



101 Gordon Road, Toronto, ON, M2P 1E5
Tel 416 733 2320 Fax 416 733 4991
info@vectorresearch.com www.vectorresearch.com

Canada's Pulse

Why Iraqis will pay for 9/11

By Marc Zwelling
President
Vector Research + Development Inc.

Public opinion is the most powerful force in the world. Even as American bombs drop awesome might on Iraq, it's American public opinion that concedes George Bush's authority to pursue the war.

But the American public's support for the war stands on a false premise. Polls show majority believe that Saddam was either personally involved in the September 11, 2001, plane hijackings that destroyed New York's World Trade Centre and struck the U.S. defence department headquarters – or gave direct or indirect support to Al Qaeda, the terrorists who plotted 9/11.

For example, in a CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll of 1,007 adults nationwide March 14-15, 88% agreed that "Saddam Hussein is involved in supporting terrorist groups that have plans to attack the United States."

Only 51%, however, agreed that "Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the September 11th terrorist attacks" while 41% said they did not believe it.

United Press International correspondent Steve Sailer reported this month that "the heart of Bush's support appears to be those who believe that Saddam Hussein was involved with the World Trade Centre atrocity." A poll for the Knight-Ridder newspaper chain asked, "How many of the Sept. 11 hijackers were Iraqi citizens?" Only 17% said none – the correct answer.

In a CBS News/*New York Times* poll March 7-9 with 1,010 adults nationwide, Americans said by 45% to 40% that "Saddam Hussein was personally involved in the September 11th, 2001, terrorist attacks against the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon." Another 15% did not know or answer.

Some 84% of Americans who approved of starting the war against Iraq thought Hussein was involved in 9/11 compared with only 49% of those who didn't think he was involved.

Bush has not discouraged people from swallowing this unproved connection between Al Qaeda and the Iraqi dictator. Removing Saddam and thwarting terrorism are Bush's key talking points to justify the war (it's never oil!). Bush even said just prior to attacking that Saddam Hussein "aids and protects terrorists, including members of Al Qaeda."

Most Americans, however, connected Saddam Al Qaeda before Bush reminded them.

Polling in February for the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland showed a strong correlation between enthusiasm for war against Iraq and beliefs about the link between Iraq and Al Qaeda.

		Approve military action vs. Iraq?	
		Yes	No
		66%	26%
Think Saddam involved in 9/11	59%	76%	17%
Don't think so	25%	48%	48%

The PIPA polltakers also asked, "Please select what you think is the best description of the relationship between the Iraqi government and the terrorist group Al Qaeda." Some 56% linked Iraq and 9/11.

Iraq was directly involved in carrying out the September 11th attacks 20% Iraq has given substantial support to Al Qaeda, but was not involved in the 36% September 11th attacks
A few Al Qaeda individuals have visited Iraq or had contact with Iraqi officials 29%
There is no connection at all 7%

In a *New York Times* poll Americans who correctly believe Saddam Hussein was not involved in 9/11 were evenly split on military action, while those who think he was involved favoured of military action by 4 to 1.

CBS/New York Times poll	Approve military action vs. Iraq?	
	Yes	No

		66%	30%
Think Saddam involved in 9/11	45%	84%	14%
Don't think so	40%	49%	47%

An ABC-TV News poll in January asked, "Do you think Iraq has or has not provided direct support to the Al Qaeda terrorist group?"

		Approve military action vs. Iraq?	
ABC poll		Yes	No
Think Iraq provided support for Al Qaeda	68%	73%	24%
Don't think so	17%	45%	51%

As these poll findings show, even if people are wrong, their ignorance serves as fact when they reach a conclusion.

Despite their noninvolvement in 9/11 it seems the Iraqis will pay the price for American misinformation.

Marc Zwelling conducts polls in Canada and the US for unions and other clients and creates communication strategies through conventional and interactive media. He can be reached at polls@vectorresearch.com.

Hank Zucker of Creative Research Systems and Gary Langer, Director of Polling at ABC News, provided insights on these polls to the American Association for Public Opinion Research online discussion group.

March/2003