

PRESIDENT BUSH GAINS ON TERRORISM, NOT ON IRAQ
August 17-21, 2006

Concerns about terrorism have risen, but there has been no change in the public's overall assessment of George W. Bush. He receives a small boost in approval of his handling of terrorism, now at 55% in this latest CBS News/New York Times Poll. But continued low ratings on his handling of the war in Iraq, concerns about the economy and worries about U.S. involvement in the Middle East have kept his overall job approval from rising, too.

The President's job approval rating is 36% in this poll, unchanged from last week and from a poll conducted in July, before the latest terrorist-related arrests in Great Britain. For most of this year, his approval rating has hovered in the mid-30s.

BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL

	Now	8/14/2006	7/2006
Approve	36%	36%	36%
Disapprove	57	57	55

Over the last few months the President has succeeded in raising his approval rating among members of his own party, both overall and on terrorism specifically. His approval rating among Republicans has risen slightly, from 68% in April to 74% now. About three in 10 Independents approve, as do less than one in 10 Democrats.

CONCERNS ABOUT TERRORISM

Both terrorism and the war in Iraq are at the top of Americans' list of the priorities they would most like to see addressed. When asked to choose which of six issues is most important for political leaders to concentrate on right now, terrorism is the number one issue chosen (24%), closely followed by the war in Iraq (22%). Following on the list are the economy (20%), the cost of health care (18%), the cost of gasoline (9%), and the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah (6%).

WHICH ISSUE SHOULD POLITICAL LEADERS CONCENTRATE ON?

Terrorism	24%
War in Iraq	22
Economy	20
Health Care	18
Gas Prices	9
Israel and Hezbollah	6

And the President's approval rating on terrorism, historically his strongest suit, has risen in this poll, to 55% now, up from 51% earlier in August. This is the highest it has been since July 2005.

BUSH'S HANDLING OF TERRORISM

	Approve	Disapprove
Now	55%	38
8/14/2006	51%	43
6/2006	47%	46
2/2006	43%	50
12/2005	48%	45
7/2005	55%	39

While he gets credit for dealing with terrorism, the President is still hampered by low approval ratings on one of the most important issues of the day, the war in Iraq. Only three in 10 Americans approve of how he is handling the war, and more than twice as many -- 65% -- disapprove. Since early this year, only about three in 10 Americans have approved of the president's handling of Iraq.

BUSH'S APPROVAL RATINGS

	Now	8/14/2006	7/2006
Terrorism	55%	51%	51%
Economy	35%	30%	33%
Foreign policy	34%	33%	35%
Iraq	30%	30%	32%

Many Americans don't see a link between the war in Iraq and the war on terrorism, which may explain the very different ratings the president receives on the two issues. When asked if the war in Iraq is part of a general war on terror, 51% of Americans say it is not - matching the largest percentage since the question was first asked in 2003. 44% say it is part of the war on terror, including 32% who say it is a major part. Earlier in the summer more Americans said they thought it was part of the war on terror, and in March the country was more evenly divided.

IS IRAQ PART OF WAR ON TERROR?

	Now	8/14/2006	6/2006	3/2006	11/2004
Yes	44%	50%	54%	46%	43%
No	51	46	41	49	51

Almost half of all Americans - 46% - believe the Bush Administration has focused too much on Iraq over the last couple of years and not enough on terrorism elsewhere in the world, the highest number since CBS started asking the question a year ago. 5% believe the Bush Administration has focused too much on terrorism elsewhere at the expense of Iraq, and 42% believe the balance is about right.

BUSH ADMINISTRATION HAS FOCUSED TOO MUCH ON...?

	Now	8/14/2006	7/2005
Iraq	46%	41%	43%
Terrorism	5	3	6
Balance about right	42	48	44

Even among those who believe Iraq is a major part of the war on terror, nearly one out of four still believes that the Bush Administration has focused too much on the war in Iraq at the expense of fighting terrorism elsewhere around the world.

THE WAR IN IRAQ

In general, Americans hold a dim view of how things are going for the U.S. in its efforts to bring stability and order to Iraq. Now only 37% of Americans believe things are going well in Iraq - near the low reached in February of this year. 62% of Americans think the war is going badly, with 29% of Americans saying it is going very badly.

HOW IS THE WAR GOING?

	Now	8/14/2006	7/2006	2/2006
Well	37%	42%	41%	36%
Badly	62	56	57	62

While a majority of Republicans -- 66% -- continues to believe that the war in Iraq is going well, only 15% of Democrats and 33% of Independents agree.

Americans also say the United States should never have gone to war with Iraq in the first place - 53% of Americans say the U.S. should have stayed out. Although the country was more evenly divided a month ago, this number has been generally consistent for most of 2006.

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

	Now	8/14/2006	7/2006	3/2006
Right thing	43%	41%	47%	41%
Should have stayed out	53	53	48	54

THE CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In spite of the recent cease fire between Israel and the Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, Americans are less optimistic about the prospects for peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors than they were at the beginning of the conflict. Now only one out of 4 Americans believes that there will ever be peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors in the Middle East, down from 31% a month ago.

WILL THERE EVER BE PEACE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ARAB NATIONS?

	Now	7/2006
Yes	26%	31%
No	70	64

But since the August 14th cease fire - which was proposed to the U.N. Security Council by the United States - Americans are more willing to believe that solving the conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbors is at least partly the responsibility of the U.S. 39% of Americans believe the U.S. has a responsibility to try to resolve the conflict between Israel and other countries in the Middle East, up six points from last month. Nevertheless, a majority of Americans continues to think this is not the U.S.' responsibility.

SOLVING CONFLICT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND MIDEAST NATIONS IS...?

	Now	7/2006
The U.S.'s responsibility	39%	33%
Not the U.S.'s business	56	58

THE ECONOMY

Americans are narrowly divided on their assessment of the national economy - 52% rate it good while 47% rate it as bad. Americans have become slightly more pessimistic about the condition of the economy since January, when 57% rated it as at least fairly good.

VIEWS OF THE ECONOMY

	Now	7/2006	5/2006	3/2006	1/2006
Good	52%	51%	53%	55%	57%
Bad	47	47	46	43	42

Americans are also clearly pessimistic when assessing the direction the country is going in as a whole. Now 67% of all Americans think the country is off on the wrong track, while just 29% think the country is going in the right direction.

DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

	Now	7/2006
Right direction	29%	28%
Wrong track	67	66

THE OUTLOOK FOR NOVEMBER

29% of Americans approve of the way Congress is doing its job, about the same as in July, and 60% disapprove. For the last year, a majority of the public has disapproved of Congress.

CONGRESS' JOB APPROVAL

Approve	29%
Disapprove	60

Although it is still the end of summer and the November elections are more than two months away, voters nationally would favor the Democrats over the Republicans - at least for now. If the election for the House of Representatives were held today, 47% of registered voters say they would choose the Democrat, while 32% would choose the Republican candidate.

SECURITY CONCERNS AMONG WOMEN: ARE THERE STILL "SECURITY MOMS?"

In the 2004 presidential election, George W. Bush lost to John Kerry among women voters 48% to 51%, but married women supported Bush over Kerry by 55% to 44%. Women voters (and especially married women) also expressed concerns about another terrorist attack. The CBS News Exit Poll found that 44% of women voters said they felt less safe from terrorism than they had four years earlier. A quarter of married women were very worried about another terrorist attack in the U.S.

But now women - married and unmarried - are dissatisfied, not necessarily with Bush's handling of the war on terrorism, but with his handling of the war in Iraq. Terrorism remains important to women, but the war in Iraq is first on the list of issues women would like political leaders to address.

When asked to choose from among the following six issues -- terrorism, the war in Iraq, the economy, gas prices, health care, and the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah -- 27% of women say the war in Iraq is most important, followed by 21% who say terrorism. Men, on the other hand, choose terrorism (27%) by a larger margin.

WHICH ISSUE SHOULD POLITICAL LEADERS CONCENTRATE ON THE MOST?

	Total	Men	Women
Terrorism	24%	27%	21%
War in Iraq	22	17	27
Economy	20	20	19
Health Care	18	18	17
Gas Prices	9	10	8
Israel & Hezbollah	6	6	6

Married women are more likely than women overall to say that terrorism is most important (27% choose it).

Approval of the President's handling of his job overall is lower among women than men -- 40% of men approve, while 32% of women do. There is also a gender gap on approval of the President's handling of the war on terrorism specifically; 59% of men approve, but a lower 50% of women do.

A gender gap on views of President Bush's handling of Iraq also exists. 35% of men approve, compared to only 26% of women -- and for women, the war is their top priority. Married women also disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the war in Iraq: 62% disapprove and only 33% approve.

Women with children under 18 give some credit to the president for his handling of terrorism; just under half approve. But only 30% approve of the job he is doing overall, and just 25% approve of how he is handling Iraq.

BUSH'S APPROVAL RATINGS

	Total	Men	Women	Women w/kids
Overall	36%	40%	32%	30%
Terrorism	55%	59%	50%	47%
Economy	35%	38%	33%	33%
Foreign policy	34%	36%	32%	33%
Iraq	30%	35%	26%	25%

Most women think the U.S. should have stayed out of Iraq - 58% say this. Men are more closely divided on the question.

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

	Total	Men	Women
Right thing	43%	49%	37%
Should have stayed out	53	47	58

But women and men share negative assessments of how the war is going. Most women think the war is not going well for the United States.

HOW IS THE WAR GOING?

	Total	Men	Women
Well	37%	38%	35%
Badly	62	61	62

When asked if the war in Iraq is part of a larger war on terror, women and men say that it is not.

IS IRAQ PART OF WAR ON TERROR?

	Total	Men	Women
Yes	44%	43%	43%
No	51	52	50

The latest foreign policy hotspot - the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon -- is of particular concern to women. Like men, they believe there will never be a time when Israel and the Arab nations will live in peace. But they are much more likely than men to say this is something the United States does NOT have a responsibility to try and solve. Women, married and unmarried, don't see this role for the U.S.

DOES U.S. HAVE RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP RESOLVE CONFLICT IN THE MIDEAST?

	Total	Men	Women	Married Women
Yes	39%	45%	33%	37%
No	56	52	60	58

This poll was conducted among a nationwide random sample of 1206 adults, interviewed by telephone August 17-21, 2006. The error due to sampling could be plus or minus three percentage points for results based on the complete sample. 700 women were interviewed in this poll; the margin of error for women is plus or minus four percentage points.

CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL
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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	Aug06a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	36	74	7	31	36
Disapprove	57	20	87	60	57
DK/NA	7	6	6	9	7

q2-q3 BLANK

q4 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?

					Jul06a
Right direction	29	53	9	26	28
Wrong track	67	40	88	70	66
DK/NA	4	7	3	4	6

q5 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q6 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling foreign policy?

					Aug06a
Approve	34	66	8	32	33
Disapprove	57	26	85	56	56
DK/NA	9	8	7	12	11

q7 How about the economy? Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the economy?

Approve	35	67	12	30	30
Disapprove	58	27	84	58	62
DK/NA	7	6	4	12	8

q8 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation with Iraq?

Approve	30	60	7	27	30
Disapprove	65	35	91	67	66
DK/NA	5	5	2	6	4

q9 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the campaign against terrorism?

Approve	55	86	32	50	51
Disapprove	38	11	60	39	43
DK/NA	7	3	8	11	6

q10 BLANK

q11 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?

** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **

*** Party ID ***

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Jul06a
	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	29	42	23	24	28
Disapprove	60	51	67	61	58
DK/NA	11	7	10	15	14

q12 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	5	11	1	3	5
Fairly good	47	67	33	43	46
Fairly bad	32	17	41	35	34
Very bad	15	3	25	17	13
DK/NA	1	2	0	2	2

q13 If the 2006 election for U.S. House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate in your district?

*** REGISTERED VOTERS ***

					Jul06a
Republican	32	78	2	19	35
Democratic	47	6	87	43	45
Other (Vol.)	0	0	0	1	1
Won't vote (Vol.)	0	0	0	1	1
Depends (Vol.)	12	12	6	20	13
DK/NA	9	4	5	16	5

q14 How much confidence do you have in George W. Bush's ability to handle a crisis -- a lot, some, a little, or none at all?

*** TOTAL RESPONDENTS ***

					Aug06a
A lot	27	59	5	22	24
Some	26	29	20	29	29
A little	20	5	29	23	22
None at all	25	7	45	22	24
DK/NA	2	0	1	4	1

q15 If you had to say, which of these six issues do you think is MOST important for political leaders to concentrate on right now: 1) Fighting terrorism, 2) Strengthening the economy, 3) Dealing with the war in Iraq, 4) Lowering gas prices, 5) Reducing the cost of health care, OR 6) Dealing with the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah (hezbollah)?

Terrorism	24	41	12	21
Economy	20	16	20	23
War in Iraq	22	15	29	22
Gas prices	9	8	11	7
Cost of health care	18	11	20	20
Conflict between Israel &	6	7	7	5
DK/NA	1	2	1	2

q16 BLANK

q17 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?

** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **

*** Party ID ***

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Aug06a
	%	%	%	%	%
Right thing	43	78	17	38	41
Stayed out	53	19	82	53	53
Don't know/No answer	4	3	1	9	6

q18 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	5	13	1	2	5
Somewhat well	32	53	14	31	37
Somewhat badly	33	26	37	34	31
Very badly	29	7	47	29	25
Don't know/No answer	1	1	1	4	2

q19 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?

Major part	32	53	16	30	35
Minor part	12	16	11	9	15
Not part	51	26	70	54	46
DK/NA	5	5	3	7	4

q20 Do you think there will or will not come a time when Israel and the Arab nations will be able to settle their differences and live in peace?

					Jul06a
Yes	26	22	31	25	31
No	70	76	64	71	64
DK/NA	4	2	5	4	5

q21-q24 BLANK

q25 Do you think the U.S. has a responsibility to try to resolve the conflict between Israel and other countries in the Middle East, or is that not the U.S.' business?

U.S. has responsibility	39	51	33	35	33
Not U.S. business	56	46	63	59	58
Don't know/No answer	5	3	4	6	9

q26 Over the last couple of years, do you think the Bush administration has focused too much on the war in Iraq and not enough on terrorists elsewhere in the world, or focused too much on terrorists elsewhere in the world and not enough on the war in Iraq, or has the balance been about right?

					Aug06a
Too much on Iraq	46	32	57	48	41
Too much on terrorists	5	3	8	3	3
Balance about right	42	60	29	38	48
DK/NA	7	5	6	11	8

q27-q96 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

q97 Do you personally use a computer either at home, work, or school to connect to the Internet or an online service like AOL?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **			
	*** Party ID ***			
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Yes	78	84	71	80
No	22	16	29	20
DK/NA	0	0	0	0

q98 How often do you visit BLOG websites on the internet -- frequently, occasionally, rarely or never?

	** THOSE WITH INTERNET SERVICE **			
Frequently	13	16	12	11
Occasionally	12	13	11	11
Rarely	22	20	25	21
Never	51	50	50	52
DK/NA	2	1	2	5

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	1206	
Total Republicans	357	367
Total Democrats	419	419
Total Independents	430	420
Total Men	506	579
Total Women	700	627