

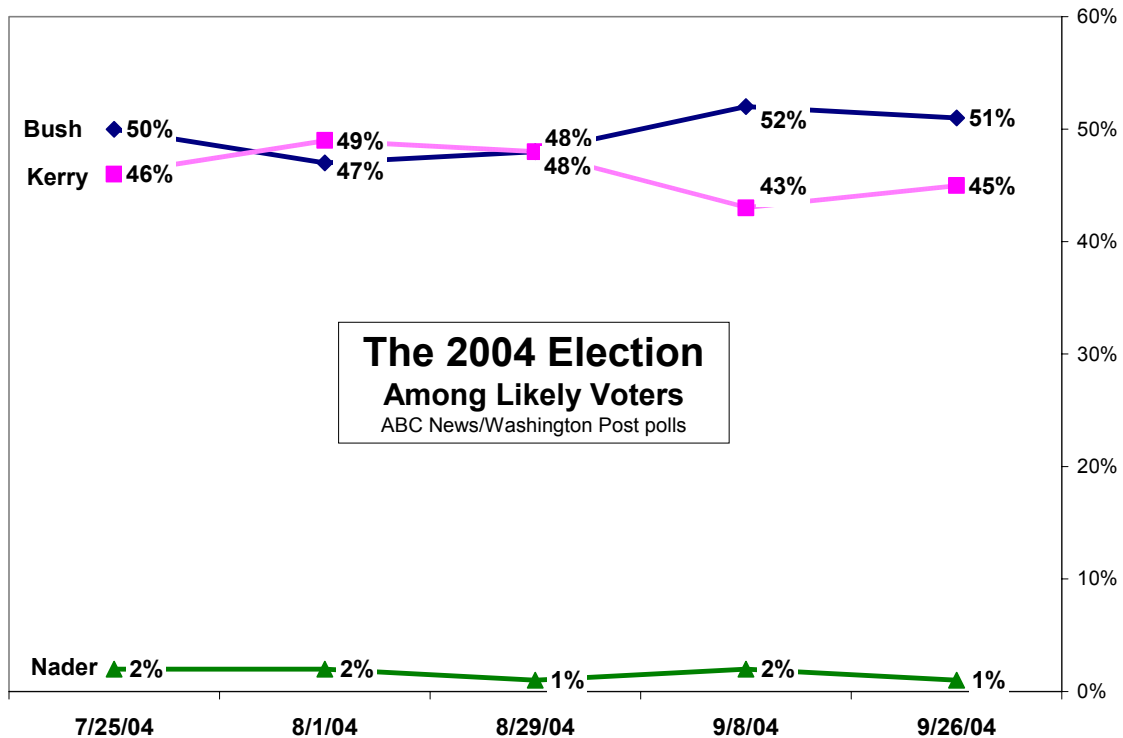
High Stakes as Debates Loom With the Advantage Still to Bush

With the potentially pivotal presidential debates approaching, two issues may cloud George W. Bush's advantage: A rise in public concern about the situation in Iraq – and a sense among most voters that he's too much of a risk-taker in his policy decisions.

Six in 10 registered voters now say the United States has gotten bogged down in Iraq, and 51 percent say the war there was not worth fighting, each up six points this month. Also, 55 percent call Bush "too willing to take risks," a possible line of Democratic attack.

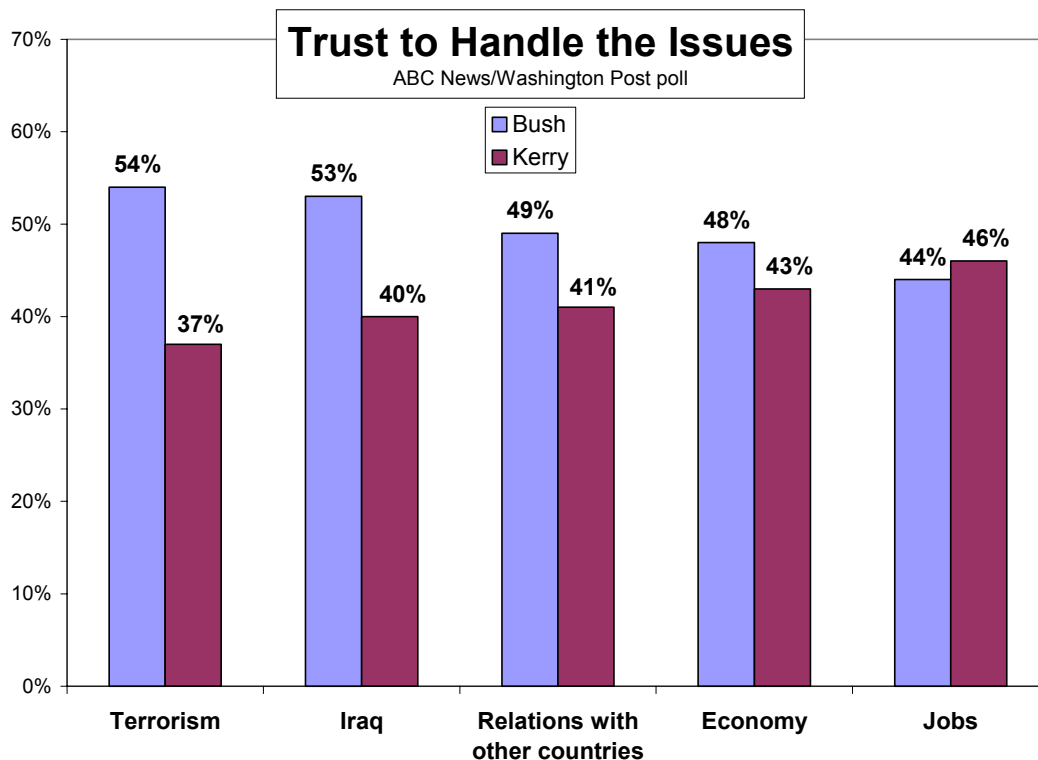
But if those concerns harass Bush like a terrier, John Kerry is up against a bigger beast: More voters continue to dislike him than to like him personally, and most prefer Bush across a range of issues and attributes, from terrorism and Iraq to honesty and leadership.

The race is being driven as much by Bush's comparative advantage over Kerry as by Bush's standing in his own right. A tepid 52 percent of registered voters approve of Bush's job performance overall (critically, though, over half), and fewer than half are satisfied with the nation's direction, or approve of his work on Iraq or the economy.



Yet despite the concerns on Iraq, for example, registered voters nonetheless trust Bush over Kerry to deal with the situation, 53-40 percent – by dint of his leadership and clarity. On the economy, similarly, while just 17 percent say most people have gotten better off financially under Bush, he still holds a slight lead in trust to handle it, 48-43 percent.

Bush leads broadly, by 54-37 percent, in trust to handle terrorism, his cornerstone issue. Another potential concern for him, though, is a five-point slip, to 59 percent, in the number of registered voters who say the country is safer now than it was before 9/11.



Still, as was the case in the last ABC News/Washington Post poll early this month, some of Bush's greatest advantages are personal: He leads Kerry in seven of eight candidate qualities, including by 26 points as the stronger leader. They're about even in the eighth, empathy.

Bush's relative strengths have enabled him to maintain the overall lead he took out of his nominating convention: Fifty-one percent of likely voters in this poll support Bush, 45 percent Kerry and one percent Ralph Nader, much like the 52-43-2 percent race in the Sept. 8 ABC/Post poll. It's nearly identical among all registered voters.

That result is not predictive – the race has been tied and it can be again. But these results present three prime worries for the Kerry camp. One is that, unlike Kerry, Bush has maintained his immediate post-convention gains (the candidate evaluations in this ABC/Post survey are little changed from those in the last). A second is Kerry's weak personal position, which sends him into the debates with a certain lack of good will. And

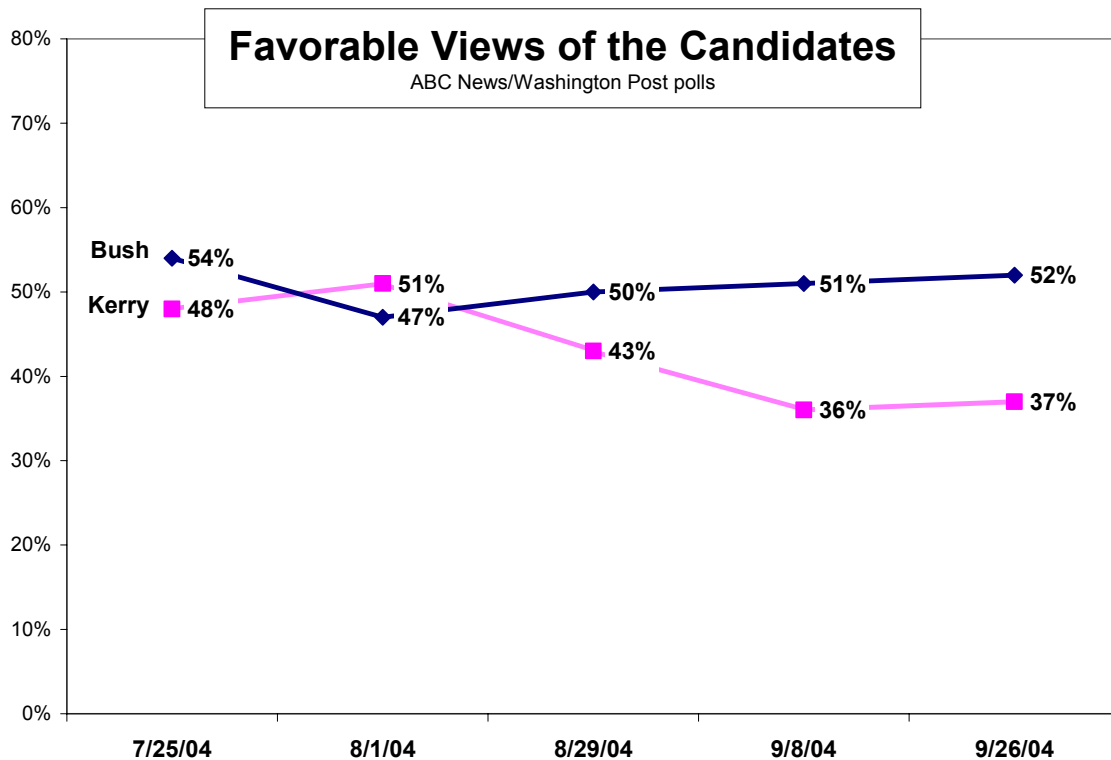
the third is a very broad sense that Kerry hasn't enunciated a clear message; registered voters by 2-1 say Bush has taken clearer stands on the issues.

Together, these mean that while Bush's task Thursday night is to consolidate and reinforce, Kerry's, more critically, is both to explain his positions in a compelling way, and at the same time to create a more positive rapport with the voting public.

ATTENTION – The election remains an attention-grabber in a way the last was not. Two-thirds of registered voters call it one of the most important elections of their lifetimes. Forty-eight percent are following it “very closely,” compared with 27 percent at this point in 2000. And 77 percent say they plan to watch the first debate Thursday.

Moving voters often is difficult, though, and debates historically have tended to reinforce perceptions rather than change them (partisans typically say their guy won). Movement may be especially tough in this contest; just 11 percent of likely voters say they might change their minds, and even fewer, a bare three percent, say there's a good chance of it.

FAVE – Kerry's favorability rating, the most basic measure of a public figure's popularity, underscores his challenge: Just 37 percent of registered voters view him favorably, 42 percent unfavorably – more unfavorable than favorable, essentially unmoved since earlier this month, and 14 points less favorable than when Kerry left his convention. Bush's rating, by contrast, is 52-38 percent favorable.



Enthusiasm tells a similar tale: Sixty-one percent of Bush’s supporters are “very enthusiastic” about his candidacy – potentially an important factor in turnout – while just 39 percent of Kerry’s supporters are very enthusiastic about his. These views, too, are essentially unchanged in the last three weeks of campaigning.

WOMEN – Kerry’s problems include weakness among women, traditionally a stronger Democratic support group. In 2000 Al Gore won women by 11 points; now Bush and Kerry are about even among women, 49-48 percent. (Bush leads by 11 points among men, precisely the same as his margin among men in 2000.)

The reason, however, is broader than the simple notion of “security moms,” the latest group du jour in election handicapping. Women are not significantly (+4 points) more apt than men to cite terrorism as the most important issue in their vote. And Kerry’s problems among women are not limited to terrorism; they reach across issues and attributes.

For example, while Kerry trails Bush among women in trust to handle terrorism, 51-39 percent, he also lacks any edge in trust to handle Iraq, the economy or relations with other countries. In personal attributes, women by a 19-point margin say Bush is the stronger leader and has taken a clearer stand on the issues, and by 13 points women say he has the more appealing personality. Finally, women divide evenly, 39-39 percent, in their favorable-unfavorable view of Kerry; for Bush it’s 49-40 percent favorable.

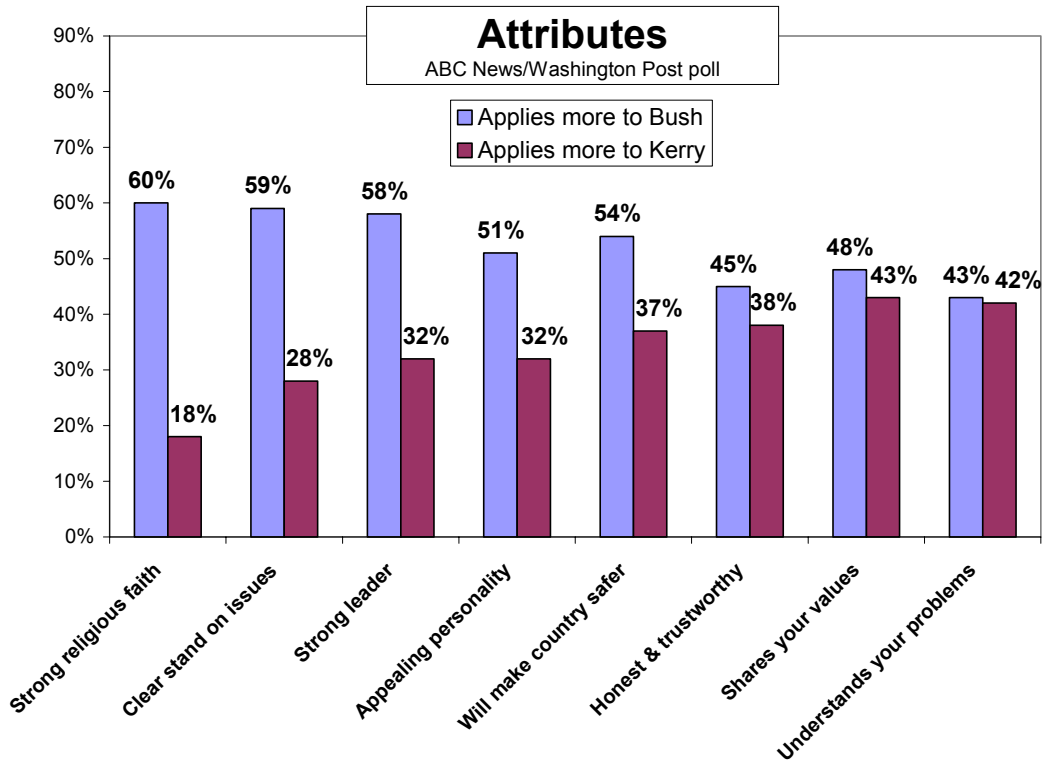
	Preference on attributes (among registered voters)					
	-----All-----		-----Men-----		-----Women-----	
	Bush-Kerry	Gap	Bush-Kerry	Gap	Bush-Kerry	Gap
Strong leader	58-32%	+26	62-29	+33	54-35	+19
Clear stand	59-28	+31	65-22	+43	53-34	+19
Appealing personality	51-32	+19	54-29	+25	48-35	+13

Kerry does better with unmarried than with married women, and worse on some issues with “moms” (married women with children at home) than with those without kids at home. Demographics are the driver. Moms – early middle-aged, better educated – are more likely to be Republicans. Unmarried women include more minorities; married non-moms are older; both these have more Democrats in their ranks.

And if Kerry has a problem with women, he also has – more traditionally for a Democrat – difficulties with men. Men by a whopping 43-point margin, for example, say Bush has taken a clearer stand on the issues, and by 33 points call him the stronger leader.

ATTRIBUTES – A follow-up question in this poll sorts candidate attributes in order of their importance in vote choices. A quarter of registered voters say honesty and trustworthiness is the No. 1 candidate quality in their choice, followed by leadership (18 percent). Making the country safer, shared values and empathy come next, about equally.

	Most important attribute	Candidate it best describes	
		Bush-Kerry	Gap
Honest	25%	45-38	Bush +7
Strong leader	18	58-32	Bush +26
Make country safer	14	54-37	Bush +17
Shares your values	13	48-43	Bush +5
Understands your problems	12	43-42	Bush +1
Clear stand	7	59-28	Bush +31
Strong religious faith	7	60-18	Bush +42
Appealing personality	*	51-32	Bush +19



RISK – As noted, the notion of risk-taking is one the Democrats may try to use against Bush: Fifty-five percent of registered voters (men and women alike) say that in making policy decisions Bush is “too willing to take risks,” as opposed to too cautious. (Thirty-five percent call Kerry too cautious.)

Even among Republicans, 35 percent say Bush is too willing to take risks; that rises to 56 percent of independents and 74 percent of Democrats. It’s 70 percent among those who say Iraq is the No. 1 issue in their vote, and a still-significant 40 percent among those who care most about terrorism.

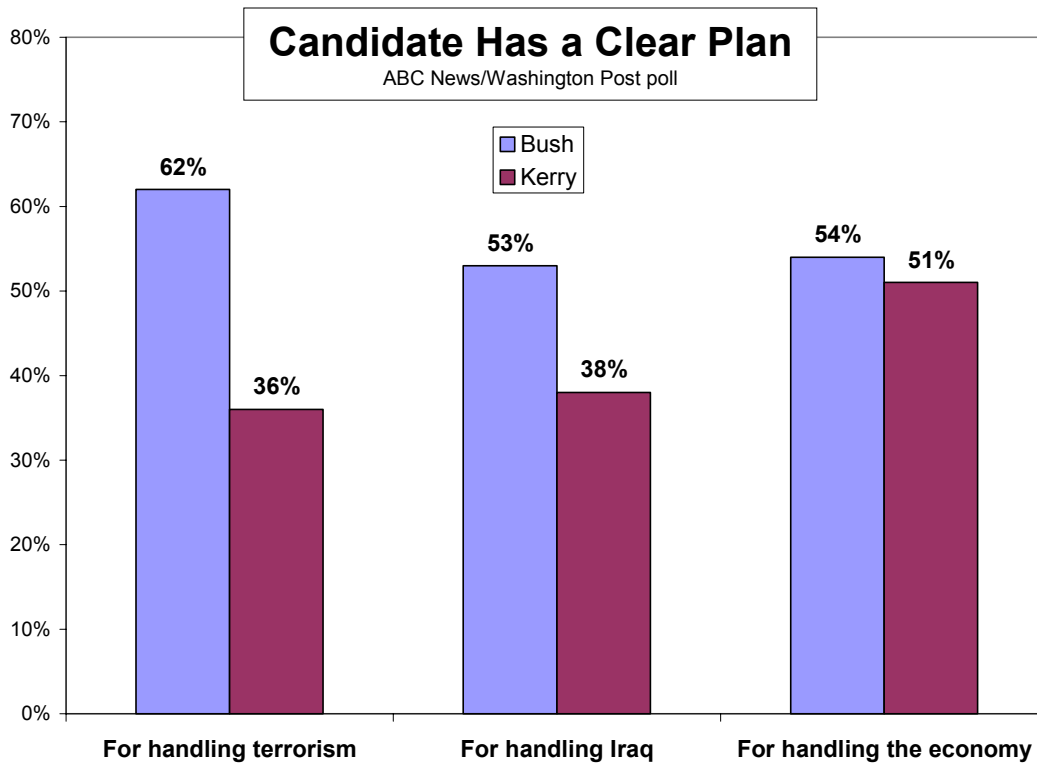
ISSUES – The economy, terrorism and Iraq remain the leading issues, followed by health care and education. When respondents were invited to name an unprompted No. 2 issue, no others were mentioned by more than one percent.

	Most important issue (among registered voters)					
	Economy	Terrorism	Iraq	Health care	Education	Other
All	28%	21	19	13	6	10
Men	31	19	20	12	4	11
Women	25	23	19	14	8	8

Bush holds his usual huge (more than 70-point) lead among voters who cite terrorism as the top issue in their vote. Similarly, among those who say the country is safer from terrorism, it's a 55-point Bush lead among likely voters. Kerry leads by 20+ points among those who cite the economy, Iraq or health care as their top issues.

CLEAR PLAN – In addition to Bush's huge edge in perceptions that he's taken clearer stands in general, he has a specific edge in having plans on terrorism and Iraq alike. Sixty-two percent say he has a clear plan on terrorism; just 36 percent say Kerry does.

And while fewer, 53 percent, say Bush has been clear on Iraq, just 38 percent say Kerry has been. The two are closer in the view that they've been clear on the economy.



ECONOMY – The economy has been and remains something of a wildcard in this election – neither bad enough to fuel strong anti-incumbent sentiment, nor good enough to work to the incumbent's advantage. Economic risks to Bush include the price of oil; when it rises, consumer confidence usually falls.

Of the five trust-to-handle issues tested in this poll, Kerry competes best (running about evenly) with Bush in “creating jobs” (46 percent trust Kerry, 44 percent Bush). And 53 percent give a negative rating, “not so good” or “poor,” to the economy’s condition.

That economic rating, though, requires context. It was worse, 60 percent negative, last March, and worse still, 70 percent negative, a year ago. Moreover it was near its all-time worst, 90 percent negative, at this time in 1992, when Bush’s father was headed for defeat at the hands of economic discontent.

	% Rating the economy negatively
Now	53%
Last March	60
Year ago	70
9/92	90

GROUPS – Bush has an advantage among one true swing voter group, white Catholics; they favor him by 17 points, 56-39 percent among likely voters (it was about the same earlier this month). He and Kerry are about even in the other quintessential swing group, independents, at 49-46 percent.

Both are strong in their bases – for example, Bush has 71 percent support from evangelical white Protestants, while Kerry has 74 percent support from minorities. But Bush is doing better at poaching: He’s winning support from 12 percent of Democrats, while Kerry’s winning fewer Republicans, four percent.

Among other groups to watch, Kerry’s winning 53 percent support from people in union households (Gore won 59 percent of union-household votes in 2000), while military veterans, 16 percent of likely voters, are dividing 64-35 percent for Bush.

The sharp differences among these groups underscore the importance of turnout.

CONTACT – In an indication of the level of effort being expended by both campaigns, 15 percent of registered voters say they’ve personally been contacted by a representative of the Bush campaign asking for their vote. About the same number, 14 percent, have been contacted by Kerry’s campaign. In the 13 most closely contested states, however, Bush has an advantage: Twenty-seven percent say they’ve been contacted by Bush’s campaign, compared with 15 percent who’ve been contacted by Kerry’s.

PARTY TIME – A final note, and a final worry for Kerry, is political party identification. It’s shifted lately, which is not surprising in an election; moving political allegiance is what campaigns are all about. Republicans held an advantage in party allegiance among likely voters in the last ABC/Post poll, taken after Bush’s convention: 38-32 percent, with 26 percent independents. It’s a closer 35-36-23 percent in this poll, yet Bush still leads.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Sept. 23-26, 2004, among a random national sample of 1,204 adults, including 969

registered voters and 810 likely voters. The results have a three-point error margin for registered voters, 3.5 points for likely voters. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

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Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1. How closely are you following the 2004 presidential race: very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely, or not closely at all?

	Very closely	Somewhat closely	Not too closely	Not closely at all	No opin.
9/26/04 RV	48	39	8	4	1
9/8/04 RV	45	40	10	4	1
8/29/04 RV	43	38	13	7	*
8/1/04 RV	41	39	13	7	*
7/25/04	34	39	15	12	*
7/11/04	36	43	13	7	1
6/20/04	33	45	15	7	*
5/23/04	33	41	17	9	*
4/18/04	30	45	16	9	0
3/7/04	33	42	18	7	*
2/11/04	30	45	15	10	*
1/18/04	22	44	22	13	*
10/29/03	15	39	30	15	0
9/13/03	16	40	27	17	*

2. I'd like you to rate the chances that you will vote in the presidential election in November: Are you absolutely certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or less than that?

	Certain to vote	Probably vote	Chances 50/50	Less than 50/50	Don't think will vote (vol.)	No op.
9/26/04 RV	87	8	4	1	*	*
9/8/04 RV	87	7	4	1	1	*
8/29/04 RV	84	10	4	2	*	0
8/1/04 RV	85	9	4	1	1	*
7/25/04 RV	85	7	5	2	*	*
10/29/03	70	12	11	6	1	0

3. (and 3a) If the 2004 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for (George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, the Republicans), (John Kerry and John Edwards, the Democrats), or Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo, the independents? Which candidate are you leaning toward?

Net Leaned Vote, Likely Voters:

	Bush	Kerry	Nader	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote	No op.
9/26/04	51	45	1	*	1	0	2
9/8/04	52	43	2	*	1	0	2

8/29/04	48	48	1	*	1	0	2
8/1/04	47	49	2	*	1	0	1
7/25/04	50	46	2	*	1	*	1

Net Leaned Vote, Registered Voters:

	Bush	Kerry	Nader	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote	No op.
9/26/04	51	44	2	1	1	*	2
9/8/04	50	44	2	*	2	*	2
8/29/04	48	47	2	*	1	*	2
8/1/04	44	50	2	*	1	1	2
7/25/04	48	46	3	*	1	*	1
7/11/04	46	46	4	1	2	1	1
6/20/04	44	48	6	*	1	*	1
5/23/04	46	46	4	*	1	1	1
4/18/04	48	43	6	*	2	1	*
3/7/04	44	48	3	*	1	2	2

Net Leaned Vote, General Population:

	Bush	Kerry	Nader	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote	No op.
7/11/04	45	46	5	1	2	1	1
6/20/04	42	48	7	*	1	1	1
5/23/04	45	44	6	*	1	2	1
4/18/04	47	42	7	*	2	1	*
3/7/04	42	47	5	*	1	3	2

4. (IF NAMED CANDIDATE) Will you definitely vote for (CANDIDATE), or is there a chance you could change your mind and vote for someone else? (IF CHANCE CHANGE MIND) Is there a good chance you'll change your mind, or would you say it's pretty unlikely?

	Definitely vote	---Chance change mind---	NET	Good	Unlikely	No opin.
Registered voters:						
9/26/04 All	82	16	4	12	2	
Bush	83	15	5	10	2	
Kerry	84	15	3	13	1	
9/8/04 All	84	14	6	8	2	
Bush	88	11	5	6	1	
Kerry	81	16	6	10	3	
8/29/04 All	81	18	7	11	1	
Bush	82	16	7	10	1	
Kerry	81	18	6	12	1	
8/1/04 All	80	19	7	12	1	
Bush	79	20	7	13	1	
Kerry	83	16	5	11	1	
7/25/04 All	78	20	7	13	2	
Bush	80	19	7	12	1	
Kerry	80	18	5	13	2	
7/11/04 All	79	21	7	13	1	
Bush	78	22	8	14	*	
Kerry	80	19	7	13	1	
6/20/04 All	73	26	12	14	*	
Bush	80	20	8	12	*	
Kerry	74	26	12	13	1	
General Population:						
6/20/04 All	71	28	13	15	1	
Bush	78	21	9	13	*	
Kerry	72	27	13	14	1	

5. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

		-----Approve-----			-----Disapprove-----			No
		NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opin.
9/26/04	All	50	33	18	45	13	32	5
	RV	52	35	17	46	13	32	5
9/8/04	All	52	35	17	43	11	32	5
	RV	52	38	14	45	11	33	3
8/29/04	All	50	31	19	47	13	34	3
	RV	52	33	19	47	13	35	1
8/1/04	All	47	28	18	49	13	36	5
	RV	48	29	19	51	13	38	2
7/25/04	All	50	32	19	47	13	34	3
	RV	51	33	18	47	13	34	2
7/11/04		48	31	17	50	11	39	2
6/20/04	All	47	30	17	51	13	39	1
	RV	48	32	15	51	12	40	1
5/23/04		47	31	17	50	14	36	3
4/18/04		51	33	18	47	13	34	1
3/7/04		50	32	18	48	12	36	2
2/11/04		50	30	21	47	14	34	2
1/18/04		58	35	24	40	9	30	2
12/21/03		59	39	21	38	15	23	3
12/14/03		57	37	20	39	10	29	5
12/7/03		53	32	21	40	13	27	7
11/16/03		57	34	23	39	11	28	4
10/29/03		56	30	26	42	13	29	2
10/13/03		53	33	20	43	13	29	4
9/30/03		54	34	20	44	15	29	2
9/13/03		58	35	23	40	14	27	2
9/7/03		56	34	22	41	13	28	4
8/11/03		59	37	22	37	14	23	4
7/10/03		59	35	24	38	13	25	3
6/22/03		68	45	23	29	11	18	4
4/30/03		71	50	22	26	17	9	3
4/16/03		74	52	22	23	9	14	3
4/9/03		77	58	19	20	6	14	4
4/3/03		71	54	16	25	7	19	4
3/23/03		68	NA	NA	27	NA	NA	4
3/20/03		67	NA	NA	28	NA	NA	5
3/2/03		62	38	23	35	13	22	4
2/23/03		60	NA	NA	34	NA	NA	6
2/9/03		64	42	21	34	14	20	3
2/1/03		62	41	21	34	13	22	4
1/28/03		62	43	19	36	13	23	2
1/27/03		59	39	21	37	15	22	4
1/20/03		59	36	23	38	16	22	2
12/15/02		66	37	28	32	12	20	2
11/4/02	LV	67	45	23	31	12	20	1
11/3/02	LV	67	45	22	32	12	20	1
11/2/02	LV	67	47	20	32	9	23	1
10/27/02	All	67	39	28	29	13	16	4
	LV	68	47	21	30	14	16	3
9/26/02		67	42	25	30	12	18	3
9/8/02		71	42	28	27	12	15	3
7/28/02		69	39	31	28	14	14	3
7/15/02		72	42	31	25	12	13	2
6/17/02		74	42	32	22	9	13	4
6/9/02		77	41	36	20	9	11	3
5/19/02		76	48	28	22	8	13	3

4/21/02	78	47	31	20	9	10	2
3/28/02	79	49	30	18	8	10	3
3/10/02	82	52	30	16	9	7	2
1/27/02	83	56	27	14	7	7	3
12/19/01	86	64	22	12	6	6	2
11/27/01	89	69	21	9	4	5	1
11/6/01	89	65	24	9	5	4	2
10/9/01	92	76	16	6	3	3	1
9/27/01	90	70	20	6	3	3	4
9/13/01	86	63	23	12	5	6	2
9/9/01	55	26	29	41	20	22	3
8/12/01	61	28	33	31	14	17	8
7/30/01	59	28	30	38	17	22	3
6/3/01	55	27	28	40	18	22	6
4/22/01	63	33	30	32	16	16	5
3/25/01	58	NA	NA	33	NA	NA	8
2/25/01	55	NA	NA	23	NA	NA	22

6. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bush is handling (ITEM)?

9/26/04 - Summary Table - Registered Voters

	Approve	Disapprove	No op.
a. The economy	47	50	4
b. The situation in Iraq	47	50	3
c. The US campaign against terrorism	59	38	3

Trend:

a. The economy

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
9/26/04 RV	47	50	4
8/29/04 RV	45	52	3
7/25/04	47	50	3
6/20/04	46	53	1
5/23/04	44	54	2
4/18/04	44	54	2
3/7/04	39	59	1
2/11/04	44	54	2
1/18/04	51	47	2
12/21/03	51	44	5
11/16/03	48	49	3
10/29/03	45	53	2
10/13/03	45	52	2
9/13/03	42	56	3
9/7/03	44	51	5
8/11/03	45	51	5
7/10/03	47	49	4
4/30/03	52	45	3
2/9/03	47	49	4
2/1/03	44	52	4
1/28/03	46	49	4
1/27/03	47	47	5
1/20/03	43	53	4
1/5/03	50	43	7
12/15/02	50	46	4
11/4/02 LV	53	45	2
11/3/02 LV	52	46	2
11/2/02 LV	55	43	2
10/27/02	51	43	6
10/27/02 LV	53	44	3

9/26/02	51	47	3
9/8/02	57	40	4
7/28/02	57	39	4
7/15/02	58	38	3
4/21/02	64	33	3
1/27/02	62	34	4
12/19/01	67	27	6
11/6/01	72	23	5
9/9/01	48	48	4
7/30/01	52	45	3
6/3/01	53	41	6
4/22/01	55	38	7
3/25/01	50	42	8

b. The situation in Iraq

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
9/26/04 RV	47	50	3
8/29/04 RV	47	51	2
7/25/04	45	53	2
6/20/04	44	55	2
5/23/04	40	58	2
4/18/04	45	54	1
3/7/04	46	53	1
2/11/04	47	52	1
1/18/04	55	42	2
12/21/03	60	39	2
12/14/03	58	38	4
11/16/03	48	48	4
10/29/03	47	51	2
10/13/03	51	47	2
9/29/03	50	47	3
9/13/03	52	46	2
9/7/03	49	47	4
8/24/03	56	37	7
8/11/03	56	41	3
7/10/03	58	41	2
6/22/03	67	30	2
4/30/03	75	22	2
Compare to: The situation with Iraq and Saddam Hussein			
3/27/03	69	26	5
3/23/03	71	26	3
3/20/03	65	29	5
3/17/03	64	29	7
3/9/03	55	38	8
2/23/03	55	39	6
2/9/03	61	37	2
2/5/03	61	32	7
2/1/03	61	35	3
1/28/03	58	38	4
1/27/03	57	40	3
1/20/03	50	46	4
12/15/02	58	37	5
11/4/02 LV	56	40	4
11/3/02 LV	57	40	4
11/2/02 LV	56	41	3
10/27/02	57	38	5
9/26/02	58	39	3
9/14/02	65	31	4
8/29/02	52	36	12

c. The US campaign against terrorism

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
9/26/04 RV	59	38	3
8/29/04 RV	60	37	3
7/25/04	57	40	4
6/20/04	50	48	2
5/23/04	58	39	4
4/18/04	63	35	2
3/7/04	63	34	3
2/11/04	64	34	2
1/18/04	66	33	2
12/21/03	70	28	2
10/29/03	63	35	2
10/13/03	66	30	4
9/13/03	70	27	3
9/7/03	67	28	5
4/30/03	79	19	2
2/9/03	74	23	4
2/1/03	75	21	3
1/27/03	72	26	2
1/20/03	71	25	4
12/15/02	79	20	1
11/4/02 LV	76	22	1
11/3/02 LV	77	22	3
11/2/02 LV	78	21	2
10/27/02 All	74	23	4
10/27/02 LV	78	20	2
9/26/02	70	28	2
9/8/02	74	24	2
7/28/02	81	17	2
7/15/02	83	15	2
5/19/02*	79	19	3
4/21/02*	81	18	2
3/10/02*	88	10	2
1/27/02	88	10	2
12/19/01*	89	9	2
10/15/01*	92	5	3

*Asked very/somewhat follow-up

7. Regardless of how you might vote, please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of (NAME) or perhaps you don't know enough to say.

9/26/04 - Summary Table - Registered Voters

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
a. John Kerry	37	42	21
b. George W. Bush	52	38	10

Trend:

a. John Kerry

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
9/26/04 RV	37	42	21
9/8/04 RV	36	42	23
8/29/04 RV	43	40	17
8/1/04 RV	51	32	16
7/25/04 RV	48	39	12
3/7/04	54	26	20

b. George W. Bush

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
9/26/04 RV	52	38	10
9/8/04 RV	51	39	11
8/29/04 RV	50	40	9
8/1/04 RV	47	45	8
7/25/04 RV	54	43	3
3/7/04	47	46	7
9/6/00 RV	58	31	11
6/11/00	50	28	22
4/2/00	50	31	19
2/27/00	49	39	11
10/31/99	69	24	8
9/2/99	61	23	16
6/6/99	54	15	30
3/14/99	54	14	32
2/14/99	51	13	36
1/19/98	34	13	53

8. In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States at this time?

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	No opinion
9/26/04 RV	49	49	2
9/8/04 RV	49	49	2
8/29/04 RV	44	54	1
7/25/04	46	53	1
4/9/03	65	32	3
3/23/03*	60	38	2
3/5/03*	36	61	3
2/9/03	49	49	2
7/30/01	53	47	1
11/4/00 LV	61	36	3
11/3/00 LV	61	35	4
11/2/00 LV	62	35	4

*Gallup.

9. What will be the single most important issue in your vote for president this year: (The U.S. campaign against terrorism), (the war in Iraq), (the economy and jobs), (education), (health care), or something else?

	Terrorism	Iraq	Economy/ jobs	Educ- ation	Health care	Other	No op.
9/26/04 RV	21	19	28	6	13	10	3
9/8/04 RV	25	18	27	6	13	8	2
8/29/04 RV	19	19	31	6	12	11	2
8/1/04 RV	20	23	25	7	11	12	2
7/25/04 RV	20	21	27	7	12	12	1

10. (IF NAMED TOP ISSUE, Q9) Is there another issue nearly as important as that in your vote for president, or is that the issue that will largely decide your vote? (IF YES) What issue is it?

	9/26/04 RV
The U.S. campaign against terrorism	10
The war in Iraq	16
The economy and jobs	19
Education	6
Health care	10
NONE/No other issues	25

Abortion/Pro-life/Pro-choice	1
Candidates' military record	*
Budget deficit	1
Environment	1
Gun control	1
Morality/moral values	1
Religion/Faith/Christian faith	1
Same-sex marriage	1
Stem-cell research	*
Taxes	*
Social Security	*
Other	5
No opinion	3

11. Who do you trust to do a better job handling (ITEM), (Bush) or (Kerry)?

9/26/04 - Summary Table - Registered Voters

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
a. The economy	48	43	*	4	5
b. The situation in Iraq	53	40	*	3	4
c. The US campaign against terrorism	54	37	1	3	5
d. Relations with other countries	49	41	1	3	6
e. Creating jobs	44	46	1	5	5

Trend:

a. The economy

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
9/26/04 RV	48	43	*	4	5
9/8/04 RV	47	43	1	4	5
8/29/04 RV	48	47	1	2	2
8/1/04 RV	41	52	*	3	4
7/25/04 RV	47	46	1	3	4
7/11/04 RV	44	50	1	3	2
7/11/04	43	51	1	3	3
6/20/04 RV	45	50	1	2	1
6/20/04	45	50	1	3	1
5/23/04	43	48	*	5	3
4/18/04	47	47	1	4	1
3/7/04	41	53	*	4	2
2/11/04	41	49	1	4	5

b. The situation in Iraq

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
9/26/04 RV	53	40	*	3	4
9/8/04 RV	53	37	1	4	6
8/29/04 RV	52	44	*	2	2
8/1/04 RV	46	48	*	2	4
7/25/04 RV	52	40	1	3	3
7/11/04 RV	47	47	1	4	2
7/11/04	47	47	1	3	2
6/20/04 RV	49	47	*	3	1
6/20/04	50	45	*	4	1
5/23/04	48	42	*	6	3
4/18/04	52	41	*	4	2

3/7/04	47	48	1	3	2
2/11/04	48	41	1	6	5

c. The U.S. campaign against terrorism

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
9/26/04 RV	54	37	1	3	5
9/8/04 RV	57	35	1	3	4
8/29/04 RV	56	38	1	2	3
8/1/04 RV	48	45	*	1	5
7/25/04 RV	55	37	2	3	3
7/11/04 RV	51	43	1	3	3
7/11/04	51	42	1	3	3
6/20/04 RV	48	47	*	3	2
6/20/04	47	48	1	3	1
5/23/04	52	39	1	4	4
4/18/04	58	37	1	3	1
3/7/04	57	36	2	2	3
2/11/04	53	37	1	4	5

d. Relations with other countries

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
9/26/04 RV	49	41	1	3	6
9/8/04 RV	47	42	1	4	6
8/1/04 RV	42	51	1	2	5

e. Creating jobs

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opin.
9/26/04 RV	44	46	1	5	5
9/8/04 RV	43	45	1	6	6
4/18/04	46	48	1	4	1
3/7/04	43	51	1	3	2
2/11/04	37	51	1	5	6

12. Please tell me whether the following statement applies more to (Bush) or more to (Kerry).

9/26/04 - Summary Table - Registered Voters

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
a. He is honest and trustworthy	45	38	3	10	4
b. He understands the problems of people like you	43	42	1	12	2
c. He is a strong leader	58	32	2	4	4
d. He will make the country safer and more secure	54	37	2	4	3
e. He shares your values	48	43	1	5	3
f. He's taken a clear stand on the issues	59	28	3	7	3
g. He has an appealing personality	51	32	4	10	3
h. He has strong religious faith	60	18	6	5	12

Trend where available:

a. He is honest and trustworthy

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
9/26/04 RV	45	38	3	10	4
9/8/04 RV	48	35	3	11	4
8/29/04 RV	47	41	2	8	3
8/1/04 RV	41	47	4	5	2
7/25/04 RV	46	40	2	10	2
6/20/04 RV	40	52	1	6	1
6/20/04	39	52	1	6	1

b. He understands the problems of people like you

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
9/26/04 RV	43	42	1	12	2
9/8/04 RV	44	43	1	8	4
8/29/04 RV	42	48	1	8	2
8/1/04 RV	37	51	1	8	2
7/25/04 RV	42	46	1	9	2
6/20/04 RV	37	55	1	7	1
6/20/04	36	56	1	6	2

c. He is a strong leader

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
9/26/04 RV	58	32	2	4	4
9/8/04 RV	58	31	3	4	4
8/29/04 RV	54	39	2	2	3
8/1/04 RV	50	44	2	2	3
7/25/04 RV	55	36	2	5	2
6/20/04 RV	50	45	1	3	2
6/20/04	51	43	2	3	2

d. He will make the country safer and more secure

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
9/26/04 RV	54	37	2	4	3
9/8/04 RV	54	35	1	5	5
8/29/04 RV	53	40	2	3	2
8/1/04 RV	48	45	1	3	3
7/25/04 RV	54	38	1	4	2
6/20/04 RV	53	42	1	2	2
6/20/04	54	40	1	3	2

e. He shares your values

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
9/26/04 RV	48	43	1	5	3
9/8/04 RV	48	40	2	6	4
8/29/04 RV	47	46	1	4	2
8/1/04 RV	44	50	1	3	2
7/25/04 RV	49	43	1	5	2
6/20/04 RV	46	48	1	3	1
6/20/04	46	48	1	4	1

f. He's taken a clear stand on the issues

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
9/26/04 RV	59	28	3	7	3
9/8/04 RV	56	29	3	9	3

g. He has an appealing personality

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
9/26/04 RV	51	32	4	10	3
9/8/04 RV	53	31	4	9	3

h. No trend.

13. And which of these is the single most important personal quality you are looking for in a presidential candidate? I'll read the list twice. Is it someone...

	9/26/04 RV
Who is honest and trustworthy	25
Who understands the problems of people like you	12
Who is a strong leader	18
Who will make the country safer and more secure	14
Who shares your values	13
Who has taken a clear stand on the issues	7
Who has an appealing personality	*
Who has strong religious faith	7
No opinion	4

14. Who do you think is better qualified to be commander in chief of the U.S. military, (Kerry) or (Bush)?

	Bush	Kerry	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
9/26/04 RV	52	41	1	3	3
9/8/04 RV	53	40	1	3	3
8/29/04 RV	53	43	*	2	1
8/1/04 RV	44	52	1	1	2

15. Thinking about his candidacy for president so far, how enthusiastic are you about (Bush/Kerry) - very enthusiastic, fairly enthusiastic, not too enthusiastic, or not enthusiastic at all?

9/26/04 - Summary Table - Among Registered Voters, Leaned Bush/Kerry Supporters

	----Enthusiastic---			-----Not Enthusiastic-----			No
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	Not at all	op.
a. Bush	91	61	31	8	6	2	*
b. Kerry	87	39	47	12	9	3	1

Trend:

	----Enthusiastic---			-----Not Enthusiastic-----			No
	NET	Very	Fairly	NET	Not too	Not at all	op.
Bush:							
9/26/04 RV	91	61	31	8	6	2	*

9/8/04 RV	95	63	32	5	4	*	*
8/29/04 RV	94	56	38	6	5	1	*
8/1/04 RV	90	53	37	10	8	2	*
7/25/04 RV	90	49	41	10	8	1	*
6/20/04 RV	90	50	40	9	7	2	*
6/20/04 All	90	48	42	10	8	2	*

Kerry:

9/26/04 RV	87	39	47	12	9	3	1
9/8/04 RV	85	39	46	14	10	4	1
8/29/04 RV	89	40	49	11	9	2	*
8/1/04 RV	92	56	36	7	6	1	1
7/25/04 RV	90	41	49	10	9	1	0
6/20/04 RV	85	34	51	15	12	3	0
6/20/04 All	83	33	50	17	13	4	0

16. In his policy decisions, do you think (NAME) is too (willing to take risks), too (cautious) or what?

9/26/04 - Registered Voters

	Too willing to take risks	Too cautious	Neither (vol.)	About right (vol.)	No op.
a. Bush	55	10	14	14	8
b. Kerry	17	35	19	6	22

17. In your opinion, is the outcome of this presidential election especially important, or is it no more important than any other presidential election? (IF ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT) Would you say it's one of the single most important elections of your lifetime, or not that important?

	NET	One of the single most	Not that important	No more important	No opinion
9/26/04 RV	82	67	15	17	1
7/25/04 RV	78	66	12	21	1
11/5/00* RV	67	NA	NA	31	2
11/2/96* RV	60	NA	NA	38	1

*Pew Research Center

18. Do you think (Bush/Kerry) does or does not have a clear plan for (ITEM)?
9/26/04 - Summary Table - Registered Voters

	-----Bush-----			-----Kerry-----		
	Does	Does not	No op.	Does	Does not	No op.
a. handling the situation in Iraq	53	44	3	38	56	6
b. handling the economy	54	43	3	51	41	7
c. handling terrorism	62	36	3	36	55	9

Trend:

a. handling the situation in Iraq

	-----Bush-----			-----Kerry-----		
	Does	Does not	No op.	Does	Does not	No op.
9/26/04 RV	53	44	3	38	56	6
6/20/04	48	50	1	42	52	6

b. handling the economy

	-----Bush-----			-----Kerry-----		
	Does	Does not op.	No	Does	Does not op.	No
9/26/04 RV	54	43	3	51	41	7
6/20/04	47	51	2	55	40	5

c. handling terrorism

	-----Bush-----			-----Kerry-----		
	Does	Does not op.	No	Does	Does not op.	No
9/26/04 RV	62	36	3	36	55	9
6/20/04	55	43	1	42	53	5

19. All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think the war with Iraq was worth fighting, or not? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----Worth fighting----			----Not worth fighting---			No op.
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/26/04 RV	46	35	12	51	8	42	3
9/8/04 RV	51	38	13	45	10	34	4
8/29/04 RV	48	34	14	50	11	39	2
7/25/04	49	36	13	48	11	37	3
6/20/04	47	32	14	52	13	39	2
5/23/04	48	35	13	50	13	37	1
5/6/04	49	NA	NA	47	NA	NA	5
4/18/04	51			47			2
3/7/04	52			44			3
2/11/04	48			50			2
1/18/04	56			41			3
12/21/03	59			39			2
12/14/03	53			42			5
11/16/03	52			44			4
10/29/03	54			44			2
10/13/03	54			44			2
9/13/03	61			37			2
9/7/03	54			42			4
8/24/03	57			37			5
8/11/03	61			35			4
7/10/03	57			40			3
6/22/03	64			33			3
4/30/03	70	"	"	27	"	"	4
Gulf War:							
2/2/92*	66	NA	NA	32	NA	NA	2
7/28/91	67			30			3
6/2/91	70			26			3
3/4/91	86	"	"	13	"	"	1

*2/2/92 and previous: "the Persian Gulf war"; 3/4/91: "this war"

20. Do you think the war with Iraq has or has not contributed to the long-term security of the United States? IF YES: Has it contributed to the long-term security of the United States a great deal, or somewhat?

	-----Contributed-----			Has not	No opin.
	NET	Great deal	Somewhat		
9/26/04 RV	54	36	18	42	4
9/8/04 RV	57	36	22	40	3
8/29/04 RV	54	33	20	42	4

7/25/04	51	32	19	45	3
6/20/04	51	28	23	46	2
5/23/04	54	30	24	43	3
4/18/04	57	33	24	40	3
3/7/04	57	29	29	40	3
2/11/04	58	32	26	38	4
1/18/04	59	34	25	38	3
12/21/03	62	34	29	34	4
7/10/03*	62	33	29	35	3
*"did or did not"					

21. Do you think the United States (has gotten bogged down in Iraq), or do you think the United States (is making good progress in Iraq)?

	Has gotten bogged down	Is making good progress	No op.
9/26/04 RV	60	36	4
9/8/04 RV	54	40	6
5/23/04	65	33	2
5/6/04	60	35	5
4/18/04	59	41	0

22. On another subject, would you describe the state of the nation's economy these days as excellent, good, not so good or poor?

	----Excellent/Good-----			-----Not so good/Poor-----			No op.
	NET	Excellent	Good	NET	Not so good	Poor	
9/26/04 RV	46	3	43	53	38	15	1
8/29/04 RV	45	3	41	55	37	18	*
7/25/04	46	4	42	53	39	14	*
6/20/04	45	4	41	55	38	17	*
4/18/04	43	4	39	57	39	18	*
3/7/04	39	2	37	60	38	22	1
1/18/04	42	3	39	58	42	16	0
12/21/03	42	4	39	57	41	16	1
10/29/03	33	1	32	67	45	23	*
9/13/03	30	2	27	70	45	25	*
8/11/03	32	2	30	68	43	25	*
4/30/03	35	1	34	64	46	19	*
2/9/03	28	1	27	72	49	23	*
1/20/03	25	1	25	74	48	26	1
12/15/02	35	1	33	65	44	21	1
11/4/02 LV	28	1	27	72	55	17	1
11/3/02 LV	27	1	26	72	56	17	1
11/2/02 LV	29	1	28	71	54	17	*
9/26/02	31	2	28	69	50	19	*
7/15/02	39	3	36	61	44	17	1
2/21/02	30	1	29	69	51	18	*
1/27/02	31	1	29	69	50	19	*
9/20/01	38	3	35	60	47	14	2
9/9/01	33	1	32	66	47	19	*
7/30/01	50	3	46	50	39	12	*
4/22/01	50	3	47	50	40	9	*
1/15/01	70	10	59	29	24	6	1
10/27/00 LV	86	24	61	14	11	3	*
10/26/00 LV	86	24	61	14	11	3	*
6/11/00	74	17	57	26	19	6	*
2/27/00	80	25	55	20	14	5	*
10/31/99	74	18	56	26	18	7	1
9/2/99	76	19	57	23	16	6	1
3/14/99	80	22	58	19	15	4	1
11/1/98	73	12	61	26	21	5	1

11/1/98	LV	78	13	65	22	19	3	*
10/13/97		61	12	49	39	27	11	*

23. Would you say most Americans are better off financially than they were in 2001 when Bush became president, not as well off, or in about the same shape as then financially?

	Better off	Not as well off	The same	No opinion
9/26/04 RV	17	45	37	2
9/8/04 RV	19	42	37	3
8/29/04 RV	14	46	39	1
8/1/04 RV	18	47	34	1
7/25/04	15	41	43	1
6/20/04	17	45	37	1
4/18/04	18	43	37	2
3/7/04	17	43	38	1
2/11/04	14	47	38	1
1/18/04	13	42	43	2
12/21/03	17	40	41	2
10/29/03	9	49	41	1
9/13/03	9	52	38	1
4/30/03	10	48	42	1
George H. W. Bush				
8/9/92	6	61	31	1
10/21/91	7	48	41	4
3/4/91	7	35	56	2
1/16/89	33	26	38	3

24. Compared to before September 11, 2001, do you think the country today is safer from terrorism or less safe from terrorism? IF SAFER: Would you say the country is much safer or somewhat safer?

	-----Safer-----			Less safe	No diff. (vol.)	No opin.
	NET	Much	Somewhat			
9/26/04 RV	59	24	35	34	5	2
9/8/04 RV	64	26	38	28	5	3
8/29/04 RV	60	24	36	31	7	2
1/18/04	67	28	39	24	8	1
9/7/03	67	24	42	27	4	2

25. Have you personally been contacted by a representative of the (NAME) campaign, either by phone or in-person, asking you for your support, or not?

	-----Bush-----			-----Kerry-----		
	Yes	No	No op.	Yes	No	No op.
9/26/04 NAT RV	15	84	*	14	85	1
9/19/04 WI RV	25	74	1	19	80	1
9/12/04 PA RV	21	78	1	14	85	1

END