

**ABC NEWS/WASHINGTON POST POLL: BUSH ADDRESS**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Thursday, Sept. 20, 2001**

## **2-1 Backing for War on Terrorism; Inaction Seen as the Greater Peril**

George W. Bush tonight won 2-1 support for his declared war on terrorism, with the public overwhelmingly seeing inaction as the nation's greater peril.

Eight in 10 Americans who saw or heard Bush's address to Congress said it increased their confidence in the nation's ability to handle the crisis. Approval of his work on the U.S. response to last week's attacks held steady, at an enormous 91 percent.

Most – albeit not all – favor his specific course. Sixty-three percent prefer a broad war against terrorist groups and the nations that support them, as Bush declared. Most of the rest do favor military action, but limited to those responsible for the attacks last week.

	Preferred approach:
Military action only vs those responsible	24%
Broader war against terrorism	63
No military action	6

**ACTION vs INACTION** – Support for military action stems from the threat the nation feels – and the perceived lack of an alternative. The public by 5-1 says the risk of further terrorism will be greater if the United States does not take military action, than if it does.

	Which creates a greater risk of further terrorism?
Taking military action	15%
NOT taking military action	73

More broadly, the nation continues to close ranks behind Bush's leadership. Ninety percent support military action against the groups or nations responsible for last week's attacks. And 83 percent feel that way even if it means war.

Bush's audience tonight was huge. Seventy-nine percent of Americans watched or listened to his address, one of the highest levels of viewership for a presidential address in at least the last decade.

**DURATION AND CASUALTIES** – The public seems prepared for a fairly long conflict: Nearly eight in 10 Americans think the military action to come will last for a year or more, and the majority, 57 percent, thinks it will last several years.

Expectation of a lengthy conflict is higher among people who heard Bush's address, suggesting he succeeded in driving home that point.

At the same time, there's less expectation of heavy losses to U.S. forces. Thirty-seven percent of Americans expect "large numbers" of casualties; 53 percent, "not that many."

**HOME FRONT** – On the home front, the public responds positively overall to proposed measures to combat terrorism – greater airport security, stronger law enforcement efforts and the creation of a new White House office for domestic security. About seven in 10 believe these will work to reduce the risk of another major terrorist attack; but far fewer, 33 percent, think these measures will produce "a great deal" of risk reduction.

**ECONOMY** – In a relatively positive result, despite the tumbling stock market, economic views in this poll are no worse than they were before last week's attacks. While 60 percent of Americans say the economy is in bad shape, it was 66 percent in an ABC/Post poll completed two days before the attacks. And while 57 percent think the economy is heading into a recession, it was a similar 53 percent just before the attacks.

**GROUPS** – There are some differences in views of military action between the sexes, and between political groups. Seventy-one percent of men prefer a broader war against terrorism; this declines to 56 percent of women (still a majority). And 74 percent of Republicans support a broader war, compared to 65 percent of independents and 55 percent of Democrats.

**METHODOLOGY** - This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Sept. 20, 2001, among a random national sample of 526 adults. The results have a 4.5-point error margin. Field work by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:  
<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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Here are the full results (\*=less than 0.5 percent)

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the U.S. response to last week's terrorist attacks?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opin.
9/20/01	91	5	4
9/13/01*	91	7	2
*9/13/01 "this week's"			

2. Do you support or oppose taking military action against the groups or nations responsible for the terrorist attacks?

	Support	Oppose	No opin.
9/20/01	90	6	4

9/13/01\* 93 5 2  
 9/11/01 94 3 3  
 \*9/13/01 and previous: "If the United States can identify the groups or nations responsible for today's attacks, would you support or oppose taking military action against them?"

3. (If support, Q2) What if that meant getting into a war - in that case would you support or oppose taking military action?

2/3 NET

	-----Support if war-----				No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	Oppose	opin.
9/20/01	83	71	12	10	7
9/13/01	86	71	15	11	3
9/11/01	86	NA	NA	7	4

4. (If support, Q2) Do you think the United States should limit its military action only to those groups or nations responsible for last week's attacks, or should the United States mount a broader war against terrorist groups and the nations that support them?

2/4 NET

	Limit action	Broader war	Oppose	No opin.
9/20/01	24	63	6	7

5. Just your best guess, do you think large numbers of U.S. troops will be killed and wounded in the military action to come, or not that many?

	Yes	No	No opin.
9/20/01	37	53	10

6. Again, just your best guess, do you think the U.S. military action to come will last for a few weeks, a few months, a year or so, or several years?

	Few Weeks	Few months	Year	Several years	No opin.
9/20/01	2	14	22	57	5

7. What do you think would create a greater risk of further terrorism in this country - if the United States DOES take military action against terrorists, or if the United States does NOT take military action?

	Does take action	Does not take action	No diff. (vol.)	No opin.
9/20/01	15	73	8	3

10. On another subject, would you describe the state of the nation's economy these days as excellent, good, not so good, or poor?

	----Excellent/Good-----			-----Not so good/Poor-----			No
	NET	Excellent	Good	NET	Not so good	Poor	op.
9/20/01	38	3	35	60	47	14	2
9/9/01	33	1	32	66	47	19	*
7/30/01	50	3	46	50	39	12	*
4/22/01	50	3	47	50	40	9	*
1/15/01	70	10	59	29	24	6	1
10/27/00 LV	86	24	61	14	11	3	*
10/26/00 LV	86	24	61	14	11	3	*

6/11/00	74	17	57	26	19	6	*
2/27/00	80	25	55	20	14	5	*
10/31/99	74	18	56	26	18	7	1
9/2/99	76	19	57	23	16	6	1
3/14/99	80	22	58	19	15	4	1
11/1/98	73	12	61	26	21	5	1
11/1/98 LV	78	13	65	22	19	3	*
10/13/97	61	12	49	39	27	11	*

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11. Just your best guess, do you think the economy is heading into a recession, or not?

	Yes	No	No opin.
9/20/01	57	37	6
9/13/01	58	37	5
9/9/01	53	44	4
7/30/01	52	46	2
4/22/01	45	50	5
3/25/01	58	37	5
1/15/01	55	42	3

12. Did you watch or listen to any of Bush's address to Congress tonight, or not?

	Yes	No	No opin.
9/20/01	79	21	0

13. Bush proposed measures to combat terrorism including stricter airport security and stronger law enforcement efforts, including the creation of a new White House office for domestic security. How much do you think these measures will do to reduce the risk of another major terrorist attack in this country- a great deal, a good amount, only some or just a little?

	-----Great/Good-----			---Only Some/Little---			No
	NET	Great deal	Good amount	NET	Only some	Just a little	opin.
9/20/01	69	33	36	28	22	6	3

14. (If watched, Q12) Did Bush's speech make you more confident in this country's ability to deal with this crisis, less confident, or what?

	More confident	Less confident	No diff. (vol.)	No opin.
9/20/01	80	4	14	3