



CBS NEWS POLL  
 For Release: Wednesday, March 19th, 2008  
 6:30pm EDT

**FIVE YEARS IN IRAQ**  
 March 15-18, 2008

As the nation enters its sixth year of military engagement in Iraq, Americans now see some improvement, and more feel positively about the way the war is going than have in months. 43% think the war in Iraq is going at least somewhat well, and 42% think the troop surge is having a positive effect on the situation there - the highest numbers since the additional troops were sent last April.

Nevertheless, six in ten Americans think the U.S. should have stayed out of Iraq in the first place. Most do not think military action against Iraq has made the United States any safer from terrorism, and a majority still thinks things in Iraq are going badly. Two in three disapprove of how President Bush is handling the war.

**THE CURRENT SITUATION**

More Americans than ever before think the troop surge in Iraq is making the situation in Iraq better - 42% say so, compared to 34% who say it is having no impact and 13% who say it is making the situation worse. The percentage of Americans who think the surge is making things better has climbed steadily over the past year - up 25 points from June's all-time low.

	<b>IMPACT OF U.S. TROOP SURGE</b>				
	Now	1/2008	9/2007	6/2007	4/2007
Making things better	42%	39%	35%	17%	25%
Making things worse	13	14	12	24	26
No impact	34	39	45	52	43

43% of Americans believe the war in Iraq is going at least somewhat well - unchanged from last month but 21 points higher than last June's low. Still, a majority still thinks the war is going badly. In May 2003 - right after President Bush announced the end of major combat operations in Iraq - 72% of Americans said things were going well.

<b>HOW ARE THINGS GOING FOR U.S. IN IRAQ?</b>						
	Now	2/2008	9/2007	6/2007	1/2006	5/2003
Well	43%	43%	33%	22%	45%	72%
Badly	54	54	64	77	54	24

Americans remain divided over Iraq by party - 71% of Republicans say the war is going well, but only 26% of Democrats and 43% of Independents agree. Positive assessments have risen about 20 points since last June among Republicans and Democrats, and 27 points among Independents.

**THINGS ARE GOING WELL FOR THE U.S. IN IRAQ**  
(By Party)

	Now	2/2008	9/2007	6/2007
Total	43%	43%	33%	22%
Republicans	71%	69%	60%	52%
Democrats	26%	24%	12%	8%
Independents	43%	43%	31%	16%

But while many think things are going better in Iraq now, most do not think taking military action against Iraq has made the U.S. any safer. While 36% say the U.S. is safer as a result of the war in Iraq, 62% say it is not, including one in four who thinks military action against Iraq has made the U.S. even less safe.

**AS A RESULT OF THE WAR IN IRAQ, U.S. IS...**

	Now	9/2007	1/2004
Safer from terrorism	36%	31%	50%
Less safe	24	23	18
No difference	38	43	29

Most Republicans say the war has made the country safer, while most Democrats and Independents do not.

Looking ahead, nearly half of all Americans - 46% - want large numbers of U.S. troops to remain in Iraq for less than a year. 22% would be willing for U.S. troops to remain for one to two years, and only 28% would be willing to have troops remain longer than that.

**WILLING FOR LARGE NUMBERS OF TROOPS TO REMAIN IN IRAQ FOR:**

	Now	1/2008	9/2007
Less than a year	46%	50%	54%
One to two years	22	24	22
Two to five years	14	10	8
Longer than five years	6	3	7
"As long as it takes" (vol.)	8	8	5

**THE IRAQ WAR AND PRESIDENT BUSH**

Fewer than one in three Americans approve of the way President Bush is handling the war in Iraq - unchanged from last month and closely matching the President's overall approval rating of 29%.

**BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL RATING**

	Overall	War in Iraq
Approve	29%	30%
Disapprove	64	65

While the President's overall approval rating has hovered around 30% for months, his approval rating for handling the war in Iraq has risen nine points from the low of 21% in December 2006. His approval rating on both counts was in the seventies right after the war began in April 2003.

**BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL RATING**

	Now	2/2008	12/2007	12/2006	3/2004	4/2003
Overall	29%	30%	28%	31%	49%	73%
War in Iraq	30%	31%	26%	21%	44%	79%

**LOOKING BACK**

36% of Americans think the U.S. did the right thing in taking military action against Iraq, but 59% believe the U.S. should have stayed out - similar to last month and last year. In March 2003 - right after the initial invasion of Iraq - seven in 10 Americans said the U.S. did the right thing.

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

	Now	2/2008	5/2007	1/2006	3/2003
Yes	36%	38%	35%	47%	69%
No	59	58	61	50	25

As in previous polls, most Republicans think the U.S. did the right thing, while most Democrats and Independents think the U.S. should have stayed out.

More specifically, only 31% of Americans think the U.S. should have stayed to rebuild Iraq after it removed Saddam Hussein from power. 27% think the U.S. should have pulled out of Iraq after removing him. Four in ten think the U.S. should have never gotten involved in Iraq in the first place.

**WHAT SHOULD THE U.S. HAVE DONE?**

	Now	7/2007	3/2006
Remove Saddam AND stay to rebuild Iraq	31%	30%	35%
Remove Saddam, then left Iraq	27	32	22
Never gotten involved in Iraq	41	34	40

In April 2004 - when Americans supported the invasion of Iraq in larger numbers - a majority of Americans also believed that Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. Today only 28% think so, the lowest number to date.

**WAS SADDAM PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN 9/11?**

	Now	9/2007	4/2003
Yes	28%	33%	53%
No	58	58	38

**THE WAR IN IRAQ AND THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE**

Most registered voters are at least somewhat confident in the ability of all three presidential candidates to make the right decisions about the war in Iraq.

**CONFIDENCE IN MAKING THE RIGHT DECISIONS ABOUT IRAQ**

(Among registered voters)

	Clinton	Obama	McCain
Confident	53%	56%	56%
Not confident	46	42	43

A slight majority of men - 52% - are uncomfortable with Clinton, while both men and women are comfortable with Obama and McCain. A majority of women overall are comfortable with all three candidates regarding their decisions on Iraq.

Voters who approve of the job President Bush is doing in Iraq and who think the U.S. action in Iraq was right express confidence in McCain, while those who disapprove of the job Bush is doing in Iraq and who think the U.S. should have stayed out express confidence in Clinton and Obama.

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This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1,067 adults nationwide interviewed by telephone March 15-18, 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. A small oversample of African Americans was also conducted for this poll, for a total of 122 interviews among this group. The results were then weighted in proportion to the racial composition of the adult population in the U.S. Census.

**CBS NEWS POLL**  
**Five Years in Iraq**  
**March 15-18, 2008**

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

	**** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ****				
	**** Party ID ****				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Feb08a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	29	66	5	27	30
Disapprove	64	26	91	62	64
DK/NA	7	8	4	11	6

q2 - q4 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q5 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation with Iraq?

Approve	30	65	6	32	31
Disapprove	65	30	91	64	65
DK/NA	5	5	3	4	4

q6-q36 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q37 How confident are you in Hillary Clinton's ability to make the right decisions about the war in Iraq--are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

	*** REGISTERED VOTERS ***				
Very confident	17	6	29	13	16
Somewhat confident	36	23	49	33	34
Not too confident	20	25	13	24	22
Not at all confident	26	46	8	29	26
DK/NA	1	1	1	1	2

q38-q39 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q40 How confident are you in Barack Obama's ability to make the right decisions about the war in Iraq--are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

Very confident	17	4	31	10	20
Somewhat confident	39	26	47	43	37
Not too confident	20	29	12	21	21
Not at all confident	22	39	9	23	19
DK/NA	2	2	1	3	3

q41-q42 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q43 How confident are you in John McCain's ability to make the right decisions about the war in Iraq--are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

\*\*\*\* REGISTERED VOTERS \*\*\*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Feb08a
	%	%	%	%	%
Very confident	19	38	7	14	27
Somewhat confident	37	48	23	43	31
Not too confident	20	8	28	20	18
Not at all confident	23	5	39	18	22
DK/NA	1	1	3	5	2

q44-q61 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q62 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?

\*\*\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*\*\*

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Feb08a
Right thing	36	68	12	37	38
Stayed out	59	26	82	58	58
DK/NA	5	6	6	5	4

q63 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	4	9	1	5	6
Somewhat well	39	62	25	38	37
Somewhat badly	30	20	38	29	30
Very badly	24	8	34	26	24
DK/NA	3	1	2	2	3

q64 BLANK

q65 Which comes closer to your view about the Iraq war? 1. The U.S. was right to remove Saddam Hussein and stay in Iraq to help rebuild a new government there. 2. The U.S. was right to remove Saddam Hussein but then should have left Iraq soon after that. OR 3. The U.S. should never have gotten involved in Iraq in the first place.

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jul07b
Right to remove and stay	31	63	10	30	30
Remove Hussein and left	27	19	33	25	32
Never have gotten involved	41	16	55	43	34
DK/NA	1	2	2	2	4

q66 From what you know about the U.S. involvement in Iraq, how much longer would you be willing to have large numbers of U.S. troops remain in Iraq -- less than a year, one to two years, two to five years or longer than five years?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jan08c
Less than a year	46	20	68	41	50
One to two years	22	29	20	21	24
Two to five years	14	25	6	13	10
Longer than five years	6	11	2	6	3
As long as it takes (vol.)	8	11	1	13	8
Should leave now (vol.)	1	1	1	1	3
DK/NA	3	3	2	5	2

q67 As you may know, the U.S. has sent a troop surge to Iraq. From what you have heard or read, would you say the troop surge is making the situation in Iraq better, making it worse, or is it having no impact on the situation in Iraq so far?

	**** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ****				Jan08e
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	%
Making it better	42	68	23	44	39
Making worse	13	7	20	9	14
No impact	34	15	45	36	39
DK/NA	11	10	12	11	8

q68 As a result of the United States' military action against Iraq, do you think the United States is more safe from terrorism, less safe from terrorism, or hasn't it made any difference?

					Sep07b
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	%
More safe	36	65	16	36	31
Less safe	24	10	38	19	23
No difference	38	22	45	44	43
DK/NA	2	3	1	1	3

q69 Do you think Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon?

					Sep07a
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	%
Yes	28	39	22	27	33
No	58	45	67	56	58
DK/NA	14	16	11	17	9

	Unweighted	Weighted
Total	1,067	
Total Registered Voters	952	906
Total Democrats	414	419
Total Republicans	324	286
Total Independents	329	362