

**August 2008**



# **Language For The New American Consensus On International Cooperation**

**A Presentation Of Key Findings From Focus  
Groups And A National Survey**

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Nationally, the American electorate has clearly pivoted from Iraq to the economy.

*Top Five Priorities Government Should Address By Combined Choice*

Combined Choice	September 2007	August 2008
<b>#1</b>	Iraq 47%	Economy & Jobs 45%
<b>#2</b>	Health Care 31%	Energy / Cost of Gas 41%
<b>#3</b>	Illegal Immigration 26%	Health Care 30%
<b>#4</b>	Economy & Jobs 24%	Iraq 30%
<b>#5</b>	Terrorism 20%	Illegal Immigration 17%

\* September data from The NBC/WSJ poll of 1,002 adults conducted September 7-9, 2007. August data from The NBC/WSJ poll of 1,075 voters conducted August 15-18, 2008.

Given the focus on the economy at home, it is not surprising “America’s dependence on foreign oil” has soared to the number one international issue.

Most Important (Combined Choice) International Concerns

	<u>September 2007</u> <u>All Voters</u>	<u>July 2008</u> <u>All Voters</u>	<u>Net</u> <u>Difference</u>
America’s dependence on foreign oil	33%	67%	+34%
The global economy and trade	20%	34%	+14%
Terrorism	38%	42%	+4%

This new focus on the dependence on foreign oil means a number of international issues have dropped in salience with American voters.

Most Important (Combined Choice) International Concerns

	<u>September 2007</u> <u>All Voters</u>	<u>July 2008</u> <u>All Voters</u>	<u>Net</u> <u>Difference</u>
The spread of nuclear weapons	12%	7%	-5%
Environmental issues like global warming	25%	18%	-7%
Global health issues	12%	5%	-7%
Improving America's relationships with other countries	27%	16%	-11%
Hostile nations such as North Korea and Iran	24%	11%	-13%

# Top Issues (Combined Choice)

There is a new American consensus across party lines on the top three international issues.

## Core Republican Voters:

- America's Dependence on Foreign Oil (72%)
- **Terrorism (60%)**
- **The Global Economy and Trade (25%)**

## Swing Voters

- America's Dependence on Foreign Oil (72%)
- **Terrorism (41%)**
- **The Global Economy and Trade (37%)**

## Core Democrat Voters:

- America's Dependence on Foreign Oil (63%)
- **The Global Economy and Trade (38%)**
- **Terrorism (29%)**

There is a net ten point increase in the number of voters who say the U.S. should be less active around the world. This is not surprising given the increasing importance of issues related to the U.S. economy and gas prices.

Among All Voters

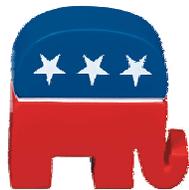
	September 2007	July 2008*
<b>More Active/ Involved</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Less Active/ Involved</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Net Difference</b>	<b>- 5%</b>	<b>-15%</b>

*\*Data from the UNF National Phone Survey conducted July 16-17 and 19-20, 2008.*

*Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view The United States needs to be more actively involved in world affairs because we are a leader and global issues affect us here at home or The United States needs to be less actively involved in world affairs because we need to focus more on issues here at home.*

Republicans are evenly divided on the U.S.'s role around the world, while Independents and Democrats want to be less active.

*By Party*

	More Active/ Involved	Less Active/ Involved	Net Difference
 <b>GOP</b>	48%	48%	0%
<b>IND</b>	31%	64%	-33%
 <b>DEM</b>	39%	57%	-18%

*\*Data from the UNF National Phone Survey conducted July 16-17 and 19-20, 2008.*

*Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view The United States needs to be more actively involved in world affairs because we are a leader and global issues affect us here at home or The United States needs to be less actively involved in world affairs because we need to focus more on issues here at home.*

Americans clearly reject “going it alone,” while an invocation about “doing our fair share” or “international cooperation” clearly works. The difference between “international cooperation” versus the phrase “multilateralism” is stark.

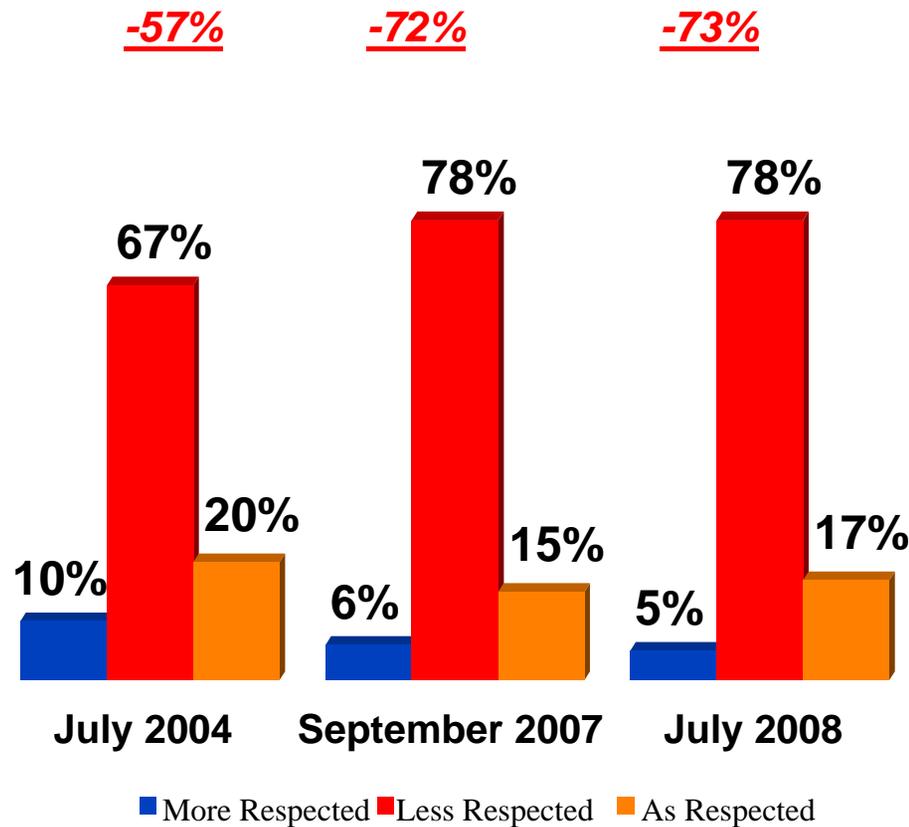
Impression Of Terms Among All Voters In September 2007

	<u>Mean Rating</u>
<b>America Doing Its Fair Share Around The World</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>International Cooperation</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Global Partnerships</b>	<b>63</b>
International Burden-Sharing	58
Multilateralism	49
<b>America Going It Alone</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Isolationism</b>	<b>30</b>

*For each term, please rate your overall impression of the term, using a scale of zero to one hundred, where zero means you have a very unfavorable opinion of the term and one hundred means you have a very favorable opinion of the term and fifty is neutral. You can use any number between zero and one hundred depending on your overall feeling or impression of the term.*

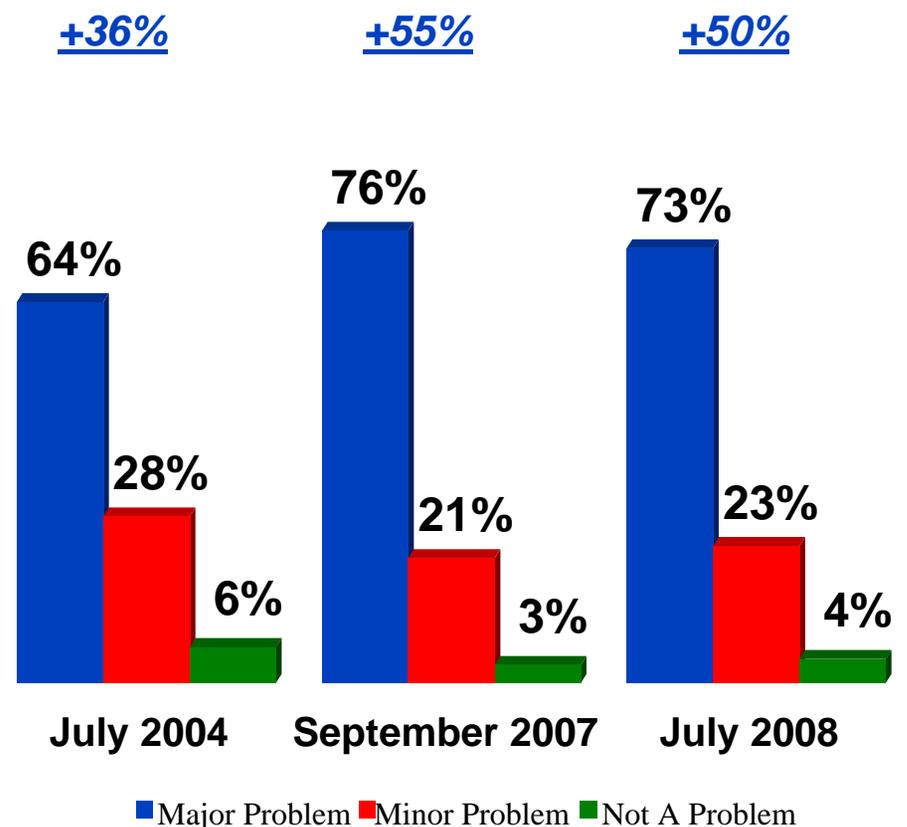
# There continues to be an American consensus that we are less respected by other countries and it is a major problem.

More Respected v. Less Respected



*Compared with the past, would you say the United States is more respected by other countries...less respected by other countries...these days, or as respected as it has been in the past?*

Major Problem v. Minor Problem



*Do you think less respect for America by other countries is a...*



**It is an important reminder that Americans' first priority in our next president continues to be keeping "America strong and secure around the world." It is compelling, though, to see the desire for balance between toughness/diplomacy in working with other countries around the world and working through organizations such as the United Nations.**

<b>Among All Voters</b>	<b>Sept. 07 % 8-10</b>	<b>July 08 % 8-10</b>
<b>Is committed to keeping America strong and secure around the world</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>Has the right balance of toughness and diplomacy in working with other countries around the world</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Will work with other countries, through organizations such as the United Nations, to tackle global terrorism work to end conflicts with other countries</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>Will improve America's image around the world</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>60%</b>

*I am going to read you some different attributes a candidate could possess or viewpoints a candidate could have about America's role in the world. I would like you to rate how important each is to you in determining how you would vote for president. Please use a scale of zero to ten, with ten being very important and zero being not important at all.*

<b>Among All Voters</b>	<b>Sept. 07 % 8-10</b>	<b>July 08 % 8-10</b>
<b>Will act to halt the spread of nuclear weapons</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>Will be more likely to bring U.S. troops home from Iraq</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Is focused much more on issues here at home and much less on issues around the world</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Will take on the global challenge posed by climate change</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Is focused on tracking down, capturing or killing terrorists throughout the world</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Wants to significantly limit America's role in the world and supports a foreign policy of abstaining from political or economic relations with other countries</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>25%</b>

*I am going to read you some different attributes a candidate could possess or viewpoints a candidate could have about America's role in the world. I would like you to rate how important each is to you in determining how you would vote for president. Please use a scale of zero to ten, with ten being very important and zero being not important at all.*

# Top Candidate Attributes (% 8-10)

The presidential candidate attributes are among the few areas where swing voters more closely mirror a mixture of Republican and Democrat voters' desires.

## Core Republican Voters:

- America strong & secure (86%)
- Balance of toughness & diplomacy (76%)
- Capturing or killing terrorists (66%)

## Swing Voters

- America strong & secure (74%)
- Balance of toughness & diplomacy (70%)
- Will work with other countries through organizations like the UN (56%)

## Core Democrat Voters:

- More likely to bring U.S. Troops home from Iraq (82%)
- Balance of toughness & diplomacy (76%)
- Will work with other countries through organizations like the UN (73%)

# What This Means For Republicans:

- It is crucial, especially to swing voters, they hear Republicans acknowledge their concern we need to focus more on the problems at home and less on the problems around the world, while at the same time maintaining an image of strong leadership.
- One way to do that is to focus on foreign policy as American leadership through international cooperation.
- Voters respond to this messaging and language because it combines both the idea of strong American leadership, while acknowledging that the U.S. will have allies that can share the burden on issues of common concern.

# What This Means For Democrats:

- Americans are looking for a president who will have the right balance between military and diplomacy. Democrats must pay special attention the word balance in discussing how America should pursue its interests in the world.
- A commitment to do what is necessary to keep America strong and secure is crucial -- particularly among the key swing voters. While President Bush may be judged for poor balance between military and diplomacy, it doesn't mean Americans now want a diplomacy-only approach.
- Once Democrats pass the national security test, they have an opportunity to frame this debate with Republicans. Voters do not want another "go it alone" administration that will ignore or neglect America's reputation in the world, or focus on terrorism only.



**August 2008**



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