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Slight Bush Gains On Heels of Foiled Terrorist Attack

Post 9/11:

- Americans See Long Road Ahead in War on Terrorism

By Mark Schulman and Tara Regan

In the wake of the foiled London airline bombing attempt and the upcoming five year anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks, President Bush's approval rating has enjoyed a slight 3-point bump up from early August, now standing at a still highly negative 38% approve 57% disapprove, according to this week's *Time/Discovery Channel* Poll.

The previous *Time* Poll, conducted in mid-August, had the President's approval rating at 35% approve 58% disapprove.

Republicans Again Have the Edge on Fighting Terrorism

Republicans have opened a substantial 8 point lead over Democrats in dealing with terrorism -- 41% think Republicans do a better job vs. 33% Democrats. A March 2006 *Time* poll had the Democrats leading on terrorism by 11 points, 44% - 33%.

- A large majority of Republicans (86%) believe their party would do a better job dealing with terrorism.
- Fewer although a majority of Democrats (65%) believe their party would do a better job.

However, Democrats Still Hold Lead in Congressional Vote

The Poll also finds that registered voters still however prefer Democrats over Republicans in the generic Congressional races, 51% - 40% (including leaners). This is little changed from late March (50% Democrat/lean Democrat vs. 41% Republican/lean Republican).

Bush Has No Clear Terrorism Policy

While Republicans have an edge on fighting terrorism, most Americans (69%) hold out little hope of a victory over terrorism in the next ten years. Only about one-quarter (23%) believe that it is possible that the war on terrorism will be won in the next 10 years;

One reason for the pessimism may be that more than half (59%) say the Bush administration has no clear policy for dealing with terrorism, with only less than 2-in-5 (36%) believing that the Administration does.

Majority Believe Iraq Hurts War on Terrorism

The bleak outlook for Iraq may also be fueling pessimism about defeating terrorism. While President Bush has argued that U.S. involvement in Iraq is central to defeating terrorism, a majority of Americans (54%) believe U.S. involvement in Iraq has only hurt the war on terrorism. Only 2-in-5 (40%) believe our involvement has helped.

- Bush's job rating in handling Iraq remains mired at 34% little changed over the past six months.

- About half (51%) believe the U.S.'s handling of the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel in Lebanon has hurt the war on terror vs. 29% who believed it helped.
- Republicans are more likely than Democrats to believe U.S. involvement in the war in Iraq (70% vs. 18%) and in the conflict in Lebanon (50% vs. 16%) are "helping" the war on terrorism.

Saddam Hussein's Role in 9/11

A little more than one-third (38%) still believe Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the September 11th attacks, down from 78% in an ABC/Washington Post Poll conducted September 13, 2001. Today, a little more than half (53%) do not think that Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the September 11th terrorist attacks.

- Republicans (47% involved vs. 43% not involved) are more likely than Democrats (29% involved vs. 65% not involved) to believe Saddam Hussein was involved with 9/11.

Americans Split on "Terrorism Politics"

Americans are split on whether the:

- Bush administration uses the threat of terrorism or terrorism alerts for political reasons (49%) or not (45%).
- U.S. government will abuse powers that the Patriot Act and other actions by the President have given to investigate U.S. citizens in order to combat terrorism (55% worry about abuse of such powers vs. 43% not worried).

Many Say Terrorist Attack in U.S. Likely in Next Year

About 3-in-4 (73%) believe that an act of terrorism in the United States in the next 12 months is either very (26%) or somewhat (47%) likely. Almost one-quarter (24%) believe an attack on U.S. soil is unlikely.

Americans are not necessarily convinced that the work the government has done is the reason for there not being a terrorist attack in the U.S. since 9/11.

- A little more than 2-in-5 (44%) believe that there has not been a terrorist attack on U.S. soil since September 11th because of the work the government has done vs. about half (49%) who believe other reasons are responsible for there not being another attack.
- Republicans are much more likely than Democrats to believe that the work of the government has protected the U.S. from another terrorist attack (72% vs. 26%).

Few Excellent or Failing Grades on Terrorism Protection

Few Americans (17%) give the government a straight "A" grade in protecting America from terrorism, about the same number who give the government failing grades of "D" or "F" (18%)

- About 1-in-3 (33%) give the government a "good" grade of "B", while 30% give the government a "C" grade.

- Republicans are more likely than Democrats to give the U.S. government an above average grade of A or B (80% vs. 28%).

Since 9/11, What Grade Would You Give U.S. Gov't In Protecting From Another Terrorist Attack?

	Total (%)	Republicans (%)	Democrats (%)	Independents (%)
A	17	33	7	13
B	33	47	21	35
C	30	16	41	32
D	11	2	18	11
F	7	2	12	8
Don't Know/No Answer	1	*	2	1

Only a slim majority (56%) believe that the creation of the Department of Homeland Security after September 11th has made the country safer. About two-in-five (40%) disagree.

Life Has Changed Since 9/11 Attacks

Almost all (91%) say that life in the United States has changed either a "great deal" (53%) or "some" (38%) since September 11th and the terrorist threats that have followed. About 8% say that life in the U.S. has not changed much in the last 5 years.

However, fewer (66%) indicate that their own lives personally have changed, either a "great deal" (27%) or "some" (39%) since 9/11.

9/11 Aftermath: More Patriotism, More Religious, More Suspicious

The weeks and months immediately following September 11th saw many changes to American life, from the wearing of American flag pins to increased waiting time and screening at airports. Some of these reactions have continued over the last five years:

- Many Americans report not only feeling more patriotic in the weeks and months immediately following the 9/11 attacks (68%) but even today (65%).
- Similarly, about 2-in-5 (39%) say they were suspicious of people who looked like they were of Middle Eastern origin immediately following 9/11. A similar number (43%) say they continue to be suspicious of people of Middle Eastern origin today.

In fact, instead of lessening in effect over time, many reactions to the immediate event of 9/11 have only gotten stronger over time:

- Feeling more religious than before 9/11 (23% reported immediately after 9/11 vs. 39% reporting today, 5 years later); traveling less by airplane (23% vs. 32%); trying to avoid attending public events with large crowds (21% vs. 28%) and avoiding travel to certain cities that might be terrorist targets (22% vs. 30%) have all increased over the last 5 years.

Do Each Describe Your Reactions In The Weeks/Months Following 9/11? And How About

Today?

	Weeks/Months Following 9/11 (%)	5 Years After 9/11 (%)
I Felt/Feel More Patriotic	68	65
I Was/Am Suspicious of People Who Looked Like They Were of Middle Eastern Origin	39	43
I Felt/Feel More Religious	23	39
I Traveled/Travel Less By Airplane	23	32
I Avoided/Avoid Travel to Certain Cities That Might Be Terrorist Targets	22	30
I Tried/Try To Avoid Attending Public Events With Large Crowds	21	28

Methodology

This Time Magazine poll was conducted by telephone between August 22-24, 2006 among a national random sample of 1,002 adults, age 18 and older throughout America. The data have been weighted to reflect the demographic composition of adult Americans.

The margin of error for the entire sample is approximately +/- 3 percentage points. The margin of error is higher for subgroups. Surveys are subject to other error sources as well, including sampling coverage error, recording error, and respondent error.

The Poll's partisan breakdown is as follows:

*32% Democrat
28% Republican
27% Independent*

Select results from this TIME/Discovery Channel poll appear in this week's issue of TIME, on newsstands Monday. For additional results from this poll, tune in to Ted Koppel's premiere on the Discovery Channel. Koppel on Discovery — The Price of Security will air from 8-11 p.m. ET on Sunday, Sept. 10.

Schulman, Ronca, & Bucuvalas (SRBI) Public Affairs designed the survey and conducted all interviewing. The full Time questionnaire and trend data may be found in the related link below.

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