



CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL
For release: Monday, December 10th, 2007
6:30 P.M. EDT

THE NATION: THE ECONOMY, GOVERNMENT WEAKENS WHILE IRAQ IMPROVES
December 5-9, 2007

Economic storm clouds have begun to appear on the horizon, making Americans more negative about the condition of the economy and the direction of the country. The assessment of the economy is at its lowest level in four years, and approval ratings of both the President and Congress have dropped.

But while Americans are increasingly pessimistic about the general direction of the country, they have grown somewhat more optimistic about one (perhaps unexpected) place: the war in Iraq. More Americans than ever before believe the troops surge is having a positive impact, and fewer Americans see the war as going badly.

THE CONDITION OF THE ECONOMY

With the looming housing crisis, a slowdown in job creation, and a likely cut in interest rates by the Federal Reserve, America's assessment of the condition of the national economy has dropped considerably since October. For the first time in over a year, a majority of Americans - 57% - thinks the economy is in at least somewhat bad shape, up eight points from October. Positive assessment of the economy has likewise dropped eight points to 42% - the lowest it has been in over four years.

Table with 5 columns: Condition (Good/Bad), Now, 10/2007, 12/2006, 8/2003. Shows percentages for each category across the four time periods.

Most Americans do not see relief on the horizon. 53% say the economy is getting worse, up eight points from October. Only 5% say the economy is getting better, the lowest number recorded since 1990. 40% of Americans do not see movement in the economy in either direction.

Table with 4 columns: The Economy Is..., Now, 10/2007, 10/1990. Rows include Getting better, Getting worse, and No difference.

As for their own financial situation, most Americans say they can make ends meet, though only 35% say their income is enough to save money

and buy extras. 13% say they do not make enough to pay their bills and other obligations.

**IS YOUR INCOME...?**

|                               | Now | 4/2007 | 12/2006 |
|-------------------------------|-----|--------|---------|
| Enough to save and buy extras | 35% | 41%    | 35%     |
| Just enough to pay bills      | 51  | 48     | 52      |
| Not enough to pay bills       | 13  | 11     | 13      |

Americans with lower household incomes are feeling the pinch more. Americans making below \$15,000 a year generally cannot make ends meet, while Americans making between \$15,000 and \$50,000 say they make just enough to pay their bills. A majority of Americans making above \$50,000 say they are able to save money.

Only one in five say the country is headed in the right direction. Seven in 10 say the country is off on the wrong track.

**DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY**

|                 | Now | 9/2007 | 6/2007 | 12/2006 |
|-----------------|-----|--------|--------|---------|
| Right direction | 21% | 24%    | 19%    | 24%     |
| Wrong track     | 71  | 71     | 75     | 70      |

**THE PRESIDENT AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: NEGATIVE RATINGS**

Pessimism about the direction of the country is linked with an unfavorable assessment of how President Bush is handling his job. Now only 28% of Americans approve of the way Bush is handling his job as President, only one point above his June all-time low. 65% of Americans disapprove. President Bush's approval rating has hovered around 30% for the past year.

**BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL RATING**

|            | Now | 10/2007 | 6/2007 | 12/2006 |
|------------|-----|---------|--------|---------|
| Approve    | 28% | 30%     | 27%    | 31%     |
| Disapprove | 65  | 61      | 65     | 63      |

Two out of three Republicans, however, still approve of the way the President is doing his job. Democrats and Independents disagree by large margins.

**BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL RATING**

(By Party)

|              | Now | 10/2007 |
|--------------|-----|---------|
| Overall      | 28% | 30%     |
| Republicans  | 65% | 66%     |
| Democrats    | 7%  | 9%      |
| Independents | 21% | 19%     |

Approval ratings on specific issues are also low, and have changed little in the past few months. Terrorism remains the President's strongest issue - with 40% of Americans approving of the job he is doing, though a slight majority - 52% - still disapprove.

**BUSH'S JOB APPROVALS**

|                | Now | 10/2007 | 9/2007 | 1/2007 |
|----------------|-----|---------|--------|--------|
| Overall        | 28% | 30%     | 30%    | 28%    |
| Terrorism      | 40% | 41%     | 40%    | 42%    |
| Foreign policy | 26% | --      | 26%    | 26%    |
| Economy        | 26% | --      | 32%    | 37%    |
| War in Iraq    | 26% | 26%     | 26%    | 24%    |

But as low as the President's job approval rating is, Americans' view of Congress is even lower. Just 21% of Americans approve of the way Congress is handling its job, down six points from October, and its lowest approval rating in over ten years. Majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents all disapprove.

**CONGRESS JOB APPROVAL**

|            | Now | 10/2007 | 1/2007 | 6/1996 |
|------------|-----|---------|--------|--------|
| Approve    | 21% | 27%     | 33%    | 19%    |
| Disapprove | 64  | 59      | 49     | 71     |

More generally, opinion of how the federal government is working overall is also low. 71% of Americans are dissatisfied with the way the federal government is working, including 16% who say they feel angry. The level of dissatisfaction is up from what it was a decade ago. Despite their party's being in control of the executive branch, more than half of all Republicans join most Democrats and Independents in being dissatisfied.

**FEELINGS TOWARDS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

|              | Now | 10/1996 |
|--------------|-----|---------|
| Enthusiastic | 1%  | 2%      |
| Satisfied    | 26  | 35      |
| Dissatisfied | 55  | 49      |
| Angry        | 16  | 12      |

Dissatisfaction with the government seems to have taken a toll on America's opinion of its two main political parties. Favorable opinion of the Republican Party dropped five points since July to 33% - a new low. A majority (59%) views it unfavorably. Americans are divided overall in their assessment of the Democratic Party. 48% of Americans view the Democratic Party favorably, while 44% view it unfavorably.

When asked to choose, Americans pick the Democrats as the party best able to handle two of the country's most pressing problems: the war in Iraq and the economy.

**WHICH PARTY IS MORE LIKELY TO...?**

|                                  | Democratic | Republican |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Make the right decisions on Iraq | 45%        | 30         |
| Ensure a strong economy          | 49%        | 31         |

**THE WAR IN IRAQ**

While concern about the domestic economy is increasing, Americans show somewhat increasing confidence in the state of the war in Iraq. 37% of Americans now say the war in Iraq is going at least somewhat well - up slightly from October and now the highest percentage in over a year - continuing a gradually increasing assessment that has been underway since June. Nevertheless, a majority still thinks the war is going badly.

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

|       | Now | 10/2007 | 6/2007 | 9/2006 | 5/2003 |
|-------|-----|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Well  | 37% | 34%     | 22%    | 38%    | 72%    |
| Badly | 59  | 63      | 77     | 61     | 24     |

And more Americans believe the troop surge sent to Iraq at the beginning of the year is working to help improve the situation in that country. 38% say the surge is making things better, up five points from October and the highest percentage yet. Still, 40% say the surge is having no impact, and 12% say it is making the situation worse.

**IMPACT OF U.S. TROOP SURGE**

|                    | Now | 10/2007 |
|--------------------|-----|---------|
| Made things better | 38% | 33%     |
| Made things worse  | 12  | 13      |
| No impact          | 40  | 41      |

But Americans are still unwilling to make a long-term troop commitment in Iraq. Three out of four Americans don't want large numbers of U.S. troops to remain in Iraq for more than two years, and half want most troops out of Iraq within the next twelve months.

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

|                              | Now | 10/2007 | 9/2007 |
|------------------------------|-----|---------|--------|
| Less than a year             | 49% | 45%     | 54%    |
| One to two years             | 24  | 27      | 22     |
| Two to five years            | 7   | 12      | 8      |
| Longer than five years       | 6   | 5       | 7      |
| "As long as it takes" (vol.) | 8   | 6       | 5      |
| "Should leave now" (vol.)    | 2   | 2       | 1      |

When asked who is winning the war, Americans pick the U.S. over the Iraqi resistance by a margin of over two to one. But most Americans continue to call it a stalemate.

**WHO IS WINNING THE WAR IN IRAQ?**

|                  | Now | 9/2007 | 12/2006 | 1/2006 |
|------------------|-----|--------|---------|--------|
| The U.S.         | 24% | 24%    | 15%     | 36%    |
| Iraqi resistance | 9   | 12     | 18      | 9      |
| Neither side     | 60  | 60     | 63      | 48     |

Looking back, most Americans - 54% - believe the U.S. made the wrong decision going to war in Iraq.

---

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1133 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone December 5-9, 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.

**CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL**

**The Nation: The Economy, Government Weakens While Iraq Improves  
December 5-9, 2007**

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

|            | ** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ** |                  |     |     | Oct07a |
|------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----|-----|--------|
|            | Total                   | *** Party ID *** |     |     |        |
|            | %                       | Rep              | Dem | Ind | %      |
| Approve    | 28                      | 65               | 7   | 21  | 30     |
| Disapprove | 65                      | 26               | 88  | 70  | 61     |
| DK/NA      | 7                       | 9                | 5   | 9   | 9      |

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?

|                 |    |    |    |    | Sep07a |
|-----------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| Right direction | 21 | 47 | 7  | 15 | 24     |
| Wrong track     | 71 | 43 | 89 | 74 | 71     |
| DK/NA           | 8  | 10 | 4  | 11 | 5      |

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

|                                |    |    |    |    | Sep07b |
|--------------------------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| War in Iraq                    | 25 | 21 | 30 | 21 | 28     |
| Economy / Jobs                 | 12 | 9  | 11 | 14 | 16     |
| Health Care                    | 7  | 5  | 10 | 6  | 8      |
| Immigration                    | 4  | 6  | 3  | 5  | 5      |
| Gas/Heating Oil Crisis         | 3  | 2  | 3  | 5  | 0      |
| Terrorism (general)            | 3  | 6  | 0  | 3  | 6      |
| Environment                    | 3  | 1  | 4  | 3  | 1      |
| Poverty / Homelessness         | 3  | 3  | 5  | 1  | 3      |
| Education                      | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2      |
| Foreign Policy                 | 2  | 1  | 3  | 2  | 4      |
| The President/G.W. Bush        | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2      |
| Budget Deficit /Natl. Debt     | 2  | 5  | 2  | 1  | 1      |
| \$ for bills, making ends meet | 2  | 0  | 1  | 3  | 0      |
| Misc. social issues            | 2  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 3      |
| Other                          | 24 | 31 | 20 | 23 | 15     |
| DK/NA                          | 4  | 4  | 3  | 6  | 5      |

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

|            |    |    |    |    | Sep07a1 |
|------------|----|----|----|----|---------|
| Approve    | 26 | 61 | 6  | 20 | 26      |
| Disapprove | 65 | 32 | 84 | 71 | 67      |
| DK/NA      | 9  | 7  | 10 | 9  | 7       |

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

|            |    |    |    |    | Sep07b |
|------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| Approve    | 26 | 57 | 8  | 20 | 31     |
| Disapprove | 64 | 33 | 83 | 69 | 61     |
| DK/NA      | 10 | 10 | 9  | 11 | 8      |

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 | Oct07a |
|------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|--------|
|            | %     | %   | %   | %   | %      |
| Approve    | 26    | 58  | 7   | 22  | 26     |
| Disapprove | 69    | 34  | 92  | 73  | 67     |
| DK/NA      | 5     | 8   | 1   | 5   | 7      |

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

|            |    |    |    |    |    |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Approve    | 40 | 79 | 16 | 35 | 41 |
| Disapprove | 52 | 15 | 76 | 57 | 51 |
| DK/NA      | 8  | 6  | 8  | 8  | 8  |

q8 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?

|            |    |    |    |    |    |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Approve    | 21 | 21 | 28 | 15 | 27 |
| Disapprove | 64 | 66 | 55 | 71 | 59 |
| DK/NA      | 15 | 13 | 17 | 14 | 14 |

q9 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   | 3  | 7  | 0  | 4  | 5  |
| Fairly good | 39 | 65 | 26 | 34 | 45 |
| Fairly bad  | 39 | 20 | 47 | 44 | 33 |
| Very bad    | 18 | 7  | 26 | 17 | 16 |
| DK/NA       | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |

q10 Do you think the economy is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

|        |    |    |    |    |    |
|--------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Better | 5  | 7  | 3  | 6  | 9  |
| Worse  | 53 | 34 | 66 | 55 | 45 |
| Same   | 40 | 57 | 31 | 36 | 44 |
| DK/NA  | 2  | 2  | 0  | 3  | 2  |

q11 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q12 Which best describes your feelings about the way the federal government is working: enthusiastic, or satisfied but not enthusiastic, or dissatisfied but not angry, or angry?

|                            |    |    |    |    | Oct96e |
|----------------------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| Enthusiastic               | 1  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 2      |
| Satisfied not enthusiastic | 26 | 44 | 17 | 22 | 35     |
| Dissatisfied not angry     | 55 | 47 | 59 | 57 | 49     |
| Angry                      | 16 | 7  | 20 | 19 | 12     |
| Don't know/No answer       | 2  | 0  | 3  | 1  | 2      |

q13 In general, is your opinion of the Republican party favorable or not favorable?

|               |    |    |    |    | Jul07a |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| Favorable     | 33 | 75 | 9  | 27 | 38     |
| Not favorable | 59 | 19 | 88 | 61 | 56     |
| DK/NA         | 8  | 6  | 3  | 12 | 6      |

q14 In general, is your opinion of the Democratic party favorable or not favorable?

|               | ** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ** |     |     |     | Jul07a |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------|
|               | *** Party ID ***        |     |     |     |        |
|               | Total                   | Rep | Dem | Ind |        |
|               | %                       | %   | %   | %   | %      |
| Favorable     | 48                      | 21  | 79  | 39  | 52     |
| Not favorable | 44                      | 76  | 16  | 47  | 41     |
| DK/NA         | 8                       | 3   | 5   | 14  | 7      |

q15 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?

|                |    |    |    |    | Sep07a |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| Republican     | 30 | 68 | 6  | 26 | 32     |
| Democratic     | 45 | 16 | 76 | 38 | 42     |
| Both (vol.)    | 2  | 2  | 3  | 1  | 1      |
| Neither (vol.) | 9  | 4  | 6  | 15 | 9      |
| DK/NA          | 14 | 10 | 9  | 20 | 16     |

q16 Regardless of how you usually vote, do you think the Republican party or the Democratic party is more likely to ensure a strong economy?

|                |    |    |    |    | Oct06a |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| Republican     | 31 | 65 | 8  | 29 | 36     |
| Democratic     | 49 | 19 | 84 | 38 | 51     |
| Both (vol.)    | 2  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1      |
| Neither (vol.) | 6  | 6  | 2  | 10 | 3      |
| DK/NA          | 12 | 8  | 5  | 22 | 9      |

q17-77 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q78 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?

|                      |    |    |    |    | Oct07a |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|--------|
| Right thing          | 41 | 75 | 17 | 39 | 45     |
| Stayed out           | 54 | 21 | 79 | 55 | 51     |
| Don't know/No answer | 5  | 4  | 4  | 6  | 4      |

q79 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            | 6  | 15 | 1  | 4  | 2  |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Somewhat well        | 31 | 56 | 15 | 27 | 32 |
| Somewhat badly       | 31 | 22 | 31 | 38 | 30 |
| Very badly           | 28 | 5  | 49 | 26 | 33 |
| Don't know/No answer | 4  | 2  | 4  | 5  | 3  |

q80 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 RESPONDENTS ** |     |     |     |        |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------|
|                            | *** Party ID ***        |     |     |     |        |
|                            | Total                   | Rep | Dem | Ind | Oct07a |
|                            | %                       | %   | %   | %   | %      |
| Less than a year           | 49                      | 25  | 63  | 52  | 45     |
| One to two years           | 24                      | 31  | 20  | 23  | 27     |
| Two to five years          | 7                       | 11  | 4   | 7   | 12     |
| Longer than five years     | 6                       | 9   | 2   | 6   | 5      |
| As long as it takes (Vol.) | 8                       | 18  | 3   | 7   | 6      |
| Should leave now (Vol.)    | 2                       | 1   | 2   | 2   | 2      |
| Don't know/No answer       | 4                       | 5   | 6   | 3   | 3      |

q81 As you may know, the United States 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 | Rep | Dem | Ind | Oct07a |
|------------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| Making it better | 38    | 70  | 22  | 31  | 33     |
| Making worse     | 12    | 5   | 19  | 10  | 13     |
| No impact        | 40    | 16  | 48  | 49  | 41     |
| DK/NA            | 10    | 9   | 11  | 10  | 13     |

q82 Who do you think is currently winning the war in Iraq - the United States, or the Iraqi resistance and insurgents, or neither side?

|                 | Total | Rep | Dem | Ind | Sep07a1 |
|-----------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|---------|
| The U.S.        | 24    | 52  | 10  | 18  | 24      |
| Iraq resistance | 9     | 2   | 15  | 8   | 12      |
| Neither side    | 60    | 42  | 69  | 64  | 60      |
| DK/NA           | 7     | 4   | 6   | 10  | 4       |

q83-90 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q91 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 | Rep | Dem | Ind | Apr07b |
|------------------------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| Can save and buy extras      | 35    | 44  | 27  | 36  | 41     |
| Just enough to pay bills     | 51    | 49  | 58  | 45  | 48     |
| Not enough to pay bills etc. | 13    | 6   | 14  | 17  | 11     |
| DK/NA                        | 1     | 1   | 1   | 2   | 0      |

|                    | UNWEIGHTED | WEIGHTED  |
|--------------------|------------|-----------|
| Total Respondents  | 1133       |           |
| Total Republicans  | 315        | 299 (26%) |
| Total Democrats    | 401        | 392 (35%) |
| Total Independents | 417        | 441 (39%) |