

ABC NEWS "THIS WEEK" POLL: BUSH AND IRAQ – 9/14/02
EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AFTER 9 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 15, 2002

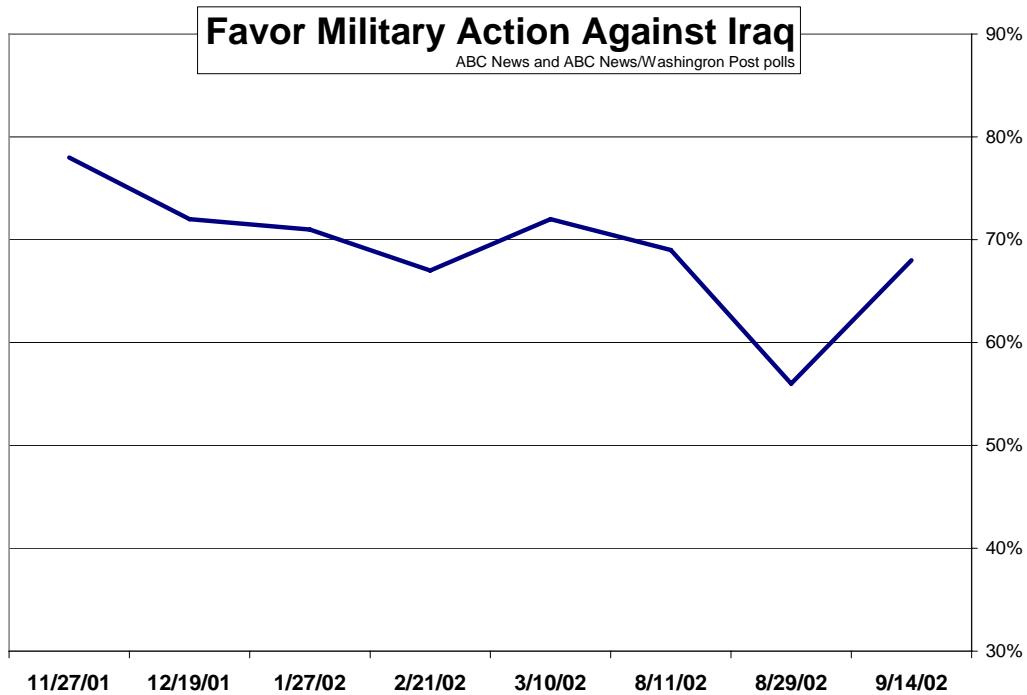
Broad Support for "Last-Chance" Plan; Many More Now Say Bush's Policy is Clear

President Bush has made broad strides in public support for his Iraq policy: Americans overwhelmingly favor his "last chance" proposal on arms inspections, and the belief that he has a clear plan to deal with Baghdad has surged.

Support for military action still falls off sharply if U.S. allies are against it. And most American oppose a high-casualty ground war, a compunction the public did not hold when it came to military action against Al Qaeda and the Taliban last fall.

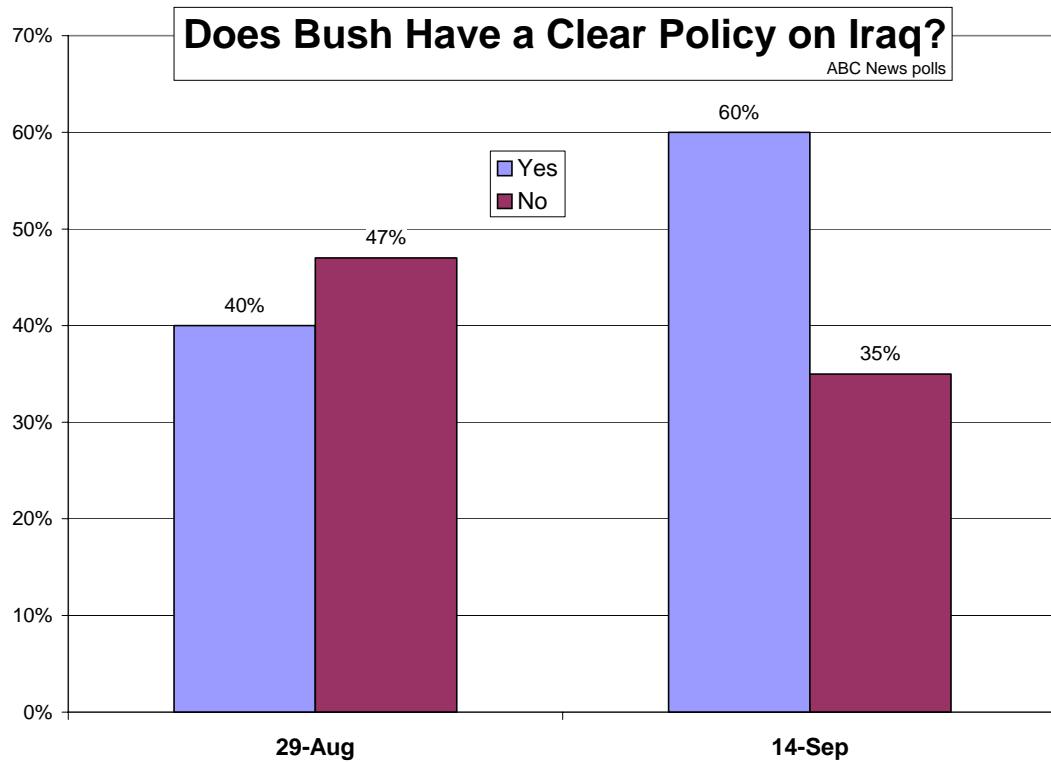
Despite those concerns, this ABC News "This Week" poll finds that Bush has gained on several fronts since an ABC News poll Aug. 29. Sixty-eight percent now support military action against Iraq. Even more, 77 percent, favor Bush's offer to have the United States hold off attacking if Iraq agrees to readmit U.N. weapons inspectors. And if Iraq interferes with those inspectors, support for military action advances to 81 percent.

Crucially, moreover, the number of Americans who say the president has a clear policy on Iraq has soared by 20 points, from 40 percent late last month to 60 percent now. Bush addressed the U.N. General Assembly on Iraq last Thursday.



Approval of Bush's overall handling of the situation has gained 13 points, to 65 percent; many of those who'd been undecided seem to have come down on his side. There's been a 12-point rise in those who call it "very" important for the United States to oust Saddam Hussein, to 68 percent. And the number of Americans who say the risk of inaction is greater than the risk of military action is up by eight points, to 55 percent.

	Now	Aug. 29
Think Bush has a clear policy on Iraq	60%	40%
Approve of Bush's handling of the situation	65	52
"Very important" to oust Saddam	68	56
Support U.S. military action against Iraq	68	56
Support delaying for weapons inspections	77	na
Support attacking if inspections are blocked	81	na



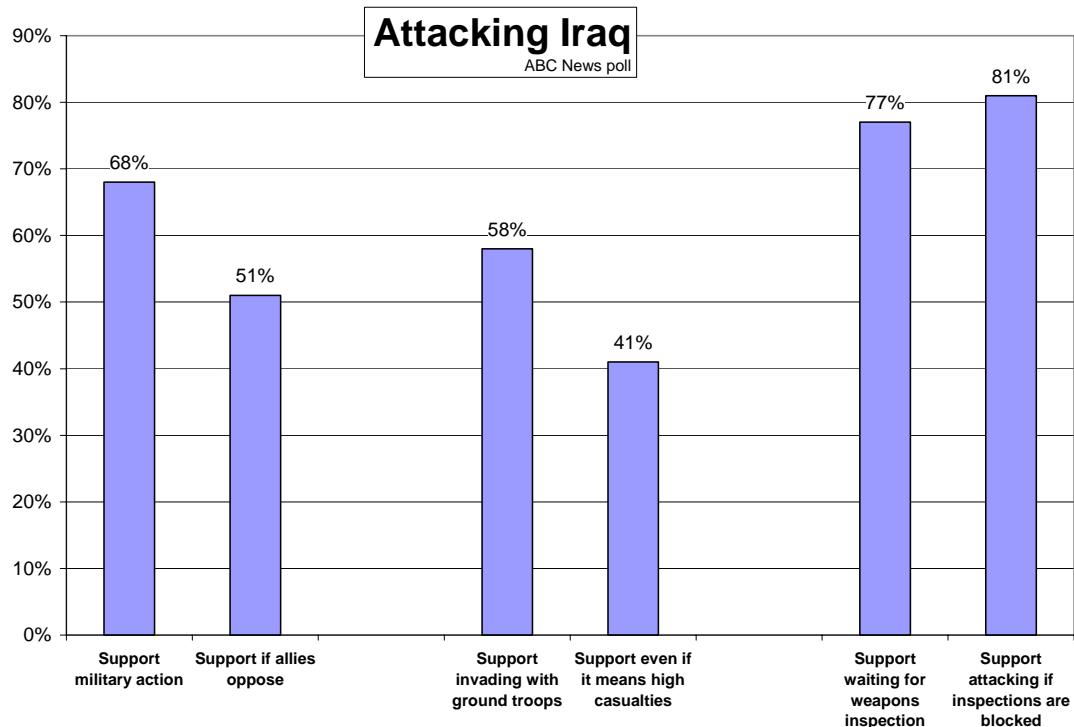
Additionally, 73 percent believe the administration is either accurately describing the threat the United States faces from Iraq (45 percent) or – even with the vivid language used – understating it (28 percent). Only about a quarter think the threat is overstated.

FALL OFF – While 68 percent now support the general proposal of U.S. military action against Iraq to oust Saddam, this falls off sharply, to 51 percent, if U.S. allies are opposed. That's more support for unilateral action than late last month, but still far short of broadly held support.

Fifty-four percent say Bush has done enough to win the support of other countries, but 41 percent think not. And half the public says Bush should present more evidence showing why the United States should use military force to overthrow Saddam's regime.

Support for using U.S. ground troops to invade Iraq is 10 points lower than support for attacking in general, at 58 percent. And this declines, to 41 percent, if it means a high-casualty ground war.

Public tolerance for casualties is premised on the level of perceived threat; far more Americans (two-thirds) expressed willingness to accept high casualties last fall, on the question of military action against groups or nations responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks.



THREAT and CLARITY – A look at subgroups shows the extent to which a sense of clear policy, a sense of threat and, secondarily, allied support all underpin support for military action.

Support for attacking Iraq to oust Saddam is 83 percent among those who think Bush has a clear policy, compared to 44 percent of those who think not. And it's 85 percent among those who think Bush is accurately describing the threat, compared to 28 percent among those who think the threat is overstated.

Similarly, support for attacking is 83 percent among those call it "very important" to oust Saddam. It's 89 percent among those who think inaction is the bigger risk. And it's 79

percent among those who think Bush has done enough to win allied support, compared to 54 percent of those who think not.

			Support for:	
	Attacking	Attacking, w/out allied support	Invasive with ground troops	Invasive, if high casualties
All	68%	51	58	41
Bush policy:				
Clear	83	66	73	54
Not clear	44	27	33	21
Threat is:				
Accurate	85	65	72	52
Understated	76	59	63	44
Overstated	28	16	25	16
Ousting Saddam:				
Very important	83	67	72	52
Somewhat impt.	46	22	34	20
Greater risk:				
Action	39	23	33	21
Inaction	89	70	74	54
Done enough to win allied support:				
Yes	79	62	70	53
No	54	36	43	28

TREND – Movement in Bush's direction on the basic question of attacking Iraq took place before his U.N. speech. Support for military action fell from 69 percent in an Aug. 11 poll to 56 percent on Aug. 29, then rebounded to 64 percent in a Washington Post poll completed Sept. 6. Again, it's 68 percent in this poll.

Others have tracked a similar course. A Gallup poll question, which specifies the use of ground troops, showed support slipping from 61 percent in June to 53 percent Aug. 21, then recovering to 58 percent Sept. 4.

GROUPS – It's Democrats and independents who've been moving on the issue; support for attacking Iraq fell in these groups in late August, and rebounded here. Views have held steadier among Republicans, among whom Bush enjoys enormous approval ratings.

Sizable majorities of men and women alike support military action – 72 percent of men, and 65 percent of women. Support for a high-casualty ground war is much lower in both groups – 46 percent of men, 36 percent of women.

There are differences between racial groups: Seventy-one percent of whites favor military action; that declines to 56 percent of nonwhites. And 69 percent of whites approve of Bush's handling of the situation; this falls among nonwhites to 47 percent.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Sept. 12-14, 2002, among a random national sample of 760 adults. The results have a 3.5-point error margin. Fieldwork 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/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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Full results follow. *=less than 0.5 percent.

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation with Iraq and Saddam Hussein?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
9/14/02	65	31	4
8/29/02	52	36	12

2. Would you favor or oppose having U.S. forces take military action against Iraq to force Saddam Hussein from power?

	Favor	Oppose	No opin.
9/14/02	68	29	3
8/29/02	56	34	10
8/11/02	69	22	9
3/10/02	72	24	4
2/21/02*	67	30	4
1/27/02	71	24	4
12/19/01	72	24	5
11/27/01	78	17	6
10/11/94**	72	23	5
1/15/93***	82	15	3
8/21/92 RV	65	30	5
2/9/92	62	35	3
4/22/91	51	43	6
4/5/91	54	37	9
3/15/91	57	38	5

*Strongly/somewhat follow asked

**10/11/94 and previous: Gallup

***1/15/93 and previous: Would you support or oppose having U.S. forces resume military action...?

3. (IF FAVOR) What if U.S. allies opposed such military action - in that case would you favor or oppose having U.S. forces take military action against Iraq?

	Favor	Oppose	No opin.
9/14/02	75	22	3
8/29/02	69	24	6
8/11/02	80	17	4
3/10/02	77	21	3

2/3 NET. Would you favor or oppose having U.S. forces take military action against Iraq to force Saddam Hussein from power? (IF FAVOR) What if U.S. allies opposed such military action - in that case would you favor or oppose having U.S. forces take military action against Iraq?

	Favor		If allies oppose		Oppose	No op.
	NET	Favor	Oppose	Don't know		
9/14/02	68	51	15	2	29	3
8/29/02	56	39	14	4	34	10

8/11/02	69	54	11	3	22	9
3/10/02	72	55	15	2	24	4

4. Would you support or oppose a U.S. invasion of Iraq with ground troops?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
9/14/02	58	39	3
8/11/02	57	36	8

5. (IF SUPPORT) What if that caused a significant number of U.S. military casualties - in that case would you support or oppose a U.S. invasion of Iraq with ground troops?

	Support	Oppose	No opin.
9/14/02	71	27	2
8/11/02	70	26	4

4/5 NET. Would you support or oppose a U.S. invasion of Iraq with ground troops? (IF SUPPORT) What if that caused a significant number of U.S. military casualties - in that case would you support or oppose a U.S. invasion of Iraq with ground troops?

	-----Support-----			----If significant casualties----		
	NET	Support	Oppose	Don't know	Oppose	No opin.
9/14/02	58	41	15	2	39	3
8/11/02	57	40	15	2	36	8

6. If Iraq agrees to let United Nations weapons inspectors back into the country, do you think the United States should hold off on attacking Iraq, or not?

	Should hold off	Should not hold off	No opinion
9/14/02	77	21	2

7. If Iraq agrees to admit the weapons inspectors, but then interferes or does not cooperate with them, in that case would you favor or oppose having U.S. forces take military action against Iraq?

	Favor	Oppose	No opin.
9/14/02	81	17	2

8. How important do you think it is for the United States to force Saddam Hussein from power -- very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?

	-----Important-----		-----Not important-----			No opinion	
	NET	Very	Smwht.	NET	Not too	At all	
9/14/02	91	68	23	8	6	3	1
8/29/02	85	56	30	12	7	5	3

9. Do you think George W. Bush has a clear policy on Iraq, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
9/14/02	60	35	6
8/29/02	40	47	13
8/11/02	45	42	14

Compare to: Do you think Clinton has a clear policy on Iraq, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
2/18/98	55	38	7
2/17/98	59	35	6

10. Do you think the Bush administration has been overstating the level of threat the United States faces from Iraq, understating it, or accurately describing it?

	Overstating	Understating	Accurately describing it	No op.
9/14/02	23	28	45	4

Compare to: Do you think the Bush administration has been overstating the level of threat the country faces from terrorism, understating it, or accurately describing it?

	Overstating	Understating	Accurately describing it	No op.
9/8/02	15	33	50	3
6/16/02	12	39	45	4

11. Do you think the Bush Administration has or has not done enough to try to win support from other countries for taking military action against Iraq?

	Has done enough	Has not done enough	No opinion
9/14/02	54	41	5

12. Do you think Bush has presented enough evidence showing why the United States should use military force to remove Saddam Hussein from power, or would you like him to present more evidence?

	Has enough evidence	Would like more	No opinion
9/14/02	48	50	2

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

	Does take action	Does not take action	No diff. (vol.)	No opin.
9/14/02	36	55	6	3
8/29/02	40	47	8	5

Compare to: 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

END