

Most Still Support NATO Raids on Serbia

A majority of Americans continued to support NATO's air strikes against Serbia during the weekend, amid reports of Serbian reprisals against civilians in Kosovo and the United States' loss of an F-117A Stealth fighter jet.

Reports of Serbian reprisals clearly are a cause for concern, however. A plurality of Americans, 48 percent, say they'd regard the air strikes as unsuccessful if the killing of civilians in Kosovo continues, even if Serbia's military strength were seriously damaged.

If Serbia's military is seriously damaged
but killings of civilians continue,
NATO air raids will be:
Successful 33%
Unsuccessful 48

STRIKES – As things stand, 55 percent support the air strikes in an ABC News/Washington Post poll completed Sunday. While that's down slightly from 60 percent in an ABC News poll Friday night, opposition did not rise appreciably.

	Support the air strikes?		
	3/28	3/26	3/23
Yes	55%	60	47
No	33	31	47
No opin.	12	9	6

VITAL – At the same time, this poll finds a decrease in the view that U.S. vital interests are not at stake in Kosovo. For the first time in ABC and ABC/Post polls, less than half the public expresses that opinion – down from 57 percent two weeks ago. Americans now divide about evenly on the question.

	Are U.S. vital interests at stake in Kosovo?			
	3/28	3/26	3/23	3/14
Yes	42%	39	41	27
No	44	51	54	57
No opin.	14	10	5	15

CLINTON – There's no change in Bill Clinton's lukewarm ratings on the matter: Fifty-one percent approve of the way he's handling the situation, same as Friday. Thirty-one percent disapprove.

THE SEXES – There are sharp differences between the sexes. Men support the air strikes by a 2-1 margin, 62 percent to 31 percent. But support declines to half of women (49 percent); 35 percent oppose the action, and women are twice as likely as men to withhold judgment on the issue.

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone March 26-28, 1999, among a random national sample of 895 adults. The results have a 3.5-point error margin. Field work by ICR Survey Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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

Full results follow:

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling the situation in Kosovo?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
3/28/99	51	31	17
3/26/99	51	32	17
3/23/99	48	39	12

2. Do you think America's vital interests are at stake in the situation involving Kosovo, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
3/28/99	42	44	14
3/26/99	39	51	10
3/23/99	41	54	5
3/14/99	27	57	15

3. Do you support or oppose the United States and its European allies conducting air strikes against Serbia?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
3/28/99	55	33	12
3/26/99	60	31	9

Compare To: The United States and its European allies have said they may bomb military targets in Serbia because it won't agree to a peace plan for Kosovo. If Serbia does not agree to the peace plan, should the United States participate in bombing Serbia, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
3/23/99	47	47	6

Compare To: The United States has said it may bomb Serbia unless Serbia agrees to a peace plan for Kosovo. If Serbia does not agree to the peace plan, should the United States bomb Serbia or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
3/14/99	26	62	12

4. Would you consider the air strikes against Serbia to be successful or unsuccessful if the bombing seriously damages Serbia's military strength but the killing of civilians in Kosovo continues?

	Successful	Unsuccessful	Neither/ Both (vol.)	No opinion
3/28/99	33	48	5	13