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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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Most Say Al Qaeda Is Weaker Than Before 9/11
IRAQ SUPPORT STEADY IN FACE OF HIGHER CASUALTIES

Most Americans think that the United States is winning the war on terrorism, and a solid majority believes that Al Qaeda and related terrorist groups are weaker now than they were before the Sept. 11 attacks. In addition, somewhat more Americans believe the war in Iraq has helped the war on terrorism rather than hurt that effort (46% helped, 40% hurt).

The latest nationwide poll by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted among 2,003 adults from Sept. 8-13, finds public attitudes on the war in Iraq remaining stable, with a notable exception. Since August, there has been a significant increase in the percentage who say that the number of American military casualties in Iraq is growing. Nearly half (46%) say that casualties over the past month are higher than they have been in recent months; in August, just 31% thought casualties were increasing.

However, the perception that casualties are rising has not materially affected opinion regarding the war itself. A majority of Americans (53%) continue to say the war was the right decision and about as many (54%) favor keeping U.S. troops in Iraq until the situation there has stabilized. These numbers have been consistent since spring. And perceptions of the Iraq military effort remain unchanged, despite the upswing in casualties. A narrow majority (52%) believe the effort is going very or fairly well, while 44% think it is not going well.

Positive Views of War on Terror

	July	Sept
<i>War on terrorism*</i>	%	%
Winning	51	52
Losing	34	28
Neither (Vol)	10	9
Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100
<i>Al Qaeda is...</i>		
Weaker	--	57
Stronger	--	30
Same (Vol)	--	4
Don't know	--	<u>9</u>
		100
<i>Iraq war's effect on war on terror</i>		
Helped	43	46
Hurt	45	40
No effect (Vol)	5	6
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100

* July figures from ABC/Wash. Post

Moreover, President Bush's own ratings on Iraq have improved slightly, despite the continuing violence. Currently, 47% of the public approves of the way Bush is handling the situation in Iraq, while 45% disapprove. Voters favor Bush over John Kerry as the candidate better able to handle the situation in Iraq. Bush holds a 51%-39% edge on that issue; the two candidates were virtually tied last month (44% Bush, 46% Kerry).

Nonetheless, the public remains skeptical that Bush has a strategy for bringing the war to a successful conclusion. Just 36% believe Bush has a clear plan to end the war, compared with 55% who believe he does not. Opinion on that measure, like most others on Iraq, has remained very consistent through the spring and summer.

Despite Casualties, War Support Unchanged		
<i>Military casualties over past month</i>	<u>Aug</u> %	<u>Sept</u> %
Higher	31	46
Lower	18	12
Same	42	31
Don't know	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100
<i>War in Iraq</i>		
Right decision	53	53
Wrong decision	41	39
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for the September 2004 News Interest Index survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 2,494 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period September 8-14, 2004. Many questions in the report were asked only during the period of September 8-13 (a total of 2,003 adults and 1,580 registered voters); a much shorter questionnaire was used for interviewing on the night of September 14.

For results based on the total sample of 2,494 adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. For results based on registered voters (N=1,972) the sampling error is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. For results based on interviews conducted Sept. 8-13 with either Form 1 (N=994) or Form 2 (N=1,009), the sampling error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. If based on Form 1 or Form 2 registered voters only (N=773 or N=807), 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.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY IN DETAIL

The sample for this survey is a random digit sample of telephone numbers selected from telephone exchanges in the continental United States. The random digit aspect of the sample is used to avoid "listing" bias and provides representation of both listed and unlisted numbers (including not-yet-listed). The design of the sample ensures this representation by random generation of the last two digits of telephone numbers selected on the basis of their area code, telephone exchange, and bank number.

The telephone exchanges were selected with probabilities proportional to their size. The first eight digits of the sampled telephone numbers (area code, telephone exchange, bank number) were selected to be proportionally stratified by county and by telephone exchange within county. That is, the number of telephone numbers randomly sampled from within a given county is proportional to that county's share of telephone numbers in the U.S. Only working banks of telephone numbers are selected. A working bank is defined as 100 contiguous telephone numbers containing three or more residential listings.

The sample was released for interviewing in replicates. Using replicates to control the release of sample to the field ensures that the complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. The use of replicates also insures that the regional distribution of numbers called is appropriate. Again, this works to increase the representativeness of the sample.

At least 10 attempts were made to complete an interview at every sampled telephone number. The calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chances of making a contact with a potential respondent. All interview breakoffs and refusals were re-contacted at least once in order to attempt to convert them to completed interviews. In each contacted household, interviewers asked to speak with the "youngest male 18 or older who is at home." If there is no eligible man at home, interviewers asked to speak with "the oldest woman 18 or older who is at home." This systematic respondent selection technique has been shown empirically to produce samples that closely mirror the population in terms of age and gender.

Non-response in telephone interview surveys produces some known biases in survey-derived estimates because participation tends to vary for different subgroups of the population, and these subgroups are likely to vary also on questions of substantive interest. In order to compensate for these known biases, the sample data are weighted in analysis.

The demographic weighting parameters are derived from a special analysis of the most recently available Annual Social & Economic Supplement data from the Census Bureau (March 2003). This analysis produced population parameters for the demographic characteristics of households with adults 18 or older, which are then compared with the sample characteristics to construct sample weights. The analysis only included households in the continental United States that contain a telephone. The weights are derived using an iterative technique that simultaneously balances the distributions of all weighting parameters.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS
 SEPTEMBER 2004 POLITICAL SURVEY
 FINAL TOPLINE**

**September 8 - 13, 2004 Total N=2003; RV N=1580
 September 8 - 14, 2004 Total N=2494; RV N=1972**

NOTE: UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, MOST QUESTIONS IN THIS SURVEY ARE BASED ON INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED SEPTEMBER 8 - 13, 2004 TOTAL N=2003; RV N=1580

Q.2 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 WITH ITEMS a and b FIRST, FOLLOWED BY RANDOMIZED ITEMS c THRU i; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]

ASKED SEPTEMBER 8 - 14 [N=2494]:		Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
b.	News about the current situation in Iraq	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 ¹	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 ²	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 SEPTEMBER 8 - 13 FORM 2 [N=1009]:

g.F2	The killing of Russian school children by Chechen rebels	48	30	11	10	1=100
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QUESTIONS 3 THROUGH 14 IN PREVIOUS RELEASE.

¹ From March 20 to April 16, 2003 the story was listed as "News about the war in Iraq."

² 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.15 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. . . "; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS)?**

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1580]:

	George W. Bush	John Kerry ³	(VOL.) Neither DK/Ref.	
ASK ALL REGISTERED VOTERS:				
f. Making wise decisions about				
what to do in Iraq	51	39	3	7=100
August, 2004	44	46	3	7=100
May, 2004	44	41	4	11=100
Late March, 2004	49	37	4	10=100
Mid-March, 2004	47	45	2	6=100

QUESTIONS 16 THROUGH 18 IN PREVIOUS RELEASE.

ASK FORM 2 [N=1009]:

Thinking now about the president...

Q.19F2 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]? [IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF "DEPENDS" PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling [ITEM]? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
b.F2 The situation in Iraq	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 ⁴	77	17	6=100
April 8-9, 2003	71	23	6=100
--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

³ In 2000 the question asked about Al Gore.

⁴ 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."

QUESTIONS 20 THROUGH 27 IN PREVIOUS RELEASE.

ASK ALL GENERAL PUBLIC:

Now thinking about Iraq...

Q.28 Do you think the U.S. made the right decision or the wrong decision in using military force against Iraq?

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

Q.29 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>
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
Q.29 CONTINUED...	Very	Fairly	Not too	Not at all	Don't know/

	<u>well</u>	<u>well</u>	<u>well</u>	<u>well</u>	<u>Refused</u>
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
April 10-16, 2003	61	32	3	1	3=100
April 8-9, 2003	60	32	3	3	2=100
April 2-7, 2003	55	37	3	2	3=100
March 25-April 1, 2003	39	46	8	2	5=100
March 23-24, 2003	45	41	6	2	6=100
March 20-22, 2003	65	25	2	1	7=100

Q.30 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?

	Aug <u>2004</u>	July <u>2004</u>	June <u>2004</u> ⁵	May <u>2004</u>	Late April <u>2004</u>	Early April <u>2004</u>	Early Jan <u>2004</u>	Oct <u>2003</u>	Sept <u>2003</u>
54 Keep troops in Iraq	54	53	51	53	53	50	63	58	64
40 Bring troops home	42	43	44	42	40	44	32	39	32
<u>6</u> Don't know/Refused	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Q.31 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?

	Aug <u>2004</u>	July <u>2004</u>	June <u>2004</u>	Late April <u>2004</u>	Early April <u>2004</u>	Dec <u>2003</u>	Oct <u>2003</u>	Sept <u>2003</u>
36 Has a clear plan	36	34	37	36	32	44	35	32
55 Doesn't have a clear plan	58	59	55	54	57	45	54	58
<u>9</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>10</u>
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Q.32 Do you think the war in Iraq has helped the war on terrorism, or has it hurt the war on terrorism?

	Aug <u>2004</u>	July <u>2004</u>	June <u>2004</u>	Mid- March <u>2004</u>	Late Feb <u>2004</u>	Early Feb <u>2004</u>	Dec <u>2003</u>	Sept <u>2003</u>	May <u>2003</u>	April <u>2003</u> ⁶	Oct <u>2002</u>
46 Helped	45	43	43	50	62	55	59	54	65	63	52
40 Hurt	44	45	44	37	28	32	26	31	22	22	34
6 No effect (VOL)	4	5	4	5	3	7	6	7	6	--	--
<u>8</u> Don't know/Refused	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>14</u>
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

ASK FORM 2 [N=1009]:

Q.33F2 Some people are comparing Iraq to the war in Vietnam thirty years ago. Do you think Iraq will turn out to

⁵ 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?"

⁶ In April 2003, the question was worded: "Do you think the war in Iraq will help the war on terrorism, or will it hurt the war on terrorism?" In Early October 2002 the question was worded: "If the U.S. uses military force in Iraq, do you think this will help the war on terrorism, or will it hurt the war on terrorism?"

be another Vietnam, or do you think the U.S. will accomplish its goals in Iraq?

		June <u>2004</u>	Late April <u>2004</u>
29	Will be another Vietnam	29	25
54	U.S. will accomplish its goals	55	54
4	Too early to tell (VOL.)	4	6
<u>13</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>12</u>	<u>15</u>
100		100	100

ASK FORM 1 [N=994]:

Q.34F1 What's your impression about what's happened in Iraq over the past month. Has the number of American military casualties been higher, lower, or about the same as in other recent months?

		<u>Aug 2004</u>
46	Higher	31
12	Lower	18
31	About the same	42
<u>11</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>9</u>
100		100

Q.35F1 In the long run, do you think the war in Iraq has increased the chances of terrorist attacks in the U.S., lessened the chances, or has it made no difference?

		<u>Nov 2002⁷</u>
34	Increased	45
32	Lessened	18
31	No difference	30
<u>3</u>	Don't know	<u>7</u>
100		100

QUESTIONS 36 THROUGH 39 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

⁷

The question from the November 2002 Global Attitudes survey was worded: "In the long run, do you think a war with Iraq to end Saddam Hussein's rule is likely to increase the chances of terrorist attacks in the U.S., lessen the chances, or will it make no difference?"

ASK FORM 1 [N=994]:

Q.40F1 Do you think the United States is winning or losing the war on terrorism?

		<i>ABC News/Wash Post</i>	
		<u>July 2004</u>	<u>October 2002</u>
52	Winning	51	47
28	Losing	34	24
9	Neither (VOL)	10	21
<u>11</u>	Don't Know/Refused	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>
100		100	101

ASK FORM 2 [N=1009]:

Q.41F2 Do you think Al Qaeda and related terrorist groups are now stronger or weaker than before 9/11?

30	Stronger
57	Weaker
4	About the same (VOL.)
<u>9</u>	Don't know/refused (VOL.)
100	