

7/30/05

Do You Believe Polls

by
Tom Holbrook

A busy week throughout the U.S. and the world and plenty of important news items we could cover. At the top of the heap is another poll being announced by USA Today/CNN/Gallup with a bold headline crying out that a majority of Americans feel the United States will not win the war in Iraq... 32% said we can't win... 21% say we could but probably won't... 43% say we will win. It sounds pretty bad for the home boys until we break down the poll results and look at them in their proper perspective. Let's write our own lead line and see what's really going on. *"A vote was taken of average Americans and 43% of them indicated we will win in Iraq, while 32% indicated there's no way we will win. 21% of Americans said they aren't real sure who will win... This group says we could win but from what they hear reported in newspapers, magazines and main stream TV news it sounds like we probably won't."* It doesn't sound quite as depressing when worded properly does it?

The 21% of Americans who aren't sure are described as an "ambivalent public" by the polling organizations. Let's check out Mr. Webster for his definition of ambivalence. *"Indecisive... uncertain as to which course to follow or what to believe."* Any idea as to why such a large percentage of our citizens are on the fence about our chances in Iraq? Well, to quote the pollsters, *"Majority views on that question have fluctuated for the past year in response to good news and bad from Baghdad."*

How can anyone help but have doubts when all they hear coming out of their TVs and Newspapers is that absolutely nothing is going on in Iraq except terrorist's suicide bombings and the deaths they cause and the continued victories against our troops by the "insurgents?" Could we say, sensationalism with lots of blood and gore sells more newspapers and TV time than the number of schools being opened, or Iraqi banks now beginning to make small and medium sized business loans to help Iraqi entrepreneurs restart their businesses?

Is the "ambivalent American public" being told that 600+ new schools and over 160 medical clinics have been constructed, or Iraqi teachers who had retired are asking for their old jobs back because they can now actually teach rather than force feed Saddam Hussein propaganda to their students? Is it being reported to the masses that 34 foreign missions have reopened in Baghdad or that 45 other countries have now offered their military forces to help with securing and rebuilding Iraq? We don't hear a word!

Other positive truths are: Oil production is increasing, in spite of terrorist bombings. Previously forbidden items are now being sold in open markets such as TV Satellite Dishes which will allow the Iraqi people to hear the truth about the outside world and to hear how the American and

Middle East Media are distorting actual conditions inside their country. Over 39,000 electricians have returned to work and teachers and other key employee positions are being paid over 4 times what they were being paid under Hussein but no major headline on that. A new Iraqi economy is being built on the principles of market economics, respect for the rule of law, and transparency of government but you won't hear about it from ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, MSNBC, the Washington Post, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Newsweek Magazine or other left leaning media outlets.

Don't think the enemy doesn't read, listen and watch our mainstream media because they do. They also watch and listen for results to polls that we spoke of at the beginning of this article. What they hear from the ones mentioned above can only encourage and embolden them to hold their course of terror and intimidation. The enemy might not read the negative comments in our small town community papers but our citizens do, and those negative comments shape their thinking to where they become part of that "ambivalent American public" who aren't sure that our country will do what we are attempting to do in Iraq.

One aspect of the above poll they didn't include in their headlines was that 53% of Americans polled said it was not a mistake to send troops to Iraq while 43% said it was. Even though our citizens are not being told the truth they still feel we are doing the right thing by liberating the Iraqi people and we should stay the course.

Let's look at what a returning American soldier has to say about the situation in Iraq from his eyewitness testimony.

A Denison, Iowa soldier is gaining notoriety as the author of an e-mail now circulating the world noting positive developments in Iraq. Sgt. First Class Ray Reynolds, 37, said he wrote the message to counter what he considers overly negative media coverage focused on soldiers killed and politicians who have criticized the war effort.

"We need to start focusing on the good because that's what's going to inspire the people of Iraq and the troops that America is behind this project. We need to think of it in terms of rebuilding the country of Iraq rather than the day-to-day ups and downs of the project."

His e-mail, based on statistics he compiled, notes accomplishments ranging from power and phone service being restored to cleaner drinking water and the interim constitution being signed. He wrote the e-mail to 13 friends and relatives and asked his acquaintances to pass it on. Now, the e-mail is traveling around the world.

Reynolds, in his letter, says the media has *"...done a very poor job of covering everything that has happened."* Sgt. Reynolds, I salute you and your comrades and I encourage any journalist reading this to hear your message and act accordingly.