

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS**  
**MAY 2001 NEWS INTEREST INDEX**  
**— FINAL TOPLINE —**  
**May 15-28, 2001**  
**N=1,468**

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>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
May, 2001	53	32	15=100
April, 2001	56	27	17=100
February, 2001	53	21	26=100

**ASK ALL:**

Q.4 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; ROTATE**]

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a. George W. Bush's announcement of support for a national missile defense system	14	26	26	33	1=100

Q.11 Please tell me if you think the REPUBLICAN Party or the DEMOCRATIC Party could do a better job in each of the following areas... (First,) which party could do a better job of...(READ AND ROTATE, EXCEPT ITEM i)

	<u>Republican Party</u>	<u>Democratic Party</u>	<u>(VOL) Both Equally</u>	<u>(VOL) Neither</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
i. Dealing with China	39	30	9	5	17=100
June, 1999	37	30	6	6	21=100

**ASK ALL:**

Q.14 In the future, how do you think the U.S. would be best protected... (READ AND ROTATE)?

34	Building a national missile defense system that would protect us from attack [OR]
53	Having treaties that would limit the arms race and help control the spread of nuclear weapons
6	<b>(DO NOT READ)</b> Both equally important
<u>7</u>	<b>(DO NOT READ)</b> Don't know/Refused
100	

**ASK ALL:**

And now a few questions on China...

Q.19 All things considered, which of these descriptions comes closest to your view of China today... Do you think China is (READ):

	<u>March 2000</u>	<u>June 1999</u>	<u>March 1999</u>	<u>Sept 1997</u>
19 An adversary	17	18	20	14
51 A serious problem, but not an adversary	44	53	48	46
22 OR, Not much of a problem	26	22	25	32
<u>8</u> Don't know/Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	<u>13</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
100	100	100	100	100

Q.20 What is your impression... These days are relations between the U.S. and China improving, getting worse, or staying about the same?

		March <u>2000</u>	June <u>1999</u>	March <u>1999</u>	Aug <u>1995</u>
6	Improving	13	7	13	16
40	Getting worse	19	35	19	22
48	Staying about the same	55	50	60	53
<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>13</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
100		100	100	100	100

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=759]:**

Q.21F1 From what you know or have read, do you think that China's government is becoming more democratic and is allowing more freedoms for Chinese citizens, or do you think this is not happening?

		June <u>1999</u>	March <u>1999</u>	Early Aug <u>1998</u>	<i>Gallup</i> <u>Oct 1997</u>
21	Becoming more democratic	26	23	35	26
62	Not happening	60	65	51	64
<u>17</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>14</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>10</u>
100		100	100	100	100

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=709]:**

Q.22F2 Do you think that China's economy is becoming more like the kind of free-market system found in the United States and other Western countries, or do you think this is not happening?

		March <u>1999</u>	Early Aug <u>1998</u>	<i>Gallup</i> <u>Oct 1997</u>
34	More free-market	34	41	34
47	Not happening	47	44	55
<u>19</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>19</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>11</u>
100		100	100	100

**ASK ALL:**

Q.23 In your opinion, is the Bush administration being too tough, not tough enough, or about right in its dealings with China?

		----- Clinton -----		
		March <u>2000</u>	June <u>1999</u>	March <u>1999</u>
8	Too tough	2	1	2
34	Not tough enough	42	51	44
46	About right	42	35	43
<u>12</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>11</u>
100		100	100	100

Q.24 Do you think that trade between China and Western nations will lead to China becoming more democratic, or don't you think so?

		<u>May 2000</u>	<u>June 1999</u>
37	Yes	32	39
47	No	47	47
<u>16</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>21</u>	<u>14</u>
100		100	100

Q.25 In deciding U.S. policies toward China, how much priority should be given to each of the following. First, **(INSERT ITEM; ROTATE)**. Do you think this should be A top priority, have some priority or have no priority at all?

		Top Priority	Some Priority	No Priority	DK/Ref
a.	Promoting fair trade between the U.S. and China	40	45	11	4=100
b.	Promoting and defending human rights in China	48	34	13	5=100
c.	Promoting better environmental policies and practices in China	30	45	18	7=100
d.	Trying to assure a peaceful relationship between China and Taiwan	40	40	12	8=100
e.	Trying to assure that China does not become a military threat to Japan and South Korea	50	34	10	6=100
f.	Trying to assure that Hong Kong continues to have some independence from China	29	46	17	8=100

Q.26 All in all, in deciding U.S. policy about China, what's more important... **(READ AND ROTATE)?**

59	Maintaining a good and friendly relationship between the U.S. and China [OR]
32	The U.S. promoting democracy and human rights in China
4	<b>(DO NOT READ)</b> Both are equally important
<u>5</u>	<b>(DO NOT READ)</b> Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.27 Do you think it is possible for the U.S., through its policies, to have much of an effect on making China more democratic, or don't you think so?

34	Yes, it is possible
56	No, it is not possible
<u>10</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.28 As you may know, the issue of tensions between China and Taiwan has been in the news recently. In your opinion, should the U.S. now COMMIT to defending Taiwan if China were to use military force against Taiwan, or should the U.S. NOT commit to such a position at this time?

		<u>March 2000<sup>1</sup></u>
26	U.S. should commit to defending Taiwan	31
64	U.S. should not commit at this time	53
<u>10</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>16</u>
100		100

<sup>1</sup> In March 2000 the question was worded slightly different: "As you may know, there have been renewed tensions about when and how to bring Taiwan back under Chinese control. If China were to use military force against Taiwan over this, should the United States use military force to defend Taiwan, or not?"

Now thinking about America's place in the world ...

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=759]:**

B.1F1 Some people say George W. Bush's policies are too aggressive regarding other countries. Do you agree or disagree?

31 Agree  
 53 Disagree  
16 Don't know/Refused  
 100

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=709]:**

B.2F2 Is George W. Bush working hard enough to have a peaceful relationship with other countries in the world, or not?

51 Yes, hard enough  
 28 No, not hard enough  
 1 Too hard (VOL)  
20 Don't know/Refused  
 100

**ASK ALL:**

Q.33 What's the greater threat to the United States at this point: The possibility of a missile attack by an unfriendly nation OR a terrorist group bringing weapons of mass destruction into the U.S.?

10 Possibility of missile attack  
 77 Terrorist bringing weapons into the U.S.  
 6 About the same (VOL)  
7 Don't know/Refused  
 100

Q.34 Do you think the U.S. should put into effect a national missile defense system, or don't you think so?

**IF YES "1" ASK:**

Q.35 Do we have a pressing need for this system right now or is this something we should put off into the future?

		Feb <sup>2</sup> 2001	Alternate Wording <sup>3</sup>	
			Feb 2001	May 2000
51	Yes, U.S. should put into effect a national missile defense system	54	49	52
29	Need the system right now	n/a	n/a	n/a
19	Should put it off into the future	n/a	n/a	n/a
3	Don't know/Refused	n/a	n/a	n/a
38	No, U.S. should not	32	40	37
<u>11</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>14</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>
100		100	100	100

<sup>2</sup> In February 2001 question was worded slightly different: "Do you favor or oppose the development of a national missile defense system?"

<sup>3</sup> In February 2001 and May 2000 question was worded differently: "Some people feel the U.S. should try to develop a ground- and space-based missile defense system to protect the U.S. from missile attack. Others oppose such an effort because they say it would be too costly and might interfere with existing arms treaties with the Russians. Which position comes closer to your view?"

**ASK ALL:**

**ROTATE Q.36/37 AND Q.38/39**

Q.36 I'm going to read a few reasons why some people OPPOSE the creation of a national missile defense system. Please tell me whether you have heard about each, or not. (First,) **(READ AND ROTATE ITEMS. ASK Q.37 BEFORE PROCEEDING TO NEXT ITEM)**. Have you heard about this, or not? (Next,)

		Have Heard <u>About</u>	Have Not <u>Heard about</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	The technology is not yet available for such a system to work	34	65	1=100
b.	A missile defense system would be too costly	60	39	1=100
c.	There is no real threat that would justify building this system	37	62	1=100

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=759]:**

d.F1	Building this system could damage U.S. relations with Russia and China	47	52	1=100
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**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=709]:**

e.F2	Building this system could trigger a new arms race among countries who feel threatened by this policy	49	50	1=100
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Q.37 Do you think this is an important reason to oppose the creation of a national missile defense system, or not? **(GO TO NEXT ITEM IN Q.36)**

		Important Reason <u>To Oppose</u>	NOT Important Reason <u>To Oppose</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	The technology is not yet available for such a system to work	37	54	9=100
b.	A missile defense system would be too costly	41	52	7=100
c.	There is no real threat that would justify building this system	31	59	10=100

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=759]:**

d.F1	Building this system could damage U.S. relations with Russia and China	34	57	9=100
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**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=709]:**

e.F2	Building this system could trigger a new arms race among countries who feel threatened by this policy	39	52	9=100
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Q.38 I'm going to read a few reasons why some people FAVOR the creation of a national missile defense system. Please tell me whether you have heard about each, or not. (First,) **(READ AND ROTATE ITEMS. ASK Q.39 BEFORE PROCEEDING TO NEXT ITEM)** Have you heard about this, or not? (Next,)

	Have Heard <u>About</u>	Have Not <u>Heard about</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a. The system would allow us to protect our allies without fear of being attacked ourselves	35	64	1=100
b. The system could protect the U.S. against missiles that are ACCIDENTALLY launched	44	55	1=100
c. Our current defense systems do not adequately protect against attack from smaller, unfriendly nations such as Iraq and North Korea	40	59	1=100

Q.39 Do you think this is an important reason to favor the creation of a national missile defense system, or not? **(GO TO NEXT ITEM IN Q.38)**

	Important Reason <u>To Favor</u>	NOT Important Reason <u>To Favor</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a. The system would allow us to protect our allies without fear of being attacked ourselves	51	41	8=100
b. The system could protect the U.S. against missiles that are ACCIDENTALLY launched	58	34	8=100
c. Our current defense systems do not adequately protect against attack from smaller, unfriendly nations such as Iraq and North Korea	50	42	8=100

Q.40 Now, after considering these reasons to favor and oppose the creation of a national missile defense system, what's your opinion? Do you think the U.S. should now put into effect a national missile defense system, or don't you think so?

49 Yes, U.S. should put into effect a missile defense system  
 41 No, U.S. should not  
10 Don't know/Refused  
 100

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS**  
**MAY 2001 FOREIGN THREATS OMNIBUS**  
**— FINAL TOPLINE —**  
**May 11-20, 2001**  
**N=1,587**

Q.1 I'd like your opinion about some possible international concerns for the U.S. Do you think that **(INSERT ITEM; ROTATE)** is a major threat, a minor threat or not a threat to the well being of the United States? What about **(INSERT ITEM)**?

		<u>Major Threat</u>	<u>Minor Threat</u>	<u>Not a Threat</u>	<b>(VOL)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	China's emergence as a world power	51	30	10	9=100
	July, 1999	53	33	10	4=100
<b>ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=770]:</b>					
b.F1	Political and economic instability in Russia	27	46	12	15=100
	July, 1999	40	42	14	4=100
c.F1	International financial instability	47	33	9	11=100
	July, 1999	52	35	7	6=100
d.F1	Ethnic conflict in the Balkans	19	38	17	26=100
	July, 1999	24	49	17	10=100
e.F1	Saddam Hussein's continued rule in Iraq	58	29	6	7=100
	July, 1999	56	33	8	3=100
f.F1	Fidel Castro's continued rule in Cuba	20	43	26	11=100
	July, 1999	17	51	28	4=100
g.F1	Sectional or tribal warfare in Africa	14	42	25	19=100
	July, 1999	11	46	35	8=100
h.F1	The spread of weapons of mass destruction	74	15	5	6=100
	July, 1999	82	12	4	2=100
<b>ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=817]:</b>					
i.F2	International drug cartels	68	24	3	5=100
	July, 1999	68	25	5	2=100
j.F2	Military conflict between China and Taiwan	36	37	11	16=100
	July, 1999	38	44	10	8=100
k.F2	International terrorism	64	27	4	5=100
l.F2	Global environmental problems	53	32	6	9=100
m.F2	The rapid spread of infectious diseases from country to country	66	26	3	5=100
n.F2	The ability of countries such as North Korea, Iraq and Iran to launch missile attacks against the United States	55	34	5	6=100