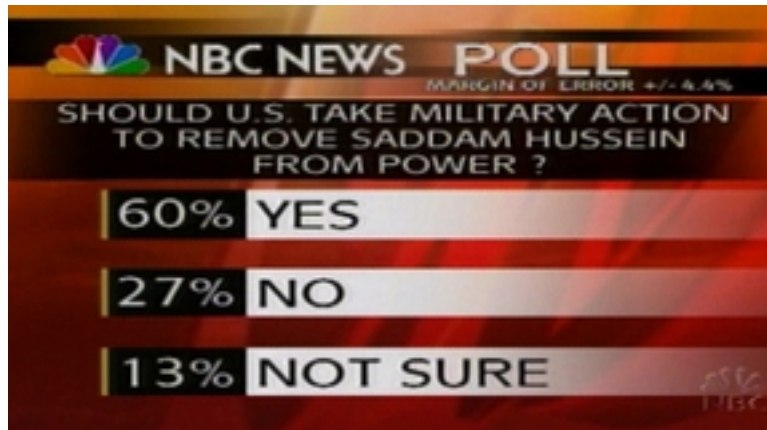


Results of Snap Opinion Polls after Colin Powell's United Nations Speech

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Description

NBC's Tim Russert looks at the results of a snap opinion poll taken just after Secretary of State Colin Powell's February 5, 2003 address before the United Nations Security Council. During the speech, Powell made the case for going to war with Iraq, including offering evidence -- now considered inaccurate -- that the Iraqi government possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD's).

Keywords

Iraq War, George W. Bush, Case for War, Costs of War, Secretary of State, Colin Powell, Approval Ratings, Job Approval, United Nations, UN, Security Council, Weapons of Mass Destruction, WMD, State of the Union, SOTU, Iraq Invasion, Hans Blix, International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, UNMOVIC, Baghdad, Saddam Hussein, Diplomacy, Military Action, State Department, Department of Defense, George H.W. Bush, Persian Gulf War, Kuwait, National Unity, National Security, Message, Surrogates, Communications Strategy, War Cabinet, Resolution 1441, Joe Biden

Transcript

Results of Snap Opinion Polls after Colin Powell's United Nations Speech
KATIE COURIC, co-host:

Let's start with the President's overall approval numbers. George W. Bush, when it comes to job approval, 61 percent approve; 31 percent disapprove; 8 percent not sure. His approval rating is up from last month. Why do you think that's the case, Tim?

TIM RUSSERT, reporting:

About seven points, Katie. I think it's largely attributed to the State of the Union address where the President began to lay out the--the case for the war. And also I think yesterday Colin Powell's presentation. It has begun to reinforce and solidify the President's standing on the war. But this is a multi-hurdle track the President's on. He has jumped over two. I believe there are two or three more to go before we actually commit to invasion of Iraq.

COURIC: When you--when you say two to--two or three to go, what do you mean by that, Tim?

RUSSERT: Well, a week from tomorrow, Hans Blix will return from Baghdad and make another report to the United Nations. I think that's a critical time. If he comes back and says, 'I'm sorry to report Saddam Hussein is still not cooperating,' you can almost hear George Bush in the White House saying, 'Strike two.' There'll probably be an attempt to have Hans Blix go back to Iraq or at least have one final negotiation, but it's a slow but actually disciplined march, Katie, to the end of the month, early March, where if Saddam Hussein is not cooperating by the Ides of March, a very, very strong likelihood of military action.

COURIC: Tim, let's turn again--well, actually, stay on Iraq, because the poll asked, 'Do you think that the US should or should not take military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq?' Of course, in part of the process that you just mentioned. Sixty percent said yes, 27 no, 13 not sure. That's nearly--nearly two thirds of those surveyed saying yes, which is a slight uptick from last month, when 56 percent said the US military should take action against Saddam. So, clearly, they're making some headway, although it's pretty small at this juncture, right?

RUSSERT: It is headway. Recall in 1991, before President Bush, former President Bush went into the Middle--the Persian Gulf to repel Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, those numbers were around 74 or 75 percent of the American people supporting the effort. And I believe this President Bush would obviously like to have the country more united than it is now. But the fact is, about a quarter of the people are opposed. That's not a bad margin. It's not a perfect one. And there are still several weeks to go for the President to make his case if he's going to further unify the country behind a military effort.

COURIC: When it comes to the question, 'Was Powell's case against Iraq convincing' yesterday at the UN, 66 percent said yes. Only 11 percent said no. Obviously, the Secretary convinced Americans, or the ones that responded to this survey, that--that Iraq is a threat. And if you break down his presentation of the evidence, point-by-point, what is the most striking thing to you about how Americans are responding?

RUSSERT: Katie, that's a very important number you've cited, because Colin Powell is by far the President's best messenger for war. Kind of ironic because he's probably been the one person in the war cabinet who's been urging the go to Congress, go to the UN, go slow. His presentation yesterday, using the intercepts, using the satellite footage, using the commentary from the inspectors, and using also defectors' eyewitness accounts, as a package, built a circumstantial case, particularly the references to biological weapons.

COURIC: Mm-hmm.

RUSSETT: That really does strike fear in the hearts of Americans and people throughout the world because of how deadly they are. But the case is not over. Further in our poll, people still want the United Nations to sanction this effort, and they still believe, by a very narrow—narrow margin, 49-48, that the President and the Administration has made the case. There's still a lot more work to be done in terms of communicating with the American people. Not just sending an army, but bringing an entire country to war.

COURIC: And also when it comes to the--the Bush Administration explaining the risks of war, the question was, 'Has Bush Admini--has the Bush Administration explained the risks of war with Iraq?' Yes, 49 percent; no, 46 percent. If you listen to Joe Biden, he says many Americans are not informed about the risks, the costs, the long-term commitment possibly by occupying troops to implement an ascent democracy in Iraq. Do you think there is much more work to be done in that area?

RUSSETT: The answer's yes. The military operation, everyone I've spoken to, believes in a matter of days we could encircle Baghdad and that Saddam would fall, probably due to lack of communication, being isolated. He may try to hunker down for a while. But what happens post-Saddam? How do the Iraqi people react? Who helps stabilize that country?

COURIC: And how much is this going to cost?

RUSSETT: Well, the estimates have been, initial effort, between 60 and 70 billion and then eight to \$10 billion per year. There are a lot of risks, a lot of concerns. No one really knows the answers, even pro--the proponents or opponents of the war. But we have to put them on the table and talk about them. That will be done in the next three weeks.

COURIC: All right, Tim Russert in Washington. Tim, thanks so much.

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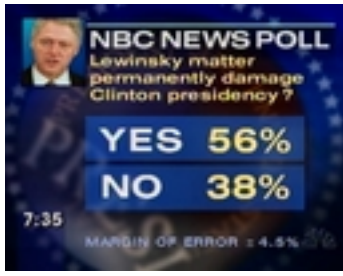
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