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THE PEW FORUM
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Plurality Sees Islam as More Likely to Encourage Violence
VIEWES OF ISLAM REMAIN SHARPLY DIVIDED

Despite the U.S. war in Iraq and the continuing threat of terrorism at home, public attitudes toward Islam have remained stable over the past year. Roughly four-in-ten Americans (39%) say they have a favorable impression of Islam, while about as many (37%) say they have an unfavorable view. The balance of opinion has not changed substantially in the past year (40% favorable in July 2003).

A plurality of Americans (46%) believes that Islam is more likely than other religions to encourage violence among its believers, while 37% say Islam does not encourage violence more than other religions. This measure also is substantially unchanged from last year, when 44% felt Islam was more likely to encourage violence. But the 2003 figure represented a substantial increase over the 25% who expressed this view in March 2002.

The nationwide survey of 2,009 adults, conducted July 8-18 by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, also finds a small decrease over the past year in perceptions of anti-Americanism among Muslims around the world. A slim 44% plurality believes that “just a few” or “some” Muslims are anti-American. That compares with 42% who say that “about half” (19%), “most,” or “almost all” (23%) Muslims around the world are anti-American. In July 2003, 49% said about half or more Muslims worldwide were anti-American. In March 2002, 36% expressed that view.

	March 2002	July 2003	July 2004
<i>View of Islam</i>	%	%	%
Favorable	38	40	39
Unfavorable	33	34	37
Don't know	<u>29</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>24</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Is Islam more likely to encourage violence?</i>			
Yes	25	44	46
No	51	41	37
Don't know/Neither	<u>24</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>17</u>
	100	100	100
<i>How many Muslims are anti-American?*</i>			
Most/Almost all	18	24	23
About half	18	25	19
Some/Just a few	45	39	44
Don't know	<u>19</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>14</u>
	100	100	100

* 2003 Figures from June

Gaps Persist in Views of Islam

There continue to be significant demographic and political differences in public opinion toward Islam. On balance, younger Americans, those under age 30, hold a more favorable view of Islam; older age groups are divided, with a relatively large minority of those age 65 and older expressing no opinion (39%).

Among religious groups, seculars by two-to-one express a favorable opinion of Islam (50%-25%). A plurality of white Catholics also has a positive impression of Islam (43% fav/34% unfav). But white evangelical Protestants, on balance, have a negative opinion of Islam (46% unfav/29% fav). And more than half of white evangelicals who attend church at least once a week have an unfavorable impression of Islam.

There also are sharp ideological differences in impressions of Islam. A solid majority of liberal Democrats (56%) say they have a favorable opinion of Islam. Conservative and moderate Democrats are less favorable (44%), but positive opinions outnumber negative ones. Republicans are less positive toward Islam, and 45% of conservative Republicans say they have an unfavorable opinion of the religion.

Views of Islam			
	<u>Fav- orable</u> %	<u>Unfav- orable</u> %	<u>DK/Ref</u> %
Total	39	37	24=100
Sex			
Male	39	41	20=100
Female	38	32	30=100
Race/Ethnicity			
White	39	37	24=100
Total Non-White	36	38	26=100
Black	38	44	18=100
Hispanic	44	38	18=100
Age			
18-29	47	36	17=100
30-49	41	39	20=100
50-64	35	37	28=100
65+	29	32	39=100
Education			
College Grad	49	34	17=100
Some College	49	33	18=100
High School or Less	28	40	32=100
Race/Religion			
White Protestant	34	41	25=100
Evangelical	29	46	25=100
Attend weekly +	23	54	23=100
Attend less often	38	33	29=100
Non-Evangelical	40	36	24=100
White Catholic	43	34	23=100
Secular	50	25	25=100
Party/Ideology			
Conservative Rep.	33	45	22=100
Mod./Liberal Rep.	40	40	20=100
Independent	36	39	25=100
Cons./Mod. Dem.	44	32	24=100
Liberal Democrat	56	26	18=100

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for the July 2004 Foreign Policy and Party Images survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 2,009 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period July 8-18, 2004. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. For results based on 1,568 Registered Voters, the sampling error is plus or minus 3.0 percentage points. For results based on either Form 1 (N=1003) or Form 2 (N=1006) general public, the sampling error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

ASK ALL:

Thinking about the Muslim religion for a moment...

ASK FORM 1 ONLY:

Q.80F1 Would you say you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of Islam?

		July <u>2003</u>	March <u>2002</u>	<i>-- ABC/Beliefnet --</i>	
				<u>Jan 2002</u>	<u>Oct 2001</u>
39	Favorable	40	38	41	47
37	Unfavorable	34	33	24	39
<u>24</u>	No Opinion	<u>26</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>13</u>
100		100	100	100	100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY:

Q.81F1 What's your impression – how many Muslims around the world are anti-American? **[READ, IN ORDER]**

		June <u>2003</u>	March <u>2002</u>
8	Almost all	7	6
15	Most	17	12
19	About half	25	18
27	Some	24	24
17	Just a few	15	21
<u>14</u>	Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	<u>12</u>	<u>19</u>
100		100	100

ASK FORM 2 ONLY:

Q.82F2 Which statement comes closer to your own views even if neither is exactly right. **[READ, IN ORDER]**

		July <u>2003</u>	March <u>2002</u>
46	The Islamic religion is more likely than others to encourage violence among its believers	44	25
37	The Islamic religion does not encourage violence more than others	41	51
2	Neither (VOL.)	3	3
<u>15</u>	Don't know (VOL.)	<u>12</u>	<u>21</u>
100		100	100