



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: May 24, 2004

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

VISIT: 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.

-More-

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). 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, a project that tries to hold politicians accountable by exposing false or misleading campaign statements. It is available online at www.FactCheck.Org.

-More-

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?

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

-More-

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

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

-More-

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

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

-More-

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

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

-More-

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.

If you would like to be removed from this press release list please call or email Jennifer Wilhelm at jwilhelm@asc.upenn.edu or (202) 879-6747.

###