

SURVEY: 2 OUT OF 3 AMERICANS WANT DEADLINES FOR BOTH INDEPENDENCE FROM MIDDLE EAST OIL, WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS FROM IRAQ

*Even Half of Conservatives Now Favor “Firm Deadline” for Pulling Troops Out of Iraq;
As 4th of July Nears, Americans Back 2015 Target for Ending Dependence on Middle East Oil.*

WASHINGTON, D.C.///June 29, 2005///Dogged by continued high oil prices and the uncertainty of the long-running war in Iraq, the American public is now prepared to start drawing lines in the sand of the Middle East, according to a new Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) national survey conducted for the Civil Society Institute (CSI) and 40mpg.org.

The CSI/40mpg.org survey shows that slightly more than two-thirds of Americans support two major deadlines: 68 percent (including 49 percent of conservatives) want to see “the setting of a firm date for the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq;” and a nearly identical number (69 percent) think “the U.S. government should set a national goal of declaring July 4, 2015 as ‘Energy Independence Day’ – a real target date for ending our reliance on Middle Eastern and other foreign oil supplies.”

The survey finds an even stronger consensus among Americans about a leadership gap in America’s increasingly interlocked energy policies and national securities policies. About three quarters of U.S. adults (74 percent) want to see stronger energy policy leadership from the White House and Congress to prevent the committing of troops in future Middle East wars, while a slightly larger share of Americans (77 percent) believe that “oil and energy companies exercise too much influence over Bush Administration energy policies.”

Civil Society Institute President Pam Solo said: **“These survey findings show that the American people want the U.S. to achieve energy independence as a concrete step toward disentangling us from an insecure region of the world where our actions seem only to put us at greater risk, rather than making the United States more secure. This new poll shows that President Bush and the Congress are simply not demonstrating enough leadership on the energy side of the national security equation. The so-called ‘idealist’ approach (nation building and promoting democracy as a strategy to secure America) does not seem to be supported by Americans who, instead, favor pragmatic actions that make us less reliant on strategic resources such as oil.”**

Opinion Research Corporation Senior Research Graham Hueber said: **“Saddled with soaring gasoline prices and deepening concerns about the ongoing war in Iraq, a strong and bipartisan majority of Americans now want to end the U.S. dependence on Middle Eastern and other foreign oil sources. Perhaps an even stronger indication of this desire for change in U.S. policy relative to the Middle East may be seen in that two out of three Americans – including a surprisingly strong 49 percent of conservatives – want to see a date set for getting U.S. troops out of Iraq.”**

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

The highlights of the Civil Society Institute/40mpg.org survey conducted by ORC are as follows:

- Seven out of 10 Americans (69 percent) think “the U.S. government should set a national goal of declaring July 4, 2015 as ‘Energy Independence Day’ – a real target date for ending our reliance on Middle Eastern and other foreign oil supplies.” Support for this idea cuts across political party affiliations to include 66 percent of conservatives, 72 percent of moderates and 72 percent of liberals.
- Over two out of three Americans (68 percent) – including half of conservatives (49 percent) – support “the setting of a firm date for the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq.” That approach is favored by 74 percent of moderates and 85 percent of liberals.
- Three out of four Americans (74 percent) – including a clear majority of conservatives (62 percent) – think “we need stronger Presidential and Congressional leadership on energy policy in order to prevent future wars involving U.S. troops in the Middle East.” Concurring with this statement are 79 percent of moderates and 87 percent of liberals.
- More than three out of four Americans (77 percent) – including a majority (57 percent) of conservatives – think that “oil and energy companies exercise too much influence over Bush Administration energy policies.” Agreeing with this statement are 79 percent of moderates and 87 percent of liberals.
- Three out of five Americans (61 percent) – including half of conservatives – think the “first” step for America “to reduce our dependence on oil from the Middle East and other foreign sources” should be “conservation, such as higher fuel efficiency rules for cars and other vehicles. Fewer than half as many Americans (29 percent) – including just 46 percent of conservatives -- would use “development of new domestic oil resources” (including those in environmentally sensitive places, such as national forests) as the first step to cutting our foreign oil addiction.
- Three out of four Americans (73 percent) are now very or somewhat “more likely to buy or consider a more fuel efficient vehicle” than in the past. That group includes 71 percent of conservatives, 75 percent of moderates and 83 percent of liberals.
- About nine out of 10 Americans (88 percent) think it is important for the U.S. government to act to impose a 40 mpg fuel efficiency requirement for vehicles in order to “save 75 percent of our dependency on Middle Eastern oil and reduce our contribution to global greenhouse gas pollution by 30 percent” (according Union of Concerned Scientist estimates). This statement is supported by 84 percent of conservatives, 91 percent of moderates and 92 percent of liberals.
- Two thirds of Americans (65 percent) agree with the statement that “it is patriotic to drive a more fuel efficient vehicle since it requires less fuel to run and, therefore, can help reduce U.S. dependency on Middle Eastern oil.” This view of patriotism is shared by 62 percent of conservatives, 70 percent of moderates and 66 percent of liberals.

- Over two out of three Americans (69 percent) – including 68 percent of conservatives – think America’s reliance on oil from the Middle East and other foreign nations makes us “more vulnerable” to terrorist attacks. This view is shared by 72 percent of moderates and 74 percent of liberals.
- Nearly nine out of 10 Americans (88 percent) think “America’s reliance of oil from the Middle East and other foreign nations” makes us “more vulnerable” to “gas hikes and shortages.” This view is shared by 84 percent of conservatives, 92 percent of moderates and 94 percent of liberals.
- About nine out of 10 Americans (86 percent) think Middle Eastern oil has played a “major role” or “somewhat of a role” in our foreign policy in that region. This view is shared by 84 percent of conservatives, 87 percent of moderates and 91 percent of liberals.

For complete survey findings (including a full set of topline results), go <http://www.40mpg.org/news.cfm>.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The CSI/40mpg.org was conducted June 17-20, 2005 by Opinion Research Corporation. Results are based on telephone interviews conducted among a sample of 1,017 adults (507 men and 510 women) aged 18 and over living in private households in the continental United States. Those interviewed were weighted by four variables: age, sex, geographic region, and race, to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total adult population. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percent for the sample of 1,017 adults. Smaller subgroups will have larger error margins.

ABOUT CSI AND 40MPG.ORG

The nonprofit and nonpartisan Civil Society Institute is based in Newton, Massachusetts. The mission of CSI is to serve as a catalyst for change by creating problem-solving interactions among people, and between communities, government and business, that can help to improve society. One of the major undertakings of the CSI is “Results For America,” which seeks to shape and tap the tremendous amount of community-level knowledge, experience and innovative action that could solve America's problems in four key areas, including energy policy. The RFA mission states: "Our national energy policy poses a growing threat to our health, to our economy and even to our national security ... Our oil imports make us more vulnerable to terrorists and give us less room to maneuver in our foreign policy. Our failure to develop the next generation of energy technology costs our nation well-paying jobs."

40mpg.org is a project of CSI. Launched on March 17, 2004, the <http://www.40mpg.org> Web site features a calculator that allows visitors to plug in estimates for their current vehicle's fuel efficiency level, a typical price paid for gasoline in recent weeks, and total number of miles driven per year. For example, a driver who gets 17 miles to the gallon, pays \$2 a gallon for gasoline and drives 25,000 miles per year, could achieve the following each year by switching to a 40 mpg

vehicle: save \$1,691.18 at the gas pump; require 845 fewer gallons of gasoline from Middle East oil; and cut personal air pollution by 16,912 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. The 40mpg.org Web site also permits visitors to: join a community of other people who own their vehicle make/model; compare and contrast one vehicle's fuel-efficiency ratings with those of others; monitor how individual members of Congress weighed in on fuel-efficiency standard votes; contact automakers and other to speak out in favor of more fuel-efficient vehicles; and send a letter to the editor of a local newspaper urging the adoption of a 40 mpg fuel-efficiency standard. Visitors who sign up at the 40mpg.org Web site will be contacted in the future to urge lawmakers and automakers to take action.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: A streaming audio recording of a related news event will be available on the Web as of 5 p.m. ET on June 29, 2005 at <http://www.40mpg.org>.