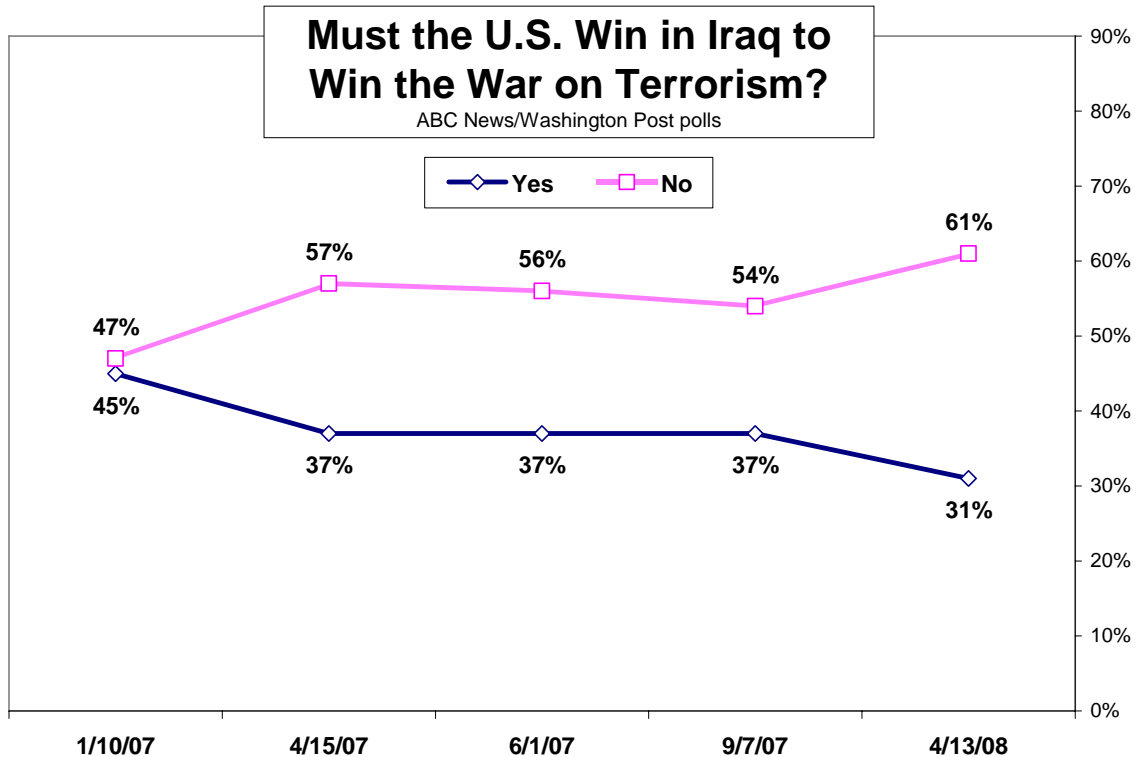


## Iraq as a “Must-Win” Now Rejected by 2-1

A record number of Americans say winning the war in Iraq is not necessary for the broader U.S. campaign against terrorism to succeed, countering John McCain’s view of the conflict and aiding his Democratic opponents’ chances in November.

Deep concern about the economy also works for the Democrats, and it’s an even more dominant issue; 90 percent say it’s in bad shape and nearly eight in 10 don’t think the government’s stimulus checks will help. But McCain pushes back strongly enough on other issues to keep the contest a close one, this ABC News/Washington Post poll finds.

All told, six in 10 Americans cite either the economy or the war as the most important issue in their vote for president, and they favor Barack Obama, by 18 points, or Hillary Clinton, by 11, over McCain. Among the remaining four in 10 who cite other issues, however, McCain holds 14- and 23-point leads over Obama and Clinton, respectively.



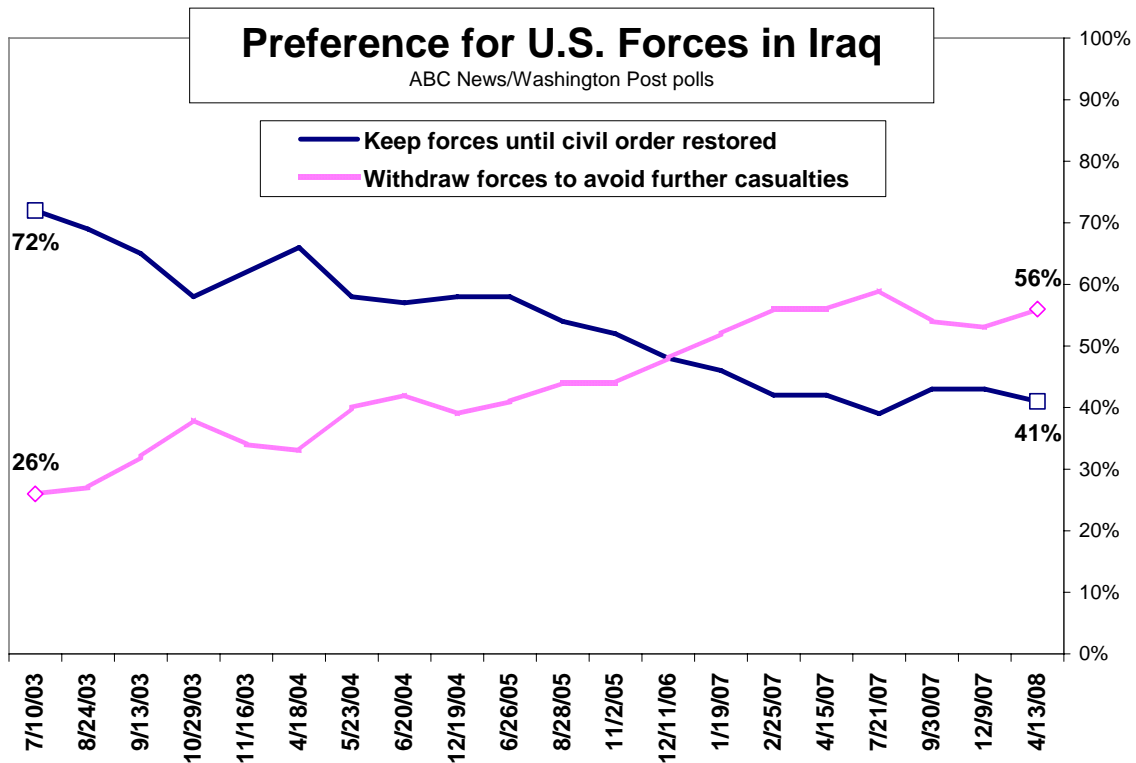
These divisions underscore the likely strategies of the candidates in the months ahead; no wonder, for example, that McCain gave a major speech on the economy this week, seeking to level the field on that issue.

IRAQ – Of the two, Iraq may be the tougher challenge for McCain: A supporter of the war, he’s argued that success there is necessary for the United States’ broader interests. But in this poll Americans by a record 2-1 margin, 61-31 percent, say winning in Iraq is not necessary to defeat terrorism more generally. That view’s evolved since January 2007, when the public divided evenly on the question.

People who see the war in Iraq as essential to countering terrorism are among McCain’s strongest supporters; he leads either Obama or Clinton in this group by more than 3-1. Among the six in 10 with the opposite view, however, he trails by 35 and 23 points, respectively.

To win war on terror	Vote Preference	
	McCain-Clinton	McCain-Obama
U.S. must win in Iraq	73-21%	72-22%
Can succeed without Iraq	35-58	29-64

That perhaps could turn if basic views of the war change. But they’ve seemed fixed in cement for more than a year: In this poll 64 percent of Americans say the war was not worth fighting, almost precisely the average in a dozen ABC/Post polls in the past 14 months. It been a majority steadily for nearly three and a half years, and opposition is more intense, with strong opponents of the war outnumbering strong supporters by 2-1.

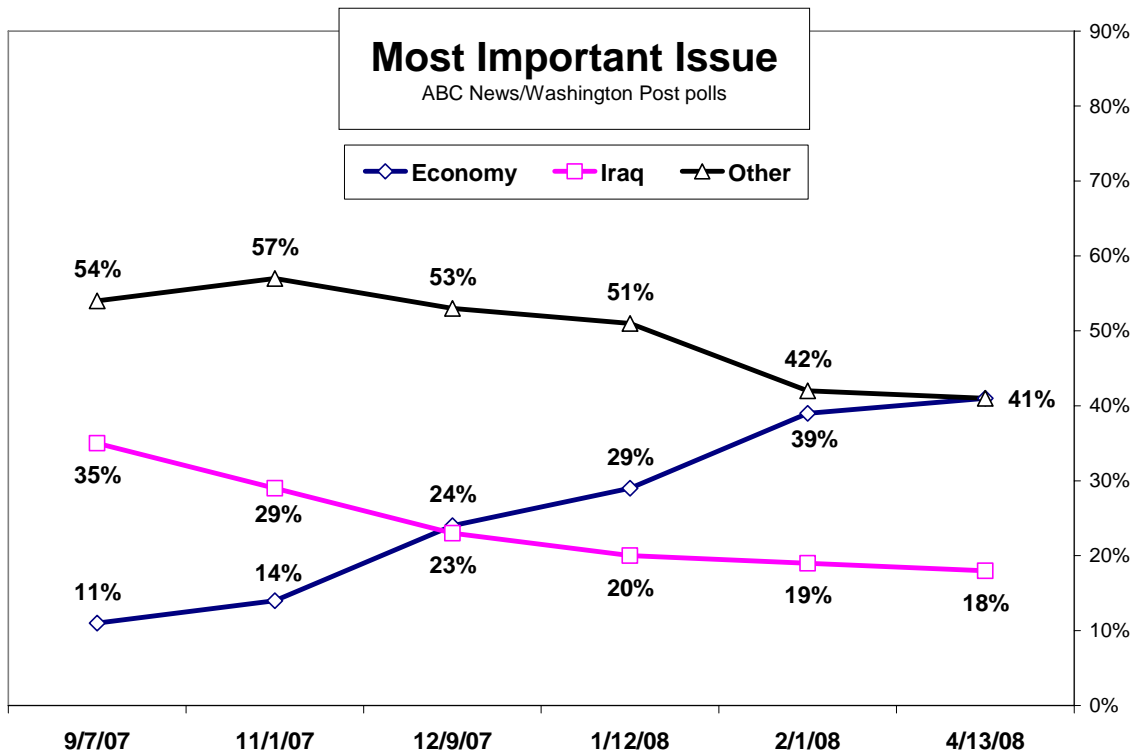


Despite successes of the surge in U.S. forces, moreover, 57 percent now say the United States is not making significant progress restoring civil order in Iraq, up 6 points from last month. And 56 percent say the United States should withdraw even if civil order is not restored, a number that tipped to a majority in January 2007 and has stayed there since. In spring 2004, by contrast, the public by 2-1 opposed withdrawing in the absence of civil order.

**IMPORTANCE** – Asked, in an open-ended question, the most important issue in their vote, 41 percent of Americans say the economy, 18 percent the Iraq war, with the remaining four in 10 dispersed among a range of answers. That marks dramatic growth in concern about the economy, and a concomitant decline for Iraq, since last fall.

As noted, Obama and Clinton both lead McCain among voters focused on the economy or the war; McCain leads among others.

Most important issue	Vote Preference	
	McCain-Clinton	McCain-Obama
Economy	42-51%	39-53%
War in Iraq	39-55	34-61
All other mentions	58-35	53-39



These views are driven to a large extent by partisanship: Democrats (and Democratic-leaning independents) are much more likely than Republicans to pick either the economy

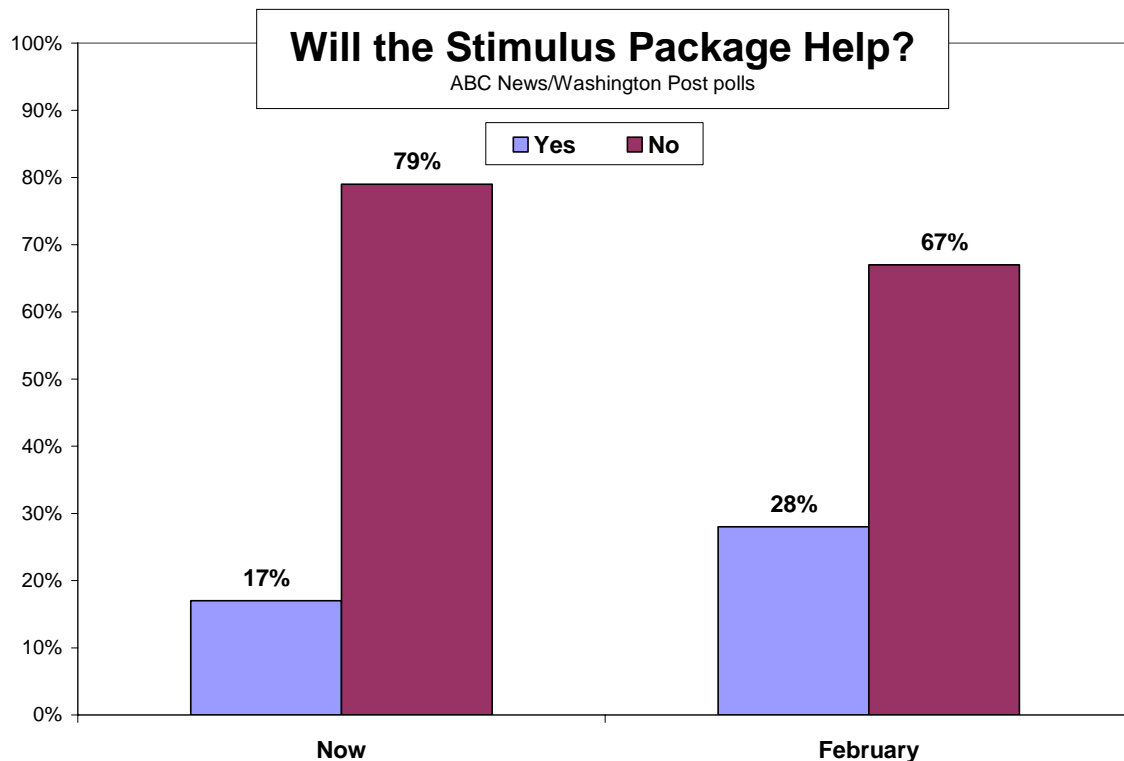
or the war as their top issue; and partisan self-identification as usual is the single best predictor of vote preference.

Even without naming specific candidates, Americans by 55-34 percent say a Democratic president would do better than a Republican handling the economy, and by a similar 52-35 percent margin people pick a Democrat to better handle the situation in Iraq.

**ECONOMY** – The bleak economic ratings are no surprise. The weekly ABC News Consumer Confidence Index hit a 14-year low on Tuesday; 73 percent of Americans say the economy’s getting worse, the most since late 1990.

The government’s forthcoming economic stimulus – rebate checks and tax breaks for businesses – may be too little, too late; the number of Americans who don’t think it’ll help avoid or ease a recession has grown from 67 percent in February to 79 percent now. Only 17 percent now think the stimulus will help, down from 28 percent.

Indeed the intended stimulating effect of the rebate checks is hardly a slam dunk: Just a quarter of Americans say they’ll spend the money; most instead plan on socking it into savings (32 percent) or using it to pay existing bills (31 percent). These intentions haven’t changed since February.

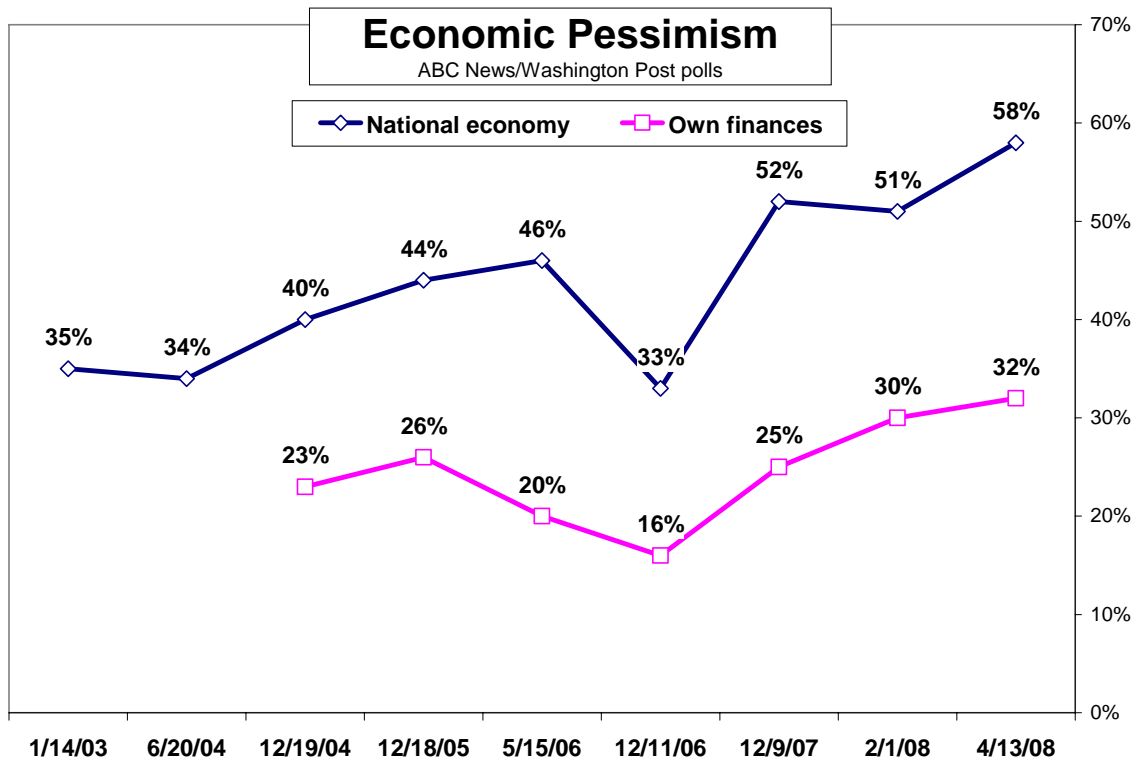


**GAS** – One of the most tangible economic complaints is the price of gasoline. Two-thirds of Americans say it’s causing them financial hardship, a scant 3 points from the record high in 2006. And 38 percent say it’s a serious hardship.

The pain hits lower-income Americans hardest. In poor families, with less than \$20,000 in annual income, 66 percent report serious hardship as a result of rising gas prices. In working class families, with incomes from \$20,000 to \$50,000, it's 44 percent. That eases to 35 percent in middle class families, 25 percent in the upper middle, and just 15 percent of those at the top end, with more than \$100,000 in household income.

Republicans, who tend to be better off, are much less likely to report serious financial hardship (28 percent, vs. four in 10 Democrats and independents alike). Beyond income groups, serious hardship peaks among African Americans, less educated adults and unmarried women – all more Democratic than Republican populations.

**THE NEXT YEAR** – There is increasing pessimism about the national economy in the coming year, but a reserve of financial optimism remains at the individual level. Nearly six in 10 Americans are pessimistic about the state of the national economy in the next 12 months, the most in polls since 2003 and up 7 points from February.



Many fewer, 32 percent, are pessimistic about their own family's financial situation, about the same as in February, but twice as high as its low in 2006. Substantial research, however, suggests that Americans are more apt to vote on their view of the national economy than on the basis of their personal well-being – a sociotropic rather than purely self-interested model.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone April 10-13, 2008, among a random national sample of 1,197 adults, including an oversample of African Americans for a total of 213 and an oversample of Catholics for a total of 292 (both weighted to their correct share of the national population). The results have a 3-point error margin for the full sample. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer and Peyton M. Craighill.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (\*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-2 Previously released.

3. Thinking ahead to the November presidential election, what is the single most important issue in your choice for president?

	4/13/08	2/1/08	1/12/08	12/9/07	11/1/07	9/7/07
Iraq/War in Iraq	18	19	20	23	29	35
Terrorism/National security	5	5	4	9	5	6
Economy/Jobs	41	39	29	24	14	11
Education	2	2	2	1	2	1
Environment	*	1	1	1	2	1
Health care	7	8	10	10	13	13
Ethics/Honesty/Corruption in government	4	4	5	4	4	6
Immigration/Illegal immigration	4	4	4	5	5	5
Abortion	1	1	1	1	1	1
Morals/Family values	2	2	2	3	3	2
Federal budget deficit	*	*	*	*	1	1
Housing/Mortgages	*	*	*	*	*	*
Global warming	0	*	*	*	*	*
Social Security	*	*	1	1	2	1
Foreign policy	1	1	2	1	2	1
Iran/Situation in Iran	0	0	*	0	*	0
Taxes	*	1	1	1	1	1
Guns/Gun control	*	*	*	*		
None/Nothing	*	*	*	1	*	*
Other	7	6	10	7	9	7
No opinion	5	7	7	7	8	9

4 Previously released.

5. 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? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Worth fighting -----			--- Not worth fighting ---			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
4/13/08	34	24	11	64	11	52	2
3/2/08	34	24	11	63	12	51	2
2/1/08	34	23	11	65	11	53	1
1/12/08	35	21	13	64	13	51	2
12/9/07	37	25	12	61	11	50	2
11/1/07	35	23	12	63	12	51	2
9/30/07	38	25	14	59	12	47	3
9/7/07	36	23	13	62	11	51	2
7/21/07	36	25	12	63	10	53	1
6/1/07	37	24	12	61	12	50	2
4/15/07	33	22	11	66	12	54	1
2/25/07	34	22	12	64	13	51	2
1/10/07	40	28	12	58	11	47	2
12/11/06	36	25	11	61	12	50	2
11/4/06 RV	44	33	12	53	10	44	2
10/22/06	40	28	12	57	11	47	2
10/8/06	35	25	10	63	13	50	2
9/7/06	42	29	13	56	11	45	2
8/6/06	39	29	10	59	12	47	1
6/25/06	40	25	15	58	13	45	2
5/15/06	37	24	14	62	12	50	1
4/9/06	41	30	11	58	10	48	1
3/5/06	42	29	14	57	11	46	1
1/26/06	44	32	12	55	13	42	1
1/8/06	43	30	13	55	12	43	2
12/18/05	46	33	14	52	11	42	1
11/2/05	39	25	13	60	12	48	1
8/28/05	46	33	12	53	9	44	1
6/26/05	46	33	13	53	10	43	1
6/5/05	41	29	12	58	12	46	1
4/24/05	44	31	13	54	12	42	2
3/13/05	45	34	11	53	11	42	2
1/16/05	44	32	12	55	10	45	1
12/19/04	42	31	11	56	10	47	2
10/3/04 LV	49	34	15	48	11	37	3
9/26/04 RV	46	35	12	51	8	42	3
9/8/04 RV	51	38	13	45	10	34	4
8/29/04 RV	48	34	14	50	11	39	2
7/25/04	49	36	13	48	11	37	3
6/20/04	47	32	14	52	13	39	2
5/23/04	48	35	13	50	13	37	1
5/6/04	49	NA	NA	47	NA	NA	5
4/18/04	51	"	"	47	"	"	2
3/7/04	52			44			3
2/11/04	48			50			2
1/18/04	56			41			3
12/21/03	59			39			2
12/14/03	53			42			5
11/16/03	52			44			4
10/29/03	54			44			2
10/13/03	54			44			2
9/13/03	61			37			2
9/7/03	54			42			4
8/24/03	57			37			5
8/11/03	61			35			4
7/10/03	57			40			3
6/22/03	64			33			3
4/30/03	70			27			4
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"

6. Do you think the United States is or is not making significant progress toward restoring civil order in Iraq?

	Is making significant progress	Is not making significant progress	No opinion
4/13/08	40	57	3
3/2/08	43	51	6
2/1/08	42	54	4
1/12/08	42	54	4
12/9/07	41	55	4
11/1/07	39	59	2
9/7/07	36	60	4
6/1/07	32	64	4
12/11/06	31	66	3
6/25/06	48	49	2
3/5/06	43	56	2
12/18/05	60	37	2
11/2/05	44	55	2
8/28/05	48	50	2
6/26/05	48	51	1
12/19/04	44	49	7
6/20/04	51	48	1

7. 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
4/13/08	41	56	3
12/9/07	43	53	4
9/30/07	43	54	3
7/21/07	39	59	3
4/15/07	42	56	2
2/25/07	42	56	2
1/19/07	46	52	3
12/11/06	48	48	4
11/2/05	52	44	4
8/28/05	54	44	2
6/26/05	58	41	2
12/19/04	58	39	3
6/20/04	57	42	1
5/23/04	58	40	2
4/18/04	66	33	1
11/16/03	62	34	4
10/29/03	58	38	3
9/13/03	65	32	3
8/24/03	69	27	4
7/10/03	72	26	2

8. Do you think (the United States must win the war in Iraq in order for the broader war on terrorism to be a success), or do you think (the war on terrorism can be a success without the United States winning the war in Iraq?)

US must win war in Iraq for success	Can be a success without US winning war in Iraq	No opinion
-------------------------------------	---	------------



4/13/08	31	61	8
9/7/07	37	54	9
6/1/07	37	56	7
4/15/07	37	57	6
1/10/07	45	47	8

9-29 Previously released.

30. 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	opinion
4/13/08	10	1	9	90	39	51	*
2/1/08	19	1	18	81	43	38	0
12/9/07	28	3	25	72	40	32	*
11/1/07	35	3	32	64	39	26	*
4/15/07	42	5	37	57	37	20	*
12/11/06	50	7	42	50	36	14	*
10/22/06	55	10	45	45	28	17	*
10/8/06	47	7	40	53	37	16	*
3/5/06	43	5	38	57	37	19	*
1/26/06	40	5	35	60	37	23	*
12/18/05	45	5	39	55	38	17	*
11/2/05	35	3	32	65	36	29	*
9/11/05	40	3	37	59	37	22	1
6/5/05	44	3	40	56	38	19	*
4/24/05	37	2	35	63	44	20	*
9/26/04 RV	46	3	43	53	38	15	1
8/29/04 RV	45	3	41	55	37	18	*
7/25/04	46	4	42	53	39	14	*
6/20/04	45	4	41	55	38	17	*
4/18/04	43	4	39	57	39	18	*
3/7/04	39	2	37	60	38	22	1
1/18/04	42	3	39	58	42	16	0
12/21/03	42	4	39	57	41	16	1
10/29/03	33	1	32	67	45	23	*
9/13/03	30	2	27	70	45	25	*
8/11/03	32	2	30	68	43	25	*
4/30/03	35	1	34	64	46	19	*
2/9/03	28	1	27	72	49	23	*
1/20/03	25	1	25	74	48	26	1
12/15/02	35	1	33	65	44	21	1
11/4/02 LV	28	1	27	72	55	17	1
11/3/02 LV	27	1	26	72	56	17	1
11/2/02 LV	29	1	28	71	54	17	*
9/26/02	31	2	28	69	50	19	*
7/15/02	39	3	36	61	44	17	1
2/21/02	30	1	29	69	51	18	*
1/27/02	31	1	29	69	50	19	*
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	*

See also ABC/Post CCI trend

31. Thinking about the next 12 months, would you say you feel (optimistic) or (pessimistic) about (ITEM)?

4/13/08 - Summary Table

	Optimistic	Pessimistic	No opinion
a. the state of the national economy	40	58	3
b. your own family's financial situation	65	32	3

Trend:

a. the state of the national economy

	Optimistic	Pessimistic	No opinion
4/13/08	40	58	3
2/1/08	45	51	4
12/9/07	45	52	3
12/11/06	64	33	3
5/15/06	52	46	1
12/18/05	55	44	1
12/19/04	58	40	2
6/20/04	64	34	2
1/14/03	63	35	2

b. your own family's financial situation

	Optimistic	Pessimistic	No opinion
4/13/08	65	32	3
2/1/08	67	30	3
12/9/07	72	25	3
12/11/06	82	16	2
5/15/06	79	20	1
12/18/05	73	26	1
12/19/04	75	23	2

32. Have recent price increases in gasoline caused any financial hardship for you or others in your household, or not? (IF YES) Has that been a serious hardship, or not serious?

	----- Yes -----				
	NET	Serious	Not serious	No	No opinion
4/13/08	67	38	29	32	1
5/21/07	58	27	30	42	*
4/15/07	67	36	31	33	*
7/19/06	60	29	30	39	1
5/15/06	57	31	26	43	*
4/9/06	70	44	26	30	*
9/11/05	64	34	30	36	*
8/28/05	66	36	30	34	*
8/21/05	53	26	27	47	*
4/24/05	64	34	30	36	*
3/20/05	57	29	28	43	*
5/23/04	64	37	27	36	0
4/18/04	54	31	23	46	0
4/28/02	53	20	33	47	*

4/29/01	48	17	30	52	*
6/25/00*	44	NA	NA	56	*
5/24/00	36			64	*
4/2/00	39			61	*
3/12/00	41			59	*
2/15/00	40	"	"	60	*

\*6/25 and previous by Gallup; slightly different wordings.

33. As you may know, the government is making payments to most workers of several hundred dollars and providing new tax breaks for businesses in order to stimulate the economy. Do you think this will or will not be enough to avoid or soften a recession?

	Will	Will not	No opinion
4/13/08	17	79	4
2/1/08*	28	67	5

\*"Bush and congressional leaders are planning payments"

34. If you get a federal rebate, what will you most likely do with it?

	4/13/08	2/1/08
Pay bills	31	31
Save it	32	30
Spend it	24	22
Save/use for		
education	2	3
Pay taxes	2	1
Help others/family/charities	1	1
Spend some/save some	2	1
Will not get a rebate	3	3
Other	*	2
No opinion	4	6

35. Thinking ahead to the next presidential election, do you think a (Democratic) or a (Republican) president would do a better job [ITEM]?

a. resolving the situation in Iraq

	Democratic	Republican	Depends (vol.)	No diff. (vol.)	No opinion
4/13/08	52	35	2	7	4
9/30/07	51	31	6	8	4

b. handling the economy

	Democratic	Republican	Depends (vol.)	No diff. (vol.)	No opinion
4/13/08	55	34	2	6	4

36-42 Previously released.

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