



CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL
For release: Sunday, January 13th, 2007
6:00 P.M. EDT

THE ECONOMY AND THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY: THE MOOD DARKENS
January 9-12, 2008

Assessments of the current state of the nation are grim as Americans have begun to choose who will vie to be the country's next president. 75% of Americans think the country is off on the wrong track - matching the highest number ever recorded in the CBS News/New York Times Poll - and approval of President Bush remains low.

Concern about the direction of the country is accompanied by growing alarm about the condition of the economy - now the country's most important problem. Perceptions of the condition of the national economy continue to drop, and most Americans think the worst is yet to come.

CONCERN ABOUT THE COUNTRY

Three in four Americans think the country is off on the wrong track, matching the highest number recorded in the twenty-five years since CBS News began asking the question. Only 19% say it is headed in the right direction, matching the all-time low reached last June.

Table with 5 columns: Direction of the Country, Now, 12/2007, 6/2007, 1/2007. Rows: Right direction, Wrong Track.

Worries about the direction of the country coincide with a low job approval rating for the president. 29% of Americans approve of the way President Bush is handling his job as president. Approval has hovered around 30% for the past year.

Table with 4 columns: Bush's Job Approval Rating, Now, 12/2007, 6/2007. Rows: Approve, Disapprove.

What approval is left of the president is fueled mainly by members of the president's own party. 66% of Republicans still approve of how he is handling his job, while nearly six in 10 Independents and nearly nine in 10 Democrats disapprove.

BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL RATING

		(By party)		
	Total	Reps	Dems	Ind
Approve	29%	66%	5%	27%
Disapprove	62	26	89	62

THE ECONOMY: GROWING CONCERNS

For the first time in over two years the economy and jobs is the most important problem facing the country today - edging out the war in Iraq. 23% name it - up eleven points in just one month.

MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

	Now	12/2007	1/2007
Economy & Jobs	23%	12%	8%
War in Iraq	22	25	33
Health Care	7	7	7

61% say the condition of the economy is bad - including nearly one in five that say it is in very bad shape. 38% describe the economy as good - though only 3% say it is very good. In January 2007 a majority of Americans said the economy was at least in fairly good condition.

CONDITION OF THE ECONOMY

	Now	12/2007	10/2007	1/2007	8/2003
Good	38%	42%	50%	58%	38%
Bad	61	57	49	41	60

Pessimism about the economy's future is on the rise. 62%, the highest percentage since 1990, think the economy is getting worse, not better.

THE ECONOMY IS...

	Now	12/2007	10/1990
Getting better	4%	5%	3%
Getting worse	62	53	67
No Difference	33	40	28

THE WAR IN IRAQ

Nearly six in 10 Americans say the war in Iraq is going badly - including 30% who say it is going very badly - while another 38% say it is going at least somewhat well. These numbers have changed little since last month, though they are an improvement from a year ago.

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

	Now	12/2007	6/2007	1/2007
Well	38%	37%	22%	23%
Badly	59	59	77	75

Meanwhile, public opinion on the effectiveness of the troop surge that began last spring continues to improve. 40% now say it has made the situation better there, a number that has increased steadily since July.

IMPACT OF U.S. TROOP SURGE

	Now	12/2007	10/2007	8/2007	7/2007
Made things better	40%	38%	33%	29%	19%
Made things worse	12	12	13	15	20
No impact	34	40	41	46	53

Looking to the future of U.S. troop commitment in Iraq, half of all Americans want most U.S. troops out of Iraq within the next year, and only about one in five is willing to see large numbers of American troops remain in Iraq for longer than two years.

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

	Now	12/2007	9/2007
Less than a year	50%	49%	54%
One to two years	24	24	22
Two to five years	10	7	8
Longer than five years	3	6	7
"As long as it takes" (vol.)	8	8	5

Looking back, 58% of Americans believe the U.S. made the wrong decision going to war in Iraq.

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1178 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone January 9-12, 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. An oversample of African Americans was also conducted for this poll, for a total of 185 interviews among this group and 141 African American Democratic primary voters. The results were then weighted in proportion to the racial composition of the adult population in the U.S. Census. The margin of error for African Americans overall is plus or minus 7 percentage points, and plus or minus 8 points for African American Democratic primary voters.

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

	**** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ****				Dec07a
	Total	**** Party ID ****			
	Rep	Dem	Ind		
	%	%	%	%	
Approve	29	66	5	27	28
Disapprove	62	26	89	62	65
DK/NA	9	8	6	11	7

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?

Right direction	19	42	5	16	21
Wrong track	75	50	91	77	71
DK/NA	6	8	4	7	8

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

Economy & jobs	23	23	25	19	12
War in Iraq	22	16	29	18	25
Health Care	7	3	9	7	7
Immigration	5	11	2	5	4
Terrorism (general)	3	7	1	2	3
Foreign Policy	2	2	3	2	2
Poverty / Homelessness	2	2	2	3	3
Education	2	1	2	4	2
Environment	2	1	2	3	3
Gas/Heating Oil Crisis	2	3	2	1	3
The President/G. W. Bush	2	0	2	3	2
Budget Deficit /National Debt	2	0	2	3	2
Religious Values	2	2	1	3	1
Defense / Military	2	1	2	2	1
Miscellaneous Social Issue	2	2	1	2	2
Other	15	22	2	14	24
DK/NA	5	4	3	9	4

q4 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	6	1	3	3
Fairly good	35	51	26	31	39
Fairly bad	42	34	45	43	39
Very bad	19	7	26	21	18
DK/NA	2	2	2	1	1

q5 Do you think the economy is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

Better	4	7	2	3	5
Worse	62	47	74	60	53
Same	33	44	22	36	40
DK/NA	1	2	2	1	2

q6-q69 RELEASED SEPARATELY

q70 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 ****				Dec07a
	**** Party ID ****				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	
	%	%	%	%	%
Right thing	36	68	14	33	41
Stayed out	58	25	80	59	54
Don't know/No answer	6	7	6	8	5

q71 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	4	6
Somewhat well	34	59	17	34	31
Somewhat badly	29	23	31	31	31
Very badly	30	7	49	28	28
Don't know/No answer	3	2	2	3	4

q72 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?

Less than a year	50	24	68	49	49
One to two years	24	32	19	22	24
Two to five years	10	18	6	9	7
Longer than five years	3	5	1	3	6
As long as it takes (vol.)	8	17	1	7	8
Should leave now (vol.)	3	1	3	4	2
DK/NA	2	3	2	6	4

q73 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?

Making it better	40	64	22	40	38
Making worse	12	3	15	16	12
No impact	34	22	49	26	40
DK/NA	14	11	14	18	10

	UNWEIGHTED	WEIGHTED
Total Respondents	1178	
Total Republicans	328	336
Total Democrats	493	472
Total Independents	357	371