

## **Support Rises for Air War; Majority Backs Ground Troops**

Public support for allied military action against Serbia has jumped in the wake of the Kosovo refugee crisis, with more than two-thirds of Americans now supporting air strikes – and 55 percent in favor of sending ground troops if the air war fails to stop the fighting.

The public's dander clearly is up: Sixty-eight percent in a new ABC News/Washington Post poll now support the NATO air strikes against Serbia, up from 55 percent last week. Most of the new supporters come from the ranks of the undecided.

Moreover, if the allied bombing does not stop Serbia's military action in Kosovo, 55 percent say they'd support "sending in ground troops to try to end the conflict." Polls earlier in the conflict found majority opposition to committing ground troops.

	Air strikes		Ground troops
	4/5	3/30	4/5
Support	68%	55	55
Oppose	29	33	41
No opinion	3	11	4

Sixty-eight percent think air power will not be enough to bring peace to Kosovo, and ground troops will be needed.

Other polls this past weekend also found rising support for allied military action, perhaps resulting from public sympathy for the humanitarian crisis created by the Serbs' reported "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo.

**FOCUS** - This poll indicates that public attention is now sharply focused on the events in Kosovo. Seventy percent of Americans say they have a good idea what the United States and its allies are trying to accomplish – and people who express this understanding are far more likely to support air strikes and ground troops alike.

**PATIENCE** – Also, most Americans express patience with the apparently slow pace of NATO's progress. Most, 57 percent, say the air war is going about as they thought it would. Only three percent say the conflict is going better than they expected for the United States and its allies; a third – 34 percent – says it's going worse.

That's no Gulf War, which as many as 50 percent said was going better than expected. But neither does it suggest broad public anxiety about NATO's performance to date.

	Conflict is going...		
	Worse than expected	Better than expected	About as expected
4/5/99	34%	3	57
1/18/91*	4	50	43

\*Gulf War peak; full trend below

**PARTIES** – The NATO air strikes attract bipartisan support, though it is greater among Democrats (75 percent in favor) than Republicans (62 percent). That’s up by 13 points among Democrats, and 10 among Republicans, from an ABC/Post Poll last week.

Democrats support sending ground troops by 2-1, but on this question Republicans divide about evenly, as do independents.

**THE SEXES** - Most men and women alike support the air strikes – 74 percent of men, up 11 points from last week, and 62 percent of women, up 14 points. Sixty-one percent of men support sending ground troops, as do 49 percent of women.

**PURPOSE** – As noted above, understanding NATO’s goals is key in supporting its actions. Among people who say they have a good idea what the allies are trying to do, 77 percent support the air strikes and 62 percent support sending ground troops. These numbers fall to 49 and 38 percent, respectively, among people who don’t understand what NATO is trying to accomplish.

**METHODOLOGY** – This poll was conducted by telephone April 5, 1999, among a random national sample of 509 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://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

Results follow:

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

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
4/5/99	68	29	3
3/30/99	55	33	11
3/28/99	55	33	12
3/26/99	60	31	9
Compare To:			
3/23/99*	47	47	6
3/14/99**	26	62	12

\*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?

\*\*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?

4. So far, would you say the conflict in Serbia is going better than you expected for the United States and its allies, worse than expected, or is it going about the way you expected?

	Better than expected	Worse than expected	About as expected	No opin.
4/5/99	3	34	57	6
Compare to Gulf War:				
2/24/91	49	5	43	3
2/5/91	27	13	55	4
1/27/91	28	15	54	2
1/20/91	39	7	50	4
1/18/91	50	4	45	2

5. Do you feel you have a good understanding of what America and its allies are attempting to accomplish by attacking Serbia, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
4/5/99	70	29	2

6. Suppose the bombing does NOT stop Serbia's military action in Kosovo. Would you support or oppose the United States and its European allies sending in ground troops to try to end the conflict in Kosovo? (GET ANSWER, THEN ASK:) Would you support/oppose this strongly or somewhat?

	-----Support-----			-----Oppose-----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	opin.
4/5/99	55	31	24	41	29	12	4

7. Just your best guess, do you think air strikes WILL be enough to stop Serbia from continuing its attacks in Kosovo, or do you think ground troops will have to be sent in to try to end the conflict?

	Air strikes enough	Need ground troops	No opinion
4/5/99	25	68	7

\*\*\*END\*\*\*