

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**MARCH 2003 NEWS INTEREST INDEX**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**March 13-16, 2003**  
**N=1,032**

Q.1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
March, 2003	55	34	11=100
February, 2003	54	36	10=100
January, 2003	58	32	10=100
December, 2002	61	28	11=100
Late October, 2002	59	29	12=100
Early October, 2002	61	30	9=100
Mid-September, 2002	67	22	11=100
Early September, 2002	63	26	11=100
Late August, 2002	60	27	13=100
August, 2002	67	21	12=100
Late July, 2002	65	25	10=100
July, 2002	67	21	12=100
June, 2002	70	20	10=100
April, 2002	69	18	13=100
Early April, 2002	74	16	10=100
February, 2002	78	13	9=100
January, 2002	80	11	9=100
Mid-November, 2001	84	9	7=100
Early October, 2001	84	8	8=100
Late September, 2001	86	7	7=100
Mid-September, 2001	80	9	11=100
Early September, 2001	51	34	15=100
August, 2001	50	32	18=100
July, 2001	51	32	17=100
June, 2001	50	33	17=100
May, 2001	53	32	15=100
April, 2001	56	27	17=100
March, 2001	55	25	20=100
February, 2001	53	21	26=100

Q.2 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely? **[INSERT ITEM; ROTATE; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]**

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	40	35	16	8	1=100
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*=100
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1=100
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1=100

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/Ref
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1=100
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1=100
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2=100
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1=100
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1=100
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0=100
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1=100
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1=100
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2=100
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*=100
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*=100
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1=100
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*=100
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1=100
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*=100
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1=100
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1=100
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*=100
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1=100
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*=100
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1=100
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*=100
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*=100
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1=100
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*=100
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*=100
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	*=100
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1=100
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*=100
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*=100
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*=100
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1=100
Early January, 1991	36	40	16	7	1=100
b. Debate over the possibility that the					
U.S. will take military action in Iraq	62	27	6	4	1=100
February, 2003	62	25	8	4	1=100
January, 2003	55	29	10	4	2=100
December, 2002	51	32	10	6	1=100
Late October, 2002	53	33	8	5	1=100
Early October, 2002	60	28	6	5	1=100
Early September, 2002 <sup>1</sup>	48	29	15	6	2=100
Early January, 1991	59	31	7	2	1=100

---

<sup>1</sup> In Early September 2002 the story was listed as "...U.S. will invade Iraq." In Early January 1991 the story was listed as "Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the presence of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf."

**Q.2 CONTINUED...**

		Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/Ref
c.	North Korea's nuclear weapons program	34	34	19	12	1=100
	February, 2003	33	34	18	13	2=100
	January, 2003	33	34	18	14	1=100
	Late October, 2002 <sup>2</sup>	25	31	23	20	1=100
	June, 1994	27	33	26	14	*=100

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=515]:**

d.F1	The work of United Nations weapons inspectors in Iraq	40	39	14	5	2=100
	January, 2003	43	33	15	8	1=100
	December, 2002	34	41	14	10	1=100
	August, 1998 <sup>3</sup>	35	39	15	10	1=100
	February, 1998	18	31	23	27	1=100
	January, 1998	36	40	16	8	*=100
	December, 1997	32	35	18	15	*=100
	November, 1997	34	33	15	17	1=100
	October, 1991	44	32	10	13	1=100
		35	38	15	11	1=100

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=517]:**

e.F2	The recent capture of a major Al Qaeda leader in Pakistan	31	39	18	11	1=100
------	---	----	----	----	----	-------

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=515]:**

f.F1	Deaths in Chicago and Rhode Island nightclubs resulting from fire and overcrowding	24	42	23	11	*=100
------	--	----	----	----	----	-------

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=517]:**

g.F2	The high price of gasoline these days	52	27	11	9	1=100
	February, 2003	53	25	12	9	1=100
	June, 2001	56	31	7	5	1=100
	May, 2001	61	26	6	6	1=100
	Early October, 2000	56	25	12	6	1=100
	June, 2000 <sup>4</sup>	61	25	9	5	*=100
	March, 2000	58	28	10	4	*=100
	October, 1990	62	26	8	4	*=100
	September, 1990	56	28	11	5	*=100
	August, 1990	57	27	10	5	1=100

h.	The Utah girl found alive nine months after being kidnaped from her home	34	36	20	10	*=100
----	--	----	----	----	----	-------

<sup>2</sup> In Late October 2002 the story was listed as "North Korea's admission that it has been secretly developing nuclear weapons." In June 1994 the story was listed as "Reports about North Korea's building of nuclear weapons and refusal to allow UN inspections."

<sup>3</sup> In August 1998 the story was listed as "The current dispute with Iraq over UN weapons inspections." In February 1998 the story was listed as "The conflict in Iraq over UN weapons inspectors and U.S. threats to retaliate with air strikes." In January 1998 the story was listed as "The conflict in Iraq over UN weapons inspectors." In November and December 1997 the story was listed as "(the conflict over) Iraq's refusal to let Americans participate in weapons inspections." In October 1991 the story was listed as "The standoff in Baghdad between the Iraqis and UN weapons inspectors."

<sup>4</sup> In August 1990 through June 2000 the question was worded "Recent increases in the price of gasoline."

**Q.2a-h RANK ORDERED SUMMARY TABLE**

Very closely %	Fairly closely %		
62	27	b.	Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will take military action in Iraq
52	27	g.F2	The high price of gasoline these days
40	39	d.F1	The work of United Nations weapons inspectors in Iraq
40	35	a.	Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
34	36	h.	The Utah girl found alive nine months after being kidnaped from her home
34	34	c.	North Korea's nuclear weapons program
31	39	e.F2	The recent capture of a major Al Qaeda leader in Pakistan
24	42	f.F1	Deaths in Chicago and Rhode Island nightclubs resulting from fire and overcrowding

Q.3 Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the nation's foreign policy?

		<i>Gallup</i>			
		April	October	Early	Aug
		<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u> <sup>5</sup>
53	Approve	69	81	46	45
36	Disapprove	20	14	34	32
<u>11</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>11</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>23</u>
100		100	100	100	100

On the subject of Iraq...

Q.4 How much have you yourself thought about whether the U.S. should use military force to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq? **[READ]**

		Feb	Jan	Dec	Early	Mid-	Late	Early
		<u>2003</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>1991</u> <sup>6</sup>
64	A Great deal	58	56	58	54	55	46	66
24	Some	27	29	29	32	27	35	24
7	Only a little – OR –	8	8	8	8	9	11	6
4	Not at all	6	6	4	5	6	6	2
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100

<sup>5</sup> In August 2001 roughly half of the U.S. sample was asked about Bush's handling of international policy, while the other half was asked about the handling of the nation's foreign policy. Results did not differ between question wordings.

<sup>6</sup> In Early January 1991 the question was worded "How much thought have you given to the question of whether the U.S. should use military force against Iraq if it does not withdraw its forces from Kuwait?"

Q.5/6 Would you favor or oppose taking military action in Iraq to end Saddam Hussein's rule? **[IF FAVOR, ASK Should we attack Iraq only if our major allies agree to join us, or attack Iraq even if allies do not want to join us?]**

		Late Early Mid- Late -----Gallup <sup>7</sup> -----												
		Feb	Jan	Dec	Nov	Oct	Oct	Sept	Aug	June	Nov	Feb	June	Mar
		<u>2003</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1992</u>						
59	Favor	66	68	65	62	55	62	64	64	59	74	52	70	55
	38 Even if allies won't join	38	26	--	--	27	--	33	30	--	--	--	--	--
	16 Only if allies agree	22	37	--	--	23	--	25	30	--	--	--	--	--
	5 Don't know/Refused	6	5	--	--	5	--	6	4	--	--	--	--	--
30	Oppose	26	25	25	26	34	28	23	21	34	20	42	27	40
<u>11</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

**ASK ALL:**

Q.7 Do you think George W. Bush has explained clearly what's at stake as to why the U.S. might use military force to end the rule of Saddam Hussein, or do you think he has not explained the reasons clearly enough?

		Feb	Jan	Dec	Late	Mid-	Late	
		<u>2003</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>NY Times</u>
								<u>Aug 1990</u> <sup>8</sup>
49	Explained clearly	53	42	48	48	52	37	50
47	Not clearly	40	53	45	45	37	52	41
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Q.8 Should the U.S. first get a United Nations resolution to use force before taking military action against Iraq or don't you think the U.S. needs to do this?

**IF "SHOULD GET UN RESOLUTION" ASK:**

Q.9 If the U.S. and most of its allies back using force against Iraq, but the UN resolution is vetoed by one or two countries who oppose it – what should the U.S. do? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

		Feb
		<u>2003</u>
54	Should first get a UN resolution	57
	24 Not use force because the UN has not approved it	22
	25 Use force if it feels it is the right thing to do	30
	5 Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)	5
35	Does not need to do this	33
1	Should not use force in Iraq (VOL.)	*
<u>10</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>10</u>
100		100

<sup>7</sup> Gallup trend was worded "Would you favor or oppose sending American troops back to the Persian Gulf in order to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq?"

<sup>8</sup> New York Times trend was worded "Do you think George Bush has explained clearly what's at stake and why the U.S. is sending troops to Saudi Arabia, or do you think ..."

**ASK ALL:**

Q.10 In your opinion, what do you think the UN weapons inspections have shown so far... **[READ ALL THREE OPTIONS; ROTATE ITEMS 1 & 2]**

		Feb <u>2003</u>
8	That Iraq will cooperate and can be peacefully disarmed	4
60	That Iraq will not cooperate and can not be peacefully disarmed	58
	--OR--	
28	That it is too early to tell	34
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused ( <b>VOL. DO NOT READ</b> )	<u>4</u>
100		100

Q.11 From your point of view, does the U.S. now have enough international support to use military force against Iraq or do you think it still has to convince more of its allies to go along?

		Feb <u>2003</u>
37	Has enough international support	37
56	Still has to convince more	56
<u>7</u>	Don't know/Refused ( <b>VOL.</b> )	<u>7</u>
100		100

Q.12 If Iraq is disarmed and Saddam Hussein is removed from power by the U.S. and its allies, do you think the people of Iraq will be better off or worse off in the long run than they are now?

79	Better off
8	Worse off
<u>13</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.13 If Iraq is disarmed and Saddam Hussein is removed from power by the U.S. and its allies do you think the Middle East region will be more stable or less stable in the long run than it is now?

64	More stable
17	Less stable
<u>19</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.14 Does the current controversy over what to do about Iraq show that the United Nations still plays an important role in dealing with international conflicts or does it show that the United Nations is not so important any more?

54	Still plays important role
32	Not so important
1	No difference [ <b>VOL.</b> ]
<u>13</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.15 Which one of the following has had the biggest influence on your thinking on the issue of how to deal with Iraq... **[READ IN ORDER]**

		<i>Military Action in Iraq</i>	
		<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
16	Personal experience	18	16
7	The views of your friends and family	8	5
41	What you have seen or read in the media	41	44
10	Your religious beliefs	9	10
11	Your education	11	13
11	OR Something else	11	10
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused ( <b>VOL.</b> )	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
100		100	100
		(N=617)	(N=307)

Q.16 Many people have been expressing their opinions about possible military action in Iraq. How much influence have the opinions of **[INSERT, ROTATE ITEMS a-e WITH ITEM f ALWAYS LAST]** had on how you view this issue... a great deal, some, not much, or no influence at all? **[READ CHOICES, IN ORDER]**

		No Influence				
		Great Deal	Some	Not Much	At all	DK/Ref
a.	Religious leaders	11	22	18	46	3=100
b.	Hollywood celebrities	2	5	14	77	2=100
c.	Political commentators	7	36	22	32	3=100
d.	Republican political leaders	11	29	21	36	3=100
e.	Democratic political leaders	7	28	20	42	3=100
f.	Your friends and family members	14	39	14	31	2=100

On a different subject...

RELIG What is your religious preference — Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Mormon, or an orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?

56	Protestant (include Baptist, Episcopal, Jehovah's Witness, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Pentecostal, Church of Christ, etc.)
24	Roman Catholic
1	Jewish
2	Mormon (include Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)
1	Orthodox Church (Greek or Russian)
1	Islam/Muslim
2	Other religion <b>[SPECIFY]</b>
10	No religion, not a believer, atheist, agnostic
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused <b>[VOL.]</b>
100	

**IF RELIG = 1,2,4,5,7,9 ASK [N=909]:**

BORN Would you describe yourself as a "born again" or evangelical Christian, or not?

42	Yes, would
51	No, would not
<u>7</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

**ASK ALL:**

ATTEND Aside from weddings and funerals how often do you attend religious services... more than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, seldom, or never?

		March <u>2002</u>	Mid-Nov <u>2001</u>	March <u>2001</u>	Sept <u>2000</u> <sup>9</sup>	June <u>1997</u>	June <u>1996</u>
15	More than once a week	15	16	17	17	12	14
24	Once a week	25	26	26	28	26	25
15	Once or twice a month	17	14	17	16	17	17
21	A few times a year	18	17	17	17	20	21
15	Seldom	15	16	15	13	15	13
9	Never	9	10	7	8	10	9
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	*	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100

**IF ATTENDS RELIGIOUS SERVICES AT LEAST ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH, ASK [N=573]:**

Q.17 Has the clergy at your place of worship spoken recently about the issue of war with Iraq, or not?

**IF YES, CLERGY HAS SPOKEN ABOUT THE WAR, ASK:**

Q.18 Did they speak in favor of the war, against it, or did they not take a position on the war?

		June <u>1996</u> <sup>10</sup>
57	Yes	59
	7 In favor of war	--
	14 Against it	--
	34 No position	--
	1 Other / Multiple positions [VOL.]	--
	1 Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	--
41	No	39
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused [VOL.]	<u>2</u>
100		100

<sup>9</sup> September 2000 results are based on registered voters.

<sup>10</sup> In June 1996 the question was worded: "As I read a list of issues, please tell me whether or not the clergy at your place of worship speaks out on this issue... (World trouble spots such as Bosnia or Rwanda)."

**ASK ALL:**

Q.19 In general, do you think that religious leaders in the United States have said too much, too little, or the right amount about war in Iraq?

15	Too much
32	Too little
34	About right
<u>19</u>	Don't know/Refused [VOL.]
100	

On a different topic...

Q.20 Which comes closer to your view? [READ]

		Mid-Nov
		<u>2001</u>
19	War is never morally justified [or]	12
77	War is sometimes morally justified	83
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>5</u>
100		100

Q.21 What do you worry about more when the United States uses military force [READ]

		Mid-Nov
		<u>2001</u>
32	That the U.S. doesn't do enough to avoid civilian casualties [or]	25
47	That the U.S. doesn't go far enough to achieve military victory	56
<u>21</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>19</u>
100		100

Q.22 How worried are you that there will soon be another terrorist attack in the United States? [READ]

		Feb	Jan	Dec	Early	Late		Jan	Dec	Oct	Oct	Early
		<u>2003</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u>
22	Very worried	34	18	31	20	16	32	20	13	29	27	28
42	Somewhat worried	41	50	42	46	46	44	42	39	42	40	45
20	Not too worried	17	23	18	22	25	17	28	27	18	19	15
14	Not at all worried	7	8	8	11	12	7	9	19	10	12	11
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	*	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100