

## Majority of Iraqis want US out in one year: poll

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**Agence France-Presse** - 28 September, 2006

A solid majority of Iraqis want US forces to leave their country within one year, and support for attacks on coalition troops has increased, according to a poll.

Seventy-one percent of Iraqis want the US forces in Iraq to leave within a year, according to a poll conducted by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland for WorldPublicOpinion.org.

Of that group, 37 percent want a US withdrawal within the next six months, according to the poll.

Responses varied by community: 57 percent of Sunnis wanted a US withdrawal in six months, an option supported by just 11 percent of Kurds and 36 percent of Shiites.

Support for attacks on US troops has also increased considerably: 61 percent approve of the attacks, up from 47 percent in January, according to the poll.

And a whopping 78 percent thought that the US presence in Iraq is provoking more conflict than it is preventing. Only the Kurds -- 56 percent -- believe that US troops are a stabilizing force.

Support for the attacks "appears to be related to the widespread view (held by 77 percent) that the US plans to maintain permanent bases in Iraq and would not withdraw even if the Iraqi government asked it to (believed by 78 percent)," the pollsters said in a statement.

A majority -- 53 percent -- of those polled also believed that Iraq's army and police forces will be ready within six months to take over from US troops, up from 39 percent in January.

In one piece of good news for US officials, the Al-Qaeda terrorist group is rejected by 94 percent of those questioned, though 23 percent of the Sunni respondents view the group favorably.

The poll was carried out between September 1-4 among 1,150 Iraqis with a plus-or-minus three point margin of error.

A separate internal US State Department poll quoted by the Washington Post had similar results: nearly three-quarters of Baghdad residents said they would feel safer if US and other foreign forces left Iraq, with 65 percent supporting an immediate pullout.

"Majorities in all regions except Kurdish areas state that the (US-led forces in Iraq) should withdraw immediately, adding that (their) departure would make them feel safer and decrease violence," concludes the 20-page State Department report, titled "Iraq Civil War Fears Remain High in Sunni and Mixed Areas," according to the Post.

The State Department poll was conducted in late June and early July among 1,870 people.

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack acknowledged the existence of the poll, but said it will not be made public.

"The United States does from time to time polling in Iraq on a variety of different subjects," he said. "In Iraq, this polling certainly is an inexact science."

McCormack refused to comment on the poll's conclusions, but did say that "the anecdotal evidence that we have from our meetings with government officials" says that "the elected representatives of the Iraqi people welcome the presence of the multinational forces, welcome the presence of the United States ... and understand that, at this point in time, they are not capable of taking over full responsibility for the security in their country."