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### **Kerry Gained Favorability after Debate but Bush Is Still Preferred As Commander-In-Chief, Annenberg Data Show**

John Kerry goes into Friday's second presidential debate with more Americans having a favorable opinion of him now than did before his first debate with George W. Bush. But the public still clearly regards Bush as someone they would trust more as commander-in-chief of the military and to lead the war on terrorism, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

Polling of 1,868 registered voters between October 1 and 6 showed that 44 percent had a favorable opinion of Kerry while 40 percent had an unfavorable view. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus two percentage points. In polling from September 21 through 26, 41 percent viewed Kerry favorably and 42 percent unfavorably.

But Bush retained a stronger balance of public sentiment. In the September polling, 50 percent viewed him favorably and 41 percent unfavorably. Now 51 percent view him favorably and 39 percent unfavorably.

But fewer respondents have either a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Kerry than of Bush. That suggests that the next two debates leave Kerry with more of an opportunity than Bush has to get people to make up their minds about him, favorably or unfavorably.

When asked to compare Bush and Kerry directly, Bush retained big leads on two major strains of the campaign, and stayed about even on a third.

Respondents were asked whom they would trust more as commander-in-chief. In the latest polling, which began on September 30, the night after the first debate, 52 percent preferred Bush while 40 percent chose Kerry. The difference between that finding and Bush's September advantage of 50 to 41 percent was not statistically significant.

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Asked whom they would trust more to handle the war on terrorism, in the latest polling 52 percent chose Bush and 38 percent chose Kerry. Those were exactly the same percentages that were recorded in September. But there was an interesting internal shift; in September, 30 percent of independents preferred Kerry, and in the latest polling it was 39 percent. The percentage of independents preferring Bush went from 56 to 51.

When asked whom they would trust more to handle the economy – an issue that came up only peripherally in the first debate which focused on Iraq and terrorism – about the same number picked each candidate. Forty-six percent chose Kerry and 44 percent chose Bush, but the difference was not statistically significant. In September Kerry held an equally insignificant 46 to 45 percent advantage on what his campaign has long expected to be a major asset. He did gain among independents; in September they divided 44 to 41 percent for Bush; in October it was 49 to 38 percent for Kerry.

Kerry did make one other significant gain on an issue, as 35 percent now say he has a plan for “bringing the situation in Iraq to a successful conclusion.” But 55 percent said he did not have a plan. In September 27 percent said he did and 61 percent said he did not.

Bush has a somewhat better balance on the question. Forty percent say he has a plan, while 53 percent say he does not. In September, 39 percent said Bush had a plan and 53 percent said he did not.

Another important overall change was that 67 percent of registered voters now say that the United States should keep troops in Iraq until a stable government is established there, while 28 percent say the troops should come home as soon as possible. In the Sept. 21-26 polling, 58 percent favored keeping the troops there until stability was achieved while 38 percent wanted them brought home as soon as possible.

The percentage of people who thought the United States was regarded worse in the world since Bush became president declined from 56 to 50 percent. The percentage who thought foreign opinion had improved went from 17 to 16 percent.

Bush has argued that the war in Iraq has made the United States safer, while Kerry has said it made this country less safe. The balance of public opinion is still on Kerry’s side, with 51 percent saying the war in Iraq has “increased the risk of terrorism against the United States. Thirty-six percent say that risk has been reduced by the war. But the margin has narrowed; from September 21 through 26, 56 percent said the risk had increased and 32 percent said it had decreased.

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### Changes since the First Debate

	September 21-26	October 1-6			
%	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent	Total
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President?					
<b>Approve</b>	51%	90%	16%	48%	51%
<b>Disapprove</b>	47%	9%	82%	49%	47%
Please tell me if your opinion of John Kerry is favorable or unfavorable.					
<b>Favorable</b>	41%	10%	79%	45%	44%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	42%	77%	7%	34%	40%
Please tell me if your opinion of George W. Bush is favorable or unfavorable.					
<b>Favorable</b>	50%	89%	18%	47%	51%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	41%	8%	69%	42%	39%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the war on terrorism?					
<b>Approve</b>	51%	89%	21%	45%	52%
<b>Disapprove</b>	46%	9%	75%	50%	45%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is currently handling the situation in Iraq?					
<b>Approve</b>	44%	83%	13%	42%	46%
<b>Disapprove</b>	53%	15%	85%	56%	52%
All in all, do you think the situation in Iraq was worth going to war over, or not?					
<b>Worth It</b>	43%	79%	19%	38%	46%
<b>Not Worth It</b>	53%	18%	78%	56%	50%
Since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the United States government has done a number of things both at home and abroad intended to protect Americans from future attacks. How safe have these efforts made you feel?					
<b>Safer</b>	67%	94%	62%	70%	75%
<b>Less Safe</b>	22%	4%	14%	12%	10%
How likely do you think there will be a terrorist attack on American soil in the next 12 months. Please use a scale from zero to ten, where zero means you are certain there will not be an attack, ten means you are certain there will be an attack, and five means there is a fifty-fifty chance. Of course you can use any number from zero to ten.					
<b>Mean</b>	5.4	4.7	5.0	5.4	5.0
As a result of the George W. Bush presidency, in general, how well regarded is the United States by countries around the world:					
<b>Better</b>	17%	28%	8%	12%	16%
<b>Worse</b>	56%	22%	77%	58%	50%
Who do you trust more to handle the responsibilities of commander in chief of the military: George W. Bush or John Kerry?					
<b>Bush</b>	50%	90%	16%	49%	52%
<b>Kerry</b>	41%	6%	77%	40%	40%
Who do you trust to do a better job handling the U.S. war on terrorism?: George W. Bush or John Kerry?					
<b>Bush</b>	52%	91%	17%	51%	52%
<b>Kerry</b>	38%	5%	73%	39%	38%
Who do you trust to do a better job handling the economy? George W. Bush or John Kerry?					
<b>Bush</b>	45%	86%	10%	38%	44%
<b>Kerry</b>	46%	8%	82%	49%	46%

	September 21-26	October 1-6			
%	Total	Republican	Democrat	Independent	Total
Has the war in Iraq reduced the risk of terrorism against the United States or increased the risk of terrorism against the United States?					
<b>Increased</b>	56%	25%	73%	56%	51%
<b>Reduced</b>	32%	64%	14%	33%	36%
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?					
<b>Keep Troops</b>	58%	85%	50%	66%	67%
<b>Bring Home</b>	38%	12%	44%	29%	28%
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?					
<b>Has Plan</b>	39%	75%	12%	32%	40%
<b>No Plan</b>	56%	19%	83%	61%	53%
Do you think John Kerry has a clear plan for bringing the situation in Iraq to a successful conclusion, or don't you think so?					
<b>Has Plan</b>	27%	12%	65%	28%	35%
<b>No Plan</b>	61%	80%	24%	62%	55%
Some people say the war in Iraq has cost \$200 billion dollars and that money would have been better spent on domestic programs like education, health care and jobs. Others say the cost of going to war in Iraq was necessary even if it meant that some of these programs were not funded. What do you think: would it have been better to spend the money on domestic programs or was it necessary to spend the money on the war in Iraq?					
<b>Better spend domestic</b>	49%	15%	80%	48%	48%
<b>Better spend Iraq</b>	45%	80%	16%	44%	47%

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## Survey Methodology

The National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) is a survey conducted each presidential election by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania.

The 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey is based on telephone interviews which began October 7, 2003 and will continue past Election Day.

The sample of telephone exchanges called was randomly selected by a computer from a complete list of thousands of active residential exchanges across the country. Within each exchange, random digits were added to form a complete telephone number, thus permitting access to both listed and unlisted numbers. Within each household, one adult was designated by a random procedure to be the respondent for the survey. The interviewing is conducted by Schulman, Ronca, Bucuvalas, Inc.

The results have been weighted to take account of household size and number of telephone lines into the residence and to adjust for variation in the sample relating to geographic region, sex, race, age and education.

This report deals with two interviewing periods. From September 21 through 26, 1,759 adults were interviewed, of whom 1,492 said they were citizens registered to vote. In theory, in 19 out of 20 cases, results for all registered voters will differ by no more than three percentage points, up or down, from what would have been obtained by interviewing all American adults. From October 1 through 6, 2,145 people were interviewed, of whom 1,868 said they were registered citizens; for them, the margin of sampling error would also be plus or minus two percentage points. For smaller subgroups, the margin of sampling error would be higher.

Moreover, some questions were not asked of all respondents, which would lead to higher potential error. In addition to sampling error, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey of public opinion may introduce other sources of error into the poll. Variations in the wording and order of questions, for example, may lead to somewhat different results.

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