

IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, AND IRAN
February 18-22, 2009

Optimism about Iraq is at its highest mark in five years, approaching levels not seen since the time of Saddam Hussein's capture. And Americans are now turning to Afghanistan as a foreign policy priority that is equally as important as Iraq. While a majority wants most combat troops out of Iraq within the next 16 months, 42% want troop levels increased in Afghanistan.

Most Democrats support revisiting the actions of the Justice Department under the Bush Administration, but Americans overall are reluctant, and Americans across party lines are skeptical of the motives of the Democrats in Congress pushing for such an investigation.

IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, AND IRAN

Americans are increasingly optimistic about how things are going for the U.S. in Iraq - once considered the country's most important problem. Now, 63% say the efforts to bring stability and order to Iraq are going at least somewhat well, a sentiment approaching levels not reached since December 2003.

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

| | Now | 12/2008 | 6/2007 | 12/2003 |
|-------|-----|---------|--------|---------|
| Well | 63% | 56% | 22% | 65% |
| Badly | 29 | 39 | 77 | 33 |

Still, most Americans think it is important that the majority of U.S. combat troops are withdrawn from Iraq within 16 months. 78% think this is important, including 46% who think it is very important.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT U.S. TROOPS LEAVE IRAQ IN 16 MONTHS?

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Very important | 46% |
| Somewhat important | 32 |
| Not too/at all important | 18 |

Republicans, Democrats, and independents alike think it is at least somewhat important to remove combat troops from Iraq within 16 months, although only a majority of Democrats think it is very important.

When it comes to military casualties in Iraq, Americans do not think the public should be forbidden from seeing images of their caskets, a policy instituted by the Bush Administration. 69% think the public

should be allowed to see these images, even more than the percentage who thought so five years ago.

**SHOULD THE PUBLIC BE ALLOWED TO SEE PICTURES OF
CASKETS OF SOLDIERS KILLED IN IRAQ?**

| | Now | 4/2004 |
|-----|-----|--------|
| Yes | 69% | 63% |
| No | 24 | 29 |

While Americans are increasingly optimistic about the war in Iraq, they are increasingly concerned about the situation in Afghanistan. When asked to choose among Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, and North Korea, Afghanistan is chosen by nearly as many Americans as Iraq as the foreign policy area the President and Congress should focus on most.

**WHICH FOREIGN POLICY AREA SHOULD
THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS FOCUS ON MOST?**

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Iraq | 36% |
| Afghanistan | 35 |
| Iran | 10 |
| North Korea | 7 |

More Americans now than a month ago think troop levels in Afghanistan should be increased. 42% now say troop levels in Afghanistan should be raised, up from 34% in January.

U.S. TROOPS LEVELS IN AFGHANISTAN SHOULD BE...?

| | Now | 1/2009 |
|-----------|-----|--------|
| Increased | 42% | 34% |
| Kept same | 23 | 28 |
| Decreased | 24 | 26 |

While most Americans see Iran as a threat to the U.S., 58% think it is a threat that can be contained with diplomatic efforts.

HOW GREAT A THREAT IS IRAN?

| | Now | 9/2008 |
|---------------------------------|-----|--------|
| Requires military action now | 13% | 10% |
| Can be contained with diplomacy | 58 | 61 |
| Not a threat at this time | 19 | 20 |

INVESTIGATING THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

Even though former President George W. Bush left office with the lowest approval ratings of any outgoing modern president, few Americans support investigating whether or not crimes were committed by the Justice Department while the Bush Administration was in office - something suggested by several Democrats in Congress. Most Americans - 58% - think Congressional hearings are not necessary.

SHOULD CONGRESS INVESTIGATE THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION?

| | All | Dems | Reps | Inds |
|------------------------|-----|------|------|------|
| Should have hearings | 37% | 56% | 22% | 30% |
| Hearings not necessary | 58 | 40 | 74 | 65 |

Not surprisingly, opinions on this matter reflect some partisan differences. Just over half of Democrats think Congress should hold hearings, while three-fourths of Republicans do not. Independents side with Republicans on this matter.

Americans are suspicious of the motives of Democratic members of Congress who want to do so: most think Democrats in Congress want to investigate the Bush Administration for political reasons. This opinion is prevalent even among rank-and-file Democrats.

WHY DO DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS WANT TO INVESTIGATE THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION?

| | All | Dems | Reps | Inds |
|----------------------------|-----|------|------|------|
| For political reasons | 68% | 49% | 90% | 69% |
| Because the law was broken | 27 | 41 | 8 | 25 |

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1,112 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone February 18-22 2009. 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.

This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL
Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran
February 18-22, 2009

q14 Which of these foreign policy areas do you want the President and Congress to concentrate on MOST right now -- Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, or North Korea?

** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **

*** Party ID ***

| | Total | Rep | Dem | Ind |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Iraq | 36 | 42 | 40 | 30 |
| Afghanistan | 35 | 29 | 40 | 34 |
| Iran | 10 | 11 | 6 | 14 |
| North Korea | 7 | 7 | 5 | 9 |
| Something else/Combo (vol.) | 4 | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| DK/NA | 8 | 8 | 6 | 7 |

q15-q63 SEPARATE RELEASE

q64 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?

| | | | | | Dec08a |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| | | | | | % |
| Very well | 11 | 17 | 5 | 11 | 11 |
| Somewhat well | 52 | 57 | 47 | 53 | 45 |
| Somewhat badly | 20 | 14 | 27 | 17 | 26 |
| Very badly | 9 | 3 | 11 | 10 | 13 |
| Don't know/No answer | 8 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 5 |

q65 How important is it to you that the United States withdraw most U.S. combat troops from Iraq within 16 months -- very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?

| | | | | |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|
| Very important | 46 | 28 | 66 | 39 |
| Somewhat important | 32 | 40 | 21 | 36 |
| Not too important | 10 | 21 | 3 | 10 |
| Not important at all | 8 | 9 | 6 | 10 |
| DK/NA | 4 | 2 | 4 | 5 |

q66 From what you have seen or heard about the situation in Afghanistan, what should the United States do now -- should the U.S. increase the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, keep the same number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan as there are now or decrease the number of troops in Afghanistan?

| | | | | | Jan09a |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| Increase | 42 | 46 | 43 | 39 | 34 |
| Keep the same | 23 | 28 | 21 | 21 | 28 |
| Decrease | 24 | 16 | 27 | 28 | 26 |
| Don't know/No answer | 11 | 10 | 9 | 12 | 12 |

q67 Thinking about Iran, which comes closer to your opinion -- Iran is a threat to the United States that requires military action now, Iran is a threat that can be contained with diplomacy now, or Iran is not a threat to the United States at this time?

**** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ****

***** Party ID *****

| | Total | Rep | Dem | Ind | Sep08c |
|---------------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Requires action now | 13 | 17 | 7 | 16 | 10 |
| Can be contained | 58 | 50 | 69 | 52 | 61 |
| Not a threat now | 19 | 21 | 17 | 19 | 20 |
| DK/NA | 10 | 12 | 7 | 13 | 9 |

q68 Do you think the public should or should not be allowed to see pictures of the military honor guard receiving caskets of soldiers killed in Iraq as they are returned to the United States?

| | | | | | Apr04d |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| Should be able to see | 69 | 69 | 68 | 70 | 63 |
| Should not | 24 | 21 | 27 | 23 | 29 |
| DK/NA | 7 | 10 | 5 | 7 | 8 |

q69 Do you want Congress to hold hearings to investigate whether the Bush Administration's treatment of detainees, the use of wiretaps and other Justice Department practices broke the law, or don't you think that is necessary?

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|
| Want hearings | 37 | 22 | 56 | 30 |
| Don't think necessary | 58 | 74 | 40 | 65 |
| DK/NA | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 |

q70 Some Democratic members of Congress are in favor of holding hearings to investigate the Bush Administration. Do you think the Democrats want to investigate the Bush Administration mostly because they think the law was broken or mostly for political reasons?

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|----|----|
| Law was broken | 27 | 8 | 41 | 25 |
| Political reasons | 68 | 90 | 49 | 69 |
| DK/NA | 5 | 2 | 10 | 6 |

| | <u>UNWEIGHTED</u> | <u>WEIGHTED</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Total Respondents | 1112 | |
| Total Republicans | 315 | 293 |
| Total Democrats | 397 | 403 |
| Total Independents | 400 | 416 |