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--Media Release--

Americans Think Negative Global Attitudes Toward US Are a Problem

Modest Majority Assumes Global Dissatisfaction With US Foreign Policy, But Only 1 in 3 Assume Kerry Favored Over Bush

World Opinion on Candidates May Influence Some Swing Voters

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College Park, MD: A large majority of Americans think that if the foreign policy of President Bush has made more people around the world feel worse about the US, this is a significant problem for the US. A modest majority assume that this is the case, but only 35% assume that more people in the world would prefer to see Bush unseated by Kerry.

If they received information that one or the other candidate was preferred by world public opinion, a small percentage of swing voters say that it would increase the likelihood they would vote for that candidate—twice as many as say it would decrease the likelihood.

These are the key findings of a new PIPA-Knowledge Networks poll of 798 Americans conducted September 3-7. The margin of error was +/-3.5%.

Asked, “If more people around the world say they have been feeling worse about the United States, how much is this a problem for the US?” 70% said a lot (40%) or somewhat (30%), while 30% said not at all (10%) or a little (20%). In an August 2004 PIPA/Knowledge Networks poll, 91% said that it is very (62%) or somewhat (29%) important “for US foreign policy... for the United States to have a positive image in the world.”

In the current poll, 51% assumed that in fact the Bush foreign policy has made “more people in the world feel worse about the US.” Sixteen percent assumed that it had made people feel better about the US, while 32% assumed that views are evenly balanced. In PIPA/Knowledge Networks’ August 2004 poll, 69% assumed that the war with Iraq made “the US image in the world...worse.”

But most do not assume that world opinion would like to see Bush unseated. Asked which candidate they think people around the world would prefer, only 35% assumed that more would prefer Kerry. Sixty-two percent assumed that more would favor Bush (25%) or that views are evenly divided (39%).

If Americans received information about global attitudes on the presidential race, responses suggest this would be a very slight net plus for the preferred candidate. Respondents who said

they did not know who they were going to vote for, or who were somewhat sure or not very sure (30% of the sample), were asked: “If you were to hear that either Bush or Kerry was preferred by most people in the world, how do you think this might affect your likelihood to vote for that candidate?” A large majority of 74% said this would have no effect either way. However, 18% said that it would make them more likely to vote for that candidate—twice as many as the 7% who said that it would make them less likely to vote for the candidate.

The poll was fielded by Knowledge Networks using its nationwide panel, which is randomly selected from the entire adult population and subsequently provided internet access. For more information about this methodology, go to www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp.

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