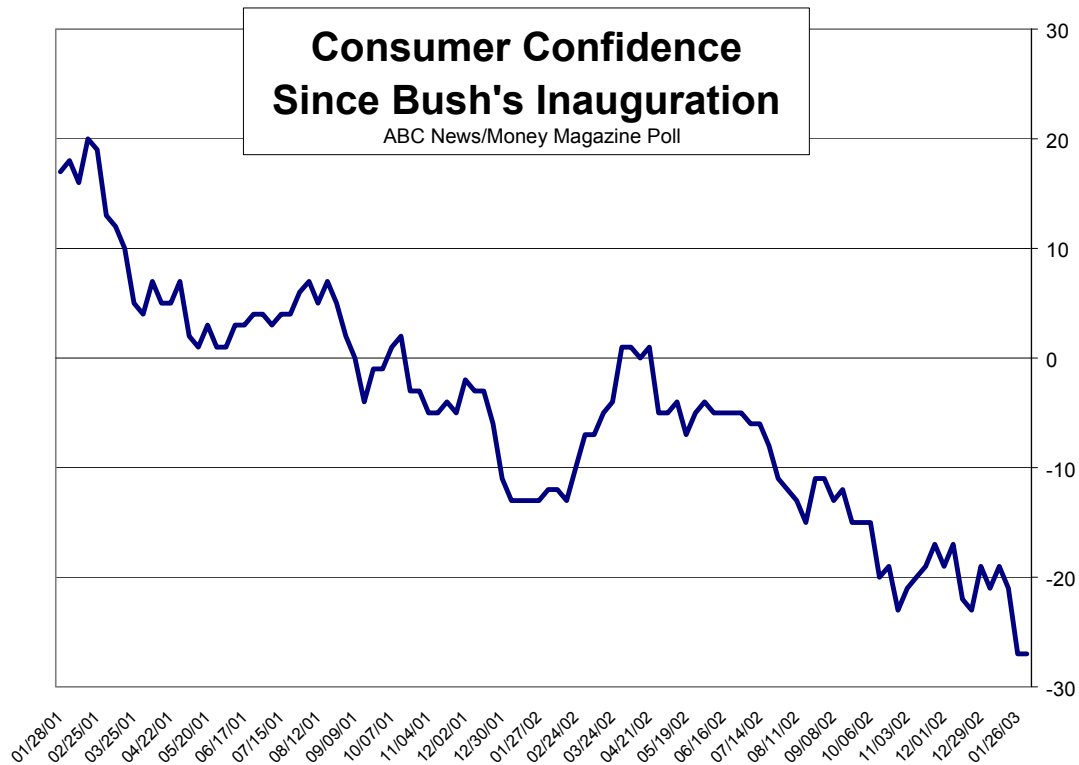


Confidence Stabilizes at Nine-Year Low

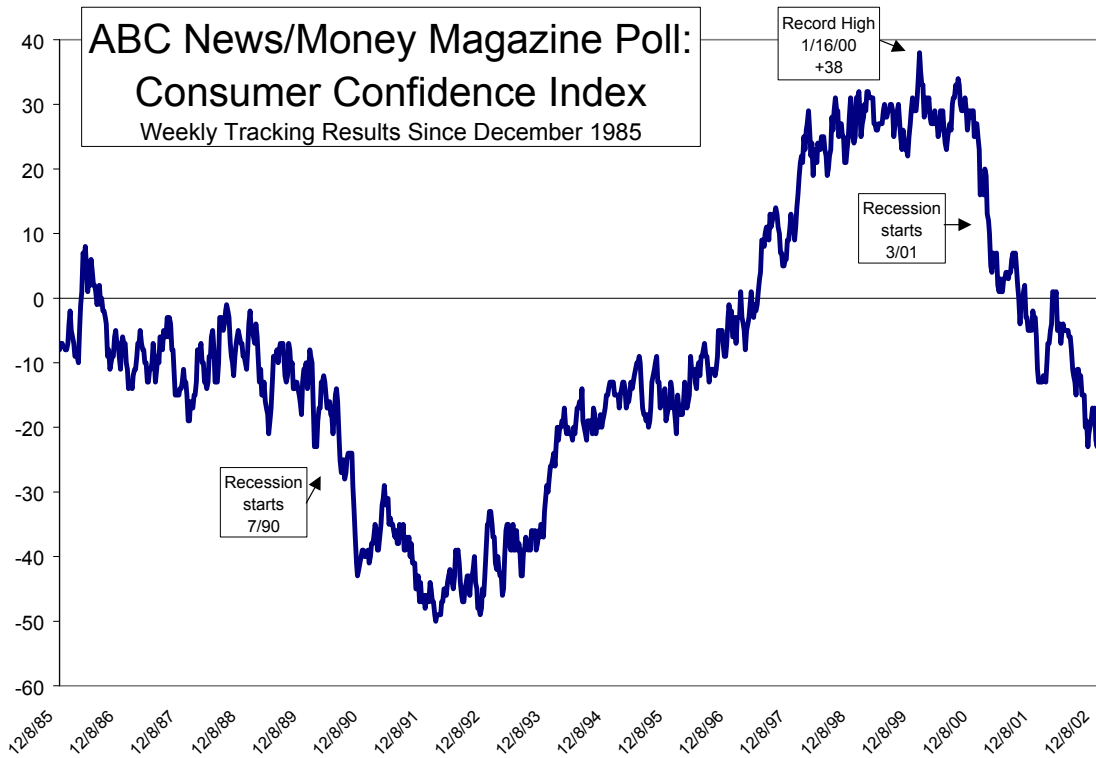
George W. Bush approaches tonight's State of the Union address with more than Iraq on his plate: Consumer confidence, after falling sharply last week, is flat this week at its lowest level in more than nine years.

The latest ABC News/Money magazine poll underscores the challenges Bush faces on the economy: Seventy-six percent of Americans rate it negatively, up 42 points since he took office. Sixty-six percent say now's a bad time to buy things, up 11 points. And nearly half, 48 percent, say their personal finances are in bad shape, up 13 points.

The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort Index, based on these three measures, stands at -27 on its scale of +100 to -100. That's unchanged from last week, when it fell six points to its lowest level since December 1993. The index is down eight points in this month alone, and down a huge 44 points since Bush was inaugurated.



Two weeks ago	-21	
2002 high	+1	March, April
2002 low	-23	Oct. 20, Dec. 15
2002 average	-11	
2001 average	+4	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-9	



GROUPS - As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index stands at -7 among people in higher-income households compared to -56 in the lowest, -10 among college graduates while -48 among high-school dropouts, -21 among whites while -60 among blacks and -18 among men while -34 among women.

Here's a closer look at the three components of the ABC/Money index:

NATIONAL ECONOMY - Twenty-four percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good, the same as last week. The best was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	24	1	23	76	52	24
Avg. since 12/85	41	4	37	59	40	19

PERSONAL FINANCES - Fifty-two percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, unchanged from last week. The best was 70 percent, set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	52	4	48	48	35	13
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

BUYING CLIMATE - Thirty-four percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need, also the same as last week. The best was 57 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 20 percent in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	34	2	32	66	46	20
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	36	61	41	20

METHODOLOGY - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index represents a rolling average based on telephone interviews with a random sample of about 1,000 adults nationwide each month. This week's results are based on 1,008 interviews in the month ending Jan. 26, 2003 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

The ABC/Money index is derived as follows: The negative response to each index question is subtracted from the positive response to that question. The three resulting numbers are then added and divided by three. The index can range from +100 (everyone positive on all three measures) to -100 (all negative on all three measures). The survey began in December 1985.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at:
<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

01/26/03	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Group	-----							
GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	-27	-27	-21	-21	-12	1	-27	-12
State of Economy	-52	-52	-46	-44	-32	-10	-52	-32
Personal Finances	4	4	10	6	16	26	4	16
Buying Climate	-32	-32	-28	-26	-20	-10	-32	-20

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-18	-14	-16	-13	-2	9	-18	-5
Women	-34	-38	-26	-29	-21	-4	-38	-18
Age:								

18 - 34	-24	-24	-9	-16	-4	10	-24	-5
35 - 44	-27	-27	-28	-11	-10	3	-31	-13
45 - 54	-23	-28	-30	-33	-17	6	-37	-14
55 - 64	-34	-25	-19	-22	-18	20	-34	-12
65 +	-28	-31	-33	-31	-14	-5	-36	-21
Income:								
Under \$15K	-56	-60	-51	-43	-49	-26	-61	-45
\$15K To \$24.9K	-43	-48	-49	-34	-31	-19	-55	-33
\$25K To \$39.9K	-34	-36	-41	-24	-12	1	-43	-19
\$40K To \$49.9K	-12	-16	-20	-9	-9	12	-30	-5
Over \$50K	-7	-2	10	-15	15	33	-15	11
Region:								
Northeast	-31	-24	-21	-29	-12	2	-32	-15
Midwest	-22	-26	-22	-27	-13	4	-27	-11
South	-28	-29	-25	-23	-10	4	-29	-13
West	-24	-24	-13	-6	-13	9	-24	-7
Race:								
White	-21	-21	-19	-17	-7	7	-21	-8
Black	-60	-53	-41	-36	-31	-18	-60	-38
Politics:								
Republican	4	4	10	8	13	34	2	13
Democrat	-42	-42	-35	-35	-23	-14	-42	-26
Independent	-37	-38	-37	-29	-12	-2	-38	-15
Education:								
< High School	-48	-43	-50	-24	-43	-12	-59	-36
High Sch. Grad.	-38	-39	-29	-29	-12	-3	-39	-16
College +	-10	-12	-5	-15	-1	13	-18	-1
Home:								
Own	-23	-21	-15	-21	-8	9	-23	-7
Rent	-36	-40	-35	-24	-21	-9	-40	-23
Marital Status:								
Single	-19	-20	-13	-19	-7	10	-20	-9
Married	-25	-25	-17	-19	-5	11	-25	-8
Sep/Wid/Div	-40	-37	-42	-33	-39	-14	-42	-29
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-19	-19	-12	-13	1	12	-20	-4
Part-Time	-30	-20	-20	-23	-11	14	-30	-9
Not Employed	-36	-40	-35	-32	-27	-13	-40	-24

END