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For The People & The Press

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1615 L Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel (202) 419-4350
Fax (202) 419-4399

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Modest Election Optimism, Positive Views of Iraqi Troop Training
PUBLIC UNMOVED BY WASHINGTON'S RHETORIC ON IRAQ

Also Inside...

- Democrats optimistic about 2006
- Medicare drug coverage confusing, costly
- Losing ground on Iraqi civilian casualties
- Few support Bush tax policy

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Andrew Kohut, Director
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors
Pew Research Center for The People & The Press
202/419-4350
<http://www.people-press.org>

Modest Election Optimism, Positive Views of Iraqi Troop Training
PUBLIC UNMOVED BY WASHINGTON’S RHETORIC ON IRAQ

The political debate over the Iraq war has grown more pointed in recent weeks, as President Bush has embarked upon a series of high-profile speeches defending the war and Democratic Rep. John Murtha has made headlines with his calls for a withdrawal of U.S. forces. But fundamental public attitudes toward the war have not been changed – in either direction – by the clashing points of view. Pew’s latest national survey shows that the public continues to be evenly divided about whether to withdraw U.S. forces as soon as possible or keep them in Iraq until the country is stabilized, as well as over the decision to take military action in Iraq.

Americans also have a mixed view of conditions on the ground in Iraq. Fully 61% of the public believes that progress is being made in training Iraqi forces, while nearly as many (58%) say the same about establishing a democracy in Iraq.

	<u>Making</u> <u>progress</u> %	<u>Losing</u> <u>ground</u> %	<u>(Vol.)</u> <u>No change</u> %	<u>DK</u> %
Training Iraqi forces	61	27	1	11=100
Establishing a democracy	58	32	2	8=100
Preventing terrorist base for attacks	48	41	2	9=100
Defeating the insurgents	44	41	3	12=100
Preventing a civil war	36	49	3	12=100
Reducing civilian casualties	35	53	3	9=100

However, a 53% majority believes the U.S. is losing ground in reducing the number of civilian casualties in Iraq. Similarly, the public by 49%-36% believes that the U.S. is not succeeding in preventing a civil war between Iraq’s ethnic and religious groups. There also is a close division of opinion about whether the U.S. is gaining or losing ground in defeating the insurgents militarily (44% making progress/41% losing ground).

The latest nationwide poll by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted among 1,502 adults from Dec. 7-11, finds the public is modestly optimistic that the Dec. 15 parliamentary elections will lead to greater stability in Iraq. About one-in-five (22%) say they have heard a lot about the elections, while 57% have heard a little. That is slightly greater than attention to Iraq’s constitutional referendum in October (21% a lot/50% a little), but well below the widespread attention to Iraq’s historic elections last January (46% a lot/40% a little).

Yet somewhat more Americans now say that the elections could lead to a more stable situation in the country than did so prior to previous rounds of balloting in October and January. Roughly

four-in-ten Americans (37%) say the parliamentary elections will lead to a more stable situation in the country. That is significantly greater than the percentages predicting that previous votes in Iraq – in October and last January – would lead to a more stable situation in the country (29% each). However, a 47% plurality believes that the situation in Iraq will not change much as a result of the election.

More Optimism in Advance of Dec. 15 Elections					
	<i>January elections</i>		<i>October referendum</i>		<i>December elections</i>
	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>	<u>Now</u>
<i>Effect in Iraq</i>	%	%	%	%	%
More stable	29	47	29	30	37
Less stable	14	7	10	6	9
No change	49	40	51	56	47
Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>
	100	100	100	100	100

As in recent surveys, however, most Americans (56%) favor setting a timetable for removing U.S. troops. Yet the public is wary about the consequences of a quick withdrawal. A solid majority (58%) believes that terrorist organizations in Iraq will become stronger if the United States withdraws its forces soon; 22% say terrorists would not be affected; just 13% feel a U.S. withdrawal would weaken terrorist organizations.

By contrast, the public is divided over what effect the continued presence of U.S. forces would have on the strength of terrorist organizations in Iraq. More than a third (36%) say keeping troops in Iraq will weaken terrorist groups there, while 30% say it will strengthen the terrorists, and 29% believe it will have no impact.

Will a U.S. Withdrawal Strengthen Iraqi Terrorists?		
	If the U.S. withdraws	If the U.S. continues
<i>The terrorists will become...</i>	<u>soon</u>	<u>to stay</u>
	%	%
Stronger	58	30
Weaker	13	36
Not affected	22	29
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100

The new survey shows that President Bush's job approval ratings have not improved, despite a brighter national economic picture and his renewed efforts to build public confidence in the war; 38% approve of his job performance, which is little changed from November (36%).

The upcoming launch of the new Medicare prescription drug benefit is drawing a mixed response. Two years ago, the public approved of the new Medicare law by roughly two-to-one (55%-27%); today, 48% approve of the changes in prescription drug coverage while 30% are

opposed. And far more people express negative reactions than positive ones to the new program, with many Americans critical of the plan's complexity and expense.

The survey shows that Democrats are highly optimistic about their party's prospects in next year's congressional midterm elections. Fully two-thirds of Democrats (66%) say they think their party will do better in 2006 than it has in recent elections – just 1% see the Democratic Party doing worse than usual next year. By comparison, only 17% of Republicans predict that the GOP's position will improve in the coming election – 20% think their party will do worse than it has recently, and 55% believe things will stay about the same.

Party's Electoral Outlook for 2006	
<i>Democrats</i>	%
Better	66
Worse	1
About the same	26
Don't know	<u>7</u>
	100
<i>Republicans</i>	
Better	17
Worse	19
About the same	56
Don't know	<u>8</u>
	100
People who identify as Democrats or Republicans asked to evaluate their own party's chances in 2006 compared to recent elections.	

What Should the U.S. Do Now?

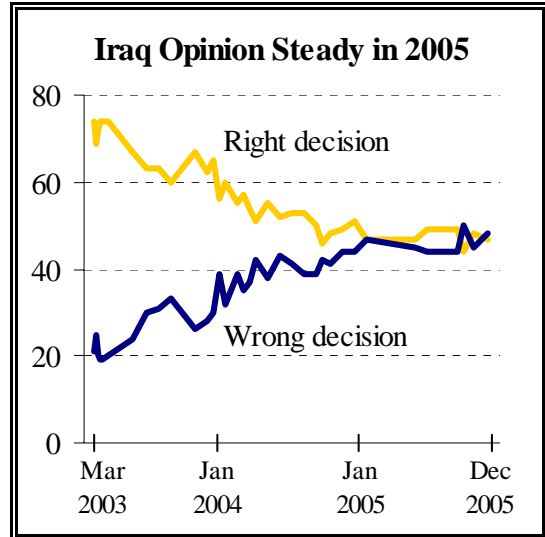
The roughly even division in the public over whether to keep troops in Iraq obscures a more complicated set of opinions about what to do next. Most of those who want to bring troops home “as soon as possible” apparently do not mean “now,” and not everyone who wants the U.S. to stay in Iraq is opposed to setting a timetable for withdrawal.

Of those who support bringing the troops home, most favor a gradual withdrawal over the next one to two years rather than an abrupt departure. Even among liberal Democrats, 66% of whom favor disengagement, most believe this withdrawal should be gradual (40% favor gradual withdrawal, 24% think it should occur immediately). Within every partisan group across the spectrum, support for bringing troops home is more likely to mean gradual rather than immediate withdrawal.

Stay or Go? More Shades of Gray Than Black-and-White				
	--- Party ID ---			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
	%	%	%	%
Bring troops home	46	25	61	50
<i>Remove all troops immediately</i>	17	6	25	18
<i>Gradually over next 1-2 years</i>	28	19	35	31
Keep troops in Iraq	49	72	33	45
<i>No timetable</i>	30	51	15	27
<i>Should set timetable</i>	17	18	16	17
Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100	100

Many of those who favor keeping troops in Iraq until a stable situation is created nonetheless favor the establishment of a timetable for withdrawal. Among the public overall, 49% favor keeping

troops in Iraq but just 30% take this position and reject a timetable for withdrawal. Democrats who believe the U.S. should remain in Iraq are divided evenly between those who favor and those who oppose a timetable. Even among Republicans, just half (51%) take the position of the administration – that the U.S. should keep troops in Iraq, with no timetable, until a stable situation is established.



Most Iraq Views Stable

For the most part, public sentiment about the decision to invade Iraq has changed little over the course of 2005. About half (47%) say the decision to use military force was right, while about as many feel it was wrong (48%).

Most of those who believe it was the wrong decision say they feel that way because the U.S. should not have gone to war in the first place. Relatively few say their judgment is based on events since the invasion occurred.

As in previous surveys, a majority of Americans (57%) feel the United States will either definitely (16%) or probably (41%) succeed in establishing a stable democratic government in Iraq. There are substantial political and demographic differences in opinions about prospects for success in Iraq.

However, even among groups that are largely opposed to the decision to go to war, sizable minorities say the U.S. will still succeed in Iraq. Fully 40% of Democrats and nearly half of African Americans (48%) say the U.S. will definitely or probably succeed in establishing a stable democracy in Iraq.

	Succeed*	Fail**	DK
	%	%	%
All	57	37	6=100
Men	62	34	4=100
Women	53	39	8=100
Whites	59	35	6=100
Blacks	48	43	9=100
<i>Males age 50+</i>			
Military veteran	52	41	7=100
Not a veteran	61	34	5=100
Under age 50	61	35	4=100
50 and older	51	40	9=100
Republican	83	13	4=100
Democrat	40	53	7=100
Independent	52	42	6=100
College grad	50	47	3=100
Some college	61	35	4=100
HS grad	61	33	6=100

* "Definitely" or "probably" succeed.
 ** "Definitely" or "probably" fail.

More men (62%) than women (53%) expect success, and Americans under age 50 (61%) are more optimistic than those 50 and older (51% think the U.S. will

succeed). Fewer college educated respondents than those with less education expect the U.S. to succeed in Iraq.

A Partisan Lens on the War

Republicans and Democrats also have very different perspectives on how the war is going. Republicans are more than twice as likely as Democrats to believe that the U.S. military effort in Iraq is going at least “fairly well” (78% for Republicans, 32% for Democrats). Independents (47%) are closer to Democrats than to Republicans in their assessment of how the war is going.

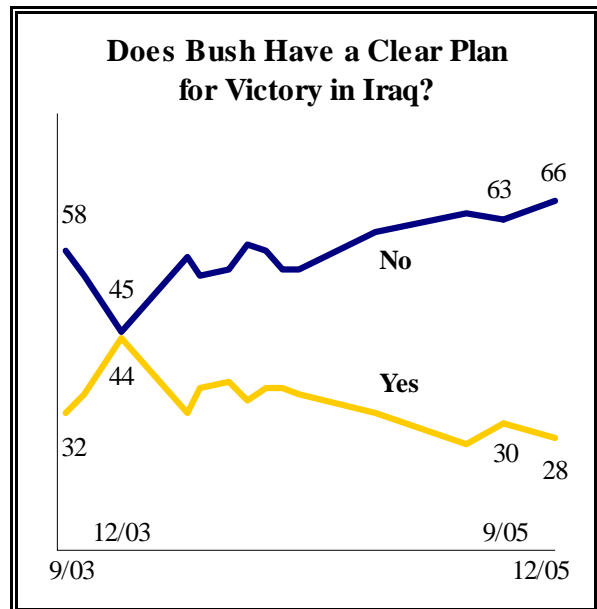
There are similar gaps between Democrats and Republicans on the six specific areas of progress asked about in the survey. Majorities of Republicans believe that the U.S. is making progress, rather than losing ground, in each of the six areas. By contrast, in only one of the areas do as many as half of Democrats agree (52% of Democrats say the U.S. is making progress in training Iraqi forces). The views of independents are much more similar to the Democrats than to the Republicans in the poll.

<i>Percent saying we're making progress in...</i>	<u>Rep</u> %	<u>Dem</u> %	<u>Ind</u> %	<i>R-D gap</i>
Training Iraqi forces	82	52	55	+30
Establishing a democracy	83	43	52	+40
Preventing terrorist base for attacks	74	31	43	+43
Defeating the insurgents	70	27	41	+43
Preventing a civil war	56	23	34	+33
Reducing civilian casualties	57	21	28	+36

The President and Iraq

President Bush delivered the first two of four major speeches outlining a “plan for victory” in Iraq prior to this survey, but the addresses failed to turn around the general perception that the president lacks a clear plan for bringing the situation to a successful conclusion. Fewer than three-in-ten (28%) say Bush has a clear plan, while two-thirds say he does not.

Another part of the president’s argument to the nation – that the media portrays an overly negative picture of events in Iraq – does find support from a significant proportion of the public



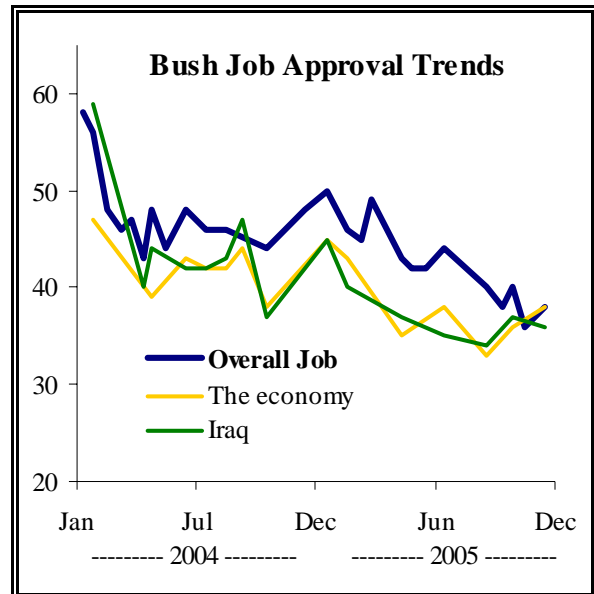
(39%). However, the same number say that the press makes the U.S. economy seem worse than it really is. Perceptions of press coverage in both areas are quite partisan.

Skepticism about the press is greatest – and growing – among Republicans. Today, two-thirds of Republicans (67%) say the press makes the situation in Iraq seem worse than it really is, up from 57% in September. By contrast, pluralities of Democrats (48%) and independents (37%) say news reports about Iraq show the situation about the way it really is. There is a sizable, though somewhat smaller, partisan gap in perceptions of coverage of the economy.

News reports make the situation seem...	Total	--- Party ID ---		
		Rep	Dem	Ind
Iraq	%	%	%	%
Worse than it really is	39	67	20	30
Better than it really is	19	10	24	23
About right	35	20	48	37
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>
	100	100	100	100
The economy				
Worse than it really is	39	58	25	33
Better than it really is	18	11	20	24
About right	36	29	46	34
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>
	100	100	100	100

Bush Job Approval

While Bush's overall job rating has held steady in recent months, it is down by 12 percentage points since the beginning of the year. The president also continues to receive generally negative ratings for his handling of both the situation in Iraq (36% approve, 58% disapprove) and the nation's economy (38% approve, 55% disapprove). And while roughly half (49%) continue to approve of how Bush has handled terrorist threats, 44% disapprove, the highest measured in any previous Pew survey.



Evaluations of Bush's overall job performance are roughly equal to his ratings on the economy and Iraq, suggesting that favorable personal evaluations and the issue of terrorism are not counterbalancing these more problematic areas in the public's broader assessment of his performance. Throughout the past year, the president's overall job approval rating has been significantly higher – by anywhere from three to nine points – than his rating on the economy and Iraq specifically. Today the president's overall rating is identical to his rating on the economy and

just two points above evaluations of his handling of Iraq. While significantly more approve of Bush's performance when it comes to terrorist threats, this apparently no longer lifts his overall approval rating as it did earlier in the year.

And while legislation now before Congress would extend Bush's tax cuts into the future, about half of Americans (51%) disapprove of how the president has handled tax policy. This is a striking turnaround from Bush's first term in office. Shortly after his first inauguration, a Fox News survey found 54% of registered voters approving of the president's handling of taxes; this fell to 45% by June of 2002, and stands at just 36% today.

Little Support for Bush on Taxes				
<i>Handling of tax policy</i>	Mar 2001*	June 2002	Feb 2003	Dec 2005
	%	%	%	%
Approve	54	45	42	36
Disapprove	31	39	44	51
Don't know	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>
	100	100	100	100

* March 2001 Fox News survey of registered voters.

Medicare Drug Plan Favored

By a 48%-30% margin, more approve than disapprove of the new Medicare prescription drug plan, which is set to go into effect in January 2006. But positive opinion of the program has slipped slightly since passage of the law two years ago, when 55% approved in December 2003.

Pluralities in all age groups favor the plan, with the strongest support coming from younger people. Among senior citizens, 45% approve and a third (34%) disapprove of the Medicare drug program, views which are largely unchanged from two years ago. By comparison, people age 18-29 continue to approve of the plan by more than two-to-one (60%-24%).

	<u>Approve</u>	Dis- <u>approve</u>	<u>DK</u>
	%	%	%
Dec 2005	48	30	22=100
Dec 2003*	55	27	18=100
<i>Age</i>			
18-29	60	24	16=100
30-49	47	29	24=100
50-64	43	34	23=100
65+	45	34	21=100
<i>Eligible for coverage?</i>			
Yes (22%)	49	37	14=100
Close relative (45%)	50	30	20=100
Neither (27%)	46	28	26=100

* December 2003 survey conducted just after Congress passed the prescription drug law.

The decline in support since 2003 has been most notable among people ages 30-64. When the bill was first passed, people in this age range were much more supportive than were those ages 65

and older. But today, there is no significant difference between those ages 30-64 and senior citizens. The sharp political divide over the Medicare prescription drug plan in 2003 has dissipated somewhat. Republicans continue to be the most supportive of the Medicare prescription drug plan (55% approve), although their approval level is down 14 points from two years ago. Support among independents is also down from 57% in 2003 to 47% today, while the views of Democrats are relatively unchanged.

	Dec 2003	Dec 2005	Change
	%	%	
18-29	64	60	-4
30-49	58	47	-11
50-64	53	43	-10
65+	44	45	+1
Republican	69	55	-14
Democrat	47	44	-3
Independent	57	47	-10

Roughly one-in-five Americans (22%) say they are eligible for the new Medicare program. Those who are experiencing the program firsthand are more likely to express disapproval of the drug plan (37%). Still, about half of eligible Americans approve of the changes to Medicare, which is no lower than in the public overall.

Personal Reactions to the Medicare Change

While more approve than disapprove of the new Medicare drug program, people volunteer criticism more frequently than praise when asked to describe their first impression of the program in their own words. The two problems cited most frequently are that the new program is complicated (mentioned by 14% of Americans) and that it will be costly for both seniors and the government (9%). Overall, by roughly two-to-one (44% vs. 20%) people are more likely cite negative than positive aspects of the program when describing it in their own words.

	% Saying...	
	Total	65+
Complicated/Confusing	14	23
Costly/Expensive	9	14
Will be helpful seniors	6	4
Scam/Drug company boondoggle	3	4
Unfair/Inequitable	3	2
Not enough	2	2
Timely/necessary	2	2
Big government/Socialism	2	2
Limits on drug choices	2	1
<i>Tone of Evaluations...</i>		
Negative/Criticism	44	59
Positive/Praise	20	17
Neutral/Descriptive	10	7

These negative reactions are even more prevalent among seniors, fully 59% of whom offer criticism when describing their first impression of the program. Nearly a quarter of seniors (23%) describe the new system as complicated and confusing, and 14% express concerns about the cost of the program.

Even many who approve of the new Medicare law offer negative descriptions when asked what

first comes to mind. In many cases, these criticisms from supporters are of a practical nature – for example, that the system is confusing. Other supporters suggest that it does not do enough for people yet. But most people who approve of the program give favorable descriptions, such as that it will help seniors afford prescription drug costs, and that is a needed step for the government to take.

Who Is Helped and Hurt

On balance, most Americans say the prescription drug plan will be good for seniors on Medicare; 53% feel it will be good, while 30% say it will be bad.

However, even more Americans (58%) feel drug companies will benefit from the new program.

The public is much less optimistic about the new plan’s impact on the federal budget deficit. About four-in-ten (42%) think that the prescription drug plan will be bad for the deficit, while only about a quarter (27%) think it will be good.

Opinions are more divided over the drug plan’s impact on Medicare’s financial stability, with about four-in-ten (41%) thinking it will be good compared with 35% saying it will be bad.

	Is the New Prescription Drug Plan Good or Bad for...			
	(Vol.)			
	<u>Good</u>	<u>Bad</u>	<u>No effect</u>	<u>DK</u>
	%	%	%	%
Drug companies	58	20	3	19=100
Seniors on Medicare	53	30	1	16=100
The financial stability of Medicare	41	35	2	22=100
The federal budget deficit	27	42	6	25=100

In evaluating the costs of the new program, seniors express more concern about the plan’s broader impact on the budget deficit and the long term stability of Medicare than they do about its effect on seniors directly. Just 27% of Americans 65 and older say they new system will be bad for seniors on Medicare, but 53% say it will be bad for the deficit and 41% say it will hurt Medicare’s finances. Young people, by comparison, worry far less about these economic issues. Just 37% of people age 18-29 see the new plan as bad for the deficit, and 28% see it hurting Medicare’s finances.

Alito Overshadowed

With the Senate gearing up for confirmation hearings next month for Samuel Alito, President Bush’s choice for the Supreme Court, public attention to the nomination has faded. Only about a third of Americans (34%) are following Alito’s nomination closely, with just 14% following it very closely. In early November, 49% were paying at least some attention, with 21% following the issue very closely.

Fewer Americans also are offering an opinion about the nomination. Currently, 32% favor Alito’s confirmation while 19% are opposed, with 49% expressing no opinion. In November, 40% favored Alito’s nomination and 23% were opposed, with 37% expressing no opinion.

The public is evenly divided over whether they believe that if Alito is confirmed he would vote to overturn the *Roe v. Wade* decision establishing a woman’s right to an abortion. Democrats, by 37%-22%, feel Alito would vote to overturn *Roe*; Republicans, by a comparable margin (32%-17%), disagree.

Pre-Hearing Lull for Alito			
<i>Should nominee be confirmed?</i>	<i>Roberts</i>	<i>Alito</i>	
	<u>Mid-Sept</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
	%	%	%
Yes	46	40	32
No	21	23	19
Don’t know	<u>33</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>49</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Worry that nominee will make court...</i>	<i>Roberts</i>	<i>Alito</i>	
	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
Too conservative	20	25	21
Not cons. enough	9	6	6
Don’t worry about this	60	56	53
Don’t know	<u>11</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>20</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Think Alito would vote to overturn Roe v. Wade</i>	<u>Dec</u>		
Yes			27
No			26
Don’t know/Other			<u>47</u>
			100

Gas Prices Still Top News Story

The price of gas is well below its level of a few months ago, but the public remains highly attentive to gas prices. About six-in-ten (61%) say they are paying very close attention to news about the high price of gas, unchanged from last month. Public interest in high gas prices reached an all-time high in early September (71% very closely), as prices spiraled in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

More than four-in-ten Americans (45%) are tracking overall developments in Iraq very closely, the highest level of interest since January. By contrast, public interest in Hurricane Katrina has declined markedly since the storm hit the Gulf Coast at the end of August. Currently, 39% say they are paying very

December’s Top News Stories	
	Percent following <u>very closely</u>
High price of gasoline	61
Situation in Iraq	45
Post-Katrina rebuilding	39
Condition of the economy	35
Medicare drug coverage	25
GM job cuts	22
Alito nomination	14

close attention to news reports on rebuilding in areas affected by Katrina. That compares with 70% who tracked news of the hurricane very closely in early September, and 73% who paid very close attention to the impact of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina in early October.

African Americans continue to display much more interest in Katrina and its aftermath than do whites. Fully 60% of blacks are paying very close attention to stories on rebuilding efforts in areas affected by Katrina; that compares with just 35% of whites. The racial gap in news interest in Katrina-related stories has widened considerably since early September; at that time, 80% of blacks and 68% of whites were paying very close attention to news of the storm and its impact.

The public's attention to post-Katrina rebuilding, while substantially below interest in the hurricane's immediate aftermath, still exceeds attention to other major news stories – the state of the economy (35% very closely); the new Medicare prescription drug benefit (25%); massive job cuts at General Motors (22%); and Alito's nomination to the high court (14%).

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 1,502 adults, 18 years of age or older, from December 7-11, 2005. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For results based on form 1 (N=761) and form 2 (N=741) the sampling error is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of six projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

Andrew Kohut, Director

Jodie Allen, Senior Editor

Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research

Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors

Carolyn Funk and Richard Wike, Senior Project Director

Nilanthi Samaranyake, Peyton Craighill, Nicole Speulda and Courtney Kennedy, Project Directors

Greg Smith, Research Associate

Jason Owens, Research Assistant

Kate DeLuca Staff Assistant

MAKING PROGRESS OR LOSING GROUND IN IRAQ

	<i>Training Iraqi forces so they can replace U.S. troops</i>		<i>Establishing democracy in Iraq</i>		<i>Preventing terrorists from using Iraq as a base for attacks</i>		(N)
	<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	61	27	58	32	48	41	(1502)
Sex							
Male	69	24	63	30	53	39	(724)
Female	54	28	54	33	44	43	(778)
Race							
White	65	23	62	28	50	40	(1216)
Non-white	46	40	43	46	43	47	(258)
Black	42	47	40	50	38	51	(137)
Hispanic*	61	27	53	34	53	40	(102)
Race and Sex							
White Men	74	21	68	26	56	38	(581)
White Women	58	25	58	29	45	41	(635)
Age							
Under 30	60	29	63	33	51	41	(204)
30-49	61	26	63	28	52	40	(494)
50-64	67	23	54	35	46	46	(448)
65+	57	30	50	33	41	38	(329)
Sex and Age							
Men under 50	68	25	67	29	55	39	(358)
Women under 50	53	29	58	31	48	42	(340)
Men 50+	70	23	56	33	51	40	(353)
Women 50+	57	28	48	36	38	45	(424)
Education							
College Grad.	70	23	62	30	50	42	(528)
Some College	62	26	62	30	52	37	(366)
H.S. Grad	60	26	59	31	46	43	(469)
Less than H.S.	50	35	44	40	48	40	(126)
Family Income**							
\$75,000+	72	21	64	31	52	40	(352)
\$50,000-\$74,999	65	25	66	25	53	43	(247)
\$30,000-\$49,999	60	28	60	32	48	43	(282)
\$20,000-\$29,999	58	31	54	34	48	39	(203)
<\$20,000	52	32	46	39	42	46	(242)

* The designation Hispanic is unrelated to the white-black categorization.

Question: Do you think we are making progress or losing ground in this area...?
 Training Iraqi security forces so they can replace U.S. troops.
 Establishing democracy in Iraq.
 Preventing terrorists from using Iraq as a base for attacks against the U.S. and its allies.

	<i>Training Iraqi forces so they can replace U.S. troops</i>		<i>Establishing democracy in Iraq</i>		<i>Preventing terrorists from using Iraq as a base for attacks</i>		(N)
	<u>Making</u>	<u>Losing</u>	<u>Making</u>	<u>Losing</u>	<u>Making</u>	<u>Losing</u>	
	<u>Progress</u>	<u>Ground</u>	<u>Progress</u>	<u>Ground</u>	<u>Progress</u>	<u>Ground</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	61	27	58	32	48	41	(1502)
Region							
Northeast	59	29	55	35	45	44	(282)
Midwest	63	26	61	30	49	39	(346)
South	59	28	58	30	50	41	(543)
West	65	23	57	32	48	42	(331)
Religious Affiliation							
Total White Protestant	67	21	66	24	56	34	(668)
- Evangelical	71	15	74	18	62	30	(322)
- Non-Evangelical	63	26	58	30	51	37	(346)
White Catholic	68	23	65	27	46	42	(279)
Seculars	59	29	44	46	34	56	(175)
Party ID							
Republican	82	10	83	13	74	19	(480)
Democrat	52	37	43	45	32	58	(495)
Independent	55	31	52	37	43	45	(428)
Party and Ideology							
Conservative Republican	86	8	87	9	74	17	(310)
Moderate/Liberal Rep.	78	11	79	16	75	22	(168)
Conservative/Mod. Dem.	56	32	49	41	38	53	(303)
Liberal Democrat	48	44	33	53	22	67	(175)
Bush Approval							
Approve	82	11	84	11	76	16	(608)
Disapprove	49	39	42	48	30	61	(783)
Marital Status							
Married	65	24	61	29	51	39	(883)
Unmarried	58	30	54	36	45	44	(602)
Labor Union							
Union Household	53	34	50	39	47	43	(192)
Non-Union Household	63	25	59	31	49	41	(1278)
Use of Force in Iraq							
Right Decision	75	15	78	15	71	22	(711)
Wrong Decision	49	39	40	50	27	62	(710)
Troop deployment							
Keep troops in Iraq	80	13	77	16	65	27	(789)
Bring troops home	44	41	41	48	33	55	(635)

MAKING PROGRESS OR LOSING GROUND IN IRAQ

	<i>Defeating the insurgents militarily</i>		<i>Preventing a civil war between religious and ethnic groups</i>		<i>Reducing the number of civilian casualties</i>		(N)
	<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	44	41	36	49	35	53	(1502)
Sex							
Male	49	41	40	48	38	52	(724)
Female	40	41	33	50	32	54	(778)
Race							
White	47	40	38	47	36	52	(1216)
Non-white	37	46	31	59	30	60	(258)
Black	30	49	27	60	23	63	(137)
Hispanic*	41	44	31	55	33	60	(102)
Race and Sex							
White Men	52	40	43	45	39	51	(581)
White Women	42	40	33	49	33	53	(635)
Age							
Under 30	50	38	35	55	36	56	(204)
30-49	48	39	39	48	38	51	(494)
50-64	43	45	38	49	34	54	(448)
65+	33	44	30	47	27	56	(329)
Sex and Age							
Men under 50	51	40	40	51	41	53	(358)
Women under 50	46	37	35	51	34	53	(340)
Men 50+	45	42	39	45	33	52	(353)
Women 50+	34	46	31	51	30	57	(424)
Education							
College Grad.	45	46	39	50	33	56	(528)
Some College	49	38	34	52	34	54	(366)
H.S. Grad	45	39	37	46	36	54	(469)
Less than H.S.	34	43	34	53	36	49	(126)
Family Income**							
\$75,000+	48	45	40	52	36	57	(352)
\$50,000-\$74,999	51	39	44	44	37	52	(247)
\$30,000-\$49,999	48	39	36	48	36	52	(282)
\$20,000-\$29,999	40	43	30	53	33	58	(203)
<\$20,000	33	44	33	54	32	53	(242)

* The designation Hispanic is unrelated to the white-black categorization.

Question: Do you think we are making progress or losing ground in this area...?
 Defeating the insurgents militarily.
 Preventing a civil war between various religious and ethnic groups.
 Reducing the number of civilian casualties there.

	<i>Defeating the insurgents militarily</i>		<i>Preventing a civil war between religious and ethnic groups</i>		<i>Reducing the number of civilian casualties</i>		(N)
	<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	44	41	36	49	35	53	(1502)
Region							
Northeast	39	46	37	50	28	58	(282)
Midwest	48	38	37	46	38	52	(346)
South	46	38	36	51	38	51	(543)
West	42	46	36	49	32	55	(331)
Religious Affiliation							
Total White Protestant	53	33	41	44	40	49	(668)
- Evangelical	59	26	48	38	47	42	(322)
- Non-Evangelical	47	39	35	51	34	56	(346)
White Catholic	51	39	40	43	37	50	(279)
Seculars	30	56	24	59	22	63	(175)
Party ID							
Republican	70	18	56	29	57	32	(480)
Democrat	27	58	23	65	21	69	(495)
Independent	41	45	34	53	28	58	(428)
Party and Ideology							
Conservative Republican	75	13	54	28	60	27	(310)
Moderate/Liberal Rep.	64	26	59	30	52	40	(168)
Conservative/Mod. Dem.	30	55	26	63	22	67	(303)
Liberal Democrat	23	64	18	70	20	72	(175)
Bush Approval							
Approve	76	14	58	28	57	30	(608)
Disapprove	24	61	23	66	20	72	(783)
Marital Status							
Married	49	38	39	46	37	50	(883)
Unmarried	39	45	33	54	32	58	(602)
Labor Union							
Union Household	44	42	34	55	30	60	(192)
Non-Union Household	44	41	37	49	35	53	(1278)
Use of Force in Iraq							
Right Decision	69	20	54	34	52	37	(711)
Wrong Decision	22	63	21	67	19	71	(710)
Troop deployment							
Keep troops in Iraq	62	28	52	35	50	40	(789)
Bring troops home	28	54	23	64	22	68	(635)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
 DECEMBER 2005 NEWS INTEREST INDEX
 FINAL TOPLINE
 December 7-11, 2005
 N=1,502

Q. 1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? [IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? [IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]

	App-rove	Di s-approve	Don' t know		App-rove	Di s-approve	Don' t know
December, 2005	38	54	8=100	Late July, 2002	65	25	10=100
Early November, 2005	36	55	9=100	July, 2002	67	21	12=100
Late October, 2005	40	52	8=100	June, 2002	70	20	10=100
Early October, 2005	38	56	6=100	April, 2002	69	18	13=100
September 8-11, 2005	40	52	8=100	Early April, 2002	74	16	10=100
September 6-7, 2005	40	52	8=100	February, 2002	78	13	9=100
July, 2005	44	48	8=100	January, 2002	80	11	9=100
June, 2005	42	49	9=100	2001			
Late May, 2005	42	48	10=100	Mid-November, 2001	84	9	7=100
Mid-May, 2005	43	50	7=100	Early October, 2001	84	8	8=100
Late March, 2005	49	46	5=100	Late September, 2001	86	7	7=100
Mid-March, 2005	45	46	9=100	Mid-September, 2001	80	9	11=100
February, 2005	46	47	7=100	Early September, 2001	51	34	15=100
January, 2005	50	43	7=100	August, 2001	50	32	18=100
2004				July, 2001	51	32	17=100
December, 2004	48	44	8=100	June, 2001	50	33	17=100
Mid-October, 2004	44	48	8=100	May, 2001	53	32	15=100
August, 2004	46	45	9=100	April, 2001	56	27	17=100
July, 2004	46	46	8=100	March, 2001	55	25	20=100
June, 2004	48	43	9=100	February, 2001	53	21	26=100
May, 2004	44	48	8=100				
Late April, 2004	48	43	9=100				
Early April, 2004	43	47	10=100				
Late March, 2004	47	44	9=100				
Mid-March, 2004	46	47	7=100				
February, 2004	48	44	8=100				
Mid-January, 2004	56	34	10=100				
Early January, 2004	58	35	7=100				
2003							
December, 2003	57	34	9=100				
November, 2003	50	40	10=100				
October, 2003	50	42	8=100				
September, 2003	55	36	9=100				
Mid-August, 2003	56	32	12=100				
Early August, 2003	53	37	10=100				
Mid-July, 2003	58	32	10=100				
Early July, 2003	60	29	11=100				
June, 2003	62	27	11=100				
May, 2003	65	27	8=100				
April 10-16, 2003	72	22	6=100				
April 9, 2003	74	20	6=100				
April 2-7, 2003	69	25	6=100				
March 28-April 1, 2003	71	23	6=100				
March 25-27, 2003	70	24	6=100				
March 20-24, 2003	67	26	7=100				
March 13-16, 2003	55	34	11=100				
February, 2003	54	36	10=100				
January, 2003	58	32	10=100				
2002							
December, 2002	61	28	11=100				
Late October, 2002	59	29	12=100				
Early October, 2002	61	30	9=100				
Mid-September, 2002	67	22	11=100				
Early September, 2002	63	26	11=100				
Late August, 2002	60	27	13=100				
August, 2002	67	21	12=100				

IF APPROVE OR DI SAPPROVE (1, 2 IN Q. 1) ASK:

Q. 1a Do you (approve/di sapprove) very strongly, or not so strongly?

	March 2005	Dec 2004	Nov 2003	Sept 2003	June 2002	April 2001
38 Approve	49	48	50	55	70	56
26 Very strongly	32	34	34	35	46	34
11 Not so strongly	16	12	14	18	21	20
1 Don't know (VOL)	1	2	2	2	3	2
54 Di sapprove	46	44	40	36	20	27
42 Very strongly	36	35	30	27	8	18
11 Not so strongly	10	8	9	9	12	9
1 Don't know (VOL)	*	1	1	*	0	*
8 Don't know/Refused	5	8	10	9	10	17
100	100	100	100	100	100	100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=761]:

More specific ally...

Q. 2 Do you approve or di sapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling [INSERT ITEM, RANDOMIZE]

	Approve	Di sapprove	DK/Ref.
a. F1 The economy	38	55	7=100
Late October, 2005	36	56	8=100
Early September, 2005	33	60	7=100
July, 2005	38	53	9=100
Mid-May, 2005	35	57	8=100
February, 2005	43	50	7=100
January, 2005	45	50	5=100
Mid-October, 2004	38	55	7=100
Early September, 2004	44	49	7=100
August, 2004	42	52	6=100
July, 2004	42	52	6=100
June, 2004	43	50	7=100
Early April, 2004	39	53	8=100
Mid-January, 2004	47	47	6=100
September, 2003	43	48	9=100
February, 2003	43	48	9=100
January, 2003	47	45	8=100
Early October, 2002	49	40	11=100
June, 2002	53	36	11=100
January, 2002	60	28	12=100
Early September, 2001	47	44	9=100
February, 2001	50	22	28=100
b. F1 The situation in Iraq	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 ¹	77	17	6=100
April 8-9, 2003	71	23	6=100

¹ 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."

Q. 2F1 CONTI NUED. . .

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Di sapprove</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
--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
c. F1 Terrori st threats	49	44	7=100
Late October, 2005	52	40	8=100
Early September, 2005	49	41	10=100
July, 2005	49	40	11=100
Mid-May, 2005	57	35	8=100
February, 2005	59	34	7=100
January, 2005	62	33	5=100
Mid-October, 2004	49	40	11=100
Early September, 2004	62	32	6=100
August, 2004	58	37	5=100
July, 2004	54	40	6=100
June, 2004	56	35	9=100
Late April, 2004	55	36	9=100
Early April, 2004	53	38	9=100
<i>Gallup</i> : December, 2003	65	33	2=100
September, 2003	64	28	8=100
February, 2003	67	25	8=100
January, 2003	69	23	8=100
Early October, 2002	71	22	7=100
June, 2002	74	18	8=100
Mid-September, 2001 ²	85	6	9=100
Clinton : Early September, 1998	72	20	8=100
d. F1 Tax pol icy	36	51	13=100
February, 2003	42	44	14=100
June, 2002	45	39	16=100
<i>FOX News</i> : January, 2002 (<i>RVS</i>)	58	28	14=100
<i>FOX News</i> : June, 2001 (<i>RVS</i>)	59	29	12=100
<i>FOX News</i> : March, 2001 (<i>RVS</i>)	54	31	15=100

NO QUESTIONS 3-6

² In Mid-September, 2001 the question was worded: "...dealing with the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington." In Early September 1998 the question was worded: "Do you approve or di sapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling current threats from international terrorist groups?"

ASK ALL:

Q. 7 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]

	Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/ Ref
a. News about the current situation in Iraq	45	38	11	5	1=100
Early November, 2005	41	40	13	6	*=100
Early October, 2005	43	36	15	6	*=100
Early September, 2005	32	40	20	7	1=100
July, 2005	43	37	13	6	1=100
June, 2005	41	39	12	7	1=100
Mid-May, 2005	42	42	11	5	*=100
Mid-March, 2005	40	39	14	5	2=100
February, 2005	38	45	13	4	*=100
January, 2005	48	37	11	4	*=100
December, 2004	34	44	15	6	1=100
Mid-October, 2004	42	38	11	8	1=100
Early September, 2004	47	37	9	6	1=100
August, 2004	39	42	12	6	1=100
July, 2004	43	40	11	6	*=100
June, 2004	39	42	12	6	1=100
April, 2004	54	33	8	5	*=100
Mid-March, 2004	47	36	12	4	1=100
Early February, 2004	47	38	10	4	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	48	39	9	4	*=100
December, 2003	44	38	11	6	1=100
November, 2003	52	33	9	5	1=100
October, 2003	38	40	14	7	1=100
September, 2003	50	33	10	6	1=100
Mid-August, 2003	45	39	10	5	1=100
Early July, 2003	37	41	13	8	1=100
June, 2003	46	35	13	6	*=100
May, 2003	63	29	6	2	*=100
April 11-16, 2003 ³	47	40	10	2	1=100
April 2-7, 2003	54	34	9	2	1=100
March 20-24, 2003	57	33	7	2	1=100
March 13-16, 2003 ⁴	62	27	6	4	1=100
February, 2003	62	25	8	4	1=100
January, 2003	55	29	10	4	2=100
December, 2002	51	32	10	6	1=100
Late October, 2002	53	33	8	5	1=100
Early October, 2002	60	28	6	5	1=100
Early September, 2002	48	29	15	6	2=100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=761]:

b.F1 The high price of gasoline these days	61	27	7	4	1=100
Early November, 2005	61	27	9	2	1=100
Late October, 2005	67	23	7	3	*=100
Early October, 2005	65	25	6	3	1=100
Early September, 2005	71	19	7	3	*=100
Mid-May, 2005	58	27	9	5	1=100
Mid-March, 2005	50	32	13	5	*=100
Mid-October, 2004	64	22	8	5	1=100
August, 2004	52	29	10	8	1=100
July, 2004	56	25	11	7	1=100
June, 2004	58	26	9	6	1=100
April, 2004	46	30	15	8	1=100
Early April, 2004	58	23	10	8	1=100

³ From March 20 to April 16, 2003 the story was listed as "News about the war in Iraq."

⁴ From October 2002 to March 13-16, 2003 the story was listed as "Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will take military action in Iraq." In Early September 2002 the story was listed as "Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will invade Iraq."

Q. 7 CONTINUED. . .

	Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/ Ref
Mid-March, 2004	47	27	14	10	2=100
September, 2003	45	27	15	11	1=100
March, 2003	52	27	11	9	1=100
February, 2003	53	25	12	9	1=100
June, 2001	56	31	7	5	1=100
May, 2001	61	26	6	6	1=100
Early October, 2000	56	25	12	6	1=100
June, 2000 ⁵	61	25	9	5	*=100
March, 2000	58	28	10	4	*=100
October, 1990	62	26	8	4	*=100
September, 1990	56	28	11	5	*=100
August, 1990	57	27	10	5	1=100

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=741]:

c. F2 Reports about the condition of the

U.S. economy	35	35	18	11	1=100
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*=100
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1=100
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*=100
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1=100
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*=100
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2=100
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1=100
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1=100
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1=100
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1=100
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*=100
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1=100
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1=100
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1=100
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1=100
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2=100
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1=100
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1=100
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0=100
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1=100
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1=100
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2=100
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*=100
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*=100
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1=100
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*=100
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1=100
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*=100
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1=100
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1=100
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*=100
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1=100
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*=100
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1=100
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*=100
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*=100
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1=100
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*=100
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*=100
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1=100
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1=100
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*=100
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*=100
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*=100
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1=100

⁵ In August 1990 through June 2000 the story was listed as "Recent increases in the price of gasoline."

Q. 7 CONTINUED...

	Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/Ref
d.F2 The nomination of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court	14	20	31	32	3=100
Early November, 2005	21	28	24	25	2=100
Early October, 2005 <i>Harriet Miers</i>	22	33	21	23	1=100
Early September, 2005 <i>John Roberts</i>	18	26	25	29	2=100
August, 1993 <i>Ruth Bader Ginsburg</i>	18	30	27	24	1=100
October, 1991 <i>Clarence Thomas</i>	28	35	18	18	1=100
July, 1991 <i>Clarence Thomas</i>	33	33	19	14	1=100
August, 1990 <i>David Souter</i>	16	27	27	29	1=100
September, 1987 <i>Robert Bork</i>	17	23	29	29	2=100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=761]:

e.F1 The major job cuts announced by General Motors	22	30	26	21	1=100
January, 1992	35	38	18	9	*=100

ASK ALL:

f. Changes to the prescription drug coverage provided by Medicare	25	24	29	20	2=100
December, 2003 <i>Medicare reform legislation</i>	25	28	22	23	2=100
g. Rebuilding efforts in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina	39	40	15	5	1=100
Early Oct, 2005 <i>Impact of Katrina and Rita</i>	73	21	4	2	*=100
Early September, 2005 <i>Impact of Katrina</i>	70	21	7	2	*=100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=761]:

ROTATE Q. 8F1 AND Q. 9F1

Q. 8F1 In general, do you think news reports are making the situation in Iraq seem WORSE than it really is or BETTER than it really is, or are reports showing the situation about the way it really is?

	Mid- Sept 2005	Oct 2003
39 Worse	35	38
19 Better	19	14
35 About the way it really is	38	36
7 Don't know/Refused	8	12
100	100	100

Q. 9F1 In general, do you think news reports are making the U.S. economy seem WORSE than it really is, or BETTER than it really is, or are reports showing the situation about the way it really is?

39 Worse
18 Better
36 About the way it really is
7 Don't know/Refused
100

NO QUESTIONS 10-13

QUESTIONS 14-15 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 16-19

On a different subject...

ROTATE Q. 20 AND Q. 21

Q. 20 Which comes closer to your view? Abortion should be generally available to those who want it; Abortion should be available but under stricter limits than it is now; Abortion should be against the law except in cases of rape, incest and to save the woman's life; Abortion should not be permitted at all.

		Late Nov ⁶ 2005	July 2005	June 1997	June 1996	CBS/NYT Feb 1996
35	Generally available	30	35	30	32	36
20	Available, but under stricter limits	19	23	21	24	22
31	Against law except rape/incest/save life	31	31	36	33	34
11	Abortion should not be permitted at all	16	9	12	9	7
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	4	2	1	2	1
<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

Q. 21 Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?

		Late Nov ⁷ 2005	July 2005 ⁸	Mid-July 2003	March 2002	March 2001	Sept 1999	June 1996
62	Favor	61	68	64	67	66	74	78
30	Oppose	27	24	30	26	27	22	18
8	Don't know/Ref. (VOL.)	12	8	6	7	7	4	4
<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

QUESTIONS 22-26 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

On a different subject...

Q. 27F2 From what you've seen and heard so far, do you think the Senate should or should not confirm Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court?

		Early Nov 2005	Harriet Miers Early Oct 2005	John Roberts Mid-Sept 2005	Early Sept 2005
32	Should	40	33	46	35
19	Should not	23	27	21	19
49	Don't know/Refused	37	40	33	46
<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

Q. 28F2 Do you worry that Samuel Alito would make the Supreme Court too conservative, not conservative enough, or don't you worry about this?

		Early Nov 2005	Harriet Miers Early Oct 2005	John Roberts Early Oct 2005	Next Supreme Court Appt. July 2005 ⁹
21	Too conservative	25	18	20	31
6	Not conservative enough	6	8	9	19
53	Don't worry about this	56	56	60	44
20	Don't know/Refused	13	18	11	6
<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

⁶ In Late November 2005 this question was asked in a unique context, following a long series of questions about euthanasia and end-of-life decisions. This context may have affected responses to this question.

⁷ In Late November 2005 this question was asked in a unique context, following a long series of questions about euthanasia and end-of-life decisions. This context may have affected responses to this question.

⁸ In July 2005 and earlier, the question was asked as part of a series of items. It was worded: "I'd like to get your views on some issues that are being discussed in this country today. All in all, do you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?"

⁹ In July 2005 the question was worded "Do you worry that the president's next Supreme Court appointment will make the court ..."

Q. 29F2 If Samuel Alito is confirmed to sit on the Supreme Court, do you think he would vote to OVERTURN the Roe versus Wade decision that established a woman's right to an abortion, or don't you think he would vote to overturn the Roe versus Wade decision?

27 Would vote to overturn Roe v. Wade
 26 Would NOT vote to overturn Roe v. Wade
 4 Not important / Doesn't matter (VOL.)
 43 Don't know/Refused
 100

ASK ALL:

Q. 30 There is now a new Medicare Law that includes some coverage of prescription drug costs. Overall, would you say you strongly approve, approve, DISapprove, or strongly disapprove of the way Medicare will now cover prescription drug costs?

		<u>Dec 2003¹⁰</u>
13	Strongly approve	12
35	Approve	43
20	Disapprove	17
10	Strongly disapprove	10
22	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	18
100		<u>100</u>

Q. 31 Please tell me what first comes to mind when you think about the new Medicare prescription drug program... just the first word or thought that comes to mind. (OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "DON'T KNOW". ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR SECOND RESPONSE).

44 NEGATIVE EVALUATIONS (NET)

14 Complicated/confusing
 9 Costly/Expensive (SUB-NET)
 3 - *Costly to seniors/high deductible/loss of prior coverage/can't afford it*
 2 - *Cost to government/inefficient/deficits/higher taxes*
 4 - *Cost generally*
 3 Scam/boondoggle/drug company/corporate scheme
 3 Unfair/inequitable
 3 Doesn't go far enough
 2 Big government/socialism/welfare/bureaucracy
 2 Not enough drug choices/limited options
 9 Other negatives

20 POSITIVE EVALUATIONS (NET)

6 Helpful/helps seniors
 2 Timely/necessary
 1 Affordability of drugs/cheaper drugs
 1 Helps low income/poor
 1 Saves money/efficient
 10 Other positives

10 NEUTRAL EVALUATIONS (NET)

4 Mentions parents/grandparents/older people
 2 Good step, but not enough
 1 Not eligible/doesn't affect me/don't want it
 1 Better than nothing/could be better
 3 Other Neutral
 7 All other mentions
 19 Nothing/Don't know

¹⁰ In December 2003 the question was worded "As you may know, Congress passed a new Medicare law that includes some coverage of prescription drug costs and changes the way Medicare covers other medical expenses for senior citizens. Overall, would you say you strongly approve, approve, DISapprove, or strongly disapprove of these recent changes?"

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=741]:

Q. 32 On balance, do you think the new Medicare prescription drug plan will be very good, good, bad, or very bad for **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**?

	Very Good	Good	Bad	Very bad	(VOL) Not much affected	DK/ ref.
a. F2 Seniors on Medicare	11	42	21	9	1	16=100
b. F2 Drug companies	22	36	17	3	3	19=100
c. F2 The financial stability of Medicare	5	36	28	7	2	22=100
d. F2 The federal budget deficit	4	23	30	12	6	25=100

ASK ALL:

Q. 33 Are you yourself eligible for the new Medicare prescription drug program?

22 Yes, eligible for new Medicare program
 71 No, not eligible
 7 Don't know/Refused
 100

IF 'NO' OR 'DK' (2,9 IN Q. 33) [N=1,129] ASK:

Q. 34 Do you have a close family member who is eligible?

45 Yes, close family member is eligible
 27 No, not eligible
 6 Don't know/Refused
 78%

NO QUESTION 35

QUESTIONS 36-46 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 47-49

Turning to the subject of Iraq ...

Q. 50 Do you think the U.S. made the right decision or the wrong decision in using military force against Iraq?

	Right decision	Wrong decision	Don't know/ Refused
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

Q. 50 CONTINUED. . .

	<u>Right decision</u>	<u>Wrong decision</u>	<u>Don't know/ Refused</u>
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	9=100

IF 'WRONG DECISION' (2 IN Q. 50) [N=710]:

Q. 51 When you say it was the wrong decision, is that **[READ AND ROTATE]?**

- 74 Mostly because you don't think we should have gone there in the first place
 - OR
 - 19 Mostly because of the way things have turned out since we went there
 - 4 Both (VOL.) **[PROBE ONCE BEFORE ACCEPTING]**
 - 3 Neither (VOL.)
 - * Other (VOL.)
 - * Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
- 100

NO QUESTION 52 OR 53

ASK ALL:

Q. 54 How well is the U.S. military effort in Iraq going? **[READ IN ORDER]**

	<u>Very well</u>	<u>Fairly well</u>	<u>Not too well</u>	<u>Not at all well</u>	<u>Don't know/ Refused</u>
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>

Q. 55 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 in Iraq	Bring troops home	Don't know/ Refused
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 ¹¹	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

IF "BRING TROOPS HOME" (2 IN Q. 55) [N=635] ASK:

Q. 56 Should the U.S. remove all troops from Iraq immediately, or should the withdrawal of troops be gradual over the next year or two?

17	Remove all troops immediately
28	Gradual withdrawal over the next year or two
1	Don't know/Refused
46%	

NO QUESTION 57 OR 58

ASK ALL:

Q. 59 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 plan	Doesn't have a clear plan	Don't know/ Refused
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

¹¹ 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?"

Q. 60 Based on what you've seen and read, do most people IN IRAQ support or oppose America's current policies in Iraq?

		July 2005	Early April 2004	Dec 2003	Sept 2003
38	Support	38	37	47	39
48	Oppose	44	48	34	47
14	Don't know/Refused	18	15	19	14
100		100	100	100	100

Q. 61 Do you think the U.S. should or should not set a timetable for when troops will be withdrawn from Iraq?

		Early Oct 2005	Mid-Sep 2005	July 2005
56	Should set a timetable	52	57	49
38	Should not set a timetable	43	37	45
1	Should get out now (VOL.)	1	1	*
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	4	5	6
100		100	100	100

Q. 62 Regardless of your feelings about the original decision to use military force, do you now believe that the U.S. will definitely succeed, probably succeed, probably fail, or definitely fail in establishing a stable democratic government in Iraq?

		Late Oct 2005	July 2005
16	Definitely succeed	12	17
41	Probably succeed	44	43
28	Probably fail	29	25
9	Definitely fail	8	8
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	7	7
100		100	100

Q. 63 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]?

		Making progress	Losing ground	(VOL) No change	Don't know/ Refused
a.	Training Iraqi security forces so they can replace U.S. troops	61	27	1	11=100
b.	Reducing the number of civilian casualties there	35	53	3	9=100
c.	Preventing terrorists from using Iraq as a base for attacks against the U.S. and its allies	48	41	2	9=100
d.	Defeating the insurgents militarily	44	41	3	12=100
e.	Establishing democracy in Iraq	58	32	2	8=100
f.	Preventing a civil war between various religious and ethnic groups	36	49	3	12=100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=761]:

Q. 64F1 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? [READ]

58	Stronger
13	Weaker
22	Would not be affected
7	Don't know/Refused
100	

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=741]:

Q. 65F2 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? **[READ]**

30 Stronger
 36 Weaker
 29 Would not be affected
 5 Don't know/Refused
100

Q. 66F2 On December 15th, Iraq is scheduled to have its first nationwide election to choose officials in the new government. How much have you heard about this... A lot, a little, or nothing at all?

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>Don't know/Refused</u>
December, 2005	22	57	20	1=100
Nationwide Oct 15th Vote on Constitution¹²				
Early November, 2005 (<i>After vote</i>)	22	52	25	1=100
Early October, 2005 (<i>Before vote</i>)	21	50	28	1=100
Nationwide Jan 30th Elections				
February, 2005 (<i>After elections</i>)	52	41	7	*=100
January, 2005 (<i>Before elections</i>)	46	40	13	1=100
Handover of Civilian Authority to Iraqi Leaders				
June, 2004 (<i>Before handover</i>)	42	40	17	1=100

Q. 67F2 Do you think the upcoming election will lead to a MORE stable situation, a LESS stable situation, or will the situation in Iraq not change much?

	<u>More Stable</u>	<u>Less Stable</u>	<u>Situation will not change much</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
December, 2005	37	9	47	7=100
Nationwide Oct 15th Vote on Constitution¹³				
Early November, 2005 (<i>After Vote</i>)	30	6	56	8=100
Early October, 2005 (<i>Before Vote</i>)	29	10	51	10=100
Nationwide Jan 30th Elections				
February, 2005 (<i>After elections</i>)	47	7	40	6=100
January, 2005 (<i>Before elections</i>)	29	14	49	8=100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=761]:

Q. 68F1 From what you've read and heard, how would you describe the current violence in Iraq, is it... **[READ AND ROTATE]**

30 Mostly a civil war between competing factions in Iraq
 OR
 58 Mostly an insurgency aimed against the U.S. and its allies
 12 Don't know/Refused
100

NO QUESTION 69

¹² In Early November 2005 the question was worded: "A few weeks ago, Iraq held a nationwide vote on the country's constitution..." In Early October 2005 the question was worded: "On October 15th, Iraq is scheduled to have a nationwide vote on the country's proposed constitution..." In February 2005 the question was worded: "Iraq recently held its first nationwide elections..." In January 2005 question was worded "On January 30th, Iraq is scheduled to have its first nationwide elections..." In June 2004 the question was worded: "On June 30th, the U.S. is planning to hand over civilian authority to Iraqi leaders..."

¹³ In Early November 2005 the question was worded: "In this election, the Iraqi people voted "yes" on the new constitution. Do you think this will lead to..." In Early October 2005 the question was worded: "If the proposed constitution is approved..." In January and February 2005 the question was worded "All in all, do you think the January elections in Iraq will lead to a MORE stable situation, a LESS stable situation, or will the situation in Iraq not change much?"

ASK ALL:

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

<i>Trend</i>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL)	(VOL)	Don't know
				No Preference	Other Party	
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
February, 2005	31	32	30	4	1	2=100
January, 2005	32	33	30	4	*	1=100
December, 2004	31	34	30	3	*	2=100

<i>Yearly Totals</i>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL)	(VOL)	Don't know
				No Preference	Other Party	
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

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	No Preference/
				<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

	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Independent/</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, [N=527] 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>
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%

ASK IF REPUBLICAN OR LEAN REPUBLICAN (1 IN PARTY OR 1 IN PARTYLN) [N=639]:

Q. 70 Thinking about next year's congressional elections, do you think the Republican Party will do better, worse, or about the same as it has in recent elections?

17	Better
20	Worse
55	About the same
8	Don't know/Refused
<u>100</u>	

ASK IF DEMOCRAT OR LEAN DEMOCRAT (2 IN PARTY OR 2 IN PARTYLN) [N=704]:

Q. 71 Thinking about next year's congressional elections, do you think the Democratic Party will do better, worse, or about the same as it has in recent elections?

62	Better
1	Worse
31	About the same
6	Don't know/Refused
<u>100</u>	