



APPENDIX SIX

POLLING INFORMATION CONCERNING WAR POWERS MATTERS



*This document reflects due diligence done by the Commission's staff,
but not necessarily the views of the Commission.*

Americans have consistently favored Congressional involvement in the decision to go to war, as shown by seven decades of polling data. Despite changes in historical context and the varying nature of external threats, the mood of the American public has remained decidedly in favor of consultation prior to committing American troops abroad.

- Prior to the Second World War, a substantial majority of the American public believed the decision to go to war should remain in the hands of Congress. Indeed, most Americans desired direct involvement in the decision, as shown in a 1935 Gallup poll indicating that 75% of Americans supported requiring Congress to obtain public approval by national referendum before it declared war.
- Broad support for congressional involvement in the decision to commit forces overseas has remained steady at nearly the same levels since the enactment of the War Powers Resolution 35 years ago:
 - As the War Powers Resolution was being enacted towards the close of the Vietnam War, a November 1973 Gallup poll found that 80% of Americans agreed that the President should be required to get congressional approval before sending armed forces into action overseas.
 - Another Gallup poll conducted in May 1987 asked whether it was appropriate to require the President to withdraw troops from hostilities after two months unless Congress has declared war. 77% of respondents answered in the affirmative, indicating that they thought the requirement was necessary to keep Congress involved in the war-making policies of the country.
 - These numbers remain substantially the same today. A Gallup poll taken in May 2008 found that 79% of Americans believed the President should be required to get the approval of Congress before sending troops abroad.
- Even when hostilities have commenced or were imminent, the American public continued to support congressional involvement in the decision to use force. For example:
 - Early in the Korean War, a January 1951 Gallup poll found that approximately two-thirds of Americans felt that the President should not be able to send troops overseas without congressional approval.
 - During the run-up to the Persian Gulf War, 74% of Americans stated in response to a November 1990 Gallup poll that they believed the President should not be able to go to war with Iraq without first receiving approval from Congress.
 - The national mood stayed steady to the eve of hostilities in Kuwait and Iraq, when a January 1991 Gallup poll recorded that 82% of Americans felt that it was “important” for President Bush to get congressional approval before initiating military action against Iraq.
 - The American public’s support of congressional involvement goes beyond the decision to go to war, encompassing even the manner of its execution. For example, an April 2007 Fox news poll found that a majority of Americans believed that Congress rather than the President should determine troop levels in Iraq.
- Recent Gallup polling also reflects that majorities of Americans believe that congressional approval should be required before the President acts even when facing exigent circumstances or where the

involvement is limited. A May 2008 Gallup poll found the following:

- Over 70% of Americans believe congressional approval should be required even where hostilities were not expected to last a long time or where involvement would be limited to air strikes.
 - Even when the United States is attacked, a full 46% of the American public—within the poll’s 5% margin of error—believed approval from Congress should be required for any response.
 - Half of Americans responded that congressional approval should be required even where hostilities are not involved, such as humanitarian missions in response to a natural disaster.
- Only where American citizens were in danger or in need of rescue abroad did a clear majority arise believing that congressional approval should not be required. However, a substantial minority of 40% continued to support requiring congressional approval in such situations.