

A Passing Grade for Bush On Knowledge of World Affairs

Nearly six in 10 Americans think George W. Bush knows enough about world affairs to serve effectively as president – whoever Pervez Musharraf is.

Bush failed in a pop quiz two weeks ago to name the leaders of three foreign nations, Pakistan, Chechnya and India; he got one right, Taiwan. He also said Musharraf, who took power in Pakistan in a military coup, "is going to bring stability to the country and I think that's good news for the subcontinent."

While critics pounced, most Americans don't share their concern. Fifty-nine percent in this poll think Bush does have sufficient knowledge of foreign affairs to serve effectively as president; 36 percent think not. (Those numbers echo the Bush-vs-Al Gore horse race, 55-39 percent, in an ABC News poll Oct. 31.)

Partisanship is a prime factor in evaluations of Bush's knowledge. Eighty-one percent of Republicans think he's sufficiently versed in world affairs; that falls to 54 percent of independents and 41 percent of Democrats. At the same time, there are many more Democrats who give Bush a passing grade than there are Republicans who fail him.

	Does Bush know enough about world affairs?	
	Yes	No
All	59%	36
Republicans	81	15
Independents	54	41
Democrats	41	55

There aren't many differences among other groups; even among know-it-all college graduates (about a quarter of the public), 62 percent say Bush knows enough.

Bush's rating on knowledge of foreign affairs isn't as strong as his scores on several personal qualities tested in the Oct. 31 poll, notably leadership. But "handling foreign affairs" is less crucial to voters than many other issues; it ranked 14th out of a list of 16.

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News.com survey was conducted by telephone Nov. 10-14 1999, among a random national sample of 1,007 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Fieldwork by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:

<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

24. Regardless of how you might vote, do you think George W. Bush has the knowledge of world affairs it takes to serve effectively as president, or not?

	Yes	No	No opin.
11/14/99	59	36	6