

Americans believe link exists between Hussein, al-Qaida

The University of Maryland poll reveals that many hold views of the Iraq war not supported by evidence

By Frank Davies
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

WASHINGTON — A new poll shows that 57 percent of Americans continue to believe that Saddam Hussein gave "substantial support" to al-Qaida terrorists before the war with Iraq, despite a lack of evidence of that relationship.

In addition, 45 percent of Americans have the impression that "clear evidence" was found that Iraq worked closely with Osama bin Laden's network, and a majority believe that before the war Iraq either had weapons of mass destruction (38 percent) or a major program for developing them (22 percent).

There's no known evidence to date that these statements are true.

U.S. weapons inspector David Kay testified before Congress in January that no weapons were found and pre-war intelligence on Iraq was "almost all wrong." CIA Director George Tenet last month rejected assertions by Vice President Dick Cheney that Iraq had cooperated with al-Qaida.

Despite that record, many Americans continue to believe that the threat from Iraqi weapons and its alleged links to terrorism justified the war. That conviction correlates closely with support for the war and President Bush, the poll released Thursday found.

For example, among those who say most experts agree that Iraq had banned weapons, 72 percent plan to vote for Bush.

The poll for the University of Maryland's Program in International Policy Attitudes, conducted by Knowledge

Networks from March 16 to 22, surveyed 1,311 adults and had a margin of error of 2.8 percentage points.

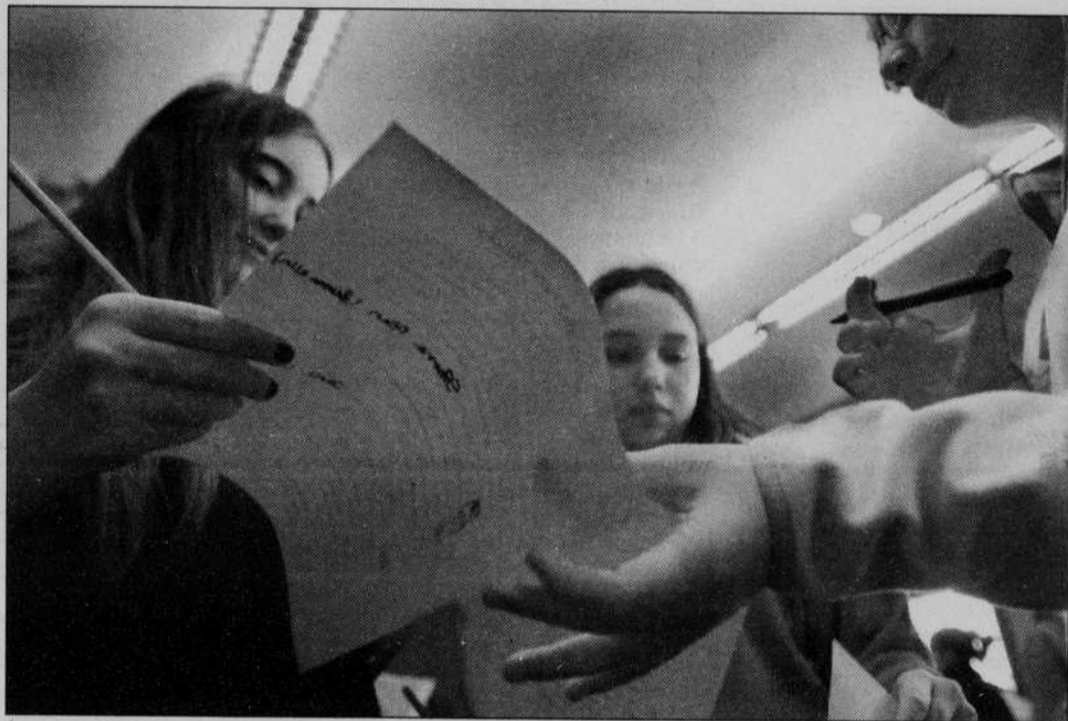
Claims by the Bush administration about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and links to terrorism helped shape public perceptions, said Steven Kull, the director of the program. No cause-and-effect relationship between the beliefs and support for the president could be proved, however.

In the poll, roughly 4 in 10 Americans perceived the administration as saying it had clear evidence that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction just before the war.

The administration has backed off earlier claims that evidence of such weapons was found, but the president continues to say the weapons question is open. "We all thought he had weapons," Bush said Wednesday.

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KIDS AT WORK



Tim Kupsick Freelance Photographer

In the Gumwood Room, sixth-grader Janie Craig (center) looks on as seventh-grader Hannah Douglas (left) passes her icebreaker worksheet to sixth-grader Sierra Allen so that she can fill out one of the sheet's many questions. Kids participated in activities Thursday such as tours of McArthur Court during Take Your Child to Work Day.

HUGHES

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ASUO Accounting Coordinator Jennifer Creighton-Neiwert said it is Hughes' personality that makes her a successful campaign manager.

"She's very friendly and open to everybody," Creighton-Neiwert said.

Ravassipour describes Hughes as "creative and bold."

"You need someone who has a broader vision, which she has," Ravassipour added.

Hughes celebrated the day Petkun and Ravassipour were elected, but says she was disappointed by the low voter turnout, which was less than 10 percent.

"Voter apathy is ridiculous," Hughes said, adding that students' lack of interest in local politics

frustrates her.

Hughes said she hopes students will become more aware of local politics.

"It's super sexy to vote in a presidential election," she said. "But what happens when a ballot initiative needs to be passed in Lane County?"

Contact the people/culture/faith reporter at moriahbalingit@dailyemerald.com.

LETTER

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her religious views. This is an entirely logical conclusion if one believes, as does Wagner, in an eternal God who has hopefully acquired more wisdom over His prolonged

existence than your average college student has acquired over a couple of decades. In the future, I suggest that those wishing to debate an issue research all viewpoints and write coherent arguments that contribute positively to the discussion. Whatever your informed opinion ends up being, I urge you to learn to

recognize and avoid ill-informed, inflammatory rants and instead to increase your understanding and tolerance of other viewpoints through the marketplace of ideas that is political debate.

Nathan Baker
graduate student
music theory

Today's crossword solution

E	F	T	S	S	H	A	G	S	P	O	M	P	
B	O	R	E	P	E	R	S	E	O	V	A	L	
B	R	U	T	R	A	D	A	R	L	E	G	O	
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I	M	P	A	T	I	E	N	T	T	R	E	N	D
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R	O	L	L	E	R	P	L	U	S	W	O	N	
A	L	O	E	A	F	O	O	T	S	I	Z	E	
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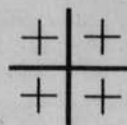
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