

DEMOCRACY CORPS

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Date: March 16, 2007
To: Friends of Democracy Corps
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THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

Political environment still dominated by Iraq, rejection of Bush and GOP

In the aftermath of the historic election results of 2006, the country's political environment has settled into a surprisingly stable position, the broad contours of which are familiar to most political observers:

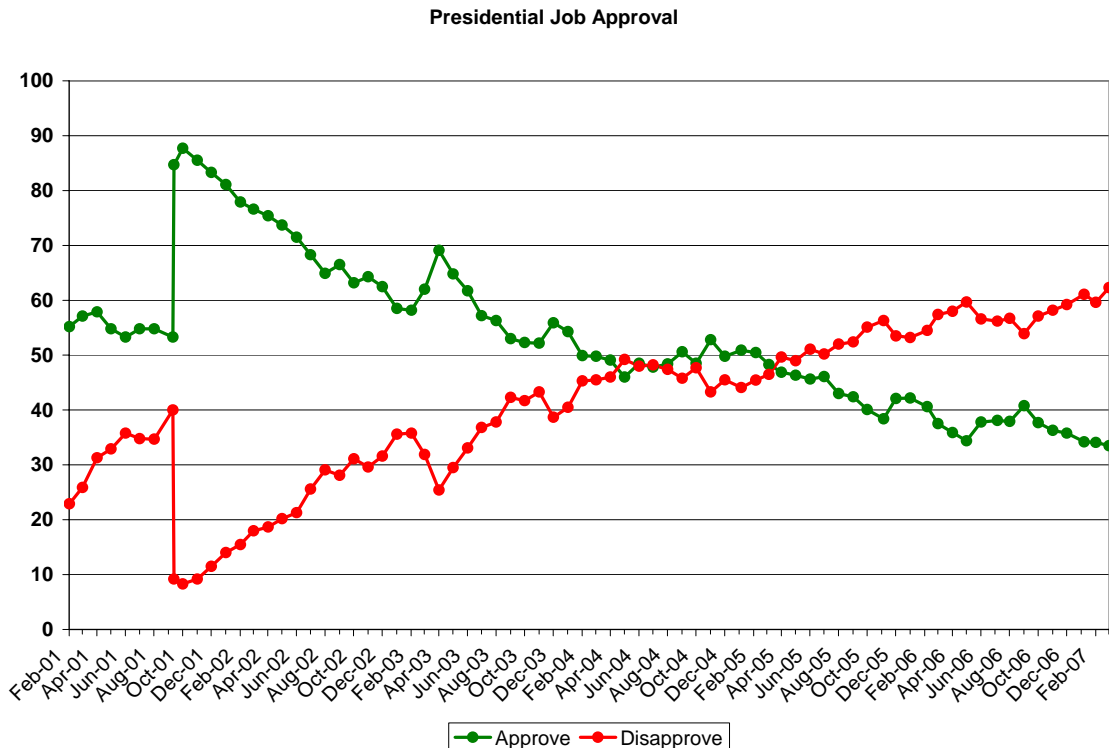
- Americans remain deeply pessimistic about the direction of our country. Ratings of the country's direction have not changed significantly since May of last year, and less than 30 percent of Americans feel the country is headed in the right direction.
- The war in Iraq is unquestionably the dominant issue driving the country's sharply negative mood. In an open-ended question in the Hotline poll on the most important issue facing the country today, 38 percent volunteered the war in Iraq; no other issue scored higher than 8 percent.
- Despite significant upheaval in the stock market, consumer confidence and ratings of the country's economy are holding strong, with the ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index reaching a new high for the year this week at +2; it has remained well above its 20-year average of -10 since October.
- Despite ratings that have already established record lows for a second-term president at this stage of his administration, President Bush's job approval continues to remain stable in 2007 (34 percent approve, 61 percent disapprove).
- Americans continue to disapprove of the job being done by Congress, while at the same time offering positive reviews of new Speaker Nancy Pelosi and maintaining the post-election gap between ratings of the

Democratic Party (48 percent favorable, 41 percent unfavorable) and the Republican Party (34 percent favorable, 54 percent unfavorable)

Neither good news (the early success of the Democrats' 100-hour agenda) nor bad (stock market, continuing violence in Iraq, resurgence of Taliban in Afghanistan) has altered this basic framework over the last few months. And while Iraq is clearly the number one priority in this environment, new surveys this month reveal continuing frustration on a range of domestic issues, particularly health care and immigration. More than anything else, these surveys expose a desperate desire for Washington to step to the plate, move beyond partisan rancor and non-binding resolutions, and start delivering real solutions to the myriad challenges facing the country today.

From Bad to Worse for Bush

It is virtually impossible to find good news for President Bush in the range of new polls released over the last few weeks. Another month brings another new record low on Bush's job approval, with 62 percent of Americans — including more than 60 percent of Independents and 20 percent of Republicans — now disapproving of his performance.



Majorities disapprove of Bush's handling of every issue in every poll, with ratings of his performance on Iraq now as low or lower than on domestic issues such as the economy and even

health care. Furthermore, in the only recent poll measuring Bush versus Democrats in Congress (a late February ABC/Washington Post survey), majorities favor the Democrats on every issue tested — by 13 points in the war on terrorism, 20 points on the economy and Iraq, 27 points on the federal budget, and 37 points on health care.

The costs of these deep-seated doubts about Bush — rooted in his failures and untruths at every level of the Iraq situation — are evident across the political landscape, but particularly in the international arena. As the tenuous situation with Iran and its nuclear efforts escalates, 63 percent of Americans say they “cannot trust the Bush administration to honestly and accurately report intelligence about possible threats from other countries.” This is a stunning rebuke of an administration that, just a few years ago, boasted record levels of public support based on the twin pillars of integrity and strong leadership on security and foreign affairs. And so, even as 37 percent of Americans say Iran represents an immediate threat requiring military action and another 49 percent view Iran as an immediate threat that can still be contained with effective diplomacy, 58 percent offer a vote of no confidence in the Bush administration’s ability to handle the current tensions with Tehran.

Overwhelming Majorities Oppose Bush Plan for Iraq

The broad opposition to President Bush’s escalation proposal initially found in surveys immediately after his announcement has not weakened as he begins to implement his plan in the face of public and congressional disapproval. In the late February ABC/Post poll, less than 1-in-3 Americans expressed support for Bush’s plan while 67 percent opposed it, including 56 percent who strongly opposed the proposal. There is no doubt that Americans remain anxious about the potential consequences of American withdrawal from Iraq and are obviously opposed to any reduction in funding that would negatively impact the troops on the ground there. But their tolerance for throwing good money after bad, not to mention more young Americans’ lives, is spent. By a margin of nearly 2-to-1 in the ABC/Post poll, Americans now say the war in Iraq was not worth fighting (64 to 34 percent), and a plurality in the most recent Zogby release believe a dramatic increase in military force would actually hurt rather than help our effort to win in Iraq (46 to 43 percent).

President Bush’s continued emphasis on an undefined ‘victory’ in Iraq shows how out of touch he is with the current American mood, as a majority in the same Zogby poll say victory is ‘unlikely’ at this stage. The Gallup/USA Today poll explores this question from a different angle and finds that only 28 percent view ‘victory’ as a likelihood at this stage, while another 20 percent believe we still could win but ultimately won’t and nearly half (46 percent) simply don’t believe the U.S. can ultimately “win the war in Iraq.”

It is important to note that the overwhelmingly negative tone on Iraq is not simply the byproduct of a war-weary nation. As cited earlier, the ABC/Post poll found that 64 percent of Americans believe the war in Iraq was not worth fighting, compared to 34 percent who still believe it has been worth the cost. Yet the same poll also showed that a solid majority of Americans still believe the war in Afghanistan was worth the cost (56 to 41 percent). It is clear from these data that the negative attitudes on Iraq that are dominating the current political environment are directly connected to the Bush administration’s failed leadership and deception on Iraq rather than a simple desire to bring the troops home.

BUSH JOB APPROVAL

		Approve	Disapprove	App – Disapp
Monthly Average – March 2007	Mar-07	34.2	60.5	-26.3
CNN/Opinion Research	3/11/2007	37	56	-19.0
CBS/NY Times	3/11/2007	34	58	-24.0
AP-Ipsos	3/7/2007	35	65	-30.0
NBC News/Wall Street Journal	3/5/2007	35	60	-25.0
USA Today/Gallup	3/4/2007	33	63	-30.0
Newsweek	3/1/2007	31	61	-30.0
Monthly Average – February 2007	Feb-07	34.1	59.6	-25.6
Fox News/Opinion Dynamics^	2/28/2007	34	57	-23.0
CBS/NY Times	2/27/2007	29	61	-32.0
Time^	2/26/2007	34	60	-26.0
ABC News/Washington Post	2/25/2007	36	62	-26.0
Diageo/Hotline^	2/24/2007	36	60	-18.0
Democracy Corps	2/19/2007	38	57	-19.0
Quinnipiac^	2/19/2007	34	60	-26.0
WNBC/Marist^	2/15/2007	35	58	-23.0
Fox News/Opinion Dynamics^	2/14/2007	35	56	-21.0
USA Today/Gallup	2/11/2007	37	59	-22.0
CBS	2/11/2007	32	59	-27.0
Pew	2/11/2007	33	56	-23.0
AP-Ipsos	2/7/2007	32	65	-33.0
Gallup	2/4/2007	32	65	-33.0
Monthly Average – January 2007	Jan-07	34.0	61.3	-27.9
Fox News/Opinion Dynamics^	1/31/2007	38	54	-23.0
Zogby	1/26/2007	32	68	-36.0
Newsweek	1/25/2007	30	64	-34.0
Time^	1/23/2007	37	59	-22.0
CNN/Opinion Research	1/21/2007	34	63	-29.0
CBS	1/21/2007	28	64	-36.0
NBC News/Wall Street Journal	1/20/2007	35	60	-25.0
ABC News/Washington Post	1/19/2007	33	65	-32.0
Newsweek	1/18/2007	31	62	-31.0
AP/AOL	1/18/2007	36	61	-25.0
Gallup	1/18/2007	36	61	-25.0
Fox News/Opinion Dynamics^	1/17/2007	35	58	-23.0
Democracy Corps	1/16/2007	40	57	-17.0
LA Times/Bloomberg	1/16/2007	33	59	-26.0
Pew	1/15/2007	33	59	-26.0
USA Today/Gallup	1/14/2007	34	63	-29.0
Diageo/Hotline^	1/14/2007	35	62	-18.0
CNN/Opinion Research	1/11/2007	35	62	-27.0
AP-Ipsos	1/10/2007	32	65	-33.0
USA Today/Gallup	1/7/2007	37	59	-22.0
CBS	1/3/2007	30	63	-33.0

Monthly Average – December	Dec-07	35.6	59.8	-24.2
Monthly Average – November	Nov-06	36.6	58.1	-21.5
Monthly Average – October	Oct-06	37.7	57.3	-19.6
Monthly Average – September	Sep-06	41.3	54.0	-12.7
Monthly Average – August	Aug-06	37.9	56.7	-18.8
Monthly Average – July	Jul-06	38.1	56.2	-18.1
Monthly Average – June	Jun-06	37.8	56.6	-18.8
Monthly Average – May	May-06	34.4	59.7	-25.3
Monthly Average – April	Apr-06	35.9	58.0	-22.1
Monthly Average – March	Mar-06	37.5	57.4	-19.9
Monthly Average – February	Feb-06	40.6	54.5	-13.8
Monthly Average – January	Jan-06	42.2	53.2	-10.9
Monthly Average – December	Dec-05	42.1	53.5	-11.3
Monthly Average – November	Nov-05	38.4	56.3	-17.9
Monthly Average – October	Oct-05	40.1	55.1	-15.1
Monthly Average – September	Sep-05	42.4	52.4	-10.0
Monthly Average – August	Aug-05	43.0	52.0	-9.0
Monthly Average – July	Jul-05	46.1	50.2	-4.1
Monthly Average – June	Jun-05	45.6	51.1	-5.4
Monthly Average – May	May-05	46.4	49.0	-2.6
Monthly Average – April	Apr-05	46.9	49.1	-2.2
Monthly Average – March	Mar-05	48.3	46.5	1.8
Monthly Average – February	Feb-05	50.5	45.5	5.0
Monthly Average – January	Jan-05	50.9	44.1	6.8
Monthly Average – December	Dec-04	49.8	45.5	4.3
Monthly Average – November	Nov-04	52.8	43.3	9.5
Monthly Average – October	Oct-04	48.5	47.7	0.8
Monthly Average – September	Sep-04	50.6	45.8	4.8
Monthly Average – August	Aug-04	48.4	47.4	1
Monthly Average – July	Jul-04	47.8	48.2	-0.4
Monthly Average – June	Jun-04	48.5	48	0.5
Monthly Average – May	May-04	46	49.2	-3.2
Monthly Average – April	Apr-04	49.1	46	3.1
Monthly Average – March	Mar-04	49.8	45.5	4.3
Monthly Average – February	Feb-04	49.9	45.3	4.6
Monthly Average – January	Jan-04	54.3	40.5	13.8
Monthly Average – December	Dec-03	55.9	38.7	17.2
Monthly Average – November	Nov-03	52.2	43.3	8.9
Monthly Average – October	Oct-03	52.3	41.7	10.6
Monthly Average – September	Sep-03	53	42.3	10.7
Monthly Average – August	Aug-03	56.3	37.8	18.5
Monthly Average – July	Jul-03	57.2	36.8	20.4
Monthly Average – June	Jun-03	61.7	33.1	28.6
Monthly Average – May	May-03	64.8	29.5	35.3
Monthly Average – April	Apr-03	69.1	25.4	43.7
Monthly Average – March	Mar-03	62	31.9	30.1
Monthly Average – February	Feb-03	58.2	35.8	22.4
Monthly Average – January	Jan-03	58.5	35.6	22.9
Monthly Average – December	Dec-02	62.5	31.6	30.9

Monthly Average – November	Nov-02	64.3	29.6	34.7
Monthly Average – October	Oct-02	63.2	31.1	32.1
Monthly Average – September	Sep-02	66.5	28.1	38.4
Monthly Average – August	Aug-02	64.9	29.1	35.8
Monthly Average – July	Jul-02	68.3	25.6	42.7
Monthly Average – June	Jun-02	71.5	21.3	50.2
Monthly Average – May	May-02	73.7	20.2	53.5
Monthly Average – April	Apr-02	75.4	18.7	56.7
Monthly Average – March	Mar-02	76.6	18	58.6
Monthly Average – February	Feb-02	77.9	15.5	62.4
Monthly Average – January	Jan-02	81.1	14	67.1
Monthly Average – Dec.	Dec-01	83.3	11.5	71.8
Monthly Average – Nov.	Nov-01	85.5	9.2	76.3
Monthly Average – Oct.	Oct-01	87.7	8.3	79.4
Monthly Average – Sept.	Sep-01	84.7	9.2	75.5
Monthly Average – Sept.	Sep-01	53.3	40	13.3
Monthly Average – August	Aug-01	54.8	34.7	20.1
Monthly Average – July	Jul-01	54.8	34.8	20
Monthly Average – June	Jun-01	53.3	35.8	17.5
Monthly Average – May	May-01	54.8	32.9	21.9
Monthly Average – April	Apr-01	57.9	31.3	26.6
Monthly Average – March	Mar-01	57.1	25.9	31.2
Monthly Average – Feb.	Feb-01	55.2	22.9	32.3

Poll	COUNTRY DIRECTION				
	Direction /Satisfied	Date	Right	Wrong	Right-Wrong
Monthly Average - March 2007		Mar-07	26.3	65.0	-38.7
CBS/NY Times	D	3/11/2007	25	69	-44
AP/Ipsos#	D	3/7/2007	29	68	-39
NBC News/Wall Street Journal#	D	3/5/2007	25	58	-33
Monthly Average - February 2007		Feb-07	28.3	66.0	-37.7
Democracy Corps#	D	2/19/2007	23	66	-43
AP/Ipsos#	D	2/7/2007	28	68	-40
Gallup#	S	2/4/2007	34	64	-30
Monthly Average - January 2007		Jan-07	30.3	62.2	-31.9
Newsweek	S	1/25/2007	30	61	-31
NBC News/Wall Street Journal#	D	1/20/2007	28	57	-29
AP/Ipsos#	D	1/18/2007	29	66	-37
Newsweek	S	1/18/2007	30	62	-32
Gallup#	S	1/18/2007	35	63	-28
Democracy Corps#	D	1/16/2007	30	62	-32
LA Times/Bloomberg	D	1/16/2007	31	61	-30
Pew Research Center#	S	1/15/2007	32	61	-29
AP/Ipsos#	D	1/10/2007	28	67	-39
Monthly Average - December 2006		Dec-06	28.4	63.9	-35.4
Monthly Average - November 2006		Nov-06	31.4	62.0	-30.6
Monthly Average - October 2006		Oct-06	29.3	62.3	-33.0
Monthly Average - September 2006		Sep-06	32.0	60.8	-28.8
Monthly Average - August 2006		Aug-06	28.3	65.9	-37.6
Monthly Average - July 2006		Jul-06	29.5	63.5	-34.0
Monthly Average - June 2006		Jun-06	28.1	64.0	-35.9
Monthly Average - May 2006		May-06	25.0	69.8	-44.8
Monthly Average - April 2006		Apr-06	26.0	67.8	-41.8
Monthly Average - March 2006		Mar-06	29.9	64.0	-34.1
Monthly Average - February 2006		Feb-06	35.5	59.8	-24.3
Monthly Average - January 2006		Jan-06	35.0	57.9	-22.9
Monthly Average - December 2005		Dec-05	33.2	60.7	-27.5
Monthly Average - November 2005		Nov-05	30.9	63.9	-33.0
Monthly Average - October 2005		Oct-05	32.8	61.3	-28.5
Monthly Average - September 2005		Sep-05	33.5	61.5	-28.0
Monthly Average - August 2005		Aug-05	36.7	57.7	-21.0
Monthly Average - July 2005		Jul-05	37.8	56.4	-18.6
Monthly Average - June 2005		Jun-05	35.0	55.5	-20.5
Monthly Average - June 2005		Jun-05	37.1	55.9	-18.8
Monthly Average - May 2005		May-05	36.1	55.4	-19.3
Monthly Average - April 2005		Apr-05	36.9	54.6	-17.7
Monthly Average - March 2005		Mar-05	40.3	55.5	-15.3

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Monthly Average - February 2005	Feb-05	41.2	51.8	-10.7
Monthly Average - January 2005	Jan-05	42.0	51.0	-9
Monthly Average - December 2004	Dec-04	42.5	49.5	-7
Monthly Average - November 2004	Nov-04	44.5	50.5	-6
Monthly Average - October 2004	Oct-04	40.9	53.6	-12.7
Monthly Average - September 2004	Sep-04	42.4	51.7	-9.3
Monthly Average - September 2004	Sep-04	42.4	51.7	-9.3
Monthly Average - August 2004	Aug-04	40.0	53.4	-13.4
Monthly Average - July 2004	Jul-04	39.1	54.3	-15.2
Monthly Average - June 2004	Jun-04	38.6	54.4	-15.8
Monthly Average - May 2004	May-04	34.6	58.6	-24
Monthly Average - April 2004	Apr-04	38.8	56.8	-18
Monthly Average - March 2004	Mar-04	39.0	54.8	-15.8
Monthly Average - February 2004	Feb-04	42.0	53.5	-11.5
Monthly Average - January 2004	Jan-04	46.9	47.2	-0.3
Monthly Average - December 2003	Dec-03	46.0	45.9	0.1
Monthly Average - November 2003	Nov-03	40.7	52.0	-11.3
Monthly Average - October 2003	Oct-03	40.3	53.4	-13.1
Monthly Average - September 2003	Sep-03	38.2	54.8	-16.6
Monthly Average - August 2003	Aug-03	40.8	52.8	-12
Monthly Average - July 2003	Jul-03	43.5	49.3	-5.8
Monthly Average - June 2003	Jun-03	47.2	46.0	1.2
Monthly Average - May 2003	May-03	51.0	42.2	8.8
Monthly Average - April 2003	Apr-03	56.5	35.0	21.5
Monthly Average - March 2003	Mar-03	46.6	46.6	0
Monthly Average - February 2003	Feb-03	40.0	52.8	-12.8
Monthly Average - January 2003	Jan-03	38.6	52.0	-13.4
Monthly Average - December 2002	Dec-02	43.4	48.2	-4.8
Monthly Average - November 2002	Nov-02	46.8	46.5	0.3
Monthly Average - October 2002	Oct-02	42.8	48.3	-5.5
Monthly Average - September 2002	Sep-02	46.2	45.3	0.8
Monthly Average - August 2002	Aug-02	46.0	47.0	-1
Monthly Average - July 2002	Jul-02	46.2	48.3	-2.2
Monthly Average - June 2002	Jun-02	49.6	39.0	10.6
Monthly Average - May 2002	May-02	52.0	40.2	11.8
Monthly Average - April 2002	Apr-02	55.5	34.3	21.3
Monthly Average - March 2002	Mar-02	56.0	36.3	19.8
Monthly Average - February 2002	Feb-02	63.0	31.5	31.5
Monthly Average - January 2002	Jan-02	63.5	28.0	35.5
Monthly Average - December 2001	Dec-01	67.7	22.7	45
Monthly Average - November 2001	Nov-01	63.7	27.3	36.3
Monthly Average - October 2001	Oct-01	67.0	29.0	38
Average - September 11-30, 2001	9/11-30/01	59.3	32.7	26.7
Average - January 1-September 10, 2001	1/1-9/11	48.1	43.2	5
Yearly Average - 2000	2000	53	37	16.5
Yearly Average - 1999	1999	52	39	12.5
Yearly Average - 1998	1998	54	38	15.4
Yearly Average - 1997	1997	46	46	0.2