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Interview dates: December 6-8, 2004
Interviews: 1,000 adults, 845 registered voters
Margin of error: ± 3.1 for all adults, ± 3.4 for registered voters

**THE ASSOCIATED PRESS POLL
CONDUCTED BY IPSOS-PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

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***AP/Ipsos Poll: Increased Uncertainty About Stable Future For Iraq
Public Remains Divided On Bush's Performance***

The Associated Press Poll is conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs. Between December 6-8, 2004, the AP-Ipsos poll interviewed a representative sample of 1,000 adults nationwide, including 845 registered voters. The margin of error is ± 3.1 for all adults and ± 3.4 for registered voters. Margin of error for subgroups may be higher.

December 13, 2004, Washington, DC – One month after President Bush's reelection, the American public is as divided as ever over Bush's performance and the direction of the country as a whole. The situation in Iraq continues to generate concern. As Iraq's January elections near, Americans are more doubtful that a stable and democratic government can be established.

Greater Skepticism toward Future Stability in Iraq

Compared to polls taken in April of this year, Americans now appear less convinced that a stable and democratic government will be established in Iraq. In mid-April, a majority thought such a government would be established. Now only 47% say it is likely – and most think it is “somewhat” rather than “very likely.” More now (51%) than in mid-April (44%) say it is unlikely a stable, democratic government will be set up in Iraq. One in five (19%) say it is “not at all likely.”

Q. How likely is it that a stable, democratic government will be established in Iraq? Is it ...

	12/6 - 8/04	4/16- 18/04	4/5 - 7/04
Very likely	9	11	10
Somewhat likely.....	38	44	40
Not too likely	32	31	33
Not at all likely	19	13	16
Not sure	2	1	1
Total Likely	47	55	50
Total Not Likely	51	44	49

Confidence in Iraq's future has particularly declined among groups including seniors (42% likely, 56% in mid-April), college graduates (41%, from 53%), Southerners (48%, from 60%) and residents of the Great Plains-Mountain region (45%, from 58%), Democrats (28%, from 40%) and Independents (36%, from 52%). Republicans, however, continue to say it's likely a stable government will be put in place (72%; 74% in April).

Voters Split on Bush's Handling of Iraq

Uncertainty about the course of events in Iraq is also reflected in the public's divided views of how President Bush has handled the situation. Registered voters are split evenly between those who approve and disapprove of Bush's handling of Iraq, although the share who "strongly disapprove" (35%) outnumbers those who "strongly approve" (27%).

Bush's Iraq policy receives particular praise from people in their thirties (58%), residents of the South (54%; 64% Oil Patch), and Republican voters (87%). Criticism is stronger among minorities (70% disapprove), college-educated women (61%), Democrats (84%) and Independents (66%).

Q. And when it comes to **(READ ISSUE)** do you approve or disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way George W. Bush is handling that issue? **(IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE, ASK:)** Is that strongly (approve/disapprove) or somewhat (approve/ disapprove)? **(IF HAVE MIXED FEELINGS OR NOT SURE, ASK:)** If you had to choose, do you lean more toward approve or disapprove?

REGISTERED VOTERS									Total Ap- prove	Total Disap- prove	Mean- Rating ¹
Strongly Ap- prove	Some- what Ap- prove	Lean Toward Ap- proval	Still Have Mixed Feelings	Lean Toward Disap- proval	Some- what Disap- prove	Strongly Disap- prove	Not Sure				
Handling the situation in Iraq											
12/6-8/04	27	12	10	1	8	7	35	-	48	50	3.9
11/3-5/04	31	10	7	1	7	5	39	-	48	51	3.8
(PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 2004 - ASKED OF ONLY HALF THE REGISTERED VOTERS)											
10/4-6/04	32	7	7	2	9	5	38	-	46	52	3.8
9/20-22/04	31	9	9	2	10	6	33	-	49	49	4.0
Handling foreign policy issues and the war on terrorism											
12/6-8/04	35	11	7	2	12	6	27	-	53	45	4.3
11/3-5/04	39	8	7	-	11	6	29	-	54	46	4.3
(FROM APRIL THROUGH OCTOBER 2004 - ASKED OF ONLY HALF THE REGISTERED VOTERS)											
10/4-6/04	36	5	9	1	12	6	31	-	50	49	4.1
9/7-9/04	42	8	4	1	10	6	29	-	54	44	4.4
8/3-5/04	38	7	6	-	12	7	30	-	51	49	4.2
1 year ago 12/1-3/03	36	12	7	3	12	7	23	-	54	43	4.4

¹Mean rating is calculated by assigning each response except “not sure” a value from 1 to 7, with “strongly approve” receiving a value of 7, and “strongly disapprove” a value of 1.

Bush fares slightly better on his handling of broader international issues. A slim majority (53%) approve of Bush's handling of foreign policy and the war on terrorism, consistent with findings from last month and most of this year.

Views on Bush's Performance in Office Remain Divided

Half (51%) of registered voters approve of Bush's overall performance in office, and nearly as many (47%) disapprove. There has been a very slight waning in the intensity of opinions, but the more striking aspect is how little views have changed over the past few eventful months.

Likewise, voters continue to be evenly divided on Bush's handling of the economy. Views of his handling of other domestic issues have improved marginally over recent weeks but have yet to move into positive territory.

- Q. Overall, do you approve, disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? **(IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE, ASK:)** Is that strongly (approve/disapprove) or somewhat (approve/disapprove)? **(IF HAVE MIXED FEELINGS OR NOT SURE, ASK:)** If you had to choose, do you lean more toward approve or disapprove?

	REGISTERED VOTERS					
	12/6 - 8/04	11/3 - 5/04	10/4 - 6/04	9/7 - 9/04	8/3 - 5/04	1 Year Ago 12/1 -3/03
Strongly approve	31	33	31	33	30	30
Somewhat approve	10	12	9	12	10	12
Lean toward approval.....	11	6	8	8	9	10
Still have mixed feelings.....	2	1	1	1	1	3
Lean toward disapproval	14	9	12	11	13	13
Somewhat disapprove.....	4	5	6	4	5	7
Strongly disapprove	28	34	33	31	32	25
Not sure.....	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Approve	51	51	48	52	49	53
Total Disapprove	47	48	51	46	50	44
<i>Mean Rating¹</i>	<i>4.1</i>	<i>4.1</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>4.2</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>4.2</i>

- Q. And when it comes to **(READ ISSUE)** do you approve or disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way George W. Bush is handling that issue? **(IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE, ASK:)** Is that strongly (approve/disapprove) or somewhat (approve/ disapprove)? **(IF HAVE MIXED FEELINGS OR NOT SURE, ASK:)** If you had to choose, do you lean more toward approve or disapprove?

REGISTERED VOTERS

	Strongly Ap- prove	Some- what Ap- prove	Lean Toward Ap- proval	Still Have Mixed Feelings	Lean Toward Disap- proval	Some- what Disap- prove	Strongly Disap- prove	Not Sure	Total Ap- prove	Total Disap- prove	Mean- Rating ¹
Handling the economy											
12/6-8/04	25	15	8	1	13	6	31	1	48	51	3.9
11/3-5/04	25	14	8	1	10	7	34	1	48	51	3.9
10/4-6/04	25	13	8	2	9	9	34	-	47	51	3.8
9/7-9/04	27	15	8	1	9	7	33	-	50	49	4.0
8/3-5/04	26	14	7	1	8	10	33	1	46	52	3.8
1 year ago 12/1-3/03	26	16	8	2	11	9	27	1	50	47	4.1
Handling domestic issues like health care, education, the environment and energy											
12/6-8/04	21	17	10	2	10	8	32	-	48	50	3.8
11/3-5/04	21	17	9	1	9	8	35	-	46	52	3.7
10/28-31/04	22	13	11	1	10	7	35	1	46	52	3.8
10/18-20/04	22	13	10	1	10	8	36	-	45	54	3.7
10/4-6/04	20	15	8	2	11	8	36	-	43	55	3.6
9/20-22/04	21	16	11	1	10	8	32	1	48	50	3.8
9/7-9/04	21	15	10	2	8	9	34	1	46	51	3.7
8/3-5/04	21	15	9	1	12	8	34	-	45	54	3.7
1 year ago 12/1-3/03	19	19	9	3	9	12	28	1	47	49	3.9

Continued Belief Country is on “Wrong Track”

By a five-to-four margin, Americans say the country is headed off “on the wrong track,” a view that has held fairly steady over the past year. As in past months, views remain most sharply divided along party lines, with 84% of Republicans saying the country is heading in the right direction, and 82% of Democrats and 68% of Independents saying things are off on the wrong track.

- Q. Generally speaking, would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?

ALL ADULTS

	12/6 - 8/04	11/3 - 5/04	10/4 - 6/04	9/7 - 9/04	8/3 - 5/04	1 Year Ago 12/1 -3/03
Right direction.....	43	46	40	44	39	43
Wrong track	52	51	56	52	59	51
Not sure	5	3	4	4	2	6