

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**MARCH 2006 NEWS INTEREST INDEX**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**March 8-12, 2006**  
**N = 1,405**

**Q.1-Q.10 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=695]:**

More specifically...

Q.3 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling **[INSERT ITEM, RANDOMIZE]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
b.F2 The situation in Iraq	30	65	5=100
February, 2006	38	57	5=100
December, 2005	36	58	6=100
Late October, 2005	37	57	6=100
Early September, 2005	34	58	8=100
July, 2005	35	57	8=100
Mid-May, 2005	37	56	7=100
February, 2005	40	53	7=100
January, 2005	45	50	5=100
Mid-October, 2004	37	56	7=100
Early September, 2004	47	45	8=100
August, 2004	43	52	5=100
July, 2004	42	53	5=100
June, 2004	42	51	7=100
Late April, 2004	44	48	8=100
Early April, 2004	40	53	7=100
Mid-January, 2004	59	37	4=100
September, 2003	52	40	8=100
April 10-16, 2003 <sup>1</sup>	77	17	6=100
April 8-9, 2003	71	23	6=100
--April 9, 2003	76	18	6=100
--April 8, 2003	65	28	7=100
April 2-7, 2003	73	21	6=100
March 28-April 1, 2003	69	26	5=100
March 25-27, 2003	73	23	4=100
March 23-24, 2003	72	22	6=100
March 20-22, 2003	70	23	7=100
February, 2003	56	37	7=100
January, 2003	56	36	8=100
Early October, 2002	56	34	10=100

**Q.11-Q.13, Q.25 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**  
**Q.14-Q.18, Q.51-Q.55 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**  
**NO QUESTIONS 56-59**

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<sup>1</sup> From March to April 2003 the item was worded: "... dealing with the war in Iraq?" The 1991 Gallup trend was worded "...George Bush is handling the situation in the Persian Gulf region."

**ASK ALL:**

Q.26 As I read you a pair of statements, tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views even if neither is exactly right. **[READ]**

		July <u>2005</u>	Late May <u>2005</u> <sup>2</sup>	Mid- July <u>2003</u>	March <u>2002</u>
53	Some religions are more likely than others to encourage violence among believers	45	52	52	47
	-OR-				
36	Religions are all about the same in this regard	43	39	38	41
4	Neither (VOL.)	5	3	5	4
<u>7</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>
100		100	100	100	100

**IF "SOME MORE VIOLENT" (1 IN Q.26) ASK:**

Q.27 Which one of the religions that I name do you think of as most violent – Christianity, Islam, Judaism or Hinduism?

		July <u>2005</u>	May <u>2005</u>
5	Christianity	5	5
34	Islam	27	35
1	Judaism	2	2
2	Hinduism	2	2
2	None (VOL.) (DO NOT READ)	2	1
9	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	7	7
36	Religions are all about the same [in Q.26]	43	39
<u>11</u>	Neither/Don't know/Refused (VOL.) [in Q.26]	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>
100		100	100

**Q.28-Q.29, Q.51-Q.55 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**Q.30-Q.50 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

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<sup>2</sup> In Late May 2005 the question was worded "Which statement comes closer to your own views even if neither is exactly right? Some religions are more prone to violence than others; OR All religions are about the same when it comes to violence."

**ASK ALL:**

Turning to the subject of Iraq ...

Q.60 Do you think the U.S. made the right decision or the wrong decision in using military force against Iraq?

	<u>Right decision</u>	<u>Wrong decision</u>	<u>Don't know/ Refused</u>
March, 2006	45	49	6=100
February, 2006	51	44	5=100
January, 2006	45	47	8=100
December, 2005	47	48	5=100
Late October, 2005	48	45	7=100
Early October, 2005	44	50	6=100
Mid-September, 2005	49	44	7=100
July, 2005	49	44	7=100
June, 2005	47	45	8=100
February, 2005	47	47	6=100
January, 2005	51	44	5=100
December, 2004	49	44	7=100
November, 2004 (RVs)	48	41	11=100
Mid-October, 2004	46	42	12=100
Early October, 2004	50	39	11=100
Early September, 2004	53	39	8=100
August, 2004	53	41	6=100
July, 2004	52	43	5=100
June, 2004	55	38	7=100
May, 2004	51	42	7=100
Late April, 2004	54	37	9=100
Early April, 2004	57	35	8=100
Mid-March, 2004	55	39	6=100
Late February, 2004	60	32	8=100
Early February, 2004	56	39	5=100
Mid-January, 2004	65	30	5=100
Early January, 2004	62	28	10=100
December, 2003	67	26	7=100
October, 2003	60	33	7=100
September, 2003	63	31	6=100
August, 2003	63	30	7=100
Early July, 2003	67	24	9=100
May, 2003	74	20	6=100
<i>April 10-16, 2003</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>7=100</i>
<i>April 8-9, 2003</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>7=100</i>
<i>April 2-7, 2003</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>8=100</i>
<i>March 28-April 1, 2003</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>6=100</i>
<i>March 25-27, 2003</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>5=100</i>
<i>March 23-24, 2003</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>5=100</i>
<i>March 20-22, 2003</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>7=100</i>
Late January, 1991	77	15	8=100

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=710]:**

Q.61F1 How well is the U.S. military effort in Iraq going? **[READ IN ORDER]**

	Very <u>well</u>	Fairly <u>well</u>	Not too <u>well</u>	Not at all <u>well</u>	Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
March, 2006	9	34	30	21	6=100
February, 2006	13	38	29	17	3=100
January, 2006	12	39	27	17	5=100
December, 2005	14	37	29	17	3=100
Early October, 2005	9	35	31	22	3=100
Mid-September, 2005	12	41	26	18	3=100
July, 2005	14	38	27	17	4=100
June, 2005	9	41	27	19	4=100
February, 2005	14	40	25	17	4=100
January, 2005	9	39	29	20	3=100
December, 2004	10	40	28	18	4=100
Mid-October, 2004	13	38	26	17	6=100
Early September, 2004	12	40	26	18	4=100
August, 2004	12	41	28	16	3=100
July, 2004	13	42	26	16	3=100
June, 2004	16	41	25	14	4=100
May, 2004	10	36	32	19	3=100
Late April, 2004	12	43	26	15	4=100
Early April, 2004	14	43	26	13	4=100
Mid-March, 2004	16	45	26	11	2=100
Early February, 2004	17	46	23	11	3=100
Mid-January, 2004	22	51	18	6	3=100
Early January, 2004	23	47	18	7	5=100
December, 2003	28	47	16	6	3=100
October, 2003	16	44	25	11	4=100
September, 2003	15	47	26	9	3=100
August, 2003	19	43	24	11	3=100
Early July, 2003	23	52	16	5	4=100
<i>April 10-16, 2003</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3=100</i>
<i>April 8-9, 2003</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2=100</i>
<i>April 2-7, 2003</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3=100</i>
<i>March 25-April 1, 2003</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>5=100</i>
<i>March 23-24, 2003</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>6=100</i>
<i>March 20-22, 2003</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>7=100</i>

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=695]:**

Q.62F2 What one word best describes your impression of the situation in Iraq these days? (**OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS “DON’T KNOW”. ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR SECOND RESPONSE**).\*

39	Bad
37	Mess
29	Chaos
22	Terrible
18	Sad
15	Disaster
15	Horrible
12	Improving
12	Vietnam
10	Hopeless
10	Too long
8	Better
8	Confused
7	Difficult
7	Good
7	Unstable
6	Bring troops home
6	Get out
6	Hopeful
6	Not good
6	Poor
6	Stalemate
5	Frustrated
5	Killing
5	Necessary
5	Never-ending
5	Out of control
5	Pitiful
5	Tragic
5	Unnecessary
4	Deplorable
4	Unrest
4	Turmoil
4	Trouble
4	Scary
4	Stupid
4	Quagmire

*\* The numbers listed represent the number of respondents who offered each response; the numbers are not percentages.*

**ASK ALL:**

Q.63 Do you think the U.S. should keep military troops in Iraq until the situation has stabilized, or do you think the U.S. should bring its troops home as soon as possible?

	Keep troops <u>in Iraq</u>	Bring troops <u>home</u>	Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
March, 2006	44	50	6=100
February, 2006	50	46	4=100
January, 2006	48	48	4=100
December, 2005	49	46	5=100
Early October, 2005	47	48	5=100
Mid-September, 2005	51	45	4=100
July, 2005	52	43	5=100
June, 2005	50	46	4=100
February, 2005	55	42	3=100
January, 2005	54	41	5=100
December, 2004	56	40	4=100
Mid-October, 2004	57	36	7=100
Early September, 2004	54	40	6=100
August, 2004	54	42	4=100
July, 2004	53	43	4=100
June, 2004 <sup>3</sup>	51	44	5=100
May, 2004	53	42	5=100
Late April, 2004	53	40	7=100
Early April, 2004	50	44	6=100
Early January, 2004	63	32	5=100
October, 2003	58	39	3=100
September, 2003	64	32	4=100

Q.64 Do you think George W. Bush has a clear plan for bringing the situation in Iraq to a successful conclusion, or don't you think so?

	Has a clear <u>plan</u>	Doesn't have <u>a clear plan</u>	Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
March, 2006	23	70	7=100
December, 2005	28	66	6=100
Mid-September, 2005	30	63	7=100
July, 2005	27	64	9=100
February, 2005	32	61	7=100
Early October, 2004	35	55	10=100
Early September, 2004	36	55	9=100
August, 2004	36	58	6=100
July, 2004	34	59	7=100
June, 2004	37	55	8=100
Late April, 2004	36	54	10=100
Early April, 2004	32	57	11=100
December, 2003	44	45	11=100
October, 2003	35	54	11=100
September, 2003	32	58	10=100

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<sup>3</sup> In June 2004 and earlier, the question was worded: "Do you think the U.S. should keep military troops in Iraq until a stable government is established there, or do you think the U.S. should bring its troops home as soon as possible?"

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=710]:**

Q.65F1 Do you think the war in Iraq has helped the war on terrorism, or has it hurt the war on terrorism?

	<u>Helped</u>	<u>Hurt</u>	(VOL) <u>No effect</u>	Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
March, 2006	38	44	8	10=100
January, 2006	44	38	8	10=100
Late October, 2005	44	44	6	6=100
Mid-September, 2005	43	43	6	8=100
July, 2005	39	47	7	7=100
February, 2005	44	41	7	8=100
Mid-October, 2004	45	40	6	9=100
Early September, 2004	46	40	6	8=100
August, 2004	45	44	4	7=100
July, 2004	43	45	5	7=100
June, 2004	43	44	4	9=100
Mid-March, 2004	50	37	5	8=100
Late February, 2004	62	28	3	7=100
Early February, 2004	55	32	7	6=100
December, 2003	59	26	6	9=100
September, 2003	54	31	7	8=100
May, 2003	65	22	6	7=100
April, 2003 <sup>4</sup>	63	22	--	15=100
Early October, 2002	52	34	--	14=100

**NO QUESTION 66**

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=695]:**

Q.67F2 Which concerns you more... [READ AND ROTATE]

	That the U.S. will leave Iraq before a stable <u>democracy is in place</u>	That the U.S. will wait too long to withdraw <u>its troops from Iraq</u>	<u>Neither</u>	Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
March, 2006	30	61	3	6=100
Early October, 2005	32	55	4	9=100
July, 2005	34	50	9	7=100
Early April, 2004	36	52	2	10=100
Mid-January, 2004	41	48	5	6=100

**NO QUESTION 68**

**ASK ALL:**

Q.69 Do you think the U.S. should or should not set a timetable for when troops will be withdrawn from Iraq?

		<u>Jan</u> <u>2006</u>	<u>Dec</u> <u>2005</u>	<u>Early Oct</u> <u>2005</u>	<u>Mid-Sep</u> <u>2005</u>	<u>July</u> <u>2005</u>
55	Should set a timetable	50	56	52	57	49
39	Should not set a timetable	42	38	43	37	45
1	Should get out now (VOL.)	2	1	1	1	*
<u>5</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100

<sup>4</sup> In April 2003, the question was worded: "Do you think the war in Iraq will help the war on terrorism, or will it hurt the war on terrorism?" In Early October 2002 the question was worded: "If the U.S. uses military force in Iraq, do you think this will help the war on terrorism, or will it hurt the war on terrorism?"

Q.70 Regardless of what you think about the original decision to use military force in Iraq, do you now believe that the United States will definitely succeed, probably succeed, probably fail, or definitely fail in establishing a stable democratic government in Iraq?

		Feb <u>2006</u>	Jan <u>2006</u>	Dec <u>2005</u>	Late Oct <u>2005</u>	July <u>2005</u>
10	Definitely succeed	16	14	16	12	17
39	Probably succeed	39	42	41	44	43
33	Probably fail	28	26	28	29	25
10	Definitely fail	11	8	9	8	8
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100

Q.71 As I read a few specific things about Iraq, tell me if you think we are making progress or losing ground in each area. First, [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]?

		Making <u>progress</u>	Losing <u>ground</u>	(VOL) No <u>change</u>	Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
<b>ASK ITEMS a THRU d OF FORM 1 ONLY [N=710]:</b>					
a.F1	Training Iraqi security forces so they can replace U.S. troops	56	30	1	13=100
	January, 2006	65	22	1	12=100
	December, 2005	61	27	1	11=100
b.F1	Reducing the number of civilian casualties there	27	56	3	14=100
	January, 2006	32	54	3	11=100
	December, 2005	35	53	3	9=100
c.F1	Preventing terrorists from using Iraq as a base for attacks against the U.S. and its allies	42	44	2	12=100
	January, 2006	52	33	2	13=100
	December, 2005	48	41	2	9=100
d.F1	Establishing democracy in Iraq	50	38	2	10=100
	January, 2006	62	26	2	10=100
	December, 2005	58	32	2	8=100
<b>ASK ITEMS e THRU g OF FORM 2 ONLY [N=695]:</b>					
e.F2	Defeating the insurgents militarily	36	51	1	12=100
	January, 2006	46	38	3	13=100
	December, 2005	44	41	3	12=100
f.F2	Preventing a civil war between various religious and ethnic groups	24	66	2	8=100
	January, 2006	34	48	4	14=100
	December, 2005	36	49	3	12=100
g.F2	Rebuilding roads, power plants and other services in Iraq	53	29	1	17=100
	January, 2006	59	22	1	18=100

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=710]:**

Q.72F1 If the U.S. were to withdraw its troops from Iraq soon, do you think terrorist organizations there will become stronger, will become weaker, or would they not be affected as a result of the withdrawal?

		<u>Dec 2005</u>
57	Stronger	58
9	Weaker	13
23	Would not be affected	22
<u>11</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>7</u>
100		100

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=695]:**

Q.73F2 If the U.S. continues to keep troops in Iraq, do you think terrorist organizations there will become stronger, will become weaker, or would they not be affected as a result of America's continued presence there?

		<u>Dec 2005</u>
32	Stronger	30
30	Weaker	36
30	Would not be affected	29
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>5</u>
100		100

**ASK ALL:**

Q.74 In your opinion, do you think democracy can succeed if the Iraqi people elect Islamic religious leaders to positions of power, or not?

		<u>Sept 2005</u>	<u>Feb 2005</u>
37	Yes, can succeed	34	37
43	No	47	40
<u>20</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>19</u>	<u>23</u>
100		100	100

Q.75 From what you've read and heard, how would you describe the current violence in Iraq, is it... **[READ AND ROTATE]**?

		<u>Dec 2005</u>
42	Mostly a civil war between competing factions in Iraq	30
	OR	
45	Mostly an insurgency aimed against the U.S. and its allies	58
<u>13</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>12</u>
100		100

Now, just a few questions for statistical purposes only.

**ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL) No Preference	(VOL) Other Party	Don't know
March, 2006	28	34	30	4	*	4=100
February, 2006	30	33	31	3	*	3=100
January, 2006	28	32	32	5	*	3=100
December, 2005	29	34	31	4	*	2=100
Late November, 2005	27	34	29	5	1	4=100
Early November, 2005	28	34	31	5	*	2=100
Late October, 2005	29	33	31	5	*	2=100
Early October, 2005	26	34	34	4	*	2=100
September 8-11, 2005	31	32	33	3	*	1=100
September 6-7, 2005	27	33	33	4	*	3=100
July, 2005	31	34	29	4	*	2=100
June, 2005	30	32	32	4	*	2=100
Mid-May, 2005	30	34	29	4	*	3=100
Late March, 2005	29	32	36	2	*	1=100
Mid-March, 2005	30	34	29	4	*	3=100
<b>Yearly Totals</b>						
2005	30	33	31	4	*	2=100
2004	30	33	30	4	*	3=100
2003	30	31	31	5	*	3=100
2002	30	31	30	5	1	3=100
2001	29	34	29	5	*	3=100
2001 Post-Sept 11	31	32	28	5	1	3=100
2001 Pre-Sept 11	28	35	30	5	*	2=100
2000	28	33	29	6	*	4=100
1999	27	33	34	4	*	2=100
1998	28	33	32	5	*	2=100
1997	28	33	32	4	1	2=100
				No Preference/		
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Other/DK</u>		
1996	29	33	33	5=100		
1995	32	30	34	4=100		
1994	30	32	34	4=100		
1993	27	34	34	5=100		
1992	28	33	35	4=100		
1991	31	32	33	4=100		
1990	31	33	30	6=100		
			Independent/			
	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>No Pref/Oth/DK</u>			
1989	33	33	34=100			
1987	26	35	39=100			

**IF ANSWERED 3, 4, 5 OR 9 IN PARTY, ASK:**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Refused to lean</u>
March, 2006	11	14	13=38%
February, 2006	11	16	10=37%
January, 2006	10	16	14=40%
December, 2005	10	16	11=37%
Late November, 2005	9	13	17=39%
Early November, 2005	11	14	13=38%
Late October, 2005	11	15	12=38%
Early October, 2005	11	18	11=40%
September 8-11, 2005	10	18	9=37%
September 6-7, 2005	10	15	15=40%
July, 2005	9	15	11=35%
June, 2005	10	16	12=38%
Mid-May, 2005	9	13	14=36%
Late March, 2005	13	17	9=39%
December, 2004	14	12	9=35%
August, 2003	12	16	14=42%
August, 2002	12	13	13=38%
September, 2000	11	13	15=39%
Late September, 1999	14	15	16=45%
August, 1999	15	15	12=42%