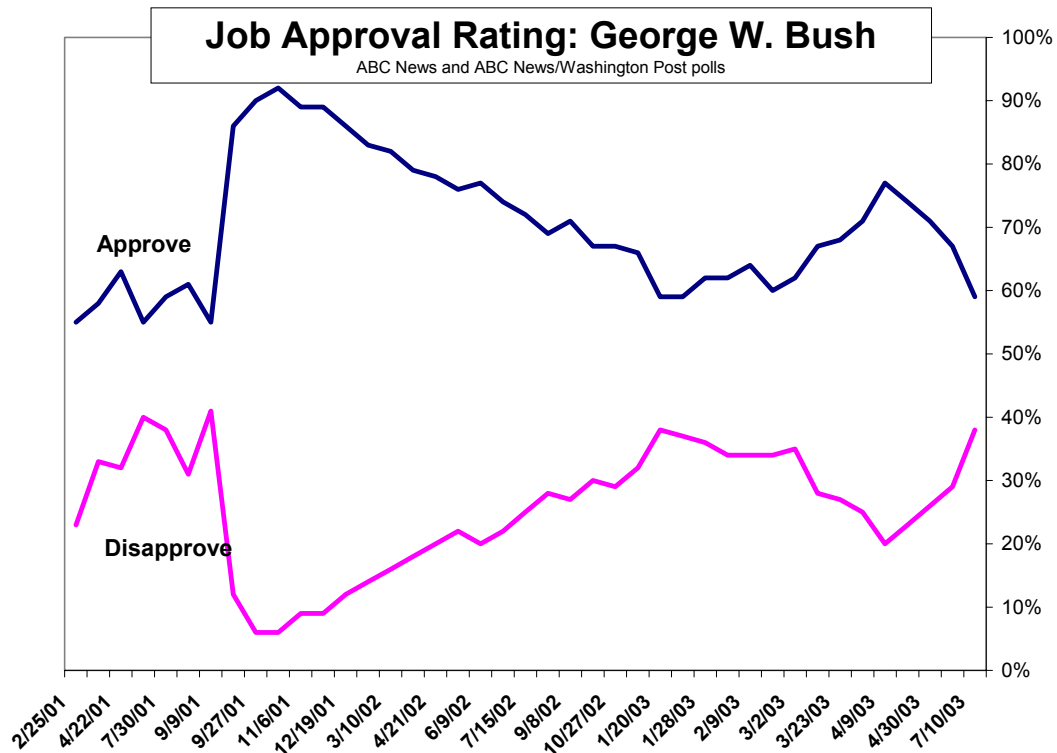


## **Bush Faces Rising Public Doubts On Credibility and Casualties Alike**

Americans are expressing rising dismay with U.S. casualties in Iraq, declining confidence in the Bush administration – and growing doubt whether the war was worth fighting.

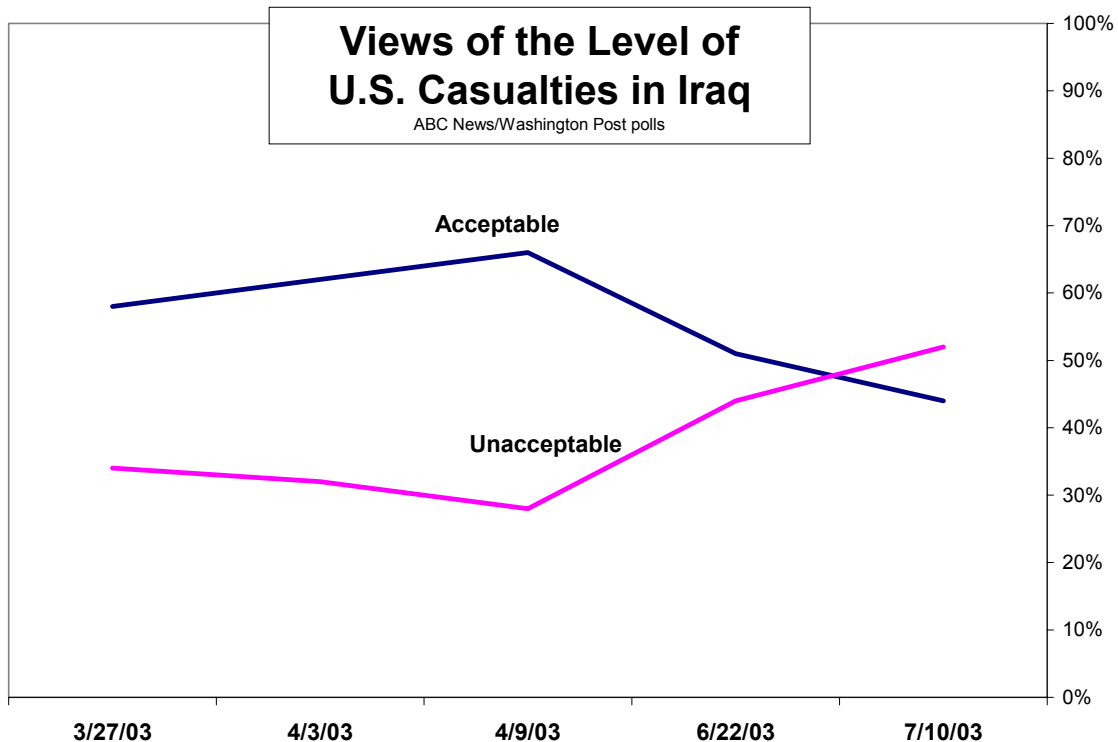
The administration faces trouble on credibility and casualties alike. Half the public thinks it “intentionally exaggerated” evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. And 52 percent, a majority for the first time, call the level of U.S. casualties “unacceptable.”

While 57 percent still say the war was worth fighting, that’s fallen from 70 percent as the main fighting wound down at the end of April. Eighty percent now express concern about getting “bogged down in a long and costly peacekeeping mission”; 43 percent are “very concerned” about that outcome, up 11 points since last month.



**BUSH** – Bush’s own ratings have suffered in tandem with these concerns. His approval rating for handling the situation in Iraq has fallen by 17 points since the end of April, from 75 percent then to 58 percent now. His overall job approval rating is down to 59

percent, matching its lowest since Sept. 11, 2001, in ABC News/Washington Post polls. The number who “strongly” approve of his performance, 35 percent, is down 15 points since late April to a post-9/11 low.

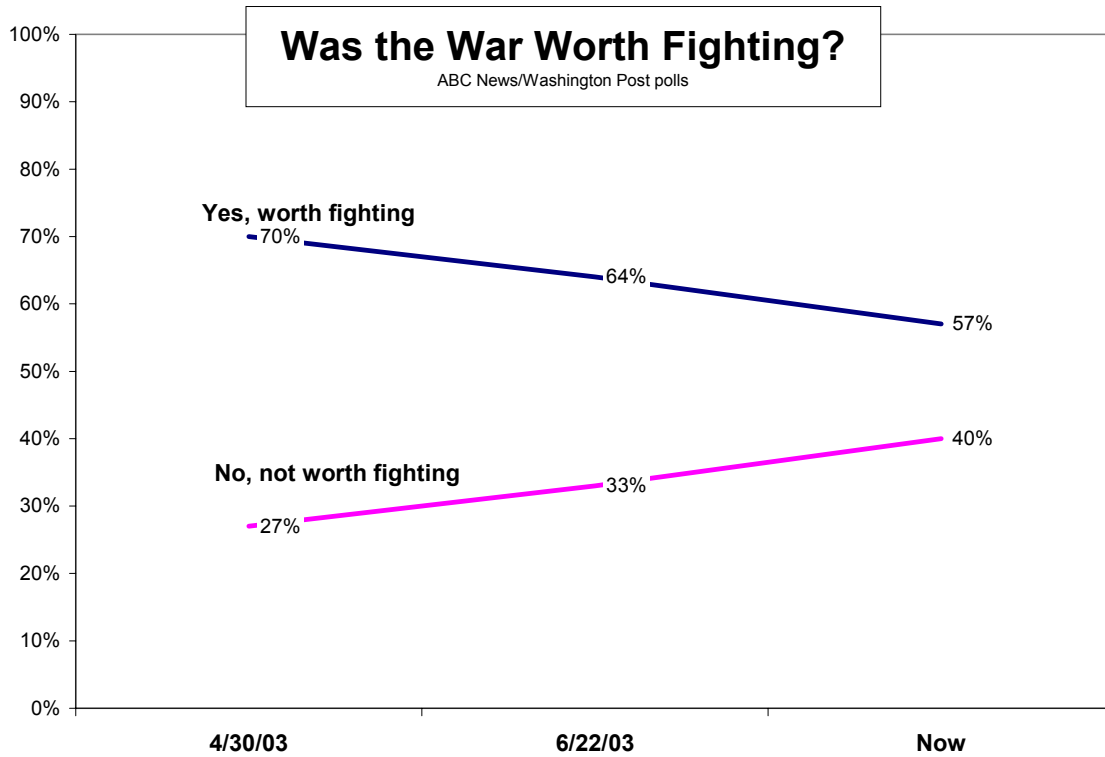


Rather than a sudden shift, most of these changes have occurred gradually over the last month, in the face of continued disorder in Iraq and disclosures about the administration’s WMD evidence. The trends don’t help Bush with an election year approaching: Most Americans have seen the Iraq war as an extension of the war on terrorism, and that effort has been the wellspring of his popularity. His ratings on other issues have been far lower; in this poll, for instance, just 47 percent approve of his work on the economy.

As ever, some of these views are highly partisan. Seventy-two percent of Democrats think the administration intentionally exaggerated WMD evidence; half of independents agree, but this drops to fewer than a quarter of Republicans. Eighty-four percent of Republicans and 59 percent of independents say the war was worth fighting; only 34 percent of Democrats agree. Sixty-four percent of Republicans say the level of casualties is acceptable; just under half of independents, and only about a quarter of Democrats, agree. And Bush’s overall job approval rating is 86 percent among Republicans and 60 percent among independents, but just 36 percent of Democrats.

Most of the recent changes, but by no means all of them, occurred among Democrats. Since April 30 Democrats have grown 16 points less likely to say the war was worth fighting, 17 points less likely to approve of Bush’s job performance overall and 22 points

less likely to approve of his work specifically on Iraq. But his approval rating on Iraq also is down by 18 points among independents, and by 10 points among Republicans.



**TROOPS vs. SADDAM** – Despite the changes, the public overwhelmingly remains committed to supporting the troops and sticking it out in Iraq. Seventy-two percent say U.S. forces should stay until civil order is restored, even at the cost of continued U.S. casualties. About as many “support the current U.S. military presence” in Iraq. (And about as many also expect “a significant number” of additional casualties to occur.)

But more Americans are setting a performance demand: Sixty-one percent now say the United States must kill or capture Saddam Hussein for the war in Iraq to be a success. That’s up from 50 percent in an ABC/Post poll in early April.

	Must U.S. kill or capture Saddam for the war to be a success?		
	7/10	4/9	3/20
Yes	61%	40	49
No	35	43	43

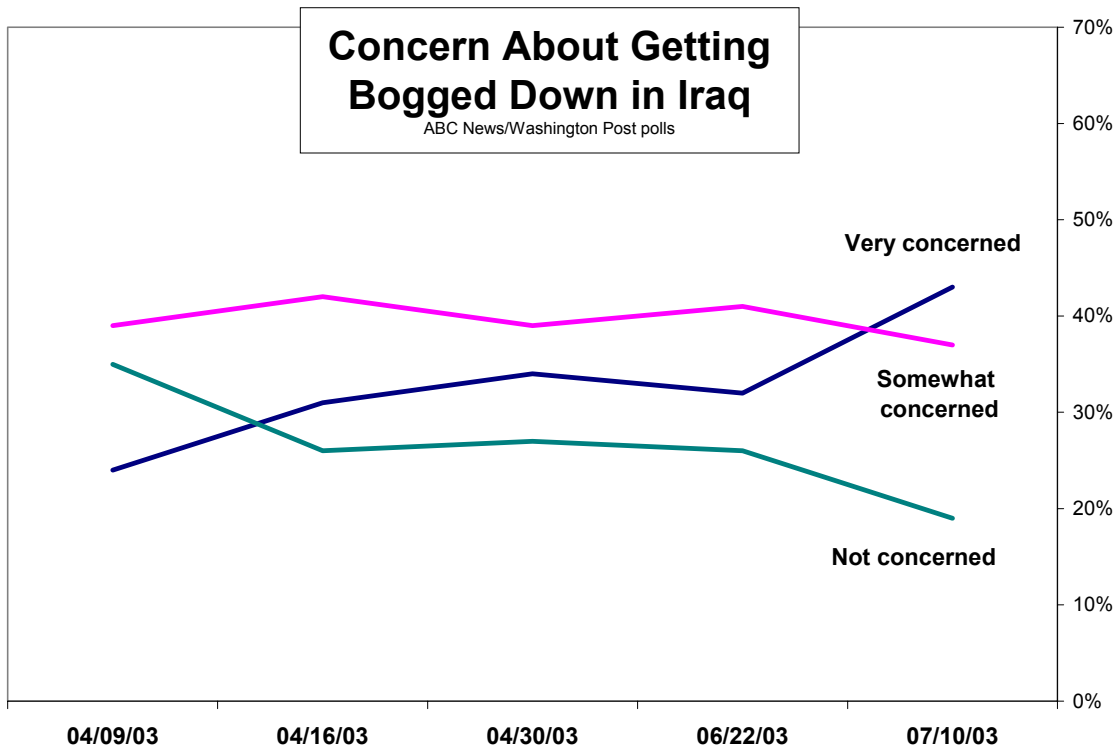
The contrast to Osama bin Laden is telling. Demand for bin Laden’s capture declined after the war in Afghanistan, apparently reflecting a sense that the mission largely had

been accomplished despite his apparent escape. Today, demand for Saddam’s capture is up, not down, signaling less satisfaction with the outcome of this war

**OUTCOME** – The public nonetheless has positive assessments of the war’s outcome. Sixty-two percent believe it did contribute to the long-term security of the United States – the fundamental justification for the conflict. And more, 72 percent, think it helped improve the lives of the Iraqi people. Fewer, though, think it accomplished a “great deal” in either regard.

There’s less consensus on whether the war accomplished another aim, contributing to long-term peace and stability in the Middle East – 50 percent think so. And some see negative outcomes: Fifty-one percent think the war caused long-term damage to U.S. relations with countries that opposed the war, and substantially more, 63 percent, think the war damaged the United States’ image in the rest of the world.

Did the war...	Yes	Yes, great deal
Contribute to long-term U.S. security?	62%	33%
Help improve Iraqis’ live?	72	41
Contribute to Mideast peace?	50	20
Damage U.S. image in rest of the world?	63	30
Cause long-term damage to relations with countries that opposed the war?	51	24



LENGTH – Most Americans don't expect a quick resolution in Iraq; asked how long they think U.S. forces will need to stay, 57 percent give answers ranging from "about a year" to a few years; an additional 13 percent say longer than that, or "as long as needed."

Whatever their answer, most, 56 percent, express comfort with the amount of time they expect it to take. But almost none say the occupation will be "too short" – and 39 percent of Americans say it'll be "too long."

LIBERIA – Finally, many people express skepticism with another, far smaller, possible military mission: Fifty-one percent say they'd oppose sending up to 2,000 U.S. troops to Liberia as part of an international force to help enforce a cease-fire in the civil war there; just 41 percent say they'd support it. Conflict clearly is the concern: Other polls have found higher support for sending U.S. troops when it's posed as a "peacekeeping" force, a considerably more benign description.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone July 9-10, 2003, among a random national sample of 1,006 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation 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/Poll\\_Vault/Poll\\_Vault.html](http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/Poll_Vault/Poll_Vault.html)

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934 or Lisa Finkel, (212) 456-6190.

Results follow:

\*= less than 0.5 percent

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

	-----Approve-----			-----Disapprove-----			No opin.
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	
7/10/03	59	35	24	38	25	13	3
6/22/03	68	45	23	29	18	11	4
4/30/03	71	50	22	26	9	17	3
4/16/03	74	52	22	23	14	9	3
4/9/03	77	58	19	20	14	6	4
4/3/03	71	54	16	25	19	7	4
3/23/03	68	NA	NA	27	NA	NA	4
3/20/03	67	NA	NA	28	NA	NA	5
3/2/03	62	38	23	35	22	13	4
2/23/03	60	NA	NA	34	NA	NA	6
2/9/03	64	42	21	34	20	14	3
2/1/03	62	41	21	34	22	13	4
1/28/03	62	43	19	36	23	13	2
1/27/03	59	39	21	37	22	15	4
1/20/03	59	36	23	38	22	16	2
12/15/02	66	37	28	32	20	12	2
11/4/02 LV	67	45	23	31	20	12	1
11/3/02 LV	67	45	22	32	20	12	1

11/2/02	LV	67	47	20	32	23	9	1
10/27/02	All	67	39	28	29	16	13	4
10/27/02	LV	68	47	21	30	16	14	3
9/26/02		67	42	25	30	18	12	3
9/8/02		71	42	28	27	15	12	3
7/28/02		69	39	31	28	14	14	3
7/15/02		72	42	31	25	13	12	2
6/17/02		74	42	32	22	13	9	4
6/9/02		77	41	36	20	11	9	3
5/19/02		76	48	28	22	13	8	3
4/21/02		78	47	31	20	10	9	2
3/28/02		79	49	30	18	10	8	3
3/10/02		82	52	30	16	7	9	2
1/27/02		83	56	27	14	7	7	3
12/19/01		86	64	22	12	6	6	2
11/27/01		89	69	21	9	5	4	1
11/6/01		89	65	24	9	4	5	2
10/9/01		92	76	16	6	3	3	1
9/27/01		90	70	20	6	3	3	4
9/13/01		86	63	23	12	6	5	2
9/9/01		55	26	29	41	22	20	3
8/12/01		61	28	33	31	17	14	8
7/30/01		59	28	30	38	22	17	3
6/3/01		55	27	28	40	22	18	6
4/22/01		63	33	30	32	16	16	5
3/25/01		58	NA	NA	33	NA	NA	8
2/25/01		55	NA	NA	23	NA	NA	22

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bush is handling (READ ITEM)?

7/10/03 - Summary Table

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
a. The situation in Iraq	58	41	2
b. The economy	47	49	4

a. The situation in Iraq

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
7/10/03	58	41	2
6/22/03	67	30	2
4/30/03	75	22	2

Compare to: The situation with Iraq and Saddam Hussein

3/27/03	69	26	5	
3/23/03	71	26	3	
3/20/03	65	29	5	
3/17/03	64	29	7	
3/9/03	55	38	8	
2/23/03	55	39	6	
2/9/03	61	37	2	
2/5/03	61	32	7	
2/1/03	61	35	3	
1/28/03	58	38	4	
1/27/03	57	40	3	
1/20/03	50	46	4	
12/15/02	58	37	5	
11/4/02	LV	56	40	4
11/3/02	LV	57	40	4
11/2/02	LV	56	41	3
10/27/02		57	38	5
9/26/02		58	39	3
9/14/02		65	31	4
8/29/02		52	36	12

b. The economy

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
7/10/03	47	49	4
4/30/03	52	45	3
2/9/03	47	49	4
2/1/03	44	52	4
1/28/03	46	49	4
1/27/03	47	47	5
1/20/03	43	53	4
1/5/03	50	43	7
12/15/02	50	46	4
11/4/02 LV	53	45	2
11/3/02 LV	52	46	2
11/2/02 LV	55	43	2
10/27/02	51	43	6
10/27/02 LV	53	44	3
9/26/02	51	47	3
9/8/02	57	40	4
7/28/02	57	39	4
7/15/02	58	38	3
4/21/02	64	33	3
1/27/02	62	34	4
12/19/01	67	27	6
11/6/01	72	23	5
9/9/01	48	48	4
7/30/01	52	45	3
6/3/01	53	41	6
4/22/01	55	38	7
3/25/01	50	42	8

3. Do you support or oppose the current U.S. military presence in Iraq? Do you support/oppose it strongly or somewhat?

	-----Support-----			-----Oppose-----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	opin.
7/10/03	74	48	26	25	15	10	1

4. All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think the war with Iraq was worth fighting, or not?

	Worth fighting	Not worth fighting	No opinion
7/10/03	57	40	3
6/22/03	64	33	3
4/30/03	70	27	4

Gulf War:

2/2/92*	66	32	2
7/28/91	67	30	3
6/2/91	70	26	3
3/4/91	86	13	1

\*2/2/92 and previous: "the Persian Gulf war"; 3/4/91: "this war"

5. Again thinking about the goals versus the costs of the war, so far in your opinion has there been an acceptable or unacceptable number of U.S. military casualties in Iraq?

	Acceptable	Unacceptable	No opinion
7/10/03	44	52	3
6/22/03	51	44	5
4/9/03	66	28	6
4/3/03	62	32	5
3/27/03	58	34	9

6. Do you think there will or will not be a significant number of additional U.S. military casualties in Iraq?

	Yes, will	No, will not	No opinion
7/10/03	74	22	4
4/3/03*	69	25	6
3/27/03**	82	13	5
3/23/03	54	40	6
3/20/03	37	55	8
3/9/03***	62	31	7
2/1/03	65	31	4

\*4/3/03 and previous: "in the war with Iraq"

\*\*3/27/03: added word "additional"

\*\*\*3/9/03 and previous: "would or would not be"

7. So far, have there been more US military casualties than you expected, fewer than you expected, or is it about what you expected?

	More	Fewer	Expected	No opinion
7/10/03	26	36	37	2
3/23/03	23	26	46	5

8. How do you feel about the possibility that the United States will get bogged down in a long and costly peacekeeping mission in Iraq - would you say you're very concerned about that, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not concerned at all?

	----Concerned-----			-----Not concerned----			Already has (vol.)	No op.
	NET	Very	Smwt.	NET	Not too	At all		
7/10/03	80	43	37	19	11	8	1	1
6/22/03	72	32	41	26	16	10	*	1
4/30/03	72	34	39	27	19	9	NA	*
4/16/03	73	31	42	26	19	7	NA	1
4/9/03	62	24	39	35	24	11	NA	3

9. Do you think (the United States has to kill or capture Saddam Hussein for the war in Iraq to be a success), or do you think (the war in Iraq can be a success with Saddam Hussein removed from power, but not killed or captured)?

	US must capture/ kill Hussein	War can succeed without Hussein	No opinion
7/10/03	61	35	4
4/9/03*	50	43	7
3/20/03	49	43	7

\*4/9/03 and previous: "if Saddam Hussein is removed from power"

Compare to: Do you think (the United States has to capture or kill Osama bin Laden for the war on terrorism to be a success), or do you think (the war on terrorism can be a success without Osama bin Laden being killed or captured)?

	US must capture/ kill bin Laden	War can succeed without bin Laden	No opin.
9/8/02	44	54	2
4/21/02	50	45	5
3/10/02	44	53	4
1/27/02	46	51	3
12/19/01	64	34	2
11/6/01	64	30	6

10. Do you think (the United States should keep its military forces in Iraq until civil order is restored there, even if that means continued U.S. military casualties); or do you think (the United States should withdraw its military



forces from Iraq in order to avoid further U.S. military casualties, even if that means civil order is not restored there)?

	Keep forces	Withdraw forces	No opinion
7/10/03	72	26	2

11. Just your best guess, about how much longer do you think the United States will need to keep U.S. military forces in Iraq?

	Few weeks	Few months	About a year	Few years	5 years or longer	Long as needed	Pull out now	Other *	No op.
7/10/03	2	17	25	32	9	4	3	*	8

12. In your opinion is that too long, too short, or about right?

	Too long	Too short	About right	No opinion
7/10/03	39	3	56	3

13. Before the war began, do you think the Bush administration did or did not intentionally exaggerate its evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, such as biological or chemical weapons?

	Did	Did not	No opinion
7/10/03	50	46	4

14. Do you think the war with Iraq did or did not (READ ITEM)? Did it (READ ITEM) a great deal or somewhat?

7/10/03 - Summary Table

	NET	-----Did----- Gt. deal	Some	Did not	No op.
a. Contribute to the long-term security of the United States?	62	33	29	35	3
b. Cause long-term damage to US relations with countries that opposed the war, such as France and Germany?	51	24	27	45	5
c. Contribute to long-term peace and stability in the Mideast?	50	20	31	45	5
d. Help to improve the lives of the Iraqi people?	72	41	31	25	3
e. Damage the United States' image in the rest of the world?	63	30	34	34	3

\*Half sample asked a,b,c. Other half asked d,e.

15. On another subject, would you support or oppose sending up to 2,000 U.S. troops to the African nation of Liberia as part of an international force to help enforce a cease-fire in the civil war there?

	Support	Oppose	No Opinion
7/10/03	41	51	8

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