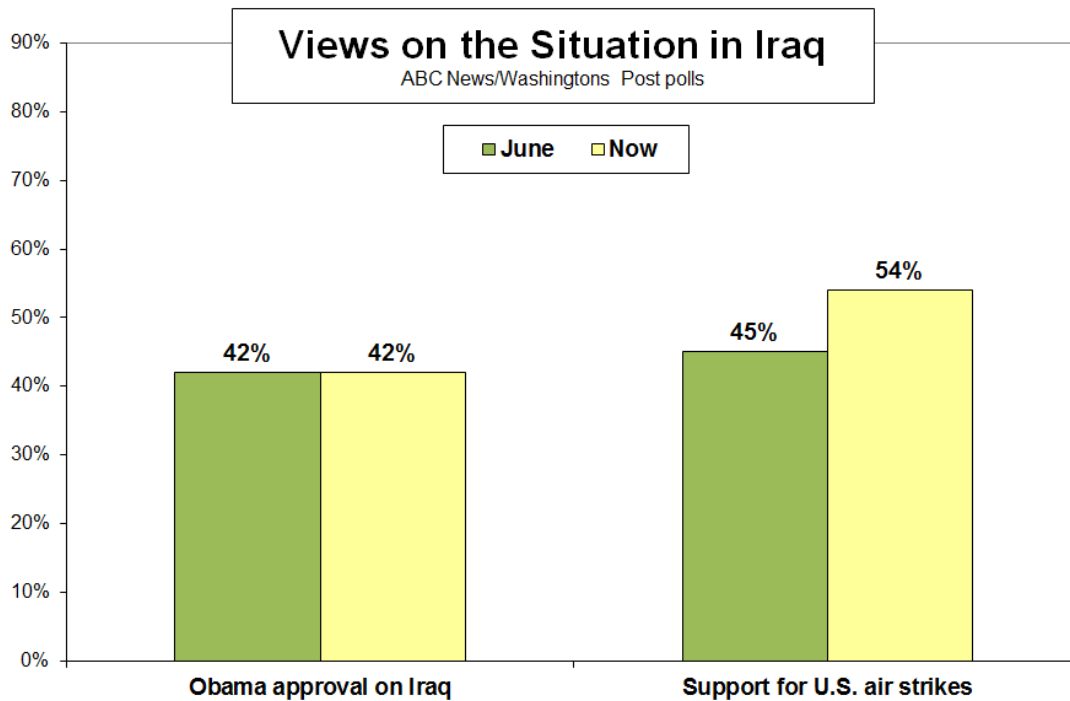


Support for U.S. Air Strikes in Iraq Jumps

After splitting evenly two months ago, a majority of Americans now support U.S. air strikes in Iraq – but without additional credit to Barack Obama for ordering them.

Support for the military action against Sunni insurgents in Iraq is up by 9 percentage points since June, from 45 to 54 percent in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll, while opposition is down by 7 points, to 39 percent. Yet views on Obama’s handling of the situation are essentially unchanged – 42 percent approve, while 51 percent disapprove.

On a third question, the public divides on providing arms and ammunition to the Kurdish military forces who are opposing the insurgents, with 45 percent in favor, 49 percent opposed.



The air strikes, which began nearly two weeks ago, represent the most significant U.S. military operations in Iraq since the withdrawal of the last ground troops in late 2011. Interviews for this survey, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), were completed before the announcement that U.S. air strikes had assisted Iraqi and Kurdish forces in recapturing the Mosul Dam, a major strategic objective.

An increase in support for U.S. military action occurred among Democrats and political independents – up by 10 and 8 points, respectively, while remaining largely stable and higher

among Republicans. Similarly, support has increased by 8 to 12 points among liberals, moderates and those who say they're "somewhat" conservative, while holding steady among strong conservatives.

Partisanship and ideology also continue to play a major role in ratings of Obama's performance on the issue. Two-thirds of Democrats and 63 percent of liberals approve of the president's handling of the situation, falling among political independents and moderates (to 37 and 44 percent, respectively) and plummeting to a quarter of conservatives and two in 10 Republicans.

What's changed is the relationship between views on air strikes and Obama's handling of the situation. For example, in June, among Democrats who opposed air strikes, 74 percent also approved of his work on the issue; today it's only 56 percent. In effect, the jump in support for air strikes among Democrats is offset by a drop in approval of the president's handling of the situation among those who continue to oppose the air strikes, leaving his overall approval on the issue unchanged.

The gain in support for military strikes, with no increase in support for Obama's handling of the situation, also may reflect different bases on which these judgments are made. The U.S. military action has widely been reported as successful. Obama's work on the issue, though, extends beyond military action to broader strategic objectives, and his success at communicating and achieving them – a more complex judgment, and one whose outcome remains an open question.

Beyond air strikes, it was reported last week that the United States also has provided limited small arms and ammunition to the Kurds. Great Britain and France are reported to be furnishing them with weapons as well. Support for the two approaches is related, though not identical: Two-thirds of those who favor air strikes also support arming the Kurds, while eight in 10 of those who oppose air strikes likewise oppose providing weapons.

Apart from partisanship and ideology, support both for air strikes and for providing arms and ammunition to Kurdish military forces is greater among men, whites, college graduates, older Americans and those who are better off financially, compared with their counterparts. Save for older adults, these same groups saw double-digit increases in support for air strikes since June.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone Aug. 13-17, 2014, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,025 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y.

Analysis by Gregory Holyk.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the situation in Iraq? Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
8/17/14	42	16	26	51	15	36	7
6/22/14	42	17	25	52	18	34	6

2. Do you support or oppose U.S. air strikes against the Sunni insurgents in Iraq? Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
8/17/14	54	31	23	39	17	22	8
6/22/14	45	20	25	46	19	27	8

3. Do you support or oppose the United States providing arms and ammunition to the Kurdish military forces, who are opposing the Sunni insurgents in Iraq? Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
8/17/14	45	22	22	49	20	29	6

*** END ***