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DATE: March 17, 2004

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**A YEAR AFTER BOMBING BEGAN, PUBLIC IS SPLIT ON WHETHER
IRAQ WAR WAS WORTH IT, ANNENBERG POLLING SHOWS**

A year after the war on Iraq began with overwhelming support from the public, Americans are about evenly split over whether the conflict was worth it, and a majority want to pay less or nothing to rebuild Iraq, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

Among 2,575 adults interviewed between March 1 and 15, 1,249 were asked, "All in all, do you think the situation in Iraq was worth going to war over, or not?" Forty-six percent said yes and 49 percent said no. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus three percentage points.

Respondents were also asked, "Should the federal government spend more money, the same as now, less, or no money at all on rebuilding Iraq?" Nine percent said more, 33 percent said the same, 31 percent said less and 22 percent said no money at all.

The latest findings show some decline in support for the war since the beginning of the year. From January 1 through 15, a majority of 53 percent, said the war was worth it and 41 percent said it was not. The early January findings on spending were not significantly different from the latest data.

But attitudes now are very different from what they were on the eve of war. A Washington Post/ABC News Poll, conducted on March 17, or two days before the bombing of Iraq began, asked "Would you support or oppose the United States going to war with Iraq?" Seventy percent said they supported war and 27 percent opposed it.

Even with a warning about possible casualties in the question, a CBS News Poll evoked a strong majority for war. On March 17, CBS News asked "Do you think removing Saddam Hussein from power is worth the potential loss of American life and other costs of attacking Iraq, or not?" Sixty percent said it was worth it, and 34 percent said it was not.

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Once the war actually began, support soared, depending on the question wording, to levels sometimes approaching 80 percent.

The Annenberg polling found supporters of the war more certain of their views than its opponents.

Those who said they thought the war had been worth it were then asked, “Some people say that the continuing deaths of American troops in Iraq and the cost in dollars outweigh the benefits. Considering that, are you sure the situation was worth going to war over, or are you uncertain about it?” Seventy-five percent of them said they were sure it was worth it.

Those who said the war had not been worth it were then asked “Some people say that the benefits of removing Saddam Hussein, a tyrant who used chemical weapons on his own people and threatened other countries, outweigh the costs. Considering that, are you sure the situation was not worth going to war over, or not?” Just 61 percent of them stuck said they were still sure the war was not worth it.

With the follow-up answers added in, 37 percent of the public said the war was worth it, 30 percent said it was not worth it, and 27 percent said they were uncertain.

President Bush’s handling of the war in Iraq tracks closely with views of the war itself. Forty-seven percent said they approved of his handling of the war, while 49 percent said they did not. That was significantly below his standing on how people viewed his handling of the Presidency overall; 55 percent approved and 43 percent did not.

The public viewed Bush’s handling of the war on terrorism even more supportively. Fifty-eight percent said they approved and 38 percent did not. And when asked if they felt safer as a result of the security measures taken since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, three fourths of the public said they felt safer. Eighteen percent said they felt much safer, 57 percent said they felt somewhat safer, and 13 percent said they felt less safe. There were no significant changes in either of those findings after the terrorist bombings in Madrid last Thursday.

By age, people 65 and over were most likely to say that the war had not been worth it. Fifty-six percent of them said it had not, while 39 percent said it had. The greatest support came from those 30 to 44, among whom 52 percent said the war had been worth it and 45 percent said it had not. Geographically, the South was most supportive, with 50 percent saying the war had been worth it and 44 percent saying it had not.

Conservatives strongly backed the war, with 64 percent saying it had been worth it and 32 percent saying it had not. Liberals held opposite views, with 67 percent saying it had not been worth it and 29 percent saying it had.

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Republicans were strongly supportive, with 78 percent saying it had been worth it and 18 percent saying it had not. Among Democrats, 70 percent said it had not been worth it and 24 percent said it had. Independents divided narrowly, with 50 percent saying the war had not been worth it and 45 percent saying it had been.

Swing voters, including those who said they were undecided between Bush and Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts and those who said they had made a choice but there was a “good chance” they would change their minds, were closely divided over the war. Forty-nine percent said it had been worth it, and 44 percent said it had not. When pressed with the follow-up questions, these swing voters ended up with 33 percent saying the war had been worth it, 25 percent saying it had not, and 34 percent uncertain.

On the question of spending to rebuild Iraq, Northeasterners were the most supportive despite their negative view of the war itself (53 percent of them not said it was not worth it, while 42 percent said it was). Forty-eight percent of Northeasterners wanted to spend as much as is now being spent or more, while 47 percent wanted to spend less or none. Southerners, who approved the war, were hostile to reconstruction. Fifty-seven percent wanted to spend less or none, while 40 percent wanted to spend as much as now or more.

Young people were also supportive of reconstruction spending, with 50 percent of those between 18 and 29 wanting to spend as much as is now being spent or more and 46 percent preferring less or no money at all. Republicans were one of the rare groups among whom a majority favored current spending or more; 57 percent held that view, while 40 percent wanted to spend less or none.

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.

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Questions

A. 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	46%	49%
North East	42%	53%
Mid-West	46%	50%
South	50%	44%
West	44%	51%
18-29	49%	46%
30-44	52%	45%
45-64	42%	51%
65 and older	39%	56%
High School or Less	44%	50%
Some College	47%	48%
College Degree or More	50%	48%
Less than \$35,000	38%	54%
\$35,000 to \$75,000	48%	50%
\$75,000 or More	53%	44%
Conservative	64%	32%
Moderate	40%	54%
Liberal	29%	67%
Republican	78%	18%
Democrat	24%	70%
Independent	45%	50%
Male	47%	48%
Female	45%	49%

Those with no opinion are not shown

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B. Some people say that the continuing deaths of American troops in Iraq and the cost in dollars outweigh the benefits. Considering that, are you sure the situation was worth going to war over or are you uncertain about it?

	Percent
Sure it was worth it	75%
Uncertain about it	22%
Not worth it at all*	1%

*volunteered

Asked of the 46% who said they war was worth it.

C. Some people say that the benefits of removing Saddam Hussein, a tyrant who used chemical weapons on his own people and threatened other countries outweigh the costs. Considering that, are you sure the situation was not worth going to war over or are you uncertain about it?

	Percent
Sure it was NOT worth it	61%
Uncertain about it	34%
Yes worth it *	4%

*volunteered

Asked of the 49% who said the war was not worth it.

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D. These were the combined results for questions A, B, and C.

	Yes, worth it	No, not worth it	Uncertain
Total	37%	30%	27%
North East	33%	35%	24%
Mid-West	39%	29%	26%
South	40%	27%	26%
West	32%	31%	31%
18-29	36%	28%	29%
30-44	42%	31%	24%
45-64	35%	34%	23%
65 and older	29%	25%	39%
High School or Less	32%	25%	35%
Some College	38%	32%	23%
College Degree or More	44%	37%	15%
Less than \$35,000	30%	29%	32%
\$35, 000 to \$75,000	38%	30%	28%
\$75,000 or More	42%	36%	18%
Conservative	53%	18%	23%
Moderate	32%	32%	28%
Liberal	19%	46%	30%
Republican	70%	12%	15%
Democrat	15%	43%	35%
Independent	34%	31%	27%
Male	42%	31%	21%
Female	31%	29%	32%

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

	Approve	Disapprove
Total	47%	49%
North East	44%	53%
Mid-West	49%	47%
South	49%	47%
West	45%	50%
18-29	41%	55%
30-44	51%	46%
45-64	48%	48%
65 and older	47%	46%
High School or Less	46%	49%
Some College	47%	50%
College Degree or More	50%	47%
Less than \$35,000	38%	56%
\$35,000 to \$75,000	52%	45%
\$75,000 or More	54%	44%
Conservative	66%	30%
Moderate	41%	56%
Liberal	27%	70%
Republican	79%	20%
Democrat	22%	74%
Independent	49%	47%
Male	50%	47%
Female	44%	51%

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F. Should the federal government spend more money, the same as now, less, or no money at all on rebuilding Iraq?

	More on it	The Same as now	Less on it	No money at all
Total	9%	33%	31%	22%
North East	11%	38%	25%	22%
Mid-West	10%	29%	36%	22%
South	7%	33%	31%	26%
West	10%	34%	33%	18%
18-29	14%	37%	27%	19%
30-44	8%	36%	31%	22%
45-64	7%	29%	36%	24%
65 and older	10%	31%	30%	23%
High School or Less	10%	31%	28%	28%
Some College	8%	30%	37%	22%
College Degree or More	10%	40%	32%	13%
Less than \$35,000	9%	32%	26%	27%
\$35, 000 to \$75,000	10%	30%	37%	21%
\$75,000 or More	10%	39%	30%	18%
Conservative	9%	39%	29%	18%
Moderate	8%	33%	31%	25%
Liberal	12%	25%	33%	25%
Republican	9%	48%	31%	10%
Democrat	12%	21%	33%	29%
Independent	7%	33%	31%	25%
Male	10%	33%	31%	24%
Female	9%	34%	32%	21%

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

	Approve	Disapprove
Total	58%	38%
North East	52%	46%
Mid-West	59%	38%
South	63%	33%
West	55%	40%
18-29	54%	43%
30-44	61%	35%
45-64	57%	38%
65 and older	57%	37%
High School or Less	58%	36%
Some College	56%	40%
College Degree or More	59%	40%
Less than \$35,000	49%	46%
\$35,000 to \$75,000	63%	35%
\$75,000 or More	61%	36%
Conservative	75%	21%
Moderate	54%	42%
Liberal	36%	62%
Republican	90%	9%
Democrat	38%	58%
Independent	55%	40%
Male	62%	34%
Female	54%	42%

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H. 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:

	Much more safe	Somewhat more safe	Somewhat less safe	Much less safe
Total	18%	57%	8%	4%
North East	12%	61%	9%	7%
Mid-West	16%	60%	9%	2%
South	22%	50%	11%	3%
West	19%	60%	3%	7%
18-29	13%	58%	10%	5%
30-44	18%	58%	9%	2%
45-64	19%	59%	8%	5%
65 and older	23%	47%	8%	6%
High School or Less	21%	49%	11%	6%
Some College	14%	67%	6%	2%
College Degree or More	16%	61%	8%	4%
Less than \$35,000	15%	54%	16%	5%
\$35,000 to \$75,000	21%	56%	2%	3%
\$75,000 or More	15%	63%	7%	4%
Conservative	25%	61%	6%	5%
Moderate	12%	58%	8%	4%
Liberal	12%	53%	14%	5%
Republican	29%	61%	5%	1%
Democrat	16%	53%	11%	6%
Independent	14%	59%	8%	5%
Male	19%	56%	8%	4%
Female	17%	57%	9%	4%

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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 between March 1 and March 15, when 2,575 people were interviewed. In theory, in 19 cases out of 20, the results 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, such as Republicans or Democrats, the margin of sampling error would be higher.

Moreover, some questions were not asked of all respondents, which would lead to a larger potential sampling error. For example, while the question on approval of George Bush's handling his job as President was asked of all respondents, the question of whether the war in Iraq had been worth it was asked of a half sample of 1,249 people, and the margin of sampling error is plus or minus three percentage points.

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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