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Republican Support for War at All-Time Low

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## A Decade Later, Iraq War Divides the Public

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## Republican Support for War at All-Time Low

# A Decade Later, Iraq War Divides the Public

A decade after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, the public offers a divided judgment of the war: 46% say the U.S. has mostly succeeded in achieving its goals in Iraq, about as many (43%) say it has mostly failed.

The public also is split over the original decision to use military force in Iraq. While 44% say it was the wrong decision to use force in Iraq, 41% say it was the right decision.

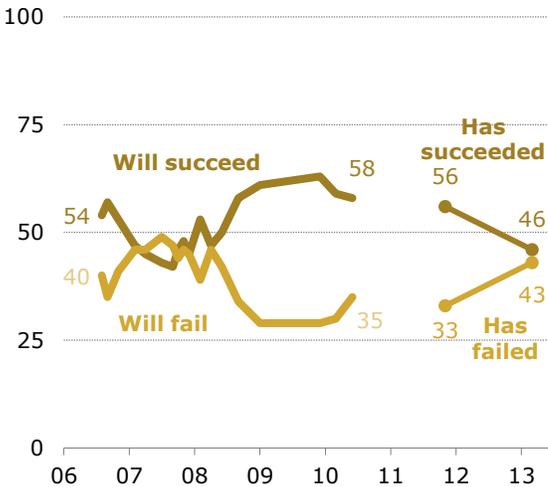
The national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted March 14-17 among 924 adults, finds that the percentages saying the war was a success and the decision to go to war was the right one have declined since November 2011, as U.S. forces were being withdrawn from Iraq.

At that time, 56% said the U.S. had mostly succeeded in Iraq, 10 points higher than today. Nearly half (48%) said the war was the right decision — among the highest percentages since the second year of the war.

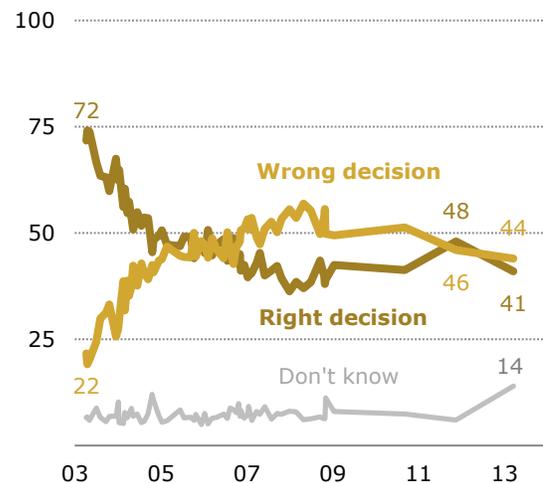
The decline in the percentage saying the war was the right decision has come largely among Republicans. Currently, 58% of Republicans say the war was the right decision, down 14 points since November 2011 and the lowest percentage since the war began in 2003. Opinions among Democrats and independents are little changed since 2011.

### Views of the Iraq War

*In achieving its goals in Iraq, the United States ...*



*Decision to use military force in Iraq...*



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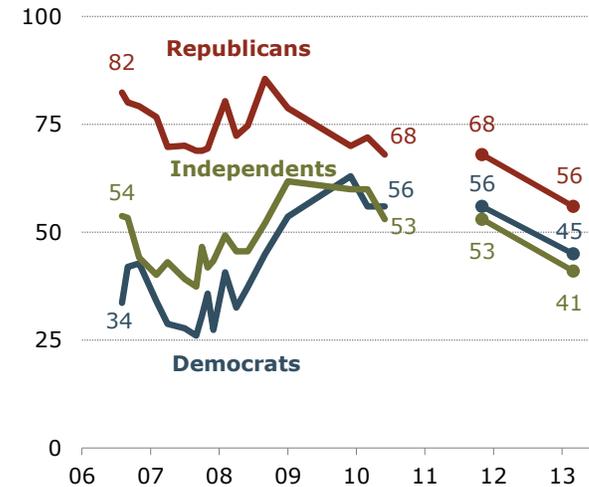
## Fewer Say U.S. Has Achieved Its Goals in Iraq

The percentage saying the U.S. has achieved its goals in Iraq has declined among all partisan groups since November 2011, and opinion among Republicans stands at a record low.

Overall, more Republicans say the U.S. has achieved its goals in Iraq than say it has failed (56% vs. 36%). While still positive, on balance, this is the lowest percentage of Republicans saying the U.S. *has* achieved or *will* achieve its goals in Iraq since the question was first asked in 2006. Less than two years ago, 68% of Republicans thought the U.S. had achieved its goals. In September 2008, 86% said the United States would definitely or probably succeed in achieving its goal.

### Has the U.S. Succeeded in Iraq?

% saying U.S. *will* succeed/*has* succeeded in achieving its goals in Iraq



PEW RESEARCH CENTER March 14-17, 2013.

Democrats are as likely to say the U.S. has mostly succeeded (45%) as mostly failed (45%) in achieving its goals in Iraq. In November 2011, Democrats also were more positive (56% mostly succeeded, 35% mostly failed). From 2006 through 2008, no more than about four-in-ten Democrats said the U.S. would succeed in Iraq, but Democrats became more optimistic after Barack Obama took office in 2009. In December 2009, 63% of Democrats said the U.S. would succeed in Iraq; today, just 45% say the U.S. has succeeded in achieving its goals there.

Among independents, 49% say the U.S. has failed to achieve its goals in Iraq, while 41% say the U.S. has succeeded. As with Republicans and Democrats, the percentage of independents saying the war was successful has declined; in December 2009, 60% of independents said the United States would be successful in achieving its goals in Iraq.

## Views of Decision to Use Force in Iraq

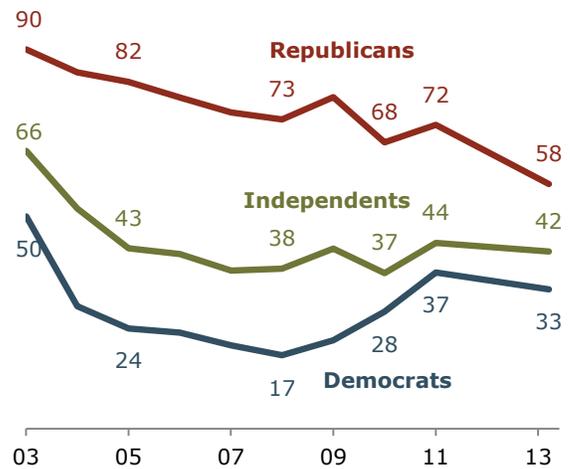
The percentage of Republicans saying the war was the right decision has fallen to an all-time low of 58%. Nonetheless, more Republicans than independents (42%) or Democrats (33%) say the war was the right decision.

The percentage of Republicans saying the war was the right decision is now substantially lower than at any point during the war. During 2003, the first year of the war, 90% of Republicans said the war was the right decision, according to an average of polls conducted that year.

Democrats continue to view the war in Iraq as the wrong decision, by a 55%-33% margin. Opinion was similar in November 2011 (59% wrong decision, 37% right decision). The percentage of Democrats saying the war was the right decision reached a low of 17% in 2008.

Independents are divided about the original decision to use force in Iraq: 42% call it the right decision, 45% the wrong decision. The percentage of independents saying the war was the right decision fell below 50% in 2005 and has changed little since then.

### Fewer Republicans Say War Was Right Decision



PEW RESEARCH CENTER March 14-17, 2013.  
2003-2008 based on aggregated data for each year.

## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted March 14-17, 2013 among a national sample of 924 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (512 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 412 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 197 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source and Universal Survey under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2011 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2012 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	924	3.9 percentage points
Republicans	228	7.8 percentage points
Democrats	300	6.8 percentage points
Independents	315	6.6 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**March 14-17, 2013 OMNIBUS**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**N=924**

**PEW.1 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****NO QUESTIONS PEW.2-PEW.5****PEW.6-PEW.8 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

Thinking about Iraq...

PEW.9 Do you think the U.S. made the right decision or the wrong decision in using military force in Iraq?

	<u>Right decision</u>	<u>Wrong decision</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
Mar 14-17, 2013	41	44	14
Nov 9-14, 2011	48	46	6
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	41	51	7
January, 2009	43	49	8
November, 2008	39	50	11
Late October, 2008	38	56	6
Mid-October, 2008	40	54	6
Mid-September, 2008	43	50	7
June, 2008	39	55	6
April, 2008	37	57	6
Late February, 2008	38	54	8
Late December, 2007	36	56	8
October, 2007	39	54	7
September, 2007	42	50	8
July, 2007	41	53	6
June, 2007	40	51	9
April, 2007	45	47	8
March, 2007	43	49	8
February, 2007	40	54	6
Mid-January, 2007	40	51	9
Early January, 2007	40	53	7
December, 2006	42	51	7
Mid-November, 2006	41	51	8
Early November, 2006 (RVs)	45	48	7
Late October, 2006	43	47	10
Early October, 2006	45	47	8
Early September, 2006	49	43	8
August, 2006	45	46	9
July, 2006	44	50	6
June, 2006	49	44	7
April, 2006	47	46	7
March, 2006	45	49	6
February, 2006	51	44	5
January, 2006	45	47	8
December, 2005	47	48	5
Late October, 2005	48	45	7
Early October, 2005	44	50	6
Mid-September, 2005	49	44	7
July, 2005	49	44	7
June, 2005	47	45	8
February, 2005	47	47	6
January, 2005	51	44	5
December, 2004	49	44	7
November, 2004 (RVs)	48	41	11
Mid-October, 2004	46	42	12

**PEW.9 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Right decision</u>	<u>Wrong decision</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
Early October, 2004	50	39	11
September, 2004	53	39	8
August, 2004	53	41	6
July, 2004	52	43	5
June, 2004	55	38	7
May, 2004	51	42	7
Late April, 2004	54	37	9
Early April, 2004	57	35	8
Mid-March, 2004	55	39	6
Late February, 2004	60	32	8
Early February, 2004	56	39	5
Mid-January, 2004	65	30	5
Early January, 2004	62	28	10
December, 2003	67	26	7
October, 2003	60	33	7
September, 2003	63	31	6
August, 2003	63	30	7
Early July, 2003	67	24	9
May, 2003	74	20	6
April 10-16, 2003	74	19	7
April 8-9, 2003	74	19	7
April 2-7, 2003	72	20	8
March 28-April 1, 2003	69	25	6
March 25-27, 2003	74	21	5
March 23-24, 2003	74	21	5
March 20-22, 2003	71	22	7
Late January, 1991	77	15	8

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.10 Overall, do you think the United States has mostly succeeded or mostly failed in achieving its goals in Iraq?

March 14-17 <u>2013</u>		Nov 9-14 <u>2011</u>
46	Mostly succeeded	56
43	Mostly failed	33
11	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	10

**TREND FOR COMPARISON:**

*Regardless of what you think about the original decision to use military force in Iraq, do you now believe that the United States will definitely succeed, probably succeed, probably fail, or definitely fail in achieving its goals in Iraq?<sup>1</sup>*

	<u>Definitely/ Probably succeed</u>	<u>Definitely/ Probably fail</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
Jun 16-20, 2010	58	35	7
Mar 10-14, 2010	59	30	10
Dec 9-13, 2009	63	29	8
Jan, 2009	61	29	10
September, 2008	58	34	8
June, 2008	50	42	8
April, 2008	47	46	7
Late February, 2008	53	39	8
Late December, 2007	45	45	10
November, 2007	48	46	6
October, 2007	46	44	10

<sup>1</sup> Trend for comparison only shows the net of answers "Definitely succeed" and "Probably succeed" and the net of answers "Definitely fail" and "Probably fail." See June 2010 [topline](#) for full trend.

**PEW.10 TREND FOR COMPARISION CONTINUED...**

	Definitely/ <u>Probably succeed</u>	Definitely/ <u>Probably fail</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
September, 2007	42	47	11
July, 2007	43	49	8
April, 2007	45	46	9
February, 2007	47	46	7
November, 2006	53	41	6
Mid-September, 2006	57	35	8
August, 2006	54	40	6