

## SURVEY: CHASTENED BY IRAQ EXPERIENCE, AMERICAN VOTERS NOW SUPPORT A “NEW REALISM” IN FOREIGN POLICY, SECURITY

### Little Support Found for “Democracy Building,” Unilateralism and Long-Term Occupations

WASHINGTON, D.C.///January 11, 2005///Fewer than one in 10 voters (7 percent) think that the primary focus of American foreign policy and security should be on the “democracy building” that is now the major thrust of U.S. efforts in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East, according to a new post-election Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) survey conducted for the nonprofit and nonpartisan Results for America (RFA), a project of the Civil Society Institute.

Civil Society Institute President Pam Solo said: “The Iraq experience clearly has been a sobering one for Americans. Voters are embracing a ‘new realism’ in foreign policy and security matters that puts more emphasis on safer U.S. borders, intelligence gathering, diplomatic initiatives, multi-national interventions when necessary and greater energy efficiency in order to decrease America's dependence on Middle Eastern oil. At the same time, voters want to de-emphasize such current strategies such as nation building, unilateral military invasions and the direct or indirect use of torture. The American public seems ready for an open, honest and democratic debate on the best course of action.”

Opinion Research Corporation Senior Research Manager Wayne Russum said: “Keeping in mind how the war in Iraq has gone so far, voters were asked if they are now more or less likely to support a greater emphasis by the U.S. on diplomacy and multi-nation military action versus a ‘go it alone’ approach. A clear majority of 64 percent are now much or somewhat more likely to support diplomacy and multi-nation action. Interestingly, there was no difference on this question between Bush and Kerry voters.”

The ORC survey of 1,608 voters was conducted December 2-6, 2004 and found that voters strongly support the following foreign policy initiatives:

- The nation’s highest foreign and military policy priority should be close to home – “defense of U.S. borders and homeland security” was selected by a plurality of 43 percent of voters versus considerably smaller groups identifying their top priority as “democracy building” in other nations (7 percent) or “going it alone” on military interventions (6 percent).
- 64 percent support a greater emphasis on diplomacy and multi-national military action than is currently the case in the U.S.
- 81 percent agree that it matters whether people around the world respect our country and that we need the rest of the world on our side to effectively fight terrorism.
- 86 percent feel it is important for the Administration to pursue a fuel efficiency target of 40 miles per gallon, in part in order to reduce dependence on Middle Eastern oil.
- 65 percent favor the U.S. taking a leadership role to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

At the same time, voters strongly oppose the following foreign policy actions or initiatives:

- Strong majorities of American voters believe that a number of current policies leave the U.S. more vulnerable to terrorist attacks, including: acting alone without international support (71 percent); and U.S. involvement in Iraq (71 percent).
- Two-thirds oppose a long-term occupation of Afghanistan or Iraq;
- 81 percent think access to Middle Eastern oil plays a role in U.S. foreign policy and about half think the U.S. policy of keeping oil prices down (thus increasing our dependence on it) is not in our best interests.
- A strong majority oppose the use of torture in other countries (66 percent) or by this country (75 percent) even to crackdown on terrorists.
- Over half (54 percent) do not support the U.S. extending its “unquestioning” support to Israel if doing so undercuts our interests.

The ORC survey found U.S. voters roughly split on the following issues: the wisdom of the Iraq invasion; invading Iran or North Korea to stop nuclear proliferation; continuing to support undemocratic regimes that are U.S. allies; the likelihood of Iraq becoming a stable democracy; and keeping a military presence in the Arabian peninsula for security reasons despite religious objections of the Saudi population.

## METHODOLOGY

The survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted December 2-6, 2004 among a sample of 2,090 adults 18 years old or older residing in private households in the continental United States. Respondents were screened for voting in the 2004 presidential election. These findings are based on the 1,608 respondents who say they voted. Completed interviews 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 at a 95 percent confidence level is plus or minus 3 percentage points for the entire sample. Smaller sub-groups will have larger error margins.

## ABOUT THE GROUPS

Results For America (<http://www.ResultsForAmerica.org>) is a project of the nonprofit and nonpartisan Civil Society Institute (<http://www.CivilSocietyInstitute.org>), which 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. RFA seeks to help resolve America's problems in four key areas, including national security.

CONTACT: Patrick Mitchell, (703) 276-3266 or [pmitchell@hastingsgroup.com](mailto:pmitchell@hastingsgroup.com).

EDITOR'S NOTE: Full survey findings and a streaming audio recording of a related news event will be available on the Web as of 6 p.m. EST on January 11, 2005 at <http://www.ResultsForAmerica.org>.