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For The People & The Press

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Kerry Issue Advantage Ebbs As Voter Opinion Fluctuates
BUSH SUPPORT STEADY IN WAKE OF CLARKE CRITICISMS

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Kerry Issue Advantage Ebbs As Voter Opinion Fluctuates
BUSH SUPPORT STEADY IN WAKE OF CLARKE CRITICISMS

A week’s worth of criticism of his pre-Sept. 11 record on terrorism has had little impact on President Bush’s support among voters. He is now running even with Sen. John Kerry in a head-to-head match-up among registered voters (47% Kerry- 46% Bush) after trailing Kerry by 52%-43% in mid-March. Voter opinions have been fluid in this early stage of the presidential contest, but Bush has held his own against Kerry with regard to personal qualities, while the Massachusetts senator has lost support on key issues like health care and jobs. And on the central question of which candidate would do the best job of defending the country against future terrorist attacks, Bush continues to lead Kerry by a wide margin (53%-29%).

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Kerry</u>	<u>Other/DK</u>
	%	%	%
Late March	46	47	7=100
Mid-March	43	52	5=100
Late February	44	48	8=100
Early February	47	47	6=100
Early January	52	41	7=100
October, 2003	50	42	8=100

Based on registered voters.

The latest national survey of 1,501 Americans by the Pew Research Center, conducted March 22-28, finds Bush’s job approval ratings still sub-par (47% approve and 44% disapprove). Kerry’s strength continues to be on domestic issues, including health care, jobs and the economy, but voters’ confidence in Kerry has slipped, not grown, over the past two weeks. Today, Bush and Kerry run virtually even on the question of who can best improve economic conditions (44% Kerry, 39% Bush). Kerry held a sizable advantage on this issue in polling earlier this month.

Bush continues to hold the advantage on defending the country against terrorism, though slightly fewer back him over Kerry on this issue (53%, down from 57% in mid-March). Notably, the president has lost ground on terrorism among swing voters, just half of whom say he could do a better job than Kerry on this issue, down from 72% in mid-March. Yet Kerry has not gained ground on terrorism. Instead, a growing number of swing voters (37%, up from 17%) are undecided as to whether Bush or Kerry could do a better job of defending the country against future attacks.

Former White House aide Richard Clarke’s criticisms of the president’s anti-terrorism policies and the televised hearings of the 9/11 commission have not undermined impressions of Bush’s leadership abilities. Half of voters (51%) say the phrase “a strong leader” better describes Bush, while a third say that about Kerry. Opinion on that matter is virtually unchanged from mid-March (52% Bush/34% Kerry).

Bush’s other primary personal strength is the widely-held perception that he is “willing to take a stand, even if it’s unpopular.” Roughly six-in-ten (59%) say that better describes Bush while only about half that number (28%) believe it is a better description of Kerry.

Bush’s Personal Advantage

While Bush held a slight advantage over Al Gore on many personal traits through most of the 2000 election cycle, voters are even more favorably predisposed to Bush in terms of leadership, forcefulness, and effectiveness than was the case four years ago.

There is less consensus over which candidate would provide the best judgment in a crisis situation – 46% say Bush, 36% say Kerry, but Kerry has not gained on this trait over the past two weeks. Throughout the 2000 election, neither Bush nor Gore held a clear advantage in this area.

The public is split over which candidate is more honest and truthful, with 37% finding Bush to be more believable, and 38% Kerry. This mirrors early evaluations of Bush and Gore in the 2000 election cycle, when neither was seen as more credible; then, as now, a significant minority volunteered that neither candidate is particularly truthful.

At this early stage in the campaign, John Kerry’s strongest personal traits are his perceived empathy and friendliness, though even here he has no significant advantage. Voters are divided over which candidate is more personally likable (40% cite Kerry, 40% Bush). And 42% say Kerry “cares about people like me,” while 38% say this phrase better describes the current president.

Bush Maintains Leadership Edge					
	<i>Phrase better describes...</i>				
	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Kerry</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>DK</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
Willing to take a stand	59	28	3	3	7=100
Mid-March	63	27	1	5	4=100
Can get things done	49	30	4	4	13=100
Mid-March	50	34	4	4	8=100
A strong leader	51	33	4	2	10=100
Mid-March	52	34	4	4	6=100
Good judgment in crisis	46	36	2	3	13=100
Mid-March	48	39	2	5	6=100
Down to earth	44	36	7	5	8=100
Mid-March	43	42	5	5	5=100
A typical politician	36	39	2	17	6=100
Mid-March	38	38	1	19	4=100
Honest and truthful	37	38	12	3	10=100
Mid-March	35	39	16	5	5=100
Personally likable	40	40	5	8	7=100
Mid-March	40	44	4	8	4=100
Cares about people	38	42	9	3	8=100
Mid-March	34	48	8	4	6=100

Based on registered voters.

Kerry Declines on Issues

By a wide margin (53% to 29%), more voters say Bush is the candidate who can best defend the country from future terrorist attacks. Bush also holds a sizable edge over his Democratic opponent in terms of making wise decisions about what to do in Iraq (49% to 37% for Kerry), and foreign policy decision-making in general (44% to 38%).

Importantly, Bush’s rating in these policy areas has not declined following news about Clarke’s book and testimony before the 9/11 commission.

In voters’ minds, Kerry’s strengths are in traditional Democratic issues – education, jobs, and health care, but even here there is significant volatility in how voters view the Democratic challenger as the campaign switches from one-sided attacks to the more typical give-and-take of an election campaign. Earlier this month, voters trusted Kerry more than Bush to improve the job situation and health care systems by margins of roughly two-to-one. Today, these margins are much tighter, as the percent expressing confidence in Kerry has declined.

In mid-March, 53% cited Kerry as better able to improve economic conditions, today 44% favor Kerry in this area. The percentage citing Bush has remained relatively stable, while the proportion saying they don’t know who would be better has increased. In fact, on a wide range of issues, from terrorism to the economy to health care, a growing number of voters are saying that they do not know which candidate would do a better job, or that neither is clearly preferable.

This volatility in evaluations of Kerry’s policy capabilities is not limited to domestic issues. Earlier this month, equal numbers cited Kerry and Bush as being best able to handle the situation in Iraq and make wise foreign policy decisions. But as in other issues, backing of Kerry has slipped significantly, while perceptions of Bush have remained stable.

Kerry Advantage on Domestic Issues Narrows				
<i>Who can best handle...</i>	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Kerry</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>DK</u>
	%	%	%	%
Terrorism	53	29	4	14=100
Mid-March	57	32	4	7=100
Situation in Iraq	49	37	4	10=100
Mid-March	47	45	2	6=100
Foreign policy	44	38	4	14=100
Mid-March	44	45	3	8=100
Trade policies	38	39	5	18=100
Mid-March	38	48	3	11=100
Economy	39	44	6	11=100
Mid-March	37	53	2	8=100
Education	39	43	5	13=100
Mid-March	36	52	3	9=100
Job situation	37	45	7	11=100
Mid-March	30	57	5	8=100
Health care	33	46	6	15=100
Mid-March	29	57	4	10=100

Based on registered voters.

Candidate Picture Unclear for Swing Voters

Overall, 38% of voters support Kerry and say they have definitely decided *not* to vote for Bush, and roughly the same number (36%) support Bush and say there is no chance they will vote for Kerry. The remaining portion of the electorate – 26% of all voters – have either expressed a preference for one of the candidates yet say they could still change their minds, or are truly undecided. And as the Bush and Kerry campaigns have begun seriously competing for the attention of these “swing” voters, the choices have become less, not more, distinct.

Swing voters are especially uncertain in assessing candidate abilities on complex issues such as trade policies and health care. Just over a quarter of swing voters (28%) feel Kerry could do better on trade and about as many (22%) favor Bush – but fully half of swing voters say they don’t see either candidate as better able to make wise decisions about U.S. trade policies. By comparison, just 12% and 13% of Bush and Kerry backers, respectively, are uncertain about which candidate could better handle trade policy.

The pattern is the same when it comes to everyday issues such as the economy, Iraq, and terrorism. Four times as many swing voters (39%) don’t know which candidate would do a better job improving economic conditions, compared with fewer than 10% of committed voters.

Fewer Swing Voters Favor Bush on Terrorism

Swing voters also are increasingly uncertain about which candidate can best defend the country against terrorism. In the survey conducted before Clarke’s allegations were widely publicized, fully 72% of swing voters said they felt Bush was the candidate best able to protect the U.S. from future terrorist attacks, while just 11% preferred Kerry.

The current survey finds only 50% citing Bush as stronger on this issue, though Kerry made no significant gains on this issue. The proportion of swing voters who don’t see either candidate as better on terrorism more than doubled from 17% to 37% as events have unfolded.

Who Can Best Defend The U.S. From Terrorism			
	Certain		
<i>Mid-March</i>	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Kerry</u>	<u>Swing</u>
Bush	98	18	72
Kerry	0	67	11
Neither/DK	<u>2</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>17</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Late-March</i>			
Bush	97	11	50
Kerry	0	71	13
Neither/DK	<u>3</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>37</u>
	100	100	100
Number of cases	(427)	(445)	(296)

Clarke Interest Steady

The poll finds that nearly all Americans have heard about Clarke’s criticism of Bush’s anti-terrorism policies prior to 9/11. More than four-in-ten (42%) say they have heard a lot about Clarke, while 47% have heard a little. Just 10% say they have heard nothing about him. While Democrats and Republicans are equally likely to be aware of the charges, Kerry voters were more likely than Bush voters to say they’d heard a lot about Clarke.

Heard About Clarke’s Criticism				
	General public	--Registered voters--		
		All	Support Bush	Support Kerry
	%	%	%	%
A lot	42	45	42	50
A little	47	45	45	44
Nothing at all	10	9	12	5
Don’t know	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100	100
Number of cases	1,501	1,168	550	544

Public awareness remained substantial throughout the interviewing period, which began March 22, the day after Clarke’s appearance on the CBS News program *Sixty Minutes*. But interest did not increase significantly after his testimony to the bipartisan commission investigating the 9/11 attacks on March 24.

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Results for the survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 1,501 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period March 22-28, 2004. 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. For results based on either Form 1 (N=706) or Form 2 (N=795), the sampling error is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

For results based on Registered Voters (N=1168), the sampling error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. For results based on either Form 1 registered voters (N=555) or Form 2 registered voters (N=613), the sampling error is plus or minus 4.5 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.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS
LATE MARCH 2004 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
March 22 - 28, 2004
N=1,501

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]**

	<u>Approve</u>	Dis- <u>approve</u>	Don't <u>know</u>		<u>Approve</u>	Dis- <u>approve</u>	Don't <u>know</u>
Late March, 2004	47	44	9=100	2001			
Mid-March, 2004	46	47	7=100	Mid-November, 2001	84	9	7=100
February, 2004	48	44	8=100	Early October, 2001	84	8	8=100
Mid-January, 2004	56	34	10=100	Late September, 2001	86	7	7=100
Early January, 2004	58	35	7=100	Mid-September, 2001	80	9	11=100
2003				Early September, 2001	51	34	15=100
December, 2003	57	34	9=100	August, 2001	50	32	18=100
November, 2003	50	40	10=100	July, 2001	51	32	17=100
October, 2003	50	42	8=100	June, 2001	50	33	17=100
September, 2003	55	36	9=100	May, 2001	53	32	15=100
Mid-August, 2003	56	32	12=100	April, 2001	56	27	17=100
Early August, 2003	53	37	10=100	March, 2001	55	25	20=100
Mid-July, 2003	58	32	10=100	February, 2001	53	21	26=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				
Late July, 2002	65	25	10=100				
July, 2002	67	21	12=100				
June, 2002	70	20	10=100				
April, 2002	69	18	13=100				
Early April, 2002	74	16	10=100				
February, 2002	78	13	9=100				
January, 2002	80	11	9=100				

NO QUESTION 2

Q.3 How much thought have you given to the coming presidential election . . . Quite a lot or only a little?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1168]:

	Quite <u>A lot</u>	(VOL.) <u>Some</u>	Only a <u>Little</u>	(VOL.) <u>None</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>
Late March, 2004	60	4	31	4	1=100
Mid-March, 2004	65	2	31	2	*=100
2000					
Early November, 2000	72	6	19	2	1=100
Late October, 2000	66	6	24	4	*=100
Mid-October, 2000	67	9	19	4	1=100
Early October, 2000	60	8	27	4	1=100
September, 2000	59	8	29	3	1=100
July, 2000	46	6	45	3	*=100
June, 2000	46	6	43	5	*=100
May, 2000	48	4	42	5	1=100
1996					
November, 1996	67	8	22	3	*=100
October, 1996	65	7	26	1	1=100
Late September, 1996	61	7	29	2	1=100
Early September, 1996	56	3	36	4	1=100
July, 1996	55	3	41	1	*=100
June, 1996	50	5	41	3	1=100
1992					
October, 1992	77	5	16	1	1=100
September, 1992	69	3	26	1	1=100
August, 1992	72	4	23	1	*=100
June, 1992	63	6	29	1	1=100
1988 (Figures from Gallup)					
November, 1988	73	8	17	2	0=100
October, 1988	69	9	20	2	0=100
August, 1988	61	10	27	2	0=100
September, 1988	57	18	23	2	0=100

Q.4 All in all, have you been hearing too much, too little, or about the right amount about the presidential campaign so far?

	<u>Total</u>	<u>RVs</u>		Mid-March 2004	
				<u>Total</u>	<u>RVs</u>
	28	30	Too much	31	33
	17	14	Too little	18	15
	48	50	Right amount	48	49
	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100		100	100
		(N=1168)			

Q.5 Now, suppose the 2004 presidential election were being held TODAY. If you had to choose between George W. Bush, the Republican, John Kerry, the Democrat or Ralph Nader [**READ; ROTATE KERRY AND BUSH WITH NADER ALWAYS LAST**] — who would you vote for?

IF OTHER OR DK (Q.5=4,9), ASK:

Q.5a As of TODAY, do you LEAN more to [**READ, ROTATE IN SAME ORDER AS Q.5**]?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1168]:

		<i>Form 1</i>	<i>Form 2</i>	Mid-March <u>2004</u>
44	George W. Bush, the Republican/Lean Bush	<u>44</u>	<u>44</u>	42
43	John Kerry, the Democrat/Lean Kerry	<u>43</u>	<u>42</u>	49
6	Ralph Nader/Lean Nader	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	4
<u>7</u>	Other/DK (VOL.)	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>
100		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	100
		N= (555)	(613)	

NOTE ON ROTATION: In Form 1 Q5/5a was asked BEFORE Q6/6a. In Form 2 Q5/5a was asked AFTER Q6/6a.

Q.6 Suppose there were only two major candidates for president and you had to choose between George W. Bush, the Republican and John Kerry, the Democrat [**READ, ROTATE**]. Who would you vote for?

IF OTHER OR DK (3,9 IN Q.6) ASK:

Q.6a As of TODAY, do you LEAN more to [**READ, ROTATE IN SAME ORDER AS Q.6**]?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1168]:

		Mid March <u>2004</u>	Late Feb <u>2004</u>	Early Feb <u>2004</u>	Early Jan <u>2004</u>	Early Oct <u>2003</u>	March <u>2000</u>	March <u>1996</u>	March <u>1992</u>	May <u>1988</u>
46	Bush/Lean Bush	43	44	47	52	50	43 <i>Bush</i>	41 <i>Dole</i>	49 <i>Bush, Sr.</i>	40 <i>Bush, Sr.</i>
47	Kerry/Lean Kerry	52	48	47	41	42	49 <i>Gore</i>	53 <i>Clinton</i>	44 <i>Clinton</i>	53 <i>Dukakis</i>
<u>7</u>	Other/DK (VOL.)	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

**NOTE: Q.7 THRU Q.10 ARE LINKED TO BOTH Q.6F1/Q.6aF1 AND Q.6F2/Q.6aF2
THOSE WHO CHOSE JOHN KERRY (IN Q.6/Q.6a) ASK:**

Q.7 Would you say that your choice is more a vote FOR John Kerry or more a vote AGAINST George W. Bush?

THOSE WHO CHOSE GEORGE W. BUSH (IN Q.6/Q.6a) ASK:

Q.8 Would you say that your choice is more a vote FOR George W. Bush or more a vote AGAINST John Kerry?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1168]:

	----- KERRY -----				----- BUSH -----				Other/ DK
	Total	Pro- Kerry	Anti- Bush	Un- decid	Total	Pro- Bush	Anti- Kerry	Un- decid	
2004									
Late Mar	47	17	27	3	46	36	8	2	7=100
Mid Mar	52	21	29	2	43	34	7	2	5=100
Feb	47	15	30	2	47	39	6	2	6=100

	----- GORE -----				----- BUSH -----				Other/ DK
	Total	Pro- Gore	Anti- Bush	Un- decid	Total	Pro- Bush	Anti- Gore	Un- decid	
2000									
Nov	45	29	14	2	41	27	12	2	14=100
Sept	47	30	14	3	41	24	14	3	12=100

	----- CLINTON -----				----- DOLE -----				----- PEROT -----				Other/ DK
	Total	Pro- Clinton	Anti- other	Un- decid	Total	Pro- Dole	Anti- other	Un- decid	Total	Pro- Perot	Anti- Other	Un- decid	
1996													
Nov	51	33	15	3	32	15	15	2	9	4	5	*	8=100
Oct	51	33	16	2	34	15	18	1	8	4	4	*	7=100
Sept	52	35	15	2	34	16	17	1	8	3	5	0	6=100
Mar	53	30	20	3	41	15	25	1	--	--	--	--	6=100

	----- CLINTON -----				----- BUSH -----				----- PEROT -----				Other/ DK
	Total	Pro- Clinton	Anti- other	Un- decid	Total	Pro- Bush	Anti- other	Un- decid	Total	Pro- Perot	Anti- Other	Un- decid	
1992													
Oct	48	23	22	3	35	19	13	3	8	3	5	*	9=100
Sept	53	21	29	3	38	20	16	2	--	--	--	--	9=100
Aug	57	27	28	2	37	20	16	1	--	--	--	--	6=100
Mar	44	13	29	2	49	32	15	2	--	--	--	--	7=100

	----- DUKAKIS -----				----- BUSH -----				Other/ DK
	Total	Pro- Dukakis	Anti- Bush	Un- decid	Total	Pro- Bush	Anti- Dukakis	Un- decid	
1988									
Oct	42	23	15	4	50	31	16	3	8=100
Sept	44	21	19	4	50	31	15	4	6=100
May	53	23	26	4	40	26	11	3	7=100

THOSE WHO DID NOT CHOOSE KERRY IN Q.6/6a ASK:

Q.9 Do you think there is a chance that you might vote for John Kerry in November, or have you definitely decided not to vote for him?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1168]:

	Mid March <u>2004</u>	Late Feb <u>2004</u>	Early Feb <u>2004</u>	----- Gore 2000 -----						- Clinton -		
				Late Mid- Early						July	May	
				Nov	Oct	Oct	Oct	Sept	June	1996	1992	
13	Chance might vote for him	13	13	15	8	9	10	11	13	14	8	11
37	Decided not to vote for him	32	36	33	41	44	40	38	35	34	36	38
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>
54%		48%	52%	53%	55%	57%	55%	56%	53%	54%	48%	55%

THOSE WHO DID NOT CHOOSE BUSH IN Q.6/6a ASK:

Q.10 Do you think there is a chance that you might vote for George W. Bush in November, or have you definitely decided not to vote for him?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1168]:

	Mid March <u>2004</u>	Late Feb <u>2004</u>	Early Feb <u>2004</u>	----- Bush 2000 -----						Dole	Bush,Sr	
				Late Mid- Early						July	May	
				Nov	Oct	Oct	Oct	Sept	June	1996	1992	
11	Chance might vote for him	11	10	10	8	10	12	11	15	15	15	8
40	Decided not to vote for him	44	43	41	44	41	40	39	38	33	40	40
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>
54%		57%	56%	53%	59%	55%	57%	57%	59%	54%	58%	53%

NO QUESTIONS 11-19

ASK FORM 1 ONLY:

Q.20F1 As I read a list of phrases, tell me if you think each phrase better describes John Kerry or George W. Bush.
(INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE)

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=555]:

	George W. Bush	John Kerry ¹	(VOL.) Neither	(VOL.) Both Equally	DK/Ref.
a. Would use good judgment in a crisis	46	36	2	3	13=100
Mid-March, 2004	48	39	2	5	6=100
Late-October, 2000	43	42	2	5	8=100
Mid-October, 2000	40	42	5	8	5=100
Early October, 2000	36	43	4	10	7=100
September, 2000	38	44	3	8	7=100
June, 2000	44	37	5	6	8=100
b. Personally likable	40	40	5	8	7=100
Mid-March, 2004	40	44	4	8	4=100
Late-October, 2000	48	39	5	5	3=100
Mid-October, 2000	44	38	5	9	4=100
Early October, 2000	41	38	4	12	5=100
September, 2000	37	44	3	12	4=100
June, 2000	42	36	7	9	6=100

¹ In 2000 the question asked about Al Gore.

Q.20F1 CONTINUED...

		George	John	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	
		<u>W. Bush</u>	<u>Kerry</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
					<u>Equally</u>	
c.	Honest and truthful	37	38	12	3	10=100
	Mid-March, 2004	35	39	16	5	5=100
	Late-October, 2000	43	32	15	5	5=100
	Mid-October, 2000	38	30	19	6	7=100
	Early October, 2000	36	32	17	8	7=100
	September, 2000	35	37	13	9	6=100
	June, 2000	35	31	19	7	8=100
d.	Cares about people like me	38	42	9	3	8=100
	Mid-March, 2004	34	48	8	4	6=100
	Late-October, 2000	40	43	8	5	4=100
	Mid-October, 2000	40	42	7	7	4=100
	Early October, 2000	35	44	11	5	5=100
	September, 2000	31	47	9	7	6=100
e.	A strong leader	51	33	4	2	10=100
	Mid-March, 2004	52	34	4	4	6=100
	Late-October, 2000	44	41	6	6	3=100
	Mid-October, 2000	42	39	9	6	4=100
	Early October, 2000	41	38	7	10	4=100
	September, 2000	44	38	7	6	5=100
f.	Can get things done	49	30	4	4	13=100
	Mid-March, 2004	50	34	4	4	8=100
	Late-October, 2000	43	39	5	6	7=100
	Mid-October, 2000	41	39	6	8	6=100
	Early October, 2000	37	38	5	11	9=100
	September, 2000	40	40	4	8	8=100
	June, 2000	43	33	8	6	10=100
g.	A typical politician	36	39	2	17	6=100
	Mid-March, 2004	38	38	1	19	4=100
	Late-October, 2000	29	51	2	15	3=100
	Mid-October, 2000	29	45	3	19	4=100
	September, 2000	37	37	2	20	4=100
	June, 2000	34	37	1	22	7=100
h.	Willing to take a stand, even if it's unpopular	59	28	3	3	7=100
	Mid-March, 2004	63	27	1	5	4=100
	Late-October, 2000	49	35	7	4	5=100
	Mid-October, 2000	49	35	6	5	5=100
	Early October, 2000	43	35	8	6	8=100
	September, 2000	45	37	8	5	5=100
	June, 2000	46	32	9	5	8=100
i.	Is down to earth	44	36	7	5	8=100
	Mid-March, 2004	43	42	5	5	5=100
	May, 2000	41	46	5	2	6=100

ASK FORM 2 ONLY:

Q.21F2 Regardless of who you support, which one of the presidential candidates —George W. Bush or John Kerry — do you think would do the best job of **(INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE. IF RESPONDENT MENTIONS ANYONE OTHER THAN BUSH OR KERRY PROBE ONCE: "IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN BUSH AND KERRY...")** ?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=613]:

		George W. Bush	John Kerry ²	(VOL.) Neither	DK/Ref.
a.	Improving economic conditions	39	44	6	11=100
	Mid-March, 2004	37	53	2	8=100
	Late-October, 2000 ³	40	46	6	8=100
	Mid-October, 2000	37	49	3	11=100
	Early October, 2000	35	47	6	12=100
	September, 2000	38	46	5	11=100
	June, 2000	38	41	5	16=100
	March, 2000	42	46	4	8=100
b.	Improving the health care system	33	46	6	15=100
	Mid-March, 2004	29	57	4	10=100
	Late-October, 2000	38	47	5	10=100
	Mid-October, 2000	37	48	4	11=100
	Early October, 2000	36	49	5	10=100
	September, 2000	32	51	6	11=100
	June, 2000	31	44	6	19=100
	March, 2000	31	51	6	12=100
c.	Improving education	39	43	5	13=100
	Mid-March, 2004	36	52	3	9=100
	Late-October, 2000	41	45	4	10=100
	Mid-October, 2000	40	46	3	11=100
	Early October, 2000	41	43	6	10=100
	September, 2000	39	45	4	12=100
	June, 2000	34	44	5	17=100
	March, 2000	42	44	3	11=100
d.	Improving the job situation	37	45	7	11=100
	Mid-March, 2004	30	57	5	8=100
e.	Making wise decisions about U.S. trade policies	38	39	5	18=100
	Mid-March, 2004	38	48	3	11=100
	July, 1996 ⁴	40	40	6	14=100
f.	Making wise decisions about what to do in Iraq	49	37	4	10=100
	Mid-March, 2004	47	45	2	6=100

² In 2000 the question asked about Al Gore.

³ In 2000 the item was listed as "Keeping the economy strong."

⁴ In 1996 the question asked about Bob Dole and Bill Clinton. In 1992, the question asked about George Bush, Sr., Bill Clinton and Ross Perot. Perot is included in the "Neither" trend category.

Q.21F2 CONTINUED...

		George <u>W. Bush</u>	John <u>Kerry</u>	(VOL.) <u>Neither</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
g.	Defending the country from future terrorist attacks	53	29	4	14=100
	Mid-March, 2004	57	32	4	7=100
h.	Making wise decisions about foreign policy	44	38	4	14=100
	Mid-March, 2004	44	45	3	8=100
	March, 2000	40	46	4	10=100
	Early September, 1996	42	44	6	8=100
	July, 1996	44	42	4	10=100
	October, 1992	53	27	9	11=100

ASK ALL:

N.1 How much, if anything, have you heard about a former aide to president Bush who claims that the president ignored serious warnings prior to the Sept 11 terrorist attacks... a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

42 A lot
47 A little
10 Nothing at all
1 Don't know/Refused
100