



CBS NEWS POLL  
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**AFTER THE SURGE REPORT: VIEWS ON THE WAR IN IRAQ**  
**September 14-16, 2007**

Most Americans continue to want troops to start coming home from Iraq, and most say President George W. Bush's plan for troop reductions does not go far enough. Americans say they expect large numbers of troops to stay in Iraq for many more years - and the President spoke of a long-term commitment to Iraq in his speech last week. But a time frame longer than two years is not acceptable to Americans.

The events of last week did little to bolster optimism about a war that most still see going badly. Although both General Petraeus and President Bush pointed to advances in Iraq, Americans are pessimistic about the prospect for U.S. success.

**U.S. TROOP LEVELS**

In a CBS News/New York Times Poll released a week ago, just before General Petraeus' testimony before Congress and the President's speech on his plans for the war in Iraq, just one in five Americans were willing to allow U.S. troops to remain in Iraq for more than two years. There is no greater appetite for that kind of long term troop commitment now: just 22% would accept U.S. troops remaining there for two years or more. About three-quarters want troops to remain there for less than two years.

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

	Now	Pre-speech 9/4-8/2007
Less than a year	49%	54%
One to two years	23	22
Two to five years	12	8
Longer than five years	5	7
"As long as it takes" (vol.)	5	5

There is a wide gap between what Americans would like to see happen, and what they think will happen. Only 34% expect troops to be in Iraq for less than two years. Most think they will be there for longer.

**KEEPING LARGE NUMBERS OF TROOPS IN IRAQ:**

	Want	Expect
Less than a year	49%	10%
One to two years	23	24
Two to five years	12	31
Longer than five years	5	27

This gap between expectations and preference exists even among Republicans, who are more willing than Democrats to allow U.S. troops to remain in Iraq for more than two years. 49% of Republicans are willing for troops to stay in Iraq two years or longer, though far more, 67%, expect them to stay that long.

As they did a week ago, most Americans would like to see U.S. troops reduced or removed altogether from Iraq.

**U.S. TROOP LEVELS IN IRAQ SHOULD BE...?**

	Now	Pre-speech 9/4-8/2007
Increased	6%	11%
Kept same	21	19
Reduced	39	35
Remove all troops	29	30

Just under half of Americans want President George W. Bush to remove even more troops by next summer than he proposed in his speech last week. 47% say the plan to bring troop numbers down to pre-surge levels next year should go even further.

**TROOP REDUCTION IN 2008: SHOULD BUSH REMOVE...?**

	All	Reps	Dems	Inds	Speech viewers
More than proposed	47%	20%	69%	45%	42%
Fewer than proposed	7	12	3	7	9
Proposed right amount	29	51	17	26	29

As with many aspects of the war, partisans disagree. Those who saw the President's speech have views similar to Americans, overall.

Americans divide on whether the U.S. has a responsibility to ensure Iraq has a stable government before removing U.S. troops. This is a change from last December, when a majority of Americans said the U.S. did have such a responsibility. Republicans overwhelmingly believe the U.S. has that responsibility, most Democrats don't.

**DOES U.S. HAVE RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE STABLE IRAQ BEFORE REMOVING TROOPS?**

	Now	12/2006
Yes	49%	57%
No	46	38

Mixed views on America's responsibility to Iraq may be partly because Americans do not see much effort from the Iraqi government itself. Few think it is doing all it can to bring stability. Even some positive words about the Iraqi government in President Bush's speech did not budge these views.

**IS IRAQI GOVERNMENT DOING ALL IT CAN?**

		Pre-speech
	Now	9/4-8/2007
Yes	18%	22%
No	69	70

The reports, speeches and testimonies of the past week have not convinced any more Americans that a stable, democratic Iraq is at hand. A week ago, most doubted Iraq would ever become a stable democracy. Today, most still have doubts.

**WILL IRAQ EVER BECOME A STABLE DEMOCRACY?**

		Pre-speech
	Now	9/4-8/2007
Yes, in year or two	4%	4%
Yes, but take longer	42	42
No, never	53	53

**ASSESSING THE SITUATION IN IRAQ**

A slight majority of Americans say they've been paying attention to news of General Petraeus' report and testimony: 57% have. Fewer watched or listened to the President's speech: 29% say they did.

Both the President and General David Petraeus last week pointed out some successes for the troop surge in Iraq, but they did not convince Americans that it is working. As was the case last week, only about one in three say it is.

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

		Pre-speech		
	Now	9/4-8/2007	8/2007	7/2007
Made things better	31%	35%	29%	19%
Made things worse	11	12	15	20
No impact	51	45	46	53

While partisans disagree on this - Republicans think it is working, Democrats think it is not - the President has made no additional progress with his base on this assessment: about the same number of Republicans say the surge is working this week (53%) as said so last week (56%).

Many who do see gains from the surge think they are tenuous: only 38% of those who think the surge is working think the improvements would hold if the U.S. drew down its troops.

And views of prospects for U.S. success remain dim. Although the President once again spoke optimistically about Iraq in his speech, fewer than half of Americans think the effort is likely to succeed; that is not much changed from last April. Back in the spring and summer of 2006, Americans were still optimistic.

**WILL THE U.S. SUCCEED IN IRAQ?**

	Now	4/2007	12/2006	5/2006
Very likely	10%	12%	9%	11%
Somewhat likely	32	33	34	44
Not very/not likely	55	53	53	44

However, most speech watchers say the U.S. is likely to succeed. Speech watchers were also somewhat more inclined to be Republicans than Americans, overall.

Despite the President's allusions to success in Iraq during his speech last week, Americans remain unconvinced the war is going well overall. Just 34% think things are going well for the U.S. in Iraq, about the same as before the speech.

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

	Now	Pre-speech 9/4-8/2007
Well	34%	33%
Badly	63	64

The President's message resonated a bit better among members of his party. Before the speech, 60% of Republicans thought the war was going well; now, 70% feel that way.

Overall views of the war are also about the same. Just 39% think the U.S. did the right thing in taking military action against Iraq. 41% did last week.

**THE WAR AND PRESIDENT BUSH**

The public believes that success in Iraq is unlikely, and they also think the President's assessments of the situation there are too rosy. His speech last week did nothing to change these views.

**WHEN BUSH DESCRIBES IRAQ, HE MAKES THINGS SOUND...**

	Now	Pre-speech 9/4-8/2007
<u>Better</u> than they really are	65%	67%
<u>Worse</u> than they really are	6	6
Describes things accurately	24	23

Among those who watched the speech, slightly more (37%) say his descriptions are accurate but most of them still say he makes things sound better.

Americans have long believed that the President is using "rose colored glasses" on Iraq. More than six in ten Americans have said Bush was painting too rosy a picture of things every time this question has been asked since the spring of 2006.

## TERRORISM

The Bush Administration has linked the war in Iraq with al Qaeda and terrorism against the U.S., but many Americans don't make that connection. Only one in three Americans calls Iraq a major part of the war on terror. A majority says it is not.

Most don't expect a troop pullout will impact the terror threat to the U.S. A 56% majority thinks that withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq will have no effect on terrorism against the U.S. 30% think it will increase it, 11% think it will decrease. That has not changed much since April, when the question was last asked.

### IMPACT OF REMOVING TROOPS FROM IRAQ ON U.S. TERROR TREAT

	Now	4/2007
Increase threat	30%	30%
Decrease threat	11	8
Stay the same	56	59

In general, about a third of Americans think the war in Iraq has made the U.S. safer from terrorism, and about one quarter thinks it has made the U.S. less safe. 43% think it has made no difference.

## THE HUNT FOR OSAMA BIN LADEN

Americans continue to lose confidence that the government will capture Osama bin Laden. In the wake of a new videotape showing the terrorist leader alive, just 39% of Americans are now confident the U.S. will capture or kill him. A majority is not confident that will happen. In August 2006, opinion was divided, with 48% confident he would be captured or killed, and in October 2001, just after the 9/11 attacks, 70% were confident.

### CONFIDENT GOVT. WILL CAPTURE BIN LADEN?

	Now	8/2006	9/2003	10/2001
Very confident	8%	14%	21%	28%
Somewhat confident	31	34	31	42
Not too/not at all confident	58	49	45	27

## PRESIDENT BUSH

President Bush's overall job approval rating is now at 29%, similar to what it was last week. It had reached a low of 27% in June, but has hovered around 30% since the end of 2006.

### BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL RATING

	Now	Last week	6/2007	3/2007	12/2006
Approve	29%	30%	27%	34%	31%
Disapprove	64	64	65	58	63

His televised nationwide address on Thursday appears to have resulted in little change overall, although opinion has become more polarized. Republican support for the President is up from 58% to 73% since last week while support among Democrats and Independents remains low, with only 6% of Democrats and 20% of Independents approving of how the President is handling his job.

**BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL RATING**

(By Party)

	Now	Last Week
Overall	29%	30%
Republicans	73%	58%
Democrats	6%	7%
Independents	20%	26%

The President's approval ratings on specific issues are also low, and have changed little over the past two months. Terrorism remains the President's strongest issue - with 40% of Americans approving of the job he is doing, though a slight majority - 54% - still disapprove.

**BUSH'S JOB APPROVALS**

	Now	Last week
Overall	29%	30%
Terrorism	40%	40%
Economy	31%	32%
War in Iraq	25%	26%

25% of Americans approve of the way President Bush is handling the war in Iraq, with most Republicans approving of the job he is doing and most Independents and almost all Democrats disapproving. Again, there has been little change since the President's address to the nation.

But Americans do not think Congressional Democrats are handling the issue much better. 31% of Americans approve of the way the Democrats in Congress are handling the war in Iraq - 57% disapprove.

**IRAQ JOB APPROVALS**

	President Bush	Democrats in Congress
Approve	25%	31%
Disapprove	70	57

Most Republicans - 58% - approve of the way the President is handling the situation in Iraq, while the same percentage of Democrats approve of the Democrats in Congress. Majorities of Independents disapprove of the way they both are handling their jobs dealing with Iraq.

27% of Americans approve of the way Congress is handling its job overall, up slightly from last week.

**CONGRESS JOB APPROVAL**

	Now	Last Week
Approve	27%	23%
Disapprove	65	66

**THE ECONOMY**

Iraq remains the most important issue facing the country today (28%), followed by the economy and jobs (16%) and health care (8%).

**MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM**

War in Iraq	28%
Economy and Jobs	16
Health Care	8

The public's assessment of the condition of the economy is mixed. While half of all Americans think the condition of the economy is at least fairly good, very few (4%) would say it is very good. 29% of Americans believe the condition of the economy is fairly bad, and nearly one in five says it is very bad.

But Americans are pessimistic when looking to the future. For the first time since September 2001, a majority of Americans (51%) say the economy is getting worse. Only 7% of Americans say the economy is getting better.

**THE ECONOMY IS...**

	Now	Last Week
Getting better	7%	8%
Getting worse	51	49
No Difference	41	43

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This poll was conducted among a random sample of 706 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone September 14-16, 2007. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus four percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher.

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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	Sep07a1
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	29	73	6	20	30
Disapprove	64	22	89	70	64
DK/NA	7	5	5	10	6

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep07a1
War in Iraq	28	19	36	27	24
Economy / Jobs	16	9	18	17	13
Health Care	8	8	10	7	7
Terrorism (general)	6	12	2	5	4
Immigration	5	11	2	3	7
Foreign Policy	4	5	1	7	2
Poverty / Homelessness	3	1	7	2	2
Defense / Military	3	4	1	4	2
Miscellaneous Social Issue	3	4	0	4	4
Misc. Government Issues	3	5	4	1	1
Education	2	3	1	2	4
The President/G.W. Bush	2	0	4	2	3
Drugs	2	2	0	3	1
Other	10	10	8	13	21
DK/NA	5	7	6	3	5

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

Approve	31	69	8	26	32
Disapprove	61	22	88	63	60
DK/NA	8	9	4	11	8

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

Approve	25	58	6	20	26
Disapprove	70	31	92	76	71
DK/NA	5	11	2	4	3

q5 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the campaign against terrorism?

Approve	40	79	16	37	40
Disapprove	54	18	78	57	52
DK/NA	6	3	6	6	8

q6 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?

Approve	27	25	32	24	23
Disapprove	65	71	57	67	66
DK/NA	8	4	11	9	11



q7 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Democrats in Congress are handling the situation with Iraq?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jul07b
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	31	10	58	21	30
Disapprove	57	89	33	58	59
DK/NA	12	1	9	21	11

q8 How would you rate the condition of the national economy these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep07a1
Very good	4	9	1	4	4
Fairly good	46	71	33	41	51
Fairly bad	29	13	41	30	30
Very bad	18	7	25	20	15
DK/NA	3	0	0	5	0

q9 Do you think the economy is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Better	7	13	4	5	8
Worse	51	24	61	61	49
Same	41	62	34	33	43
DK/NA	1	1	1	1	0

q10-15 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q16 BLANK

q17 How much attention have you been able to pay to news about the testimony to Congress by General Petraeus on the state of the war in Iraq? -- A lot, some, not much, or no attention so far?

A lot	22	26	21	20
Some	35	42	31	35
Not much	28	21	28	32
No attention	13	11	19	10
DK/NA	2	0	1	3

q18 Did you watch or listen to President Bush's speech on Thursday night on the war in Iraq?

Yes	29	38	24	28
No	71	62	76	72

q22-31, q33-q35, q46 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q32, q37-q51 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q52 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?

Right thing	39	70	20	35	41
Stayed out	53	26	75	52	54
Don't know/No answer	8	4	5	13	5

q53 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	Sep07a1
	%	%	%	%	%
Very well	3	8	2	2	4
Somewhat well	31	62	13	26	29
Somewhat badly	29	23	36	26	32
Very badly	34	4	47	43	32
Don't know/No answer	3	3	2	3	3

q54 Regardless of whether you think taking military action in Iraq was the right thing to do--would you say that the U.S. is very likely to succeed in Iraq, somewhat likely to succeed, not very likely to succeed, or not at all likely to succeed in Iraq?

					Apr07a
Very likely	10	23	5	5	12
Somewhat likely	32	47	21	31	33
Not very likely	31	20	40	31	29
Not at all likely	24	8	32	28	24
Don't know/No answer	3	2	2	5	2

q55 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?

					Sep07a1
Less than a year	49	16	70	53	54
One to two years	23	32	21	20	22
Two to five years	12	29	5	7	8
Longer than five years	5	9	1	6	7
As long as it takes (vol.)	5	11	1	5	5
Should leave now (vol.)	1	0	1	2	1
DK/NA	5	3	1	7	3

q56 How much longer do you think large numbers of U.S. troops WILL have to remain in Iraq--for less than a year, one to two years, two to five years, or will US troops have to stay in Iraq for longer than five years?

Less than a year	10	5	12	11
One to two years	24	23	28	21
Two to five years	31	40	29	26
Longer than five years	27	27	25	29
As long as it takes (vol.)	2	2	1	3
Should leave now (vol.)	0	0	0	0
DK/NA	6	3	5	10

q57 Do you think of the war with Iraq as part of the war on terrorism, or do you think of it as separate from the war on terrorism?

IF YES, ASK: Is it a major part of the war on terrorism, or a minor part of the war on terrorism?

					Sep07a1
Major part	31	56	16	29	38
Minor part	11	15	8	10	13
Not part	51	25	64	55	47
DK/NA	7	4	12	6	2

q58 From what you have seen or heard about the situation in Iraq, what should the United States do now - should the U.S. increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq, keep the same number of U.S. troops in Iraq as there are now, decrease the number of troops in Iraq, or remove all its troops from Iraq?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*  
 \*\*\*\*\* Party ID \*\*\*\*\*

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep07a1
	%	%	%	%	%
Increase	6	15	2	4	11
Keep the same	21	38	9	20	19
Decrease	39	36	43	38	35
Remove all troops	29	7	41	32	30
Don't know/No answer	5	4	5	6	5

q59 BLANK

q60 If the U.S. withdrew its troops from Iraq, do you think the threat of terrorism against the United States would increase, decrease, or stay the same?

					Apr07a
Increase	30	52	14	28	30
Decrease	11	4	17	10	8
Stay about the same	56	41	66	57	59
Don't know/No answer	3	2	3	4	3

q61 As you may know, the U.S. has sent more than 20,000 additional troops to Iraq. From what you have heard or read, would you say this troop increase is making the situation in Iraq better, making it worse, or is it having no impact on the situation in Iraq so far?

	** HALF SAMPLE X**				Sep07a1
Making it better	31	53	12	31	35
Making worse	11	3	19	11	12
No impact	51	42	65	48	45
DK/NA	6	3	4	10	8

q62 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?

	** HALF SAMPLE Y **			
Making it better	30	63	12	28
Making worse	14	9	8	21
No impact	51	24	73	45
DK/NA	6	4	7	6

q63 Do you think the improvement will be permanent, or will it last only as long as the extra U.S. troops are in place?

	AMONG THOSE WHO SAID IN BETTER IN Q61 OR Q62			
Permanent	38	52	19	27
Temporary	47	35	70	53
Depends (Vol.)	8	5	5	12
DK/NA	7	7	7	7

q64-q66 BLANK

q67 President Bush has proposed reducing the number of U.S. troops in Iraq to pre-surge levels by the summer of 2008. Do you think by next summer, he should remove more troops than that, remove fewer troops than that, or is that the right amount to remove?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %
Remove more troops	47	20	69	45
Remove fewer troops	7	12	3	7
Right amount	29	51	17	26
Depends (Vol.)	5	3	4	8
Remove all now (Vol.)	3	1	2	4
DK/NA	9	13	6	9

q68-q69 BLANK

q70 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?

					Mar06a
More safe	31	57	20	23	30
Less safe	23	7	30	26	23
No difference	43	34	48	45	44
Don't know/No answer	4	2	3	6	3

q71 Do you think the United States has a responsibility to make sure that Iraq has a stable government in place before it removes its troops from Iraq, or don't you think it has this responsibility?

					Dec06a
Yes, has responsibility	49	72	34	46	57
No, does not	46	24	59	49	38
DK/NA	5	3	7	5	5

q72 Do you think the Iraqi government is or is not doing all they can realistically be expected to do in order to bring about stability in Iraq?

					Sep07a1
Is	18	25	18	15	22
Is not	69	71	71	67	70
DK/NA	12	4	11	18	8

q73 Which of these do you think is most likely? 1. Iraq will become a stable democracy in the next year or two, OR 2. Iraq will become a stable democracy, but it will take longer than a year or two, OR 3. Iraq will probably never become a stable democracy.

Will in the next year or two	4	5	1	5	4
Will, but it will take longer	42	58	36	37	42
Never become a democracy	53	35	62	56	53
DK/NA	2	1	1	2	1

q74 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q75 When George W. Bush talks about how things are going for the United States in Iraq today, do you think he is making things in Iraq sound better than they really are, making things sound worse than they really are, or is he describing the situation in Iraq accurately?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

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

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep07a1
	%	%	%	%	%
Sound better	65	33	84	70	67
Sound worse	6	9	8	3	6
Describing accurately	24	55	6	18	23
DK/NA	5	3	2	9	4

q76-q78 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q79 How much confidence do you have in the ability of the U.S. government to capture or kill Osama Bin Laden--would you say you're very confident he will be caught, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

					Aug06b
Very confident	8	16	4	6	14
Somewhat confident	31	49	22	26	34
Not too confident	31	16	38	34	29
Not at all confident	27	15	35	27	20
Not alive (Vol.)	1	2	0	1	1
Don't know/No answer	3	1	2	6	2

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	706	
Total Republicans	194	182 (26%)
Total Democrats	239	244 (34%)
Total Independents	273	280 (40%)
Half Sample X	356	346
Half Sample Y	350	360