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The People, The Press & Politics

Campaign '92

Verdict in L.A.

Survey V

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BUSH, CLINTON, PEROT IN DEADLOCK:
L.A. Rioting Shadows President's Standing

The civil disturbance in Los Angeles that followed the Rodney King verdict has taken its toll on George Bush's standing with the voters. *Times Mirror's* latest nationwide survey, conducted April 30 - May 3 finds the President deadlocked with Democratic challenger Bill Clinton and Independent candidate Ross Perot. 33% of the 1301 respondents in Times Mirror's national sample say they would vote for George Bush if the election were being held today, while 30% say they would vote for Clinton and the same percentage, 30%, would support Perot. (The margin of sampling error is ± 3 percentage points). If the election were to be fought between Bush and Clinton absent the Perot factor, the President would glean 46% to Clinton's 43%, within the margin of error.

Just two weeks ago Bush had a significant lead over his two rivals. A *USN&WR* report survey of April 14-15 found 40% of a nationwide sampling supporting Bush, 29% Clinton and only 24% favoring third party challenger Perot.

The Times Mirror survey of this past weekend found Americans focused on news about the King verdict and subsequent disturbances to a degree that has been rarely matched in Times Mirror monthly surveys of news attentiveness. 70% of the poll's respondents said they were following this story *very closely* and 22% fairly closely. This is a level of public attentiveness equivalent even to the amount of interest the public evidenced in news about the Gulf war.

Public faith in President Bush as national leader of the gulf war enterprise was significantly greater than the level of confidence the public now expresses in the President's capabilities with regard to the problems that were unfolding on the nation's television screens this past weekend.

Respondents to the Times Mirror survey say that Bill Clinton is better able than the President to deal with the country's racial problems. 31% thought Clinton would do the best job and 13% named Perot. Only one in four said they thought George Bush was the Presidential candidate who would do the best job of dealing with the racial situation.

With the problems of the inner cities dominating the public's consciousness, the poll found most in the survey (61%) saying that the next President should give higher priority to the problems of poor people than to the problems of middle income people (25%). In a follow-up question, 41% of those who would give priority to the problems of the poor named Clinton as the candidate who would do the best job of this, while just 15% named the President and 22% Perot.

Clinton was also best regarded, though by a narrower margin, as best qualified to deal with the problems of the middle class. Thirty-two percent of those who would give higher priority to middle class problems favored Clinton for helping the middle class, 26% Bush and 25% Perot.

Bush's problems in this survey are closely linked to the recent civil disturbances as well as to the significant gains that Ross Perot has made in becoming better known to voters in general and in strengthening his appeal to people who typically vote Republican.

Perot's favorable to unfavorable ratings margin has improved from 29% to 21% in March, to 50% to 27% in the current survey. Over this same period more Americans came to hold unfavorable opinions of George Bush. Bush's unfavorable ratings grew from 36% in March to 42% in the current poll. Personal evaluations of Bill Clinton have not changed materially over the past month - 53% favorable/42% unfavorable.

Perot gets his best ratings mostly from groups who are Republican leaning: men (55%), college graduates (59%) and people from households where incomes are \$50,000 or more per year (64%).

The trend in voting intentions reflects both a deterioration of George Bush's personal image and Perot's widening constituency, when trended against the mid-April survey. The current poll finds Perot running even with President among groups that a GOP candidate typically dominates. Bush and Perot are in a statistical tie among the affluent, college graduates, whites and among men.

The President garners the support of only 66% of the Republicans questioned, while Perot leads Bush 37% to 31% among Independents. However, Clinton does even more poorly among members of his party. He manages to get the support of only 56% of Democrats, with as many as 28% saying they would vote for Perot. Among Independents Clinton also trails Perot by 14 points (23% - 37%).

DEMOGRAPHIC TREND IN PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT

	<u>Bush</u>		<u>Clinton</u>		<u>Perot</u>		
	<u>4/92</u>	<u>Curr</u>	<u>4/92</u>	<u>Curr</u>	<u>4/92</u>	<u>Curr</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	40	33	29	30	24	30	(1301)
<i>Sex</i>							
Male	41	33	27	30	25	33	(645)
Female	38	33	30	30	23	27	(656)
<i>Race</i>							
White	42	36	25	26	25	32	(1052)
Black	15	10	56	61	20	21	(175)
<i>Age</i>							
18 - 29	43	39	30	32	19	25	(328)
30 - 49	40	34	30	28	25	32	(524)
50 +	36	28	26	32	27	31	(434)
<i>Education</i>							
College grad.	46	35	26	24	22	34	(363)
Some college	38	33	25	30	32	34	(363)
High school grad	40	36	27	30	24	28	(424)
Less than							
H.S. grad.	33	25	40	38	18	23	(148)
<i>Income</i>							
\$50,000 and over	41	35	23	24	31	36	(231)
\$30,000-\$49,999	44	43	28	22	24	31	(319)
\$20,000-\$29,999	40	30	28	34	25	31	(230)
Less than \$20,000	32	29	38	38	21	24	(389)
<i>Region</i>							
Northeast	46	30	24	30	22	32	(317)
Midwest	34	32	32	33	25	29	(351)
South	44	39	31	30	19	24	(456)
West	33	29	25	27	34	38	(177)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>							
Republican	72	66	8	7	15	23	(350)
Democrat	19	10	56	56	19	28	(442)
Independent	36	31	19	23	37	37	(466)

** 4/92 survey is data from the U.S. News & World Report survey conducted 4/13 - 4/15, 1992.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted among a nationally representative sample of 1,301 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period of April 30 - May 3, 1992. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3 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.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

TIMES MIRROR CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS
 NATIONAL POLITICAL SURVEY #5
 APRIL 30 - MAY 3, 1992
 N=1,301

SEX: 1[]Male 2[]Female INTERVIEWER'S NAME: _____
 TIME STARTED: _____ INTERVIEWER'S I.D.: _____
 TIME FINISHED: _____ PAGE NUMBER: _____
 LENGTH: _____ REPLICATE NUMBER: _____
 REGION: 1 East STRATUM: 1 Stratum One
 2 Midwest 2 Stratum Two
 3 South 3 Remainder
 4 West
 DATE: _____

INTRODUCTION: Hello, we are conducting a telephone opinion survey for leading newspapers and tv stations around the country. I'd like to ask a few questions of the youngest male, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home (IF NO MALE, ASK: May I please speak with the oldest female, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home?)

MY FIRST QUESTION IS...

Q.3 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. (READ AND ROTATE LIST)

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK</u>
h. The verdict in the Rodney King case and the riots and disturbances that followed	70	22	5	2	1=100

ON ANOTHER SUBJECT..

Q.18 Who would you most like to see nominated as the Democratic party's Presidential candidate? **(READ CATEGORIES 1-3)**

BASED ON DEMOCRATS AND LEANERS

May	
<u>1992</u>	
11	Former California Governor Jerry Brown
41	Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton
40	Some other candidate
<u>8</u>	(DO NOT READ) Don't know
100	

Q.19 Suppose the 1992 Presidential election were being held today. If George Bush were the Republican candidate and Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton were the Democratic candidate who would you like to see win?

IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED '3' OTHER OR '4' UNDECIDED IN Q.19 ASK:

Q.21 As of today, do you lean more to George Bush, the Republican or do you lean more to Bill Clinton the Democrat?

May		Mar
<u>1992</u>		<u>1992</u>
46	George Bush - with leaners	50
43	Bill Clinton - with leaners	43
<u>11</u>	Other/Undecided	<u>7</u>
100		100
		(557)

IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED '1' GEORGE BUSH OR '2' BILL CLINTON IN Q.19 ASK:

Q.20 Do you support (INSERT CHOICE FROM Q.19) strongly or only moderately?

Strength of support

<u>May</u> <u>1992</u>		<u>Mar</u> <u>1992</u>
46	George Bush	50
15	Strongly	19
31	Only moderately	31
43	Bill Clinton	43
10	Strongly	9
33	Only moderately	34
<u>11</u>	Other/undecided	<u>7</u>
100		100 (557)

ASK ALL:

Q.22 And suppose the candidates were George Bush, the Republican candidate, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, the Democratic candidate, and Ross Perot was the Independent candidate, who would you like to see win?

IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED '4' OTHER OR '5' UNDECIDED IN Q.22 ASK:

Q.23 As of today, do you lean more to George Bush, the Republican, Bill Clinton, the Democrat, or do you lean toward Ross Perot, the Independent?

<u>May</u> <u>1992</u>		<u>U. S. News &</u> <u>World Report</u> <u>April 1992</u>
33	George Bush - with leaners	40
30	Bill Clinton - with leaners	29
30	Ross Perot - with leaners	24
<u>7</u>	Other/Undecided	<u>7</u>
100		100 (1000)

AGAIN ON A DIFFERENT SUBJECT....

Q. 34aa In your opinion which presidential candidate George Bush, Bill Clinton, or Ross Perot would do the best job of dealing with the racial situation in this country?

- 24 George Bush
- 31 Bill Clinton
- 13 Ross Perot
- 4 **(DO NOT READ)** Other
- 28 **(DO NOT READ)** Undecided

100

(981) **Based on total respondents interviewed 5/1-3/92**

Q. 34a What should the next President give higher priority to: improving conditions for middle income people or to improving conditions for poor people?

- 25 Middle income people
- 61 Poor people
- 14 Not sure

100

Q. 34b In your opinion which presidential candidate George Bush, Bill Clinton, or Ross Perot would do the best job of improving conditions for (ANSWER IN Q. 34a)?

		<u>Middle class</u>	<u>Poor People</u>
1	George Bush	26	15
2	Bill Clinton	32	41
3	Ross Perot	25	22
4	(DO NOT READ) Other	3	4
5	(DO NOT READ) Undecided	<u>14</u>	<u>18</u>
		100	100
		(359)	(760)

Q.42 I'd like your opinion of some people. As I read from a list, please tell me which category best describes your overall opinion of who I name. First, would you describe your opinion of **(ITEM)** as very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable? **(ROTATE)**

	<u>Very Favorable</u>	<u>Mostly Favorable</u>	<u>Mostly Unfavorable</u>	<u>Very Unfavorable</u>	<u>(VOL) Never Heard Of</u>	<u>(VOL) Can't Rate</u>
a. George Bush	13	42	25	17	0	3=100
March, 1992	18	45	23	13	0	1=100
February, 1992	26	38	20	14	0	2=100
January, 1992	20	43	22	13	0	2=100
November, 1991	25	46	17	9	0	3=100
May, 1990	24	52	15	7	0	2=100
January, 1989	24	54	9	4		9=100
*October, 1988	23	35	20	17		5=100
*September, 1988	19	40	20	17		4=100
*August, 1988	25	40	18	12		5=100
May, 1988	11	40	25	17		7=100
January, 1988	11	41	26	13		9=100
September, 1987	18	51	19	8		4=100
May, 1987	11	56	19	7		7=100
b. Bill Clinton	11	42	32	10	*	5=100
March, 1992	10	43	29	11	1	6=100
February, 1992	15	44	24	7	2	8=100
January, 1992	9	28	11	4	27	21=100
November, 1991	5	25	8	2	39	21=100
c. Ross Perot	11	39	20	7	2	21=100
March, 1992	11	18	15	6	29	21=100