

**THE BUSH PRESIDENCY: TWO WARS, TWO REACTIONS**  
August 17-21, 2006

Americans define the Presidency of George W. Bush by two things - the fight against terrorism and the war in Iraq. And while the first is something positive many see in the President, the second worries more Americans.

When asked to put in their own words what they like best about the Bush Presidency, the war on terrorism garners the most responses. One in ten Americans - 11% -- cites the President's handling of the war on terrorism. Second, with 5%, is that the President is (as he himself has said) the "decider," he is decisive and makes generally good decisions. His handling of the war in Iraq comes third, with 4%.

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT THE BUSH PRESIDENCY?**

Handling of war on terror	11%
Decisive	5
Handling of war in Iraq	4
Taxes	3
Morality/religion	3
Nothing	19
Don't know	34

What is most striking, however, is that more than half the country is unable to volunteer something they like best about the President or say they like nothing.

Far fewer people had any difficulty deciding what about the Bush Presidency they liked the least, and their overwhelming answer was the handling of the war in Iraq and its effects. Behind that came the handling of immigration, the handling of the economy, and the President's policies in general.

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE LEAST ABOUT THE BUSH PRESIDENCY?**

Handling of the war in Iraq	38%
Handling of immigration	5
The economy	5
Policies in general	5
Nothing	3
Don't know	14

These voluntary answers reflect both the President's low approval rating (36% in this poll) and what are clearly his strengths and weaknesses. 55% of Americans now approve of the way the President is handling the campaign against terrorism, but only 30% approve of how he is handling Iraq.

Even for the President's partisans, the war in Iraq emerges as the number one dislike. It was mentioned by 23% of Republicans. 10% named immigration policy. 10% of conservatives cited immigration.

The war on terrorism has been near the top of people's minds since just after the September 11, 2001 attacks. Nearly half of the public said the handling of it was what they liked best about the Bush Presidency at the beginning of 2002. Then, more than a year before the war in Iraq began, many more Americans were unsure about what they didn't like than about what they liked.

	<b>THE BUSH PRESIDENCY</b>			
	<b>LIKE BEST</b>		<b>LIKE LEAST</b>	
	Now	1/2002	Now	1/2002
Don't know	34%	15%	14%	48%
Nothing	19	1	3	7
Handling of terror	11	48	1	4
Handling of Iraq	4	NA	38	NA

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This poll was conducted among a nationwide random sample of 1206 adults, interviewed by telephone August 17-21, 2006. The error due to sampling could be plus or minus three percentage points for results based on the complete sample.

**CBS NEWS/NEW YORK TIMES POLL**  
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q2 Regardless of your overall opinion of George W. Bush, what do you like best about what he has done so far as President?

\*\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*\*  
 \*\*\* Party ID \*\*\*

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Handling war on terror/attacks	11	21	3	8
Decisive/makes good decisions	5	9	1	6
Handling of war in Iraq	4	6	2	3
Taxes/tax cuts/tax breaks	3	5	1	2
Morality/Religion/Christian	3	6	1	2
Strong leader/leadership	2	2	0	2
Agree on issues in general	2	2	2	2
Patriotic/stands up	2	4	1	3
Foreign Policies	1	2	1	1
Defense/military	1	4	0	1
Education bill	1	2	1	1
His approach/he's tough	1	2	0	0
Handling of war in Afghanistan	1	1	0	2
Honesty and Integrity	1	2	0	1
He cares	1	1	1	0
Handling of immigration	1	1	1	0
Nothing	19	4	33	19
Other	7	8	6	11
DK/NA	34	18	46	36

q3 Regardless of your overall opinion of George W. Bush, what do you like least about what he has done so far as President?

Handling Iraq war/effects of war	38	23	53	37
Handling of economy	5	2	8	5
His policies in general	5	7	4	6
Handling of immigration	5	10	1	3
Handling of oil/gas prices	3	4	2	4
Dishonest	2	1	1	3
Not qualified/experienced	2	3	1	1
Partisan politics/gridlock	2	1	5	1
Hurricane Katrina	2	2	3	1
Tax cuts/effects of tax cuts	1	1	1	0
Privatization of Social Security	1	1	1	1
Not for the poor	1	0	0	2
Cause budget deficit	1	2	1	1
Foreign policy/not enough	1	1	1	2
Bringing U.S. into a broad war	1	1	1	1
Not enough/no military experience	1	1	0	0
Not decisive/iffy	1	1	1	0
Speaks without thinking	1	2	0	1
Energy/Enron	1	1	1	1
Handling of war on terror	1	0	1	1
Stem cell research	1	2	0	1
Nothing	3	6	2	1
Everything	2	0	3	2
Other	5	7	4	8
DK/NA	14	21	5	17

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	1206	
Total Republicans	357	367
Total Democrats	419	419
Total Independents	430	420