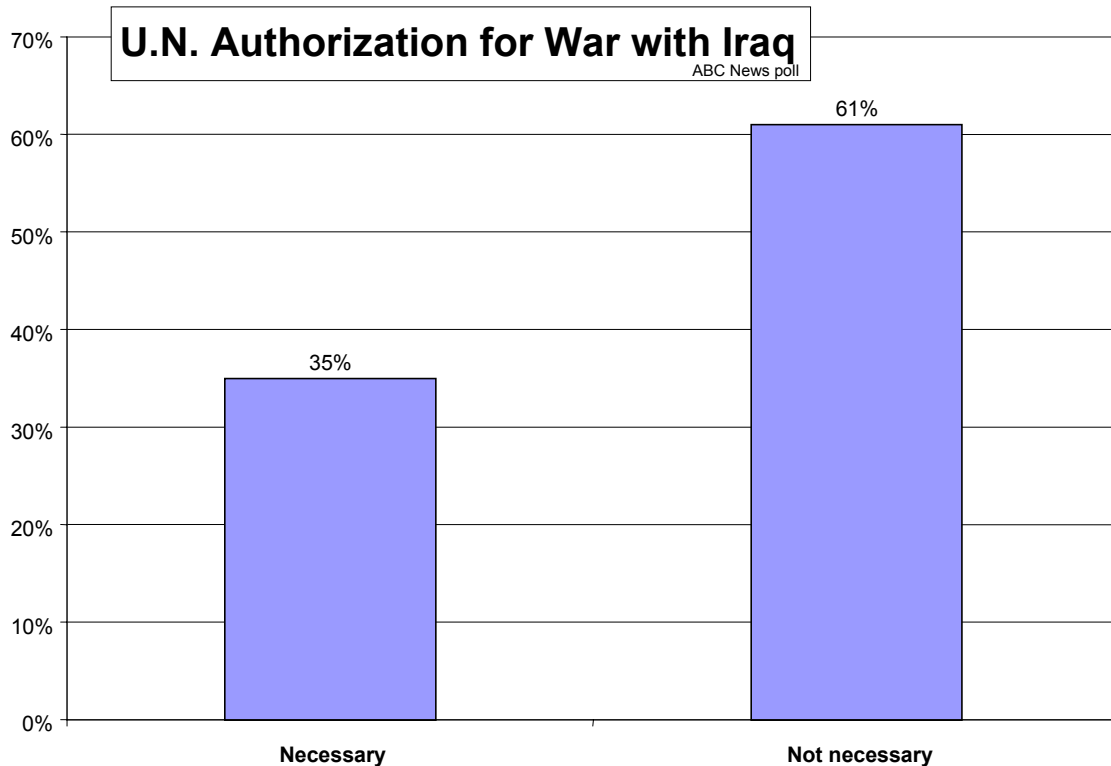


## **Support for War is Steady at Six in 10; U.N. Approval Desired, Not Necessary**

Public support for war with Iraq is holding steady at about six in 10 Americans, with the public saying by a 26-point margin that United Nations authorization is not necessary for the United States to proceed.

Fifty-five percent approve of George W. Bush's handling of the confrontation, a less-than overwhelming endorsement that may reflect his difficulties winning more international support for war, particularly at the United Nations Security Council.

But while Americans do prefer more international support, most say it's not a condition for war. Sixty-one percent in this ABC News poll say U.N. authorization isn't necessary for the United States to act. That rises to 71 percent if some U.S. allies participate. And in the final analysis 59 percent support war with Iraq, unchanged in the last week.



U.N. authorization is:	
Necessary	35%
Not necessary	61

If allies participate, U.N. authorization is	
Necessary	24
Not necessary	71

With U.S. forces poised to attack on the president's order, this poll puts the question at its most basic: "Would you support or oppose the United States going to war with Iraq?" It finds 59 percent in support, 35 percent opposed. "Strong" supporters outnumber "strong" opponents by about 2-1.

Such results have been stable; an ABC News/Washington Post poll a week ago, in a different question, found the same level of support for Bush administration policy on Iraq.

While a majority, 59 percent is well short of the 75 percent support for sending ground troops into Afghanistan in fall 2001, and the 69 percent support for attacking Iraq in January 1991, when the United Nations was aboard. It's greater, though, than prospective support for the air campaign against Serbia in 1999, 47 percent.

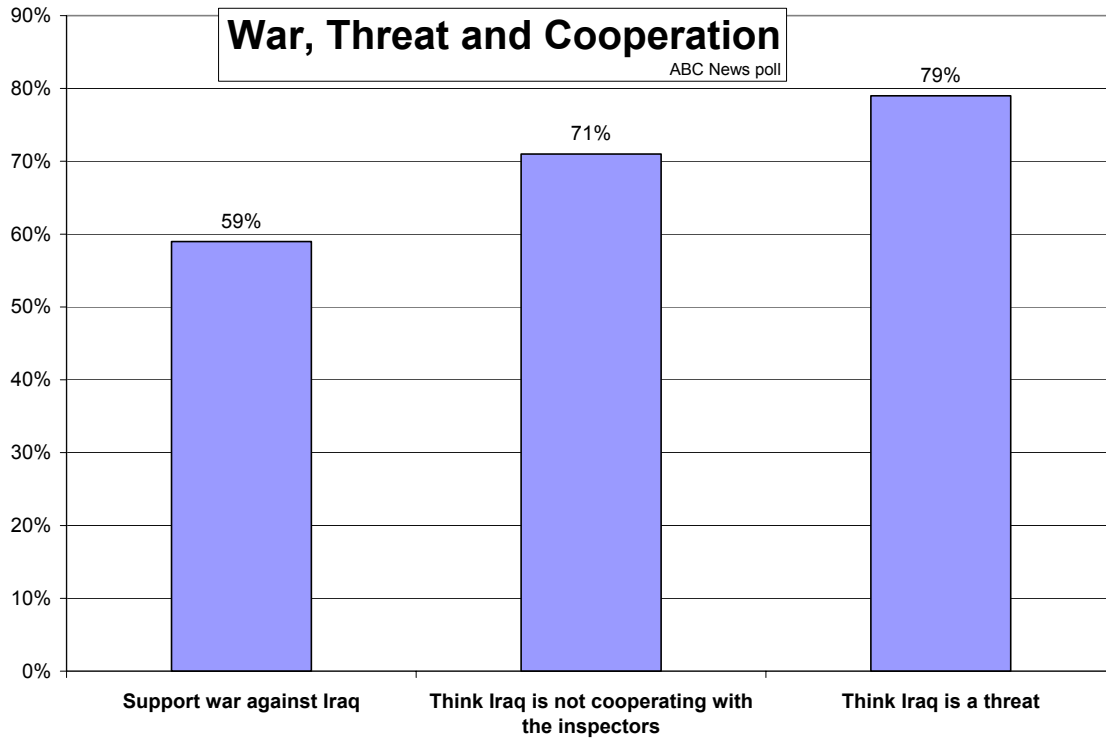
	Support	Oppose
War vs Iraq (3/9/03)	59%	35
Previous:		
Ground troops in Afghanistan (10/7/01)	75	21
War vs Iraq (1/13/91)	69	26
Air campaign vs Serbia (3/23/99)	47	47

THREAT – Prime factors in support for war include a presence of threat and an absence of alternatives. In this poll nearly eight in 10 Americans believe Iraq is a threat to the United States, and 71 percent think it's not cooperating with the U.N. inspectors there.

While international cooperation is the preference, threat reduction seems a demand. Among people who see Iraq as a threat, 68 percent support war; among those who think it's not a threat, support for war plummets to 21 percent.

Similarly, support for war is 29 points higher among those who think Iraq is not cooperating with U.N. inspectors than among those who see even partial cooperation.

	War:	
	Support	Oppose
Think Iraq is a threat (79%)	68%	26
Think it's not a threat (19%)	21	76
Think Iraq is cooperating (25%)	39	58
Think it's not cooperating (71%)	68	26



Stark differences remain among groups, particularly partisan differences: Eighty-six percent of Republicans support war, while 52 percent of Democrats oppose it. The apparent reason is that the Bush administration to some extent has asked the public to take its word. Republicans are predisposed to believe Bush; Democrats, not so.

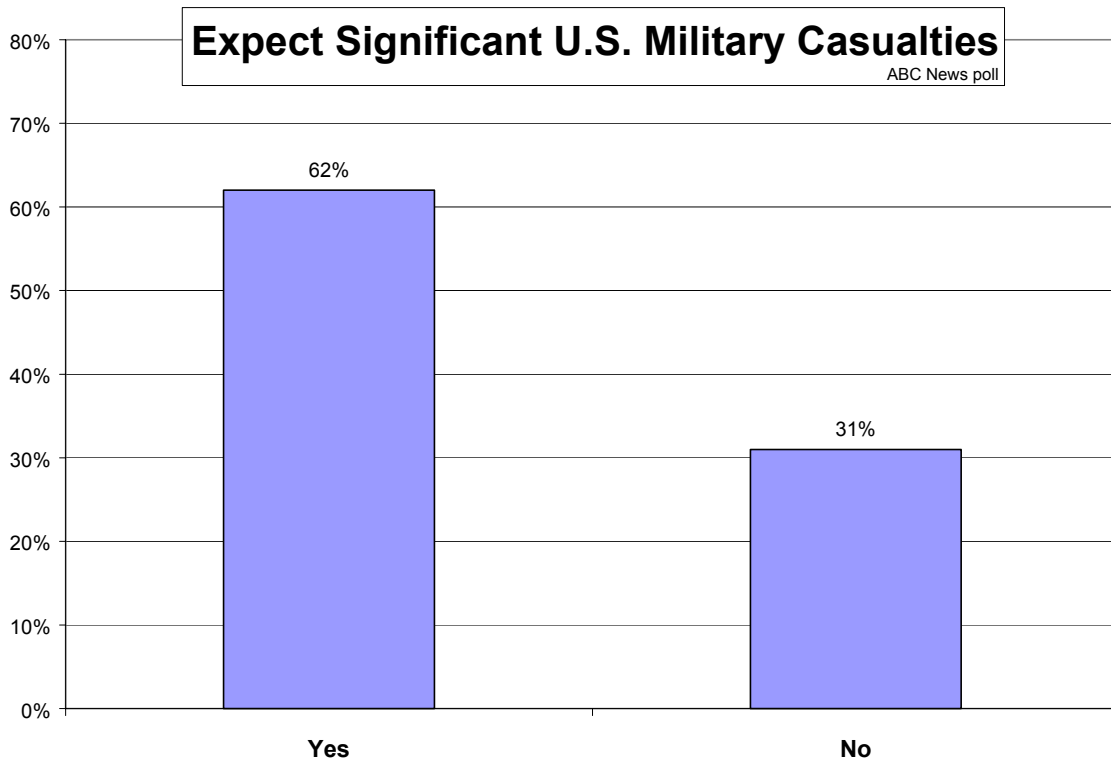
Bush attains majority support for war because his policy wins more Democrats (46 percent) than it loses Republicans (10 percent); and also because he's (fairly narrowly) persuaded more independents to support attacking Iraq than to oppose it.

	War:	
	Support	Oppose
All	59%	35
Democrats	46	52
Independents	50	41
Republicans	86	10

**LENGTH AND CASUALTIES** – Most Americans don't expect either a very short war or a low-casualty one. Fewer than a quarter think a war with Iraq would last a few weeks; a third think it would take several months and nearly four in 10 think it would last a year or more. By 2-1, most foresee a significant number of U.S. military casualties.

Support for war is highest among those who expect a short, low-casualty war. But supporters do outnumber opponents even among those who expect a long conflict or a high-casualty one.

	War:	
	Support	Oppose
Think war would last		
Few weeks (22%)	79%	19
Several months (33%)	58	36
Year or more (39%)	50	42
Expect significant U.S. military casualties?		
Yes (62%)	53	43
No (31%)	73	20



It's broadly assumed that support for war necessarily declines as casualties mount – based in part on a misreading of public opinion on the use of U.S. forces in Somalia (where most of the decline in support actually occurred before the battle of Mogadishu). What seems more critical is not the number of casualties, but the presence or lack of a persuasive rationale for sustaining them – a calculation only unfolding events can direct.

OWN WORDS – Respondents in this poll were asked, in an open-ended question, why they support or oppose war with Iraq. Among those who support war, 40 percent cited a threat – to the United States or the world in general – including a threat of terrorism. A quarter also spoke of a need to remove Saddam Hussein from power.

Among those who oppose it, top answers were a lack of justification, a need for more international support, other problems here at home, and the human cost of war.

QUESTION – This poll included a split-sample test of the basic question on war. Half of respondents were asked the question ABC News has used for months – whether they “favor or oppose having U.S. military forces take action against Iraq to force Saddam Hussein from power.” Many other news polls use similar questions.

With the situation now clearer than it was months ago – e.g., with more than 230,000 U.S. troops in place – the other half was asked a blunter version: “Would you support or oppose the United States going to war with Iraq?”

As noted, the new version found 59-35 percent support. The other found slightly higher support – 65-30 percent. And “strong” support in the new version was seven points lower, 40 percent compared to 47 percent. There are two likely reasons: The old version is somewhat less explicit (“military action” versus “war”), and it includes (for many people) a positive rationale – removing Saddam Hussein.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone March 5-9, 2003, among a random national sample of 1,032 adults. The results have a three-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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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
3/9/03	55	38	8
2/23/03	55	39	6
2/9/03	61	37	2
2/5/03 All	61	32	7
Watched Powell*	65	31	5
Didn't watch	55	35	10
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 All	57	38	5

10/27/02 LV	61	37	3
9/26/02	58	39	3
9/14/02	65	31	4
8/29/02	52	36	12

2a. (HALF SAMPLE) Would you support or oppose the United States going to war with Iraq? Would you support/oppose it strongly or only somewhat?

	-----Support-----			-----Oppose-----			
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	No opin.
3/9/03	59	40	19	35	21	14	6

Compare to: The Bush administration says it will move soon to disarm Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power, by war if necessary, working with countries that are willing to assist, even without the support of the United Nations. Overall, do you support or oppose this policy? (IF SUPPORT) Do you support it with reservations or without reservations?

	-----Support-----					
	NET	W/o reserv.	With reserv.	DK	Oppose	No opinion
3/2/03	59	34	24	1	37	4

2b. (HALF SAMPLE) Would you favor or oppose having U.S. forces take military action against Iraq to force Saddam Hussein from power? Would you say you favor/oppose military action against Iraq strongly or only somewhat?

	-----Favor-----			-----Oppose-----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	op.
3/9/03	65	47	18	30	20	10	5
2/23/03	63	42	21	31	18	13	6
2/9/03	66	46	21	31	17	14	2
2/5/03 All	67	45	22	27	17	11	6
Watched Powell	71	51	20	24	15	9	5
Didn't watch	61	37	23	32	18	13	7
2/1/03	66	48	19	31	18	14	3
1/28/03	63	43	19	32	20	13	5
1/27/03	61	40	21	36	21	15	3
1/20/03	57	40	17	41	25	16	3
12/15/02	62	41	20	35	20	15	3
11/17/02	64	NA	NA	29	NA	NA	7
9/26/02	61	NA	NA	34	NA	NA	5
9/14/02	68	NA	NA	29	NA	NA	3
8/29/02	56	NA	NA	34	NA	NA	10
8/11/02	69	NA	NA	22	NA	NA	9
3/10/02	72	NA	NA	24	NA	NA	4
2/21/02	67	46	21	30	12	18	4
1/27/02	71	NA	NA	24	NA	NA	4
12/19/01	72	NA	NA	24	NA	NA	5
11/27/01	78	NA	NA	17	NA	NA	6
10/11/94*	72	NA	NA	23	NA	NA	5
1/15/93**	82	NA	NA	15	NA	NA	3
8/21/92 RV	65	NA	NA	30	NA	NA	5
2/9/92	62	NA	NA	35	NA	NA	3
4/22/91	51	NA	NA	43	NA	NA	6
4/5/91	54	NA	NA	37	NA	NA	9
3/15/91	57	NA	NA	38	NA	NA	5

\*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 SUPPORT, Q2a or Q2b) What's the main reason you'd support going to war with Iraq/favor military action against Iraq? (Open-ended)

3/9/03

Threat (Net)	40
Threat to the U.S.	22
Threat (general)	13
Supports terrorism	13
Remove Saddam	25
Iraq has dangerous weapons/Disarmament/ Inspections don't work/Defying the UN	16
Moral obligation/Have to act/Unfinished business	11
Support Bush	6
In military/Support military	5
Help Iraqis/Mideast peace	5
Other	3
No opinion	4

4. (IF OPPOSE, Q2a or Q2b) What's the main reason you'd oppose going to war with Iraq/military action against Iraq? (Open-ended)

	3/9/03	3/2/03
Think it's unjustified/insufficient threat	16	10
Need the support of the UN/Need more int'l support	14	18
Have other problems here at home/Bad economy	14	5
Human cost/loss of life (civilian/military)	12	15
Afraid of more terrorist attacks in U.S.	11	4
Moving too fast/Too aggressive	10	11
Anti-war in general	10	--
Economic cost/Not worth the money	6	14
Fear a wider war/broader complications	6	8
Inspections are working/Give inspectors more time	5	2
Keep trying diplomacy	5	2
Don't trust Bush/government	3	8
Other	1	9
No opinion	4	11

5. Do you think that getting support from the United Nations Security Council is necessary before the United States goes to war with Iraq, or is support from the United Nations Security Council desirable, but not necessary?

	Necessary	Desirable, not necessary	Not desirable (vol)	No opin.
3/9/03	35	56	5	4

6. (IF NECESSARY, Q5) What if the United States has support from the governments of other countries, such as Great Britain, Australia and Spain - in that case is getting support from the United Nations Security Council necessary, or desirable, but not necessary?

Q5/6 NET

	Necessary	Desirable, not necessary	Not desirable (vol)	No opin.
3/9/03	24	65	6	5

7. As you may know, United Nations inspectors are in Iraq looking for any evidence that Iraq has chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. Do you think Iraq is or is not cooperating with the U.N. weapons inspectors? (IF COOPERATING) Do you think Iraq is fully cooperating or only partially cooperating with the U.N. inspectors?

	NET	Fully	Partially	Not cooperating	No opinion
3/9/03	25	3	21	71	5
1/20/03	22	4	18	75	3

8. Do you think Iraq does or does not pose a threat to the United States?

	Does	Does not	No opin.
3/9/03	79	19	2
1/27/03	81	16	3
12/15/02	81	17	2
8/11/02	79	16	5

9. Just your best guess, how long do you think a war with Iraq would last - a few weeks, several months, about a year or longer than that?

	Weeks	Months	Year	Longer	No opin.
3/9/03	22	33	16	23	7
2/1/03	19	32	18	27	5

10. Do you think there would or would not be a significant number of U.S. military casualties in a war with Iraq?

	Yes, would	No, would not	No opinion
3/9/03	62	31	7
2/1/03	65	31	4

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