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**CONTACT:** Adam Clymer at 202-879-6757 or 202 549-7161 (cell)

**VISIT:** [www.naes04.org](http://www.naes04.org)

**American Public Shifts to View That Prison Guards  
Were Following Orders, Annenberg Polling Shows**

The American public's opinion about prisoner abuse in Iraq has shifted dramatically away from the idea that the guards were acting on their own at the Abu Ghraib prison to the belief that they followed orders, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

In polling from last Monday through Sunday night, 48 percent said the guards were "following orders from their commanders," while 30 percent said they acted "on their own," and 9 percent said both were true. From May 6 through 9, just two weeks earlier, 47 percent said they acted on their own, 31 percent said they followed orders and 6 percent said both. In the latest polling, 1,997 people were interviewed and the margin of sampling error was plus or minus two percentage points.

On the eve of President Bush's Monday night speech to discuss policy in Iraq, 64 percent of the public said they did not believe he had "a clear plan for bringing the situation in Iraq to a successful conclusion," while 30 percent said he had a plan. Those percentages have remained steady in May.

The public is also now evenly split about keeping troops in Iraq "until a stable government is formed." Forty-seven percent want to do that, while 47 percent want the troops brought "home as soon as possible." In the first two weeks of May 50 percent wanted to keep them in Iraq and 45 percent wanted to bring them home.

But the public turned on Bush's handling of the war on terrorism, a political strength the President's campaign has relied on. Fifty percent disapprove of his handling of the war on terrorism while 46 percent approve. Until now the Annenberg polling has shown more Americans approving than disapproving, though by shrinking margins. On another question, 64 percent of the public said the war had "increased the risk of terrorism against the United States," while 24 percent said the risk had been reduced by the war.

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There was also for the first time a solid majority saying “the situation in Iraq” was not “worth going to war over.” Fifty-four percent held that view, while 40 percent said it was worth it. In the first two weeks of May, 50 percent said the war was not worth it, while 45 percent said it was.

But despite the increasingly negative views on the situation in Iraq, there was little change in the public’s support for Donald H. Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense. Sixty-three percent said he should not resign because of the prison abuse scandal, while 28 percent said he should go. Two weeks ago, 66 percent said he should stay on while 24 percent said he should quit.

Political independents took a series of negative stands on Iraq and terrorism. Sixty-one percent disapproved of how the President was handling Iraq, 53 percent disapproved of his handling of the war on terrorism, 70 percent said he did not have a clear plan for bring the situation in Iraq to a successful conclusion, and 50 percent wanted the troops brought home as soon as possible (while 43 percent wanted them to stay until a stable government was established).

And 53 percent of independents disapproved of his overall handling of his job as president while 44 percent approved. For the public as a whole, 50 percent disapproved while 48 percent approved.

That National Annenberg Election Survey, the largest academic election poll, is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania ([www.AnnenbergPublicPolicyCenter.org](http://www.AnnenbergPublicPolicyCenter.org)). It has been tracking the presidential campaign since October 7, and interviewing will continue until after Election Day. Dr. Kathleen Hall Jamieson is the director of the survey. Ken Winneg is the managing director of the survey. Adam Clymer is the political director of the survey.

Another major election project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center is [FactCheck.org](http://FactCheck.org), a project that tries to hold politicians accountable by exposing false or misleading campaign statements. It is available online at [www.FactCheck.Org](http://www.FactCheck.Org).

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## Questions

A. Recently, photographs were made public that appeared to show U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners. Do you think the soldiers mistreated these prisoners on their own, or do you think they were following orders from their commanders?

<b>%</b>	<b>On their own</b>	<b>Followed orders</b>
<b>Total</b>	30%	48%
<b>Republicans</b>	43%	36%
<b>Democrats</b>	22%	59%
<b>Independents</b>	29%	47%
<b>Men</b>	31%	48%
<b>Women</b>	30%	49%
<b>Whites</b>	31%	47%
<b>African-Americans</b>	23%	61%
<b>Latinos</b>	36%	48%
<b>High school graduate or less</b>	29%	52%
<b>Some college</b>	33%	44%
<b>College degree or more</b>	30%	47%
<b>18-29 years old</b>	38%	46%
<b>30-44</b>	37%	42%
<b>45-64</b>	24%	54%
<b>65 and over</b>	20%	54%
<b>Household income below \$35,000</b>	27%	53%
<b>\$35,000 to less than \$75,000</b>	33%	46%
<b>\$75,000 and over</b>	35%	45%
<b>Union household</b>	28%	50%
<b>Conservatives</b>	36%	39%
<b>Moderates</b>	29%	53%
<b>Liberals</b>	24%	56%
<b>Northeast</b>	28%	48%
<b>Midwest</b>	26%	53%
<b>South</b>	35%	44%
<b>West</b>	30%	50%

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B. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the war on terrorism?

<b>%</b>	<b>Approve</b>	<b>Disapprove</b>
<b>Total</b>	46%	50%
<b>Republicans</b>	84%	14%
<b>Democrats</b>	24%	73%
<b>Independents</b>	41%	53%
<b>Men</b>	55%	41%
<b>Women</b>	39%	57%
<b>Whites</b>	52%	43%
<b>African-Americans</b>	14%	84%
<b>Latinos</b>	41%	56%
<b>High school graduate or less</b>	47%	49%
<b>Some college</b>	47%	47%
<b>College degree or more</b>	44%	52%
<b>18-29 years old</b>	41%	56%
<b>30-44</b>	47%	48%
<b>45-64</b>	52%	45%
<b>65 and over</b>	42%	53%
<b>Household income below \$35,000</b>	36%	58%
<b>\$35,000 to less than \$75,000</b>	52%	44%
<b>\$75,000 and over</b>	52%	46%
<b>Union household</b>	47%	51%
<b>Conservatives</b>	66%	31%
<b>Moderates</b>	40%	54%
<b>Liberals</b>	25%	73%
<b>Northeast</b>	34%	60%
<b>Midwest</b>	50%	48%
<b>South</b>	55%	41%
<b>West</b>	43%	54%

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C. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is currently handling the situation in Iraq?

<b>%</b>	<b>Approve</b>	<b>Disapprove</b>
<b>Total</b>	39%	57%
<b>Republicans</b>	73%	24%
<b>Democrats</b>	18%	81%
<b>Independents</b>	33%	61%
<b>Men</b>	45%	52%
<b>Women</b>	34%	62%
<b>Whites</b>	44%	53%
<b>African-Americans</b>	13%	84%
<b>Latinos</b>	30%	66%
<b>High school graduate or less</b>	41%	54%
<b>Some college</b>	37%	60%
<b>College degree or more</b>	38%	59%
<b>18-29 years old</b>	37%	59%
<b>30-44</b>	40%	55%
<b>45-64</b>	41%	57%
<b>65 and over</b>	37%	59%
<b>Household income below \$35,000</b>	31%	65%
<b>\$35,000 to less than \$75,000</b>	42%	54%
<b>\$75,000 and over</b>	45%	52%
<b>Union household</b>	35%	62%
<b>Conservatives</b>	58%	38%
<b>Moderates</b>	34%	62%
<b>Liberals</b>	20%	78%
<b>Northeast</b>	28%	67%
<b>Midwest</b>	40%	57%
<b>South</b>	47%	49%
<b>West</b>	37%	59%

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D. All in all, do you think the situation in Iraq was worth going to war over, or not?

<b>%</b>	<b>Yes, Worth It</b>	<b>No, Not Worth It</b>
<b>Total</b>	40%	54%
<b>Republicans</b>	70%	25%
<b>Democrats</b>	21%	76%
<b>Independents</b>	39%	55%
<b>Men</b>	46%	49%
<b>Women</b>	36%	59%
<b>Whites</b>	47%	49%
<b>African-Americans</b>	13%	81%
<b>Latinos</b>	22%	75%
<b>High school graduate or less</b>	39%	55%
<b>Some college</b>	44%	52%
<b>College degree or more</b>	40%	55%
<b>18-29 years old</b>	42%	55%
<b>30-44</b>	40%	53%
<b>45-64</b>	43%	53%
<b>65 and over</b>	34%	60%
<b>Household income below \$35,000</b>	29%	64%
<b>\$35,000 to less than \$75,000</b>	48%	47%
<b>\$75,000 and over</b>	47%	51%
<b>Union household</b>	41%	57%
<b>Conservatives</b>	58%	37%
<b>Moderates</b>	30%	64%
<b>Liberals</b>	28%	70%
<b>Northeast</b>	28%	65%
<b>Midwest</b>	46%	50%
<b>South</b>	46%	49%
<b>West</b>	39%	56%

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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 interviewing conducted from May 17 through May 23, when 1,997 people were interviewed. In theory, in 19 cases out of 20 the results for the each of these interviewing periods will differ by no more than two percentage points, up or down, from what would have been obtained by interviewing all American adults. For smaller subgroups, the margin of sampling error would be higher, and some questions were not asked of all respondents, which would also result in a higher potential sampling 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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