

# In the Polls

**T**he US public has little desire to further cut the defense budget; nearly 75 percent of all Americans want it to remain at its current level or maybe even go up. By a similarly wide margin, Americans continue to favor rendering military aid to important allies, even if they are not all that enthusiastic about protecting weaker nations from aggression.

For all that, the public evinces deeply conflicting views about just when and where to use force. Though a solid majority would approve of taking military action to defend Saudi Arabia, the same cannot be said for a treaty ally (South Korea), a traditional regional friend (Israel), and a next-door neighbor (Mexico).

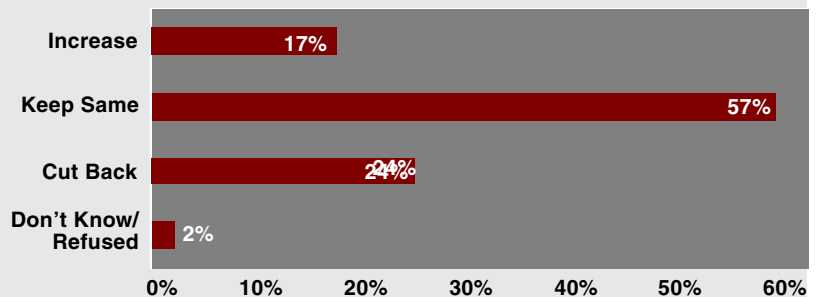
The overwhelming majority now regrets that the US didn't finish off Saddam Hussein in 1991, when it was a possibility. And most Americans are in favor of expanding NATO, though almost nobody can name the prospective new member nations.

If a survey of polls taken during the past six months is a guide, Americans are increasingly concerned about weapons of mass destruction. The public gives top priority to halting the menace posed by nuclear, chemical, and biological arms. Americans feel increasingly threatened by terrorists wielding such weapons.

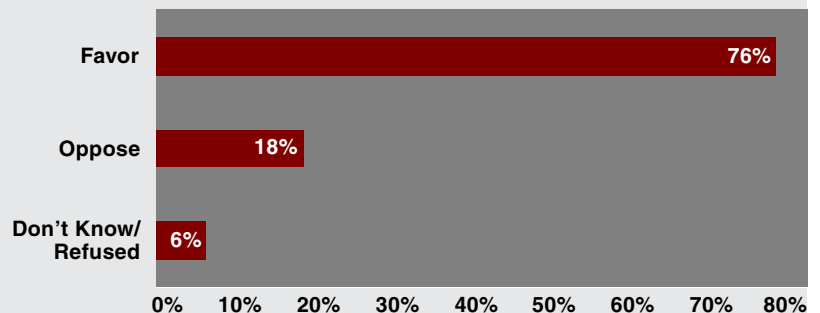
*Air Force Magazine* draws these poll results from a large sampling of recent polling data made available by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, located at the University of Connecticut.

## Superpower Status

*Do you think that we should increase our spending on national defense, keep it about the same, or cut it back?*



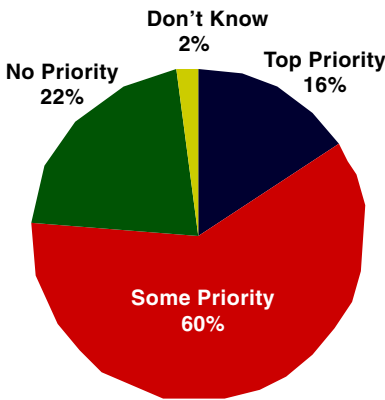
*Do you favor or oppose military aid to countries that are important allies of the US?*



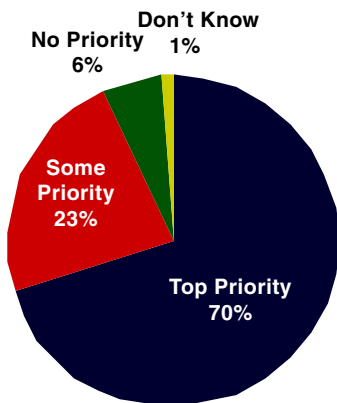
Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Pew Research Center, September 1997.

## Priorities

*Tell me how much priority you think should be given to protecting weaker nations against foreign aggression, even if US vital interests are not at stake.*



*Tell me how much priority you think should be given to preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction.*



Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Pew Research Center, September 1997.

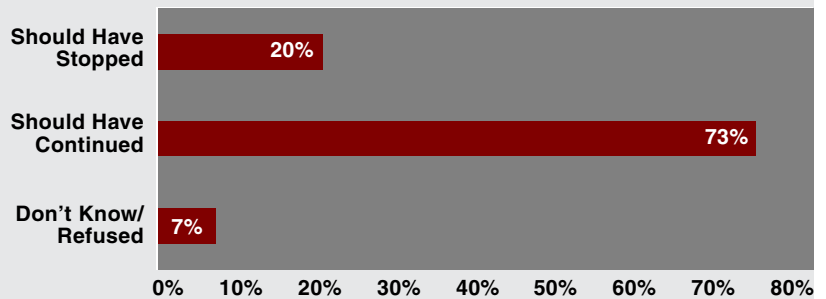
## Use of Force

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't Know/Refused
Would you approve or disapprove of the use of US forces if Iraq invaded Saudi Arabia?	54%	41%	5%
Would you approve or disapprove of the use of US forces if the Mexican government was about to fall because of revolution or civil war?	43%	49%	8%
Would you approve or disapprove of the use of US forces if Arab forces invaded Israel?	45%	47%	8%
Would you approve or disapprove of the use of US forces if North Korea invaded South Korea?	35%	58%	7%

Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Pew Research Center, September 1997.

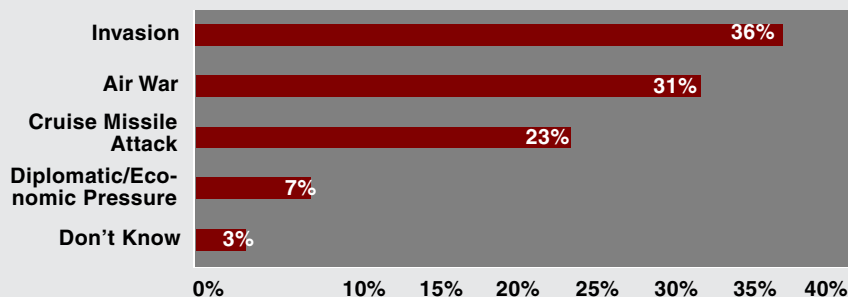
## Iraq, Past and Future

*In 1991, should the United States have stopped fighting when Iraqi troops left Kuwait, or should the US have continued fighting Iraq until Saddam Hussein was removed from power?*



Source: CBS for the CBS News Poll, November 1997.

*The American military could respond to events in Iraq in several ways. Please say which of the following would be appropriate if Iraq shoots down a US warplane.*

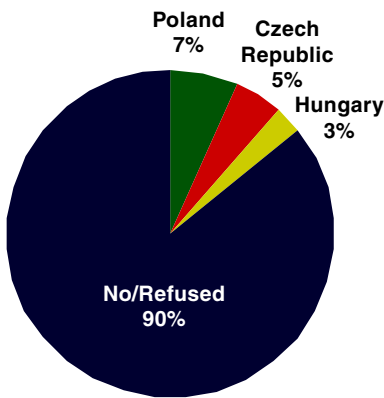


Source: Louis Harris and Associates for the Harris Poll, November 1997.

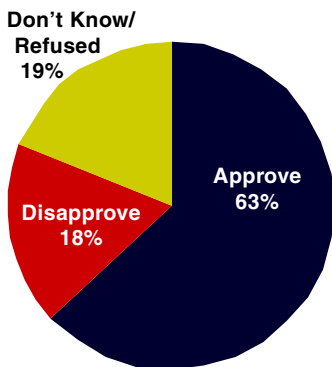
## NATO Expansion

*This summer, three countries were invited to join NATO. Do you happen to recall the names of any of them?*

Note: Adds to more than 100 percent due to overlapping responses.



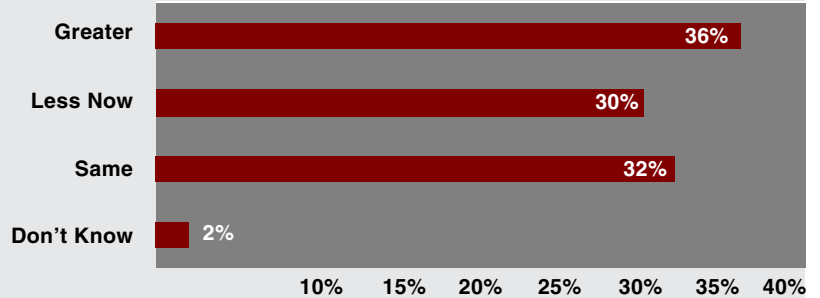
*Generally, do you approve or disapprove of expanding NATO to include Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary?*



Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Pew Research Center, September 1997.

## Weapons of Mass Destruction

*Do you think the danger of attack on the United States with a nuclear, biological, or chemical weapon is greater now than it was 10 years ago, less now than it was 10 years ago, or is it about the same?*



*These days, do you think there is more of a danger of a nuclear attack on the United States by a foreign military power, by a foreign-sponsored terrorist, or by a domestic terrorist?*

