

Wisconsin Public Radio & St. Norbert College Survey Center

THE WISCONSIN SURVEY Spring 2003

Survey Information:

Number of Adult Wisconsin Resident Respondents: 401

Interview Period: March 6-14, 2003

Margin of Error: +/- 4.9% at the 95% confidence level.

- The president's approval rating (very and somewhat satisfied with the job the president is doing) is 54%, which is very much the same as national sentiments. Ratings have been steadily dropping since the peak after 9/11/01. More specifically, 48% said they approve of the way the president is handling the situation in Iraq.
- Similarly, 36% of Wisconsin Survey respondents said they felt the country is going in the right direction. Fifty-seven percent said they felt it was going in the wrong direction. When we asked this question in the fall of 2002, 47% said they felt we were going in the right direction and 44% in the wrong direction, so we can see a significant drop in agreement with the way the country is going since October.
- When asked whether they approved of the president's handling of different policy areas, approval of his handling of domestic security had the highest approval rating of 74%, followed by the war on terrorism (not including Iraq) at 69%. Then we find a significant drop-off in approval with education policy at 54% approval, the situation in Iraq at 48%, taxes 47%, North Korea 43%, corporate reform 38%, the economy 33% and only 31% approval for his handling of health care issues. Respondents were more unsure about how corporate reform and North Korea are being handled (13% and 12% of respondents respectively)
- Confidence in the ability of the government to protect us from terrorist attacks is down from when we asked this question in October of 2001. In the spring of 2003, 20% of respondents said they had a great deal of confidence that the government could protect us compared to 35% in October of 2001. Similarly, 57% had a fair amount of confidence compared to 54% in 2001, and 19% said they did not have very much confidence compared to 11% in 2001. This year, 5% said they had no confidence at all compared to less than 1% in 2001.
- When comparing responses to the question of whether they felt the president had done enough to explain to the American people why we should invade Iraq, responses were well within the error margin. This March, 46% said he had explained enough compared to 48% in the fall of 2002 (in the fall, the survey was likely voters only).
- Only 12% of respondents said that we should not go to war with Iraq under any circumstances. On the other hand 46% said we should give the weapons inspectors more time and 47% we should wait for another UN resolution to be passed. Thirty-nine percent said we should go to war even if we have to act alone.
- In the fall of 2002, we asked whether respondents felt that we should wait for allied support and UN approval before moving into Iraq. Of likely voters, 70% said we should wait for allied support and 69% said we should wait for UN approval, so we find a definite decrease in the number of people who think we need to wait for allies or the UN since this last fall.
- In looking at the characteristics of those with these various views about war scenarios, the first is that very nearly everyone thinks that war may be justified. Many of the 12% who answered that there were no circumstances under which we should go to war, also answered that we should wait for allied approval before going to war. Those 12% tended to be more liberal than the overall

sample and generally were much less favorable toward President Bush in all areas of policy that we asked about. They also tended to have a less optimistic view of the current economy and their own future well-being, as well as that of the country as a whole. Their age, education and income mirrored that of the survey. There were however, relatively more women in this category than the overall survey. Of those 12% in this category, 80% were women.

- On the other hand, looking at the 39% who said we should go to war with Iraq even if we have to act alone, these respondents were more likely be male (54% of this category were men compared to 41% in the overall sample) and be more Republican and conservative than the overall sample. They also were generally more favorable to the President in all areas of policy that we asked about. Similarly, they were more optimistic about the economy than the overall sample. They tended to see the different threats we could be facing as more probable than the overall sample and were slightly more likely to have a survival kit.
- For those who said they thought we should wait for more allies to support us and give the UN weapons inspectors more time were the more moderate of the respondents. They tended to be slightly more Democrat than Republican and either moderate liberal, or moderate conservative. Those who thought we should wait for allied support were also highly likely to say that the weapons inspectors should be given more time and that another UN resolution should be sought before going into war. These groups were still somewhat unfavorable to President Bush's handling of different areas of policy and somewhat skeptical about the health of the economy in the near future.
- Seventy-seven percent of respondents said that the costs of war were either very or somewhat important for them. Those who said we should act alone were much more likely to say that costs were not that important for them in assessing their views on the conflict.
- Worry over whether the respondent themselves or a family member would be affected by a terrorist attack rose slightly since we asked it in the fall of 2001, though the differences are well within the error margins for the survey. In March of this year, 27% said they feared they or their family members might be a victim of an attack compared to 23% in the fall of 2001.
- This survey went into the field right after Khalid Shaikh Mohammed was taken into custody and henceforth began to give information on the possible whereabouts of Osama bin Laden. Given that context, 56% of respondents said they felt we were winning the war on terrorism, while 18% said they felt we were losing, and 17% said they felt it was a draw.
- In terms of the likelihood of various threats, the percentage of respondents who think that it is very or somewhat likely that we will be attacked in a similar fashion as the 9/11 attacks was up slightly from the fall of 2001 (though within error margins). In March of this year, 77% said it was very or somewhat likely that we would experience another terrorist attack of the 9/11-type, compared to 73% in the fall of 2001. The likelihood of a nuclear attack was also higher this year than in the fall of 2001. This year, 42% of respondents said they thought it was somewhat or very likely that we might be attacked by a nuclear weapon, compared to 32% in the fall of 2001. Interestingly, the likelihood of a biological weapon was less likely now compared to the fall of 2001 according to the surveys. In March of this year, 75% said they felt it was very or somewhat likely that we could experiences bioterror compared to 82% of respondents in the fall of 2001.
- Finally, 17% of respondents said they had some sort of emergency kit ready in case of a terrorist attack.

Survey Questions - Frequency Results

What would you say is the most important problem facing the nation today?

- | | |
|-------------|-----|
| 1. War/Iraq | 53% |
|-------------|-----|

| | |
|---|----|
| 2. Economy & Jobs | 17 |
| 3. Terrorism | 8 |
| 4. President Bush | 6 |
| 5. Foreign Policy | 3 |
| National Budget/Deficit | |
| Taxes/Spending Priorities | |
| 6. Health Care Prescription Drug Coverage | 2 |
| Domestic Security | |
| 10. Government Ethics | 1 |
| Education | |
| Middle East Crisis | |
| 12. Lack of Support for the President | 1 |
| Public Morality | |
| Other | 3 |
| None | 1 |
| Don't Know | 0 |
| Refused | 0 |

Generally speaking, would you say that things in the country are going in the right direction, or are they going in the wrong direction?

| | <u>Spring '03</u> | <u>Fall '02*</u> |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Right Direction | 36% | 47% |
| Wrong Direction | 57 | 44 |
| Not Sure | 7 | 9 |
| Refused | <1 | <1 |

* Sample consisted of likely voters only

How satisfied are you with the way President Bush is doing his job overall. Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Very Satisfied | 24% |
| Somewhat Satisfied | 30 |
| Somewhat Dissatisfied | 22 |
| Very Dissatisfied | 23 |
| Not Sure | 1 |
| Refused | 0 |

Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way President Bush is handling each of the following aspects of his job. Do you approve or disapprove of the way he is handling....

| | <u>Approve</u> | <u>Dissapprove</u> | <u>Not Sure</u> | <u>Refused/NA</u> |
|--|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 14a. the War on Terrorism overseas (not including Iraq) | 69% | 28 | 4 | 0 |
| 14b. Policies to protect us at home against terrorism | 74% | 23 | 3 | 0 |
| 14c. The situation with Iraq | 48% | 46 | 7 | 0 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|----|---|
| 14d. The situation with North Korea | 43% | 44 | 12 | 1 |
| 14e. The Economy | 33% | 61 | 5 | 0 |
| 14f. Health care/prescription drugs | 31% | 58 | 9 | 2 |
| 14g. Corporate Reform | 38% | 46 | 13 | 4 |
| 14h. Taxes | 47% | 50 | 3 | 1 |
| 14i. Education | 54% | 37 | 9 | 1 |

How much confidence do you have in the US government to protect its citizens from future terrorist attacks: a great deal, fair amount, not very much, or none at all?

| | <u>Spring '03</u> | <u>Fall '01</u> |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| A great deal | 20% | 35% |
| A fair amount | 57 | 54 |
| Not very much | 19 | 11 |
| No confidence at all | 5 | <1 |
| Not Sure | <1 | 0 |
| Refused | 0 | 0 |

Do you think the Bush Administration has done enough to explain to the American people why we should invade Iraq?

| | <u>Spring '03</u> | <u>Fall '02*</u> |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Has Explained Enough | 46% | 48% |
| Has Not Done Enough | 52 | 49 |
| Don't Know | 2 | 3 |
| Refused | 0 | 1 |

* Sample consisted of likely voters only

Please tell me whether you *agree* or *disagree* with the following circumstances under which the United States would go to war with Iraq.

| | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Not Sure</u> | <u>Refused/NA</u> |
|---|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 17a. We <u>should</u> go to war with Iraq even if we have to act alone without support or our allies | 39% | 58 | 2 | <1 |
| 17b. We <u>should only</u> go to war if Britain and Spain continue to support us | 29% | 67 | 3 | 1 |
| 17c. We should <u>not</u> go to war until ALL our European allies support us (eg. Gain approval of France, Germany, and Russia) | 37% | 59 | 3 | 1 |
| 17d. We should <u>not</u> go to war until our Middle Eastern allies like Saudi Arabia and Jordon support us | 30% | 66 | 4 | 1 |
| 17e. We should <u>not</u> go to war until another UN resolution approving of the use of force is passed | 47% | 49 | 4 | 1 |
| 17f. We should <u>not</u> go to war until the UN weapons inspectors have taken more time | 46% | 52 | 2 | 1 |

to do inspections

17g. We should not go to war with Iraq under any circumstances 12% 87 2 0

In the fall of 2002, we asked whether respondents felt that we should wait for allied support and UN approval before moving into Iraq. Of likely voters, 70% said we should wait for allied support and 69% said we should wait for UN approval.

Bush administration officials have estimated that a war with Iraq could cost anywhere from \$50 billion to \$200 billion. How important are cost issues of a possible armed conflict in Iraq to you. Would you say they are very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important for you in this conflict?

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Very Important | 39% |
| Somewhat Important | 38 |
| Not Very Important | 11 |
| Not at all Important | 10 |
| Not Sure | 2 |
| Refused/NA | <1 |

Overall, are you worried that you or a member of you immediate family might become the victim of a terrorist attack?

| | | |
|------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | <u>Spring '03</u> | <u>Fall '01</u> |
| Yes | 27% | 23% |
| No | 73 | 75% |
| Not Sure | <1 | 2% |
| Refused/NA | 0 | 0 |

Do you think the United States is winning or losing the war on terrorism?

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Winning | 56% |
| Losing | 18 |
| Neither/A Draw (volunteered) | 17 |
| Not Sure | 8 |
| Refused/NA | 1 |

I'm going to read you a list of potential threats that the United States might face in the next ten years. For each one, please tell me how likely a threat you think it is: very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely to occur in the next ten years....

| | <u>Very Likely</u> | <u>Somewhat Likely</u> | <u>Somewhat Unlikely</u> | <u>Very Unlikely</u> | <u>Not Sure</u> | <u>Refused</u> |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Q21a. The US will be attacked by terrorists in a similar way that it was attacked on September 11th | 34% (36%) | 43 (37) | 11 (17) | 10 (8) | 2 (2) | 1 (<1) |
| Q21b. The US will be attacked within its borders by | 25% | 50 | 17 | 6 | 2 | 1 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|
| terrorists possessing biological weapons. | (43%) | (39) | (9) | (5) | (4) | (<1) |
| Q21c. The US will face an attack by nuclear weapons from a terrorist nation. | 10% (7%) | 32 (25) | 30 (34) | 25 (31) | 3 (4) | 1 (<1) |

() are results from the Wisconsin Survey of October, 2001

Do you have an emergency kit of food and supplies prepared in case of a terrorist attack?

| | |
|------------|-----|
| Yes | 17% |
| No | 83 |
| Not Sure | <1 |
| Refused/NA | 0 |