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Swing Voters For 2004 Presidential Election Believe Iraq Was Worth Fighting, But Doubt Bush's Evidence About Weapons Of Mass Destruction And Doubt Bush's Economic Plan

Democratic Presidential Candidates Succeed In Raising Doubts About U.S. Political Leadership

Between July 8-10, 2003, and July 22-24, 2003, Ipsos-Public Affairs interviewed for the Cook Political Report a representative sample of 2,000 adult Americans nationwide, including 1,520 registered voters. The margin of error for the combined surveys is $\pm 2.2\%$ for all adults, $\pm 2.5\%$ for registered voters.

Washington, D.C., July 28, 2003 — In interviews with 1,520 registered voters conducted July 8-10, 2003, and July 22-24, 2003, the Ipsos-Public Affairs/*Cook Political Report* Poll finds the 2004 Presidential election taking shape as a key group of swing voters emerge. These swing voters:

- Believe that the war with Iraq was worth fighting;
- Believe the Bush Administration intentionally exaggerated its evidence that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction; and,
- Are extremely negative about Bush's handling of the economy and other domestic issues.

Ipsos-Public Affairs, in the most recent *Cook Political Report* poll, conducted July 22-24, 2003, repeated two questions from an earlier ABCNEWS/*Washington Post* poll. The questions were:

- 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?
- 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?

	Bush Administration did or did not intentionally exaggerate its evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction	
	ABCNEWS/ <i>Washington Post</i>	Ipsos/ <i>Cook Political Report</i>
	<u>7/11/03</u>	<u>7/22-24/03</u>
Did exaggerate evidence	50%	44%
Did not exaggerate evidence	46%	52%

*Note: The ABCNEWS/*Washington Post* poll was asked of all adults, whereas the Ipsos-Public Affairs/*Cook Political Report* poll was asked of registered voters.

	War with Iraq was worth fighting			
	ABCNEWS/ <i>Washington Post</i> Poll			Ipsos/ <i>Cook Political Report</i>
	<u>4/30/03</u>	<u>6/22/03</u>	<u>7/11/03</u>	<u>7/22-24/03</u>
Worth fighting	70%	64%	57%	59%
Not worth fighting	27%	33%	40%	37%

*Note: The ABCNEWS/*Washington Post* poll was asked of all adults, whereas the Ipsos-Public Affairs/*Cook Political Report* poll was asked of registered voters.

Based on the results, Ipsos-Public Affairs identified three key groups:

1. Those that believe the Bush Administration did NOT intentionally exaggerate evidence AND believe the war with Iraq was worth fighting;
2. Those that believe the Bush Administration DID intentionally exaggerate evidence BUT believe the war with Iraq was worth fighting; and,
3. Those that do NOT believe the war with Iraq was worth fighting.

The first group has an extremely positive assessment of Bush; the third group has an extremely negative assessment of Bush. The middle group strongly approves of Bush's foreign policy, but strongly disapproves of Bush's handling of the economy and other domestic issues.

This key swing group in the electorate is predominantly:

- Moderate Democrats
- Residents of Southern states
- Male
- Individuals with no college experience
- Individuals in sales or skilled trade positions

	Overall Presidential Approval			
	All Registered Voters	Did NOT exaggerate evidence / war with Iraq worth fighting	DID exaggerate evidence / war with Iraq worth fighting	War with Iraq NOT worth fighting
Total Approve	54%	91%	49%	12%
Total Disapprove	44%	8%	48%	86%

	Presidential Approval – Handling the Economy			
	All Registered Voters	Did NOT exaggerate evidence / war with Iraq worth fighting	DID exaggerate evidence / war with Iraq worth fighting	War with Iraq NOT worth fighting
Total Approve	45%	75%	33%	14%
Total Disapprove	53%	24%	67%	84%

	Presidential Approval – Handling Domestic Issues Like Health Care, the Environment, and Energy			
	All Registered Voters	Did NOT exaggerate evidence / war with Iraq worth fighting	DID exaggerate evidence / war with Iraq worth fighting	War with Iraq NOT worth fighting
Total Approve	47%	74%	36%	18%
Total Disapprove	51%	22%	64%	81%

	Presidential Approval – Handling Foreign Policy Issues			
	All Registered Voters	Did NOT exaggerate evidence / war with Iraq worth fighting	DID exaggerate evidence / war with Iraq worth fighting	War with Iraq NOT worth fighting
Total Approve	57%	93%	59%	16%
Total Disapprove	41%	6%	39%	82%

These results demonstrate just how close the 2004 Presidential election could be.

	Presidential Re-election			
	All Registered Voters	Did NOT exaggerate evidence / war with Iraq worth fighting	DID exaggerate evidence / war with Iraq worth fighting	War with Iraq NOT worth fighting
Definitely vote to reelect Bush	40%	72%	33%	6%
Consider voting for someone else	23%	20%	33%	23%
Definitely vote for someone else	35%	6%	32%	70%

In the same survey, Ipsos-Public Affairs conducted a “perceptual mapping” analysis based on the open-end responses to the question of what people feel is the most important national problem. Consistently since Fall, 2001, the issue of political leadership has been associated with Independent voters. In the current survey, the issue of concerns about political leadership is more closely aligned with Democratic voters. This suggests that the nine Democratic presidential candidates have succeeded in raising the issue of political leadership among voters in their own party.

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About Ipsos-Public Affairs

Ipsos-Public Affairs is a non-partisan, objective public affairs research organization made up of Democratic and Republican campaign and political polling veterans. It was established in August 2001 in Washington, D.C., and is headed by veteran pollster Thomas Riehle, who has more than 15 years of experience as a political pollster in Washington. The division conducts strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of U.S. and international organizations. Typically, the division's studies are based on opinion research, not only public opinion, but often elite stakeholder, corporate and media opinion. Ipsos-Public Affairs is a member of the Ipsos Group, the second largest survey-based marketing research company in the world. The Ipsos/Cook Political Report poll and the Ipsos Consumer Attitudes and Spending by Household (CASH) Index poll are usually conducted the first and third week of every month, as part of Ipsos-Public Affairs weekly omnibus polling service.

The political survey is designed in conjunction with Charlie Cook of the Cook Political Report. Founded in 1984, The Cook Political Report is an independent, non-partisan newsletter that analyzes elections for the U.S. House, Senate, governor and President as well as domestic American political trends. The New York Times has called the publication, “a newsletter that both parties consider authoritative” while the dean of the Washington political press corps, the Washington Post’s David Broder has called Charlie Cook, its editor and publisher, “perhaps the best political handicapper in the nation.” Cook also writes two weekly columns that appear in National Journal magazine and CongressDaily/AM and on nationaljournal.com, and serves as a political analyst for Cable News Network’s show “Inside Politics.” Researched and written by a staff of five based in Washington, D.C., the Cook Political Report’s subscribers are primarily the lobbyists and managers for the political action committees of the nation’s major corporations, trade associations and labor unions as well as by news organizations, foreign governments and others with an interest in detailed, impartial information and analysis of Congressional, gubernatorial and presidential elections.