

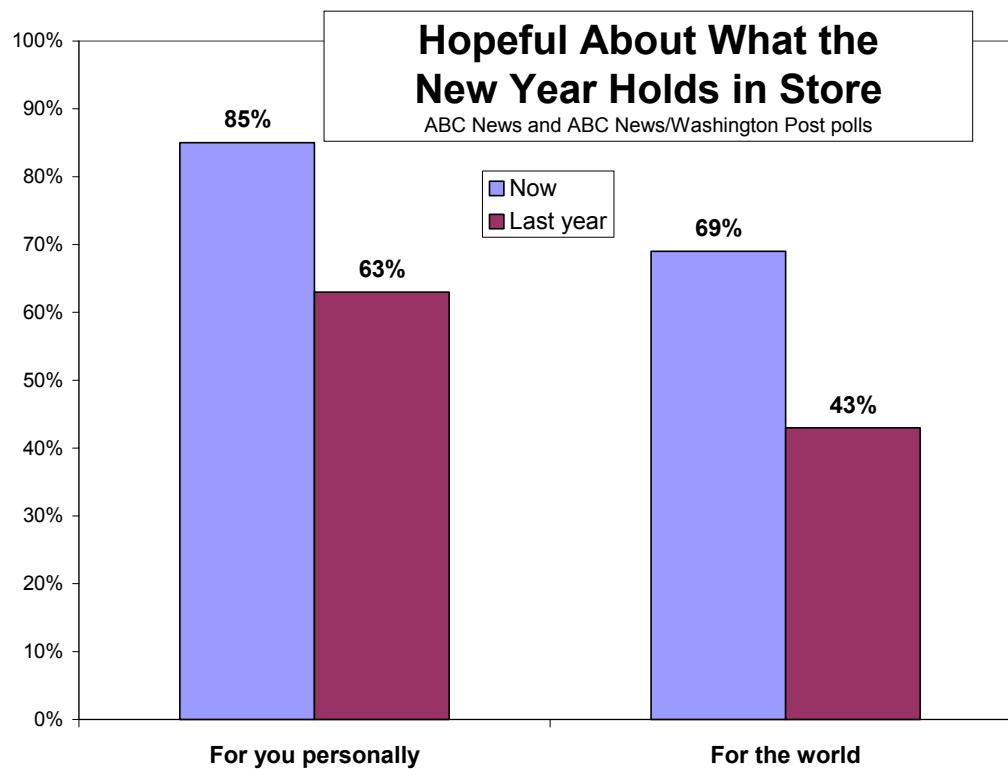
**ABC NEWS POLL: 2004 OUTLOOK – 12/21/03**

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AFTER 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2003

## Heading into New Year, A Jump in Hopefulness

Americans are carrying high hopes into the New Year: Broad majorities say they're more hopeful than fearful about what 2004 holds in store – for themselves personally as well as for the world. Both views have surged from their levels a year ago.

Hopefulness has rebounded even beyond its 2001 levels (a post-9/11 rally) after a sharp drop last year. Eighty-five percent are now upbeat about what the New Year will bring to them personally, up 22 points from 2002. And 69 percent are more hopeful than fearful about the world's prospects in general, compared with 43 percent last year.



A few factors likely are at play. Consumer confidence is rebounding now; it was lower, and weakening, at this time last year. Last December just over a quarter of Americans said the economy was in good shape; it was up to 42 percent in an ABC News/Washington Post poll last week. And earlier this month 35 percent said the economy was getting better – more than double the number who thought so in December 2002.

Iraq is another likely factor. At this point last year, war and its uncertain outcome were looming, a sure source of anxiety. Today, Saddam Hussein is a prisoner, and despite concern about continuing casualties, six in 10 say the war was worth fighting and as many believe it has contributed to the long-term security of the United States.

Personal Outlook in the Year Ahead			
Are you...	12/03	12/02	Change
More hopeful	85%	63%	+22
More fearful	12	35	-23

World Outlook in the Year Ahead			
Are you...	12/03	12/02	Change
More hopeful	69%	43%	+26
More fearful	27	56	-29

**GROUPS** – Across the demographic spectrum, more than eight in 10 are more hopeful than fearful about their personal futures. There's somewhat more variability on the question of what's in store for the world.

The biggest difference is partisan: Seventy-nine percent of Republicans are more hopeful than fearful about what 2004 holds for the world; that slips to 70 percent of independents and falls to 59 percent of Democrats. Seventy-two percent of men are more hopeful, compared with 66 percent of women, likely because more women are Democrats.

Among Democrats, a hopeful personal outlook has jumped 28 points since 2002, from 54 to 82 percent. Republicans bumped up a smaller 16 points – but they were at a much higher 76 percent already last year.

Hopefulness for the world also is lower among less-educated and lower-income Americans – 57 and 60 percent respectively, compared with more than 70 percent of those with more education and the higher incomes it usually produces.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Dec. 17-21, 2003, among a random national sample of 1,031 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:  
[http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/Poll\\_Vault/Poll\\_Vault.html](http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/Poll_Vault/Poll_Vault.html)

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934, or Lisa Finkel, (212) 456-6190

Results follow:

1. On another subject, looking ahead to next year, are you more hopeful, or more fearful, about what the year 2004 holds in store for you personally?

	More hopeful	More fearful	No opin.
12/21/03	85	12	4
12/15/02	63	35	2
12/19/01	80	16	4

2. How about for the world in general? Are you more hopeful, or more fearful, about what the year 2004 holds in store for the world in general?

	More hopeful	More fearful	No opin.
12/21/03	69	27	4
12/15/02	43	56	1
12/19/01	62	35	3

\*\*\*END\*\*\*