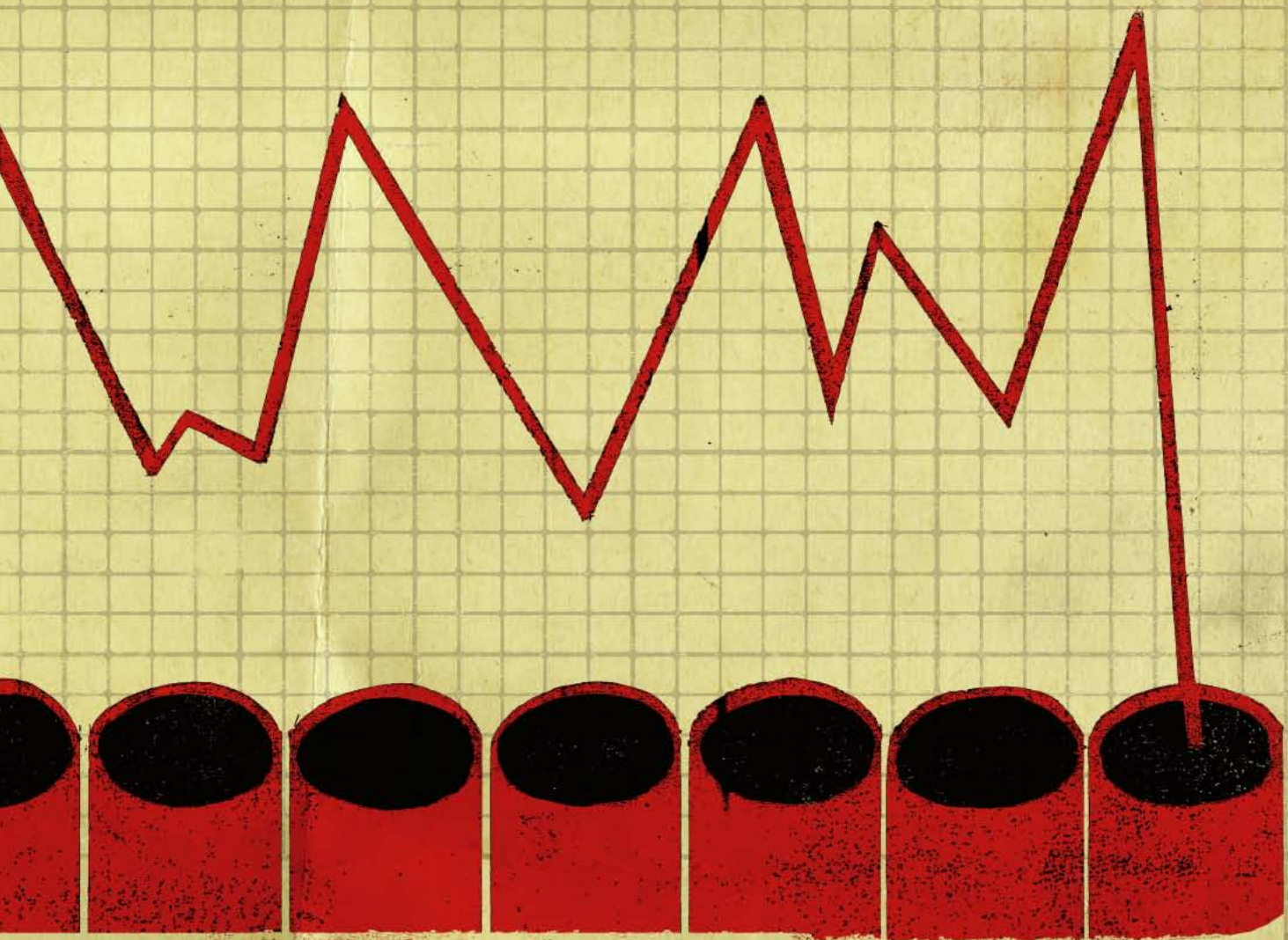


# THE TERRORISM INDEX

*In the third Terrorism Index, more than 100 of America's most respected foreign-policy experts see a world that is growing more dangerous, a national security strategy in disrepair, and a war in Iraq that is alarmingly off course.*







**A**mericans are thinking more about the war on terror than ever before. But that doesn't mean they've come to see this issue in the black-and-white terms preferred by many elected leaders. The combination of bloody wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, continued terrorist attacks from Britain to Somalia, and a presidential election in which candidates are defining themselves based on how they would stare down the threats has many seeing shades of gray. Six years after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, just 29 percent of Americans believe the United States is winning the

war on terror—the lowest percentage at any point since 9/11. But Americans also consider themselves safe. Six in 10 say that they do not believe another terrorist attack is imminent. Likewise, more than 60 percent of Americans now say that the decision to invade Iraq was a mistake. Yet around half report that they would support similar military action to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Such seemingly incompatible points of view may stem in part from the fact that we are increasingly asked to reconcile a bewildering array of threats—and a nebulous enemy that defies convention. In Iraq,

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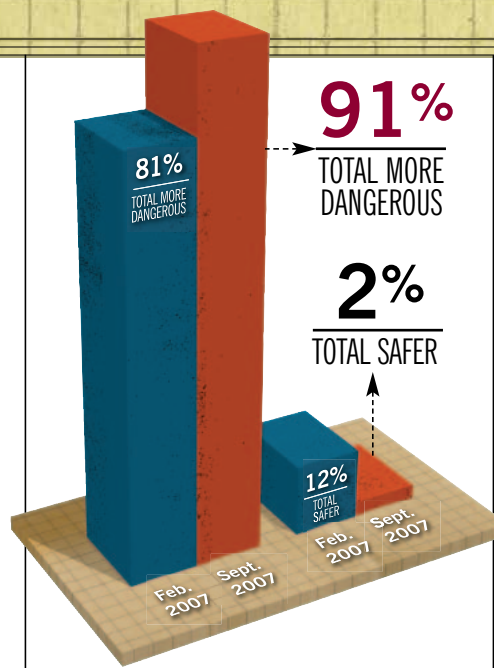




for instance, the same surge in U.S. forces that is meant to help pacify Baghdad only escalates violence elsewhere in the country. In the broader Middle East and South Asia, some of the same countries that are now the United States' most crucial allies have also been guilty of cultivating the very terrorists we look to bring to justice. Deciphering priorities from such difficult paradoxes can be hard. So, how can one determine whether the war on terror is making America safer or more dangerous?

To find out, FOREIGN POLICY and the Center for American Progress once again turned to the very people who have run the United States' national security apparatus during the past half century. Surveying more than 100 of America's top foreign-policy experts—Republicans and Democrats alike—the FOREIGN POLICY/Center for American Progress Terrorism Index is the only comprehensive, nonpartisan effort to mine the highest echelons of the nation's foreign-policy establishment for its assessment of how the United States is fighting the war on terror. First released in July 2006, and again last February, the index attempts to draw definitive conclusions about the war's priorities, policies, and progress. Its participants include people who have served as secretary of state, national security advisor, senior White House aides, top commanders in the U.S. military, seasoned intelligence professionals, and distinguished academics. Eighty percent of the experts have served in the U.S. government—including more than half in the Executive Branch, 32 percent in the military, and 21 percent in the intelligence community.

The world these experts see today is one that continues to grow more threatening. Fully 91 percent say the world is becoming more dangerous for Americans and the United States, up 10 percentage points since February. Eighty-four percent do not believe the United States is winning the war on terror, an increase of 9 percentage points from six months ago. More than 80 percent expect a terrorist attack on the scale of 9/11



Do you believe the world is becoming safer or more dangerous for the United States?

The United States is winning the war on terror.

**Agree** 6%

**Disagree** 84%

within a decade, a result that is more or less unchanged from one year ago.

On the positive side, many of the key agencies charged with ensuring the United States' national security appear to be getting better at their job. Six of nine agencies, including the Departments of State and Defense, scored above average on the experts' scale of 0 to 10. One year ago, only one agency scored above average. The National Security Agency fared the best, with an average ranking of 6.6. Many of the policies that these agencies pursue, however, did not fare as well. Nearly every foreign policy of the U.S. government—from domestic surveillance activities and the detention of terrorist suspects at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, to U.S. energy policies and efforts in the Middle East peace process—was sharply criticized by the experts. More than 6 in 10 experts, for instance, believe U.S. energy policies are

negatively affecting the country's national security. The experts were similarly critical of the CIA's rendition of terrorist suspects to countries known to torture prisoners and the Pentagon's policy of trying detainees before military tribunals.

No effort of the U.S. government was more harshly criticized, however, than the war in Iraq. In fact, that conflict appears to be the root cause of the experts' pessimism about the state of national security. Nearly all—92 percent—of the index's experts said the war in Iraq negatively affects U.S. national security, an increase of 5 percentage points from a year ago. Negative perceptions of the war in Iraq are shared across the political spectrum, with 84 percent of those who describe themselves as conservative taking a dim view of the war's impact. More than half of the experts now oppose the White House's decision to "surge" additional troops into Baghdad, a remarkable 22 percentage-point increase from just six months ago. Almost 7 in 10 now support a draw-down and redeployment of U.S. forces out of Iraq.

Chastened by the fighting in Iraq, the U.S. national security community also appears eager not to make the same mistakes elsewhere. For instance, though a majority—83 percent—do not believe Tehran when it says its nuclear program is intended for peaceful, civilian purposes, just 8 percent favor military strikes in response. Eight in 10, on the other hand, say the United States should use either sanctions or diplomatic

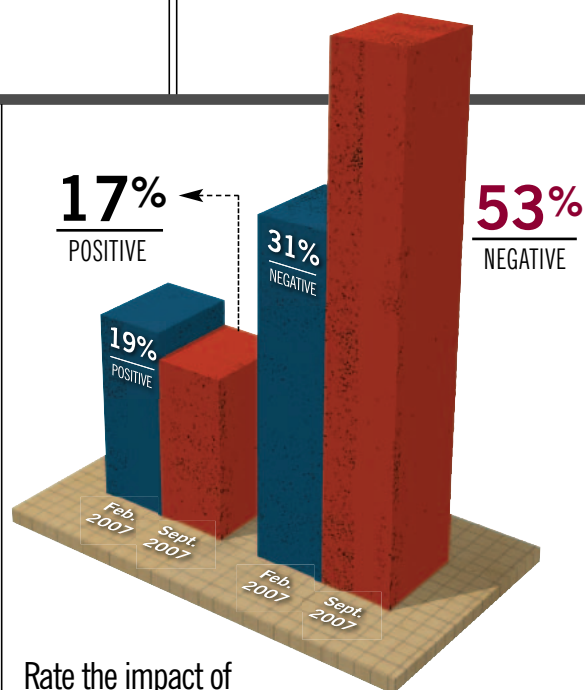
talks to negotiate an end to Iran's nuclear ambitions. Similarly, a majority of the experts favor some kind of engagement with groups that may be labeled terrorist organizations but have gained popular support at the ballot box, such as Hamas in the Palestinian Territories or Hezbollah in Lebanon. It's one indication that, after six years, we may be entering a new chapter in the war on terror.

## THE FAILING SURGE

**T**he outcome of the war in Iraq may now rest in large part on the success or failure of the so-called surge. Beginning in February, the White House sent an additional 28,000 U.S. troops to Baghdad in an effort to quell the violence there. Securing the capital with overwhelming force is a key component of the anti-insurgency plan developed by Gen. David Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq and the military's foremost expert on counterinsurgency tactics. It took until June for all the U.S. forces to be put in place, and the number of American troops in Iraq is now at its highest level since 2005. But is Petraeus's plan working?

The index's experts don't think so. More than half say the surge is having a negative impact on U.S. national security, up 22 percentage points from just six months ago. This sentiment was shared across party lines, with **64 percent of conservative experts saying the surge is having either a negative impact or no impact at all.** When the experts were asked to grade the government's handling of the Iraq war, the news was even worse. **They gave the overall effort in Iraq an average point score of just 2.9 on a 10-point scale.** The government's public diplomacy record was the only policy that scored lower.

These negative opinions may result in part from the experts' apparent belief that, a decade from now, the world will still be reeling from the consequences of the war. Fifty-eight percent of the index's experts say that in 10 years' time, Sunni-Shiite tensions in the Middle East will have dramatically increased. **Thirty-five percent believe that Arab dictators will have been discouraged from reforming.** Just 5 percent, on the other hand, believe that al Qaeda will be weaker, whereas **only 3 percent believe Iraq will be a beacon of democracy** in the Middle East. If true, the surge, or any other tactical shift for that matter, was probably already too little, too late.



Rate the impact of additional U.S. troops in Baghdad.





# A PERFECT NIGHTMARE

**A** perfect terrorist storm may be brewing in Pakistan. When asked to choose the nation that is most likely to become the next al Qaeda stronghold, more experts chose Pakistan than any other country, including Iraq. Osama bin Laden reportedly remains at large along Pakistan's mountainous border with Afghanistan, where al Qaeda is also regrouping; the country's intelligence service is said to be still cooperating with radical Islamist elements; and President Pervez Musharraf's political future seems increasingly imperiled. These developments would not be as worrisome had the experts not also said that Pakistan is the country most likely to transfer nuclear technology to terrorists in the next three to five years. Together, it's a terrifying combination.

But if there is a wide consensus about the dangers that Pakistan poses, there is very little agreement about what to do about it. A modest number of the index's experts, fewer than 1 in 3, favors threatening Pakistan with sanctions. Yet about the same number support increasing U.S. aid to the country. Such a muddled response underscores the puzzle that Pakistan presents to American policymakers. What is clear is that the experts do not favor more of the same: **More than half of those surveyed believe the current U.S. policy toward Pakistan is having a negative impact on U.S. national security.** Getting the strategy right could be critical if the world is to keep those dark clouds from forming.

Which country is most likely to become the next al Qaeda stronghold?

<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Iraq</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Somalia</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Sudan</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>7%</b>

Which countries are most likely to transfer nuclear technology to terrorists in the next three to five years?

<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>North Korea</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Russia</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Iran</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>United States</b>	<b>5%</b>



ARIF ALI/GETTY IMAGES

# WILL THE ENEMY FOLLOW US HOME?

It may be the most common—and, for many, the most convincing—argument against a quick exit from Iraq: Pulling American forces out would only move the war's front line from the streets of Baghdad to the streets of Anytown, U.S.A. Or, as President George W. Bush often says, "The enemy would follow us home."

Or would it? It's a scenario that the index's experts say is unlikely. **Only 12 percent believe that terrorist attacks would occur in the United States as a direct result of a U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq.** Eighty-eight percent of the experts said that either such a scenario was unlikely or that they see no connection between a troop withdrawal from Iraq and terrorist attacks inside the United States. This line of thinking was consistent across party

lines, with 58 percent of conservatives saying they did not believe terrorist attacks would occur at home as a result of a military drawdown in Iraq.

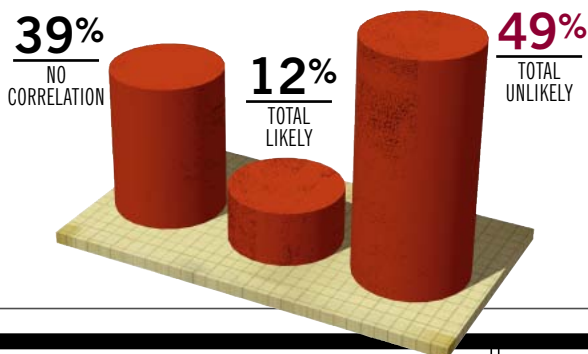
That could explain why a bipartisan majority, 68 percent, of the experts favor redeploying U.S. forces from Iraq during the next 18 months.



Although most oppose an immediate pullout, the situation in Iraq has deteriorated to the

point that **1 in 5 experts, including 25 percent of conservatives, now favor an immediate withdrawal.** If opinion continues to move in this direction, it will become much harder to explain why the troops aren't home-ward bound.

Would a troop withdrawal from Iraq lead to terrorist attacks in the United States?



## THE NEXT FRONT

Raging violence in Iraq has raised the specter that similar savagery could bleed over into neighboring countries. Many have feared that there could be a spillover of violence in Turkey, which has reportedly amassed troops on its border with Iraq, or in Saudi Arabia, home to a series of recent al Qaeda attacks, including the 2003 bombing of a residential compound in Riyadh. But the index's experts fear for someone else in Iraq's backyard.

Nearly half said that Jordan is the neighbor most likely to experience a spillover of violence from Iraq—

more than twice as many who pinpointed any other country. The Hashemite Kingdom was already a target for terrorists working from Iraq with the 2005 Amman hotel bombings, and it now hosts the second-

largest Iraqi refugee population. With porous borders and its own home-grown Islamist movement, it's a volatile mix that may be primed to explode.

Which neighboring country is most likely to experience spillover violence from the war in Iraq?

Jordan	47%
Saudi Arabia	22%
Turkey	18%
Syria	7%
Iran	2%



# DECIPHERING THE CHATTER

**T**he U.S. presidential race is being dominated by foreign-policy issues. So how does the rhetoric of the candidates match up to the opinions of the country's most respected international affairs experts? Here's a look.



**Sen. Hillary Clinton:** "I believe we are safer than we were."—*June 3, 2007*

**Terrorism Index Experts:** A huge majority, 91 percent, believe the world is growing more dangerous for Americans and the United States.

**Mayor Rudy Giuliani:** "I support the president's increase in troops. Even more importantly, I support the change in strategy. . . ."—*Jan. 10, 2007*

**Terrorism Index Experts:** The majority, 83 percent, believe the surge has had either a negative impact or no impact at all on the war in Iraq.

**Sen. John McCain:** "We lose this war and come home, they'll follow us home."—*Mar. 10, 2007*

**Terrorism Index Experts:** Nearly 9 in 10 say that they do not believe terrorist attacks would occur inside the United States as the result of a withdrawal from Iraq.

**Sen. Barack Obama:** "We must maintain the isolation of Hamas."—*Mar. 2, 2007*

**Terrorism Index Experts:** More than 70 percent believe the United States should engage, not isolate, Hamas.

**Gov. Mitt Romney:** "This is a time . . . to increase our diplomatic isolation of Iran."—*Feb. 18, 2007*

**Terrorism Index Experts:** Eight in 10 support engaging in bilateral dialogue with Tehran over its nuclear program.

**Sen. John Edwards:** "[Congress] should correct its mistake and use its constitutional funding power to force an immediate withdrawal from Iraq."—*July 10, 2007*

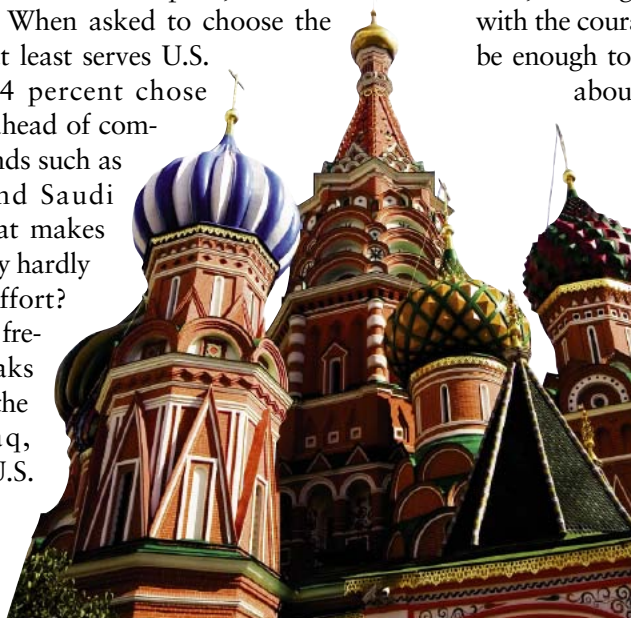
**Terrorism Index Experts:** Almost 80 percent of the experts oppose an immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq.

TOP TO BOTTOM: CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES; CHRIS HONDRIG/GETTY IMAGES; JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES; BRAD BARKET/GETTY IMAGES; DARREN MCCOLLISTER/GETTY IMAGES; SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

# NO LOVE FROM RUSSIA

**W**ith so many foreign-policy headaches these days, Washington could use some friends to lean on. According to the index's experts, don't look to Moscow. When asked to choose the U.S. ally that least serves U.S. interests, 34 percent chose Russia, far ahead of complicated friends such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. What makes Russia an ally hardly worth the effort? The Kremlin frequently speaks out against the war in Iraq, denounces U.S. leadership in the world, and has

refused to back the toughest international sanctions against Iran. Nor does it help that Russian President Vladimir Putin has increasingly played the strong-man, cracking down on the press or any other group with the courage to question his leadership. It may be enough to make a superpower think carefully about the company it keeps. **FP**



Choose the ally that least serves America's national security interests.

<b>Russia</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Israel</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Mexico</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Egypt</b>	<b>5%</b>

## [ Want to Know More? ]

For complete results, a list of index participants, and details of the methodology used in the survey, visit [ForeignPolicy.com](http://ForeignPolicy.com) and [AmericanProgress.org](http://AmericanProgress.org).

The National Counterterrorism Center tracks cases of terrorist activity around the world in its annual *Report on Incidents of Terrorism*, available on its Web site. Lee Hamilton, Bruce Hoffman, Paul Pillar, and other terrorism experts assess the progress of the war on terror in *State of the Struggle: Report on the Battle Against Global Terrorism* (Washington: Council on Global Terrorism, 2006).

Jessica T. Mathews offered a plan for how to move forward in Iraq in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, in "The Situation in Iraq" (July 18, 2007), available on the Web site of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. For two other viewpoints on how to fix the situation in Iraq, see "The New Strategy in Iraq," by Frederick W. Kagan and Kimberly Kagan (*The Weekly Standard*, July 9, 2007), and *Strategic Reset: Reclaiming Control of U.S. Security in the Middle East*, by Brian Katulis, Lawrence J. Korb, and Peter Juul (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2007). Benjamin Friedman offers a skeptical look at the U.S. government's ability to prevent terrorist attacks at home in "Think Again: Homeland Security" (*FOREIGN POLICY*, July/August 2005). Pakistan's involvement in the war on terror is the subject of Zahid Hussain's *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

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