9	5	6
Terrorism (general)	5	12	1	3	3
Immigration	4	6	1	5	4
Budget Deficit/National Debt	3	2	2	5	2
Gas/Heating Oil Crisis	3	2	2	4	2
The President/G.W. Bush	2	1	3	1	1
Poverty / Homelessness	2	1	4	2	3
Miscellaneous Social Issue	2	1	1	2	2
Other	13	17	10	14	13
DK/NA	6	7	3	10	5

q3 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the economy?

Approve	27	57	8	24	27
Disapprove	63	31	87	61	62
DK/NA	10	12	5	15	11

q4 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation with Iraq?

					Dec07a
Approve	31	62	7	32	26
Disapprove	65	32	88	64	69
DK/NA	4	6	5	4	5

q5 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q6 How would you rate the condition of the national economy these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?

					Jan08e
Very good	2	4	0	1	2
Fairly good	27	47	14	27	26
Fairly bad	45	38	51	45	44
Very bad	25	9	35	26	27
DK/NA	1	2	0	1	1

q7 Do you think the economy is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jan08e
	%	%	%	%	%
Better	3	8	1	3	6
Worse	63	40	80	62	67
Same	32	50	18	34	26
DK/NA	2	2	1	1	1

q8-75 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q76 Looking back, do you think the United States did the right thing in taking military action against Iraq, or should the U.S. have stayed out?

					Jan08c
Right thing	38	74	15	35	36
Stayed out	58	22	83	58	58
Don't know/No answer	4	4	2	7	6

q77 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?

					Jan08e
Very well	6	12	2	5	7
Somewhat well	37	57	22	38	31
Somewhat badly	30	22	36	29	27
Very badly	24	8	38	23	32
Don't know/No answer	3	1	2	5	3

q78 BLANK

q79 How concerned are you that in the next 12 months you or someone else in your household might be out of work or looking for a job -- very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not at all concerned?

					Jan06b
Very concerned	29	17	39	28	22
Somewhat concerned	27	23	31	25	27
Not at all concerned	43	59	28	46	51
DK/NA	1	1	2	1	0

q80 How would you rate the financial situation in your household these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?

					Apr07b
Very good	18	25	14	16	14
Fairly good	60	63	57	61	69
Fairly bad	15	9	20	14	13
Very bad	6	2	9	6	4
Don't know/No answer	1	1	0	3	0

q81 Do you currently rent your home, or are you buying it with a mortgage, or is it entirely paid for?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				Dec06a
	*** Party ID ***				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
%	%	%	%	%	
Rent	21	13	27	21	21
Buying with mortgage	49	54	46	49	48
Entirely paid for	28	32	24	28	28
Don't know/No answer	2	1	3	2	3

q82 How concerned are you about not being able to pay your mortgage -- very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not at all concerned?

	*HOMEOWNERS WITH MORTGAGES*			
Very concerned	13	7	23	8
Somewhat concerned	24	19	25	26
Not at all concerned	63	74	51	66
DK/NA	0	0	1	0

q83-87 BLANK

q88 Think about your household income, would you say that it is more than enough so that you can save money or buy some extras, just enough to meet your bills and obligations, or is it not enough to meet your bills and obligations?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				Jan08e
Can save and buy extras	38	50	31	37	33
Just enough to pay bills	46	43	48	46	46
Not enough to pay bills	13	6	20	11	21
DK/NA	3	1	1	6	0

q89 How comfortable are you personally with having debt, other than a mortgage or car payment -- are you mostly comfortable with it because it is a manageable way to pay for things you need, or mostly uncomfortable with it because you worry you might overspend or not be able to pay it off?

Mostly comfortable	39	52	33	34
Mostly uncomfortable	53	40	62	54
DK/NA	8	8	5	12

q90 Compared to a year ago, do you feel more comfortable about being able to pay off the credit card and other debt you currently owe, less comfortable about being able to pay it off, or about the same as you did a year ago?

More	18	22	15	19
Less	20	15	25	20
Same	52	52	52	50
Don't have debt (Vol.)	8	11	6	8
DK/NA	2	0	2	3

	<b>UNWEIGHTED</b>	<b>WEIGHTED</b>
Total Respondents	1266	
Total Republicans	382	344
Total Democrats	464	485
Total Independents	420	436