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Bush Ratings Buoyed by Saddam Capture, Improving Economy

The Associated Press Poll is conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs. Between December 15-17, 2003, the AP/Ipsos poll interviewed a representative sample of 1,001 adults nationwide, including 756 registered voters. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 for all adults, +/- 3.6 for registered voters.

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) In the past month, President George W. Bush has enjoyed a significant increase in public approval for his overall job performance, as 59% now approve and 39% disapprove of how he handles the job, up from 50%-47% in November. It is the best overall performance rating Bush has seen since the summer.

Overall, do you approve, disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? **(IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE, ASK:)** Is that strongly (approve/disapprove) or somewhat (approve/disapprove)? **(IF HAVE MIXED FEELINGS OR NOT SURE, ASK:)** If you had to choose, do you lean more toward approve or disapprove?

	REGISTERED VOTERS						
	12/15 - 17/03	12/1 - 3/03	11/18 - 20/03	11/4 - 6/03	10/21 - 23/03	10/7 - 9/03	9/16 - 18/03
Total Approve.....	59	53	50	52	55	51	55
Total Disapprove.....	39	44	47	46	43	46	43
	9/2 - 4/03	8/19 - 21/03	8/5 - 8/03	7/22 - 24/03	7/8 - 10/03	6/17 - 19/03	6/3 - 5/03
Total Approve.....	52	56	58	54	60	58	61
Total Disapprove.....	45	40	38	44	38	39	35
	2 nd Quarter AMJ 03	1 st Quarter JFM 03	4 th Quarter OND 02	3 rd Quarter JAS 02	2 nd Quarter AMJ 02	1 st Quarter JFM 02	1 Year Ago 12/17 - 19/02
Total Approve.....	62	56	63	65	73	77	60
Total Disapprove.....	35	39	35	32	25	21	37

Bush approval ratings are positive across the board, with a solid boost on handling of the economy: A majority of 55% approve and 43% disapprove, the highest approval and lowest disapproval rating on his handling of the economy since the summer of 2002. In the wake of the capture of Saddam Hussein, 63% approve (43% strongly approve) and only 35% disapprove his handling of foreign policy issues and the war on terrorism.

	<u>Strongly Approve</u>	<u>Some-what Approve</u>	<u>Lean Toward Approval</u>	<u>Still Have Mixed Feelings</u>	<u>Lean Toward Disapproval</u>	<u>Some-what Disapprove</u>	<u>Strongly Disapprove</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Total Approve</u>	<u>Total Disapprove</u>
Handling the economy										
12/15-17/03	23	19	13	1	11	8	24	1	55	43
12/1-3/03	26	16	8	2	11	9	27	1	50	47
11/18-20/03	21	15	10	3	12	10	29	-	46	51
Handling foreign policy issues and the war on terrorism										
12/15-17/03	43	11	8	1	14	5	17	1	63	35
12/1-3/03	36	12	7	3	12	7	23	-	54	43
11/18-20/03	32	13	7	3	14	7	23	1	52	44

Bush and the War in Iraq—and the War on Terrorism

The main lesson Americans took away from the capture of Saddam Hussein is that the U.S. might be able to capture Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, too.

How much confidence do you have in the ability of the U.S. government to capture or kill Osama bin Laden?

Very confident	20
Somewhat confident.....	47
Not too confident	22
Not at all confident.....	10
Not sure.....	1
Total Confident	67
Total Not Confident	32

That does not mean, however, that Americans feel the war on terrorism has been won with the capture of Saddam Hussein. In fact, three-in-five (63%) believe a terrorist attack against a U.S. target is at least somewhat likely in 2004.

In your opinion, how likely is it that more terrorist attacks will be carried out against major U.S. cities, buildings or national landmarks in the next year?

Very likely	15
Somewhat likely	48
Not very likely	30
Not likely at all	6
Not sure.....	1
Total Likely.....	63
Total Not Likely.....	36

Americans do not even believe the war in Iraq is ended with Saddam's capture—94% in this AP/Ipsos poll say the war in Iraq goes on. But Americans believe the U.S. military presence in Iraq is part of the war on terrorism, and not a distraction from it. And most Americans believe the Bush Administration made the right decision, and not a mistake, when it chose to invade Iraq.

I'm going to read two statements. Please tell me which comes closer to your view:

The U.S. military presence in Iraq is an important part of the campaign against terrorism.....	70
The U.S. military presence in Iraq is a distraction from the campaign against terrorism	27
Not sure	3

All in all, thinking about how things have gone in Iraq since the United States went to war there in March 2003, do you think the [United States / Bush administration] made the right decision --OR-- a mistake in going to war in Iraq?

	<u>United States</u>	<u>Bush Administration</u>
Right decision	64	67
A mistake.....	34	29
Not sure	2	4

As a result, definite vote intentions among registered voters now favor the re-election of Bush over the election of someone else by a 14-point margin, 45%-31%. One month ago, that was a tie vote.

If the election were held today, would you ...

	REGISTERED VOTERS						
	<u>12/15 - 17/03</u>	<u>12/1 - 3/03</u>	<u>11/18 - 20/03</u>	<u>11/4 - 6/03</u>	<u>10/21 - 23/03</u>	<u>10/7 - 9/03</u>	<u>9/16 - 18/03</u>
Definitely vote to reelect Bush as President.....	45	41	37	39	40	36	41
Consider voting for someone else	21	20	25	24	24	26	22
Definitely vote for someone else	31	36	37	35	33	35	35
Not sure	3	3	1	2	3	3	2

To view all the questions and results on the poll, please download the topline document.