

## **PUBLIC OPINION ON FOREIGN POLICY**

### **THE MULTILATERAL PUBLIC THAT PERCEIVES ITSELF AS UNILATERAL**

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**Abstract** Americans have a strong preference for multilateral foreign policies over unilateral foreign policies. But do Americans know their own preferences? Data from a national survey show wide misperceptions of public opinion on foreign policy. While Americans strongly prefer multilateral policies, they overestimate public support for unilateral policies. For example, while only 23 percent of respondents agreed that the more important lesson of September 11 is that the United States should work alone to fight terrorism rather than work with other countries, respondents estimated that almost 50 percent of Americans endorsed this view. Moreover, misperceptions of public opinion were related to subsequent judgments of specific policies. For example, respondents who incorrectly perceived the unilateral view as the majority view were 1.84 times more likely to support a presidential decision to invade Iraq without the approval of the United Nations (UN) Security Council than respondents who correctly perceived the unilateral view as the minority view. Misperceptions of public opinion were also associated with the belief that the current foreign policy reflects the opinions of the American people. This belief in the legitimacy of the foreign policy was as strong a predictor of support for specific unilateral policies as respondents' attitudes.

## **Introduction**

Do Americans prefer unilateral foreign policies to multilateral foreign policies? Despite some early skepticism about the rationality of public opinion on

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American foreign policy, most recent studies show that public opinion on foreign policy issues is relatively stable, driven by specific events, generally anti-isolationist, and strongly multilateral (Holsti 1996; Kull and Destler 1999; Page and Shapiro 1992). But does the public know its own preferences? That is, are actual attitudes different from perceived attitudes?

An extensive study of policymakers (members and staff of the U.S. Congress, officials of the executive branch, representatives of the media, and professionals at nongovernmental organizations) showed systematic misperceptions of public opinion on foreign policy (Kull and Destler 1999). For example, policymakers perceived public opinion as easily changeable and as supporting extreme unilateral policies. This study suggests that such biases could be widespread among Americans. Policymakers are better informed than the general public and are more motivated to be informed about public opinion. Thus, if anything, they should be less prone to biases.

There are many different reasons why public preferences could be misperceived. Support for multilateral policies is inconsistent with widely shared, although incorrect, beliefs about the isolationist tendencies of Americans (Kull and Destler 1999) and the motivating power of self-interest to the exclusion of other pro-social motives (Miller 1999). In addition, unilateral international policies enacted by the current Bush administration, the most salient actors in one's political environment, and extensive media coverage of unilateral policies and views (for example, "President says America is not afraid to take unilateral action," headline from *New York Times*, January 29, 2003) could further contribute to misperceptions of public support for unilateral policies.

The current article addresses two interrelated questions: Do Americans misperceive public opinion on foreign policy, and, if so, do such misperceptions result in increased support for policies that reflect perceived rather than actual public opinion?

#### PLURALISTIC IGNORANCE

Pluralistic ignorance refers to shared but erroneous beliefs about the attitudes and behaviors of other people (Allport 1924; Miller and McFarland 1991; O'Gorman, 1986). For example, Fields and Schuman (1976) found that while 76 percent of white respondents agreed that a mother should allow her 6-year-old daughter to play with an African-American child at home, only 33 percent believed that this was the majority opinion (see also O'Gorman and Garry 1976).

Both biases in the informational environment (O'Gorman 1986; Shamir and Shamir 1997) and inference biases (Prentice and Miller 1993) contribute to pluralistic ignorance effects. For example, Shamir and Shamir (1997) have shown that pluralistic ignorance on specific issues was highly correlated with the prominence of these issues in the media. Information that is easily

accessible because of such biases in the informational environment has a large impact on judgments (Taylor 1982; Tversky and Kahneman 1973; Schwarz and Vaughn 2002), and people rarely adjust their judgments for biases inherent in the accessible information (Kahneman 2003; Nisbett and Ross 1980).

In the case of foreign policy, pluralistic ignorance could be revealed by an overestimation of public support for unilateral policies (or underestimation of support for multilateral policies). For example, a vocal unilateral minority that is represented by the actions of major political actors and extensively covered in the media could easily feed into misperceptions of public opinion to the extent that people perceive these unilateral views as representative of the views of the American public.

Misperceptions of public opinion (Fields and Schuman 1976; O'Gorman and Garry 1976; Shamir and Shamir 1997) could have important implications for attitudes and behaviors (Noelle-Neumann 1984; but see Mutz 1998). Not only can people misperceive the attitudes of others, believing that their own attitudes differ from the norm, but they can also change their behaviors and attitudes in the direction of the misperceived norm (Miller, Monin, and Prentice 2000; Prentice and Miller 1993). In the case of foreign policy attitudes, people who misperceive public opinion as preferring unilateral views could be more likely to support specific unilateral policies than people who correctly perceive public opinion as preferring multilateral views.

#### MISPERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC OPINION, LEGITIMACY, AND POLICY SUPPORT

We expected that respondents would overestimate the proportion of Americans supporting unilateral views about the role of the United States in the world and, correspondingly, underestimate public support for multilateral views. If misperceptions of public opinion have implications for subsequent judgments, respondents who incorrectly perceive majority support for unilateral views should be more likely to endorse specific unilateral policies, such as undertaking a military action against Iraq without the approval of the UN, than respondents who correctly perceive minority support for unilateral views. The former respondents should also be more likely to endorse general policies that imply potentially unprovoked unilateral actions, such as the shift in the defense strategy of the United States from deterrence to preemptive action.

We also expected that estimates of public support for unilateral views would be associated with the belief that the foreign policy of the administration reflects the opinions of the American people. Given the arguably unilateral foreign policy of the current Bush administration and the assumption that governments in democratic countries represent the people, respondents could use the actions of the administration as a cue to infer the opinions of the public. In addition to documenting one possible source of misperceptions of

public opinion, the question about the representativeness of the foreign policy of the administration essentially measures the belief in the legitimacy of this policy, that is, the correspondence between public preferences and foreign policy. The idea of legitimacy is extremely important because if people believe in the legitimacy of specific policies they could support those policies even if the policies are inconsistent with their general attitudes. For example, research on social justice shows that people are willing to accept outcomes and policies that do not favor them to the extent that they perceive these outcomes and policies as legitimate (Kelman 2001; Tyler 2000, 2001).

The legitimacy perspective predicts that respondents who believe that the foreign policy of the administration reflects the opinions of the American people should support both specific policy decisions, such as invading Iraq without the approval of the UN Security Council, and general policy decisions, such as the shift in the defense strategy of the United States. Most important, such support should be independent of the respondents' attitudes toward the role of the United States in the world. That is, not only respondents who hold unilateral attitudes, but also respondents who hold multilateral attitudes, which are inconsistent with such policy decisions, should support those decisions to the extent that they believe that the current foreign policy reflects the opinions of the American people.

## Method

### OVERVIEW

The survey consisted of two sets of questions. In the first set of three questions, respondents were asked about the role of the United States in the world. In the second set of questions, they were asked to report their attitudes toward specific foreign policies. Respondents were randomly assigned to three different conditions, which differed with respect to the first set of questions. In the control condition, respondents were asked to report their attitudes toward the role of the United States in the world. In the other conditions, in addition to reporting their attitudes, respondents were either asked to estimate the proportion of Americans endorsing unilateral or multilateral views (estimation condition) or provided with information about the actual proportions of Americans endorsing these views (information condition). The second set of questions was the same for all respondents. The control condition allowed us to test whether the procedure of estimating the opinion of others changes respondents' reports of their own attitudes toward specific policies. The information condition tested whether information about the actual public opinion could affect respondents' support for specific unilateral policies.

## RESPONDENTS

The survey was supported by Time-sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (Mutz and Lupia 2003). The survey data were collected by Knowledge Networks (KN). Participants were part of a national panel used by KN. In order to obtain this panel, KN uses a random digit dialing sample of all U.S. households with telephones. The panel constitutes a representative sample of persons 18 years or older in telephone households across the United States. As incentive for becoming a part of this panel, participants are offered WebTV Internet access and equipment in exchange for completing short weekly surveys online (for full details see [www.knowledgenetworks.com](http://www.knowledgenetworks.com)). Forty percent of contacted households agreed to join the panel, and 62 percent of those who agreed to join completed the first demographic survey. The household retention rate for the panel was 53 percent. The sample for the current study was randomly selected from the KN profiled panel. Only one adult panel member per household was eligible for the survey. A total of 1,539 people were contacted via e-mail. The survey was sent out to all potential respondents on February 14, 2003, and the completed surveys were received electronically between February 14 and February 24, 2003. The survey completion rate was 68 percent, giving a final sample size of 1,044 people. Across all response stages, the cumulative response rate is approximately 9 percent. Excluding the panel attrition rate, given evidence that this rate is not a serious source of measurement error (Dennis and Li 2003), the cumulative response rate is 17 percent.

## SURVEY QUESTIONS

The questionnaire consisted of eight questions (see Appendix). We selected questions that have been used in previous surveys so that we could test for changes in public opinion. Questions 1, 2, and 3 measured unilateral and multilateral views and were taken from a survey of the U.S. population conducted by Harris Interactive and sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (World View 2002a). Further, question 1 has been used in multiple surveys over the last six years. Questions 4 and 5 were related to the U.S. involvement in Iraq. Question 4 was asked in a CBS/*New York Times* Poll in October 2002 (CBS News/*New York Times* 2002). Question 5 was asked in a survey of the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) conducted by KN in January 2003 (PIPA 2003). Questions 6, 7, and 8 were new. Question 6 was related to the U.S. shift in defense strategy from deterrence to preemptive action and was based on "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America" that was published by the Bush administration in September 2002 (White House 2002). Finally, Question 7 asked about the importance of U.S. foreign policy to the respondent, and question 8 asked about the extent to which the administration's foreign policy reflects the opinions of the American public.

## PROCEDURES

Each selected KN participant received notification of the survey via e-mail. The instructions directed the respondent to log onto the survey Web site, and they completed the survey online. Respondents read that this was a "short survey regarding current foreign relations issues" and that they would be given "the opportunity to voice [their] opinions about America's role in world affairs." Each question appeared on a new page, and respondents indicated their answers by clicking on the radio button that corresponded to their desired statement. If respondents did not answer a question, they were prompted to do so before proceeding to the next question. In addition, respondents were unable to indicate more than one response for any given item.

As noted above, the respondents were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: control, estimation, and information. The first set of questions (questions 1, 2, and 3) provided the context manipulation. These questions probed respondents' attitudes with respect to U.S. engagement in international affairs. In the first condition (the control group), respondents ( $N = 363$ ) were simply asked to report their attitudes toward U.S. engagement in the world. In the second condition (the estimation group), for each of the three questions, respondents ( $N = 337$ ) reported their own attitudes and then were asked to estimate the proportion of Americans who endorsed each of the stated positions in the question. Each estimation question was presented on a new screen with a display that indicated the running total of the respondents' percentages. If the respondents' total for the estimate questions did not equal 100 percent, they were prompted to rectify their answers once and then allowed to move on to the next question. In the third condition (the information group), respondents ( $N = 344$ ) reported their own attitudes and then were given information about the proportion of Americans who endorsed each of the positions stated in the questions. That is, after reporting their attitude to each question, respondents saw a new screen that listed the breakdown of the percentages of Americans who endorsed each position statement. These statements were preceded by a short phrase that read: "Just for your information, a previous representative survey found that. . . ." The population estimates that were provided in the information condition were based on a survey of the U.S. population conducted by Harris Interactive and sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (World Views 2002a). This sample was used because it was the most extensive and recent survey of public opinion on international issues. (All details about the methodology and results of the survey are available online at World Views 2002b.) The administration of the second set of questions (questions 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) was the same for all respondents. Respondents were asked to report their opinion on each item.

Very few survey participants did not respond to specific questions. The range of nonresponse was from 0 percent to 2.1 percent, with a mean nonresponse per question of 0.7 percent. For the purposes of the analyses, the

nonresponses were coded as missing data. All statistical analyses were conducted on nonweighted data. However, when the percentages refer to population percentages (for example, tables 1 and 2), the reported percentages are weighted.

## Results

### ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE WORLD

The data from the current survey were consistent with previous national surveys. More than two-thirds of the sample (71 percent) agreed that in solving international problems, "the United States should do its fair share," while only 16 percent agreed that "the United States should continue to be the preeminent world leader." This question has been asked in several surveys over the course of the last seven years, and as shown in table 1, unilateral and multilateral attitudes have been remarkably stable (see also Page and Shapiro 1992). None of the four surveys shows a shift in attitudes. For instance, support for the multilateral position ranges from 71 percent to 74 percent, and support for the unilateral position ranges from 11 percent to 17 percent.

In the survey conducted in June 2002, 34 percent of respondents agreed that the United States has the responsibility to play the role of "world policeman," compared to 32 percent in the current survey. The difference between the two surveys was larger for the third question on the more important lesson of September 11. Whereas in June 2002, 34 percent of respondents agreed that the more important lesson of September 11 is that the United States should

**Table 1.** Measuring Attitudes about the U.S. Role in the World in Four National Surveys over the Last Seven Years

	Time of survey			
	June 1996	July 2000	June 2002	February 2003
In solving international problems: U.S. should continue to be the preeminent world leader.	13%	11%	17%	16%
U.S. should do its fair share in efforts with other countries.	74%	72%	71%	71%
U.S. should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems.	12%	15%	9%	13%

NOTE.—See Appendix for the exact wording of questions. The surveys in June 1996 and July 2000 were conducted by the Program of International Policy Attitudes. The survey in June 2002 was conducted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. The survey percentages do not add exactly to 100 because of question nonresponse.

work more on its own to fight terrorism rather than work more closely with other countries, only 23 percent agreed with this statement in the current survey. Thus, as in previous national surveys (Kull and Destler 1999, chap. 2; World Views 2002a), respondents show a strong preference for multilateral policies. In the two questions that presented explicit multilateral positions, the ratio of respondents preferring multilateral over unilateral positions was larger than 3 to 1. In the "world policeman" question, there was clear lack of majority support for the unilateral position.

#### MISPERCEIVING PUBLIC OPINION

We now turn to an analysis of the experimental condition in which respondents were asked to estimate public opinion on U.S. engagement in world affairs. We compared these estimates of public opinion with the self-reported opinion of respondents. For the self-reported opinion, we used the total national sample of 1,044 respondents. These self-reports express the attitudes of respondents, and the data from the national sample were weighted to reflect the national rates of support for specific views.

Do respondents misperceive public opinion on the role of the United States in the world? As shown in table 2, across all questions, respondents overestimated public support for the unilateral view. For example, while only 23 percent believed that the more important lesson of September 11 is that the United States needs to act alone more to fight terrorism rather than to work more closely with other countries, respondents on average estimated this percentage to be almost 50 percent,  $t(332) = 20.99, p < .001$ . Correspondingly, respondents underestimated the percentage of Americans believing that the more important lesson of September 11 is that the United States should work more closely with other countries to fight terrorism.

For the question on solving international problems, respondents' estimate of the percentage of Americans believing that "As the sole remaining superpower, the United States should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems" was more than twice the actual percentage,  $t(332) = 18.92, p < .001$ . At the same time, respondents underestimated the percentage of Americans believing that "The United States should do its fair share in efforts to solve international problems with other countries,"  $t(332) = 26.54, p < .001$ . Consistent with the analyses of Kull and Destler (1999), respondents overestimated public support for the isolationist view that the United States should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems,  $t(332) = 9.06, p < .001$ .

As in the previous two questions, in the case of the question on the responsibility of the United States, respondents overestimated the percentage of Americans endorsing the response option implying a unilateral position, namely that the United States has the responsibility to play the role of "world policeman,"  $t(332) = 12.36, p < .001$ .

**Table 2.** Self-Reported Public Opinion from a National Sample and Respondents' Estimates of Public Opinion

Questions:	Opinion (%)	Estimate of opinion (%)	
		Mean	Median
In solving international problems:			
U.S. should continue to be the preeminent world leader.	16.4	35.3	33.0
U.S. should do its fair share in efforts with other countries.	71.1	43.4	45.0
U.S. should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems.	12.5	21.6	20.0
The responsibility of the U.S. to fight violations of international law and aggression:			
U.S. has the responsibility to play the role of “world policeman.”	32.3	47.7	50.0
U.S. does not have the responsibility to play the role of “world policeman.”	67.7	52.4	50.0
The more important lesson of September 11:			
U.S. needs to act on its own more to fight terrorism.	22.6	48.7	50.0
U.S. needs to work more closely with other countries to fight terrorism.	77.4	51.2	50.0

NOTE.—See Appendix for the exact wording of questions. The self-reported public opinion is based on data from a national sample of 1,044 respondents. The survey was conducted by Knowledge Networks between February 14 and February 24, 2003. The estimates of public opinion at large were obtained from a random subsample of 333 respondents from the national sample.

The estimation biases<sup>1</sup> were widespread not only at the level of the mean estimates but also at the level of individual responses. Eighty-seven percent of respondents overestimated the percentage of Americans endorsing the "act alone" view in the September 11 question. Similarly, 87 percent of respondents overestimated the percentage of Americans endorsing the preeminent world leader option in the international problems question, and 76 percent overestimated the percentage of Americans believing that the United States

1. Additional analyses showed that misperceptions of public opinion are not restricted to specific demographic groups. Respondents differing on age, education, race, income, region of the country, and metropolitan status all converged on the same misperceptions. The only significant difference found in these analyses was between males and females on the "world leader" estimate. The males' estimate was slightly higher ( $M = 37.5$ ) than the females' estimate ( $M = 33.4$ ),  $F(1, 331) = 4.31$ ,  $p < .039$ , a rather negligible difference given the actual percentage of 16.4. Further, with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons, this difference was not significant.

has the responsibility to play the role of “world policeman.” At the same time, 94 percent of respondents underestimated the percentage of Americans believing that “The United States should do its fair share in efforts to solve international problems with other countries.”

FALSE CONSENSUS AND ESTIMATION ERRORS

The estimates of public opinion were closely related to respondents’ attitudes, demonstrating a strong false consensus effect, that is, the tendency to perceive one’s attitudes as shared by the majority (Krueger 2002; Krueger and Clement 1997; Marks and Miller 1987; Mullen et al. 1985; Ross, Greene, and House 1977). For example, as shown in table 3 (see diagonals), the 17.2 percent of respondents who believed that “As the sole remaining superpower, the United States should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems” also believed that almost 54 percent of Americans

**Table 3.** Respondents’ Estimates of Public Opinion as a Function of Their Attitudes

Holding Attitude (sample %)	Estimate of Opinion (%)			Self-reported Opinion (%)
	World leader	Fair share	Withdraw	
In solving international problems, the U.S. should: Continue to be the preeminent world leader (17.2)	<b>53.8</b>	30.5	16.5	16.4
Do its fair share in efforts with other countries (73.6)	31.8	<b>49.3</b>	19.0	71.1
Withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems (9.2)	28.4	29.0	<b>42.8</b>	12.5
In world affairs, the U.S.: Should play the role of “world policeman” (33.9)	Should play	Should not		
	<b>60.8</b>	39.3		32.3
Should not play the role of “world policemen” (66.1)	39.5	<b>60.5</b>		67.7
The more important lesson of 9/11 is that the U.S. needs to: Act on its own more to fight terrorism (24.6)	Act on its own	Act with others		
	<b>59.4</b>	40.6		22.6
Work more closely with other countries to fight terrorism (75.4)	43.0	<b>57.0</b>		77.4

NOTE.—See Appendix for the exact wording of questions. Percentages in parentheses show sample percentage.

shared their view. The group holding this minority opinion perceived itself as the majority. These respondents also underestimated the proportion of Americans believing that the United States should do its fair share in solving international problems—a difference larger than 40 percent. Although respondents who believed that the United States should do its fair share in efforts with other countries correctly perceived their opinion to be the plurality opinion, they substantially underestimated support for their view and overestimated support for the unilateral view. Similarly, respondents who supported an isolationist view overestimated support for the unilateral view and underestimated support for the multilateral view, while overestimating their position with a factor of 3.4.

The same pattern was revealed for the other two questions. Respondents who believed that the United States has the responsibility to play the “world policeman” believed that the majority shared their opinion, overestimating the actual support for their position by a factor close to 2. Respondents who did not believe that the United States has this responsibility correctly perceived themselves as the majority, but they nevertheless underestimated the actual support for their position. Respondents who believed that the major lesson of September 11 was that the United States should work alone rather than work more closely with other countries perceived themselves as the majority. And again, the majority respondents who did not share the “work alone” view correctly perceived themselves as the majority but underestimated the actual support for their view.

The relation between respondents’ attitudes and their estimates of public opinion was reflected in highly reliable interactions of attitudes and estimates:  $F(4, 660) = 43.13, p < .001$ , for the question on solving international problems;  $F(1, 331) = 95.85, p < .001$ , for the question on the responsibility of the United States; and  $F(1, 329) = 41.01, p < .001$ , for the question on the lesson of September 11. Finally, although respondents believed that their own opinion was the plurality opinion among Americans, for every group of respondents the estimate was reliably higher than the self-reported opinion supporting unilateral views. For example, as shown in table 3, in the case of the “solving international problems” question, all three groups of respondents reliably overestimated (53.8 percent, 31.8 percent, and 28.4 percent respectively) the support for the unilateral view (16.4 percent),  $p < .003$ .<sup>2</sup>

#### EFFECTS OF MISPERCEPTIONS ON SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC UNILATERAL POLICIES

The estimates of public support for the unilateral views in the questions were positively correlated, indicating a common underlying bias to overestimate unilateral support. The correlation between the “world leader” estimate and the “world policeman” estimate was .45,  $p < .001$ . The correlation

2. That was also the case when the estimated percentages were tested against the observed sample percentages for the respondents who did the estimation (e.g., 17.2 percent for the first question).

between the “world leader” estimate and the “act on its own more to fight terrorism” was .32,  $p < .001$ , and the correlation between the “act on its own” estimate and the “world policeman” estimate was .34,  $p < .001$ . An analysis treating each of these estimates as an item in a scale showed a reasonable reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .63$ ). Given the high interestimate correlations, we computed a mean score of estimated public support for unilateral views ( $M = 43.1$  percent). Based on this estimate, we divided respondents into those who believed that the unilateral view had majority support (mean estimate equal to or greater than 50 percent—perceived unilateral majority,  $N = 101$ ) and those who believed that the unilateral view had minority support (mean estimate smaller than 50 percent—perceived unilateral minority,  $N = 232$ ).

Do misperceptions of public opinion affect support for specific unilateral policies such as invading Iraq without the support of the UN? Whereas 49.5 percent of respondents who incorrectly estimated that the unilateral view was the majority view agreed that “Iraq presents such a clear danger to American interests that the United States needs to act now even without the support of its allies,” only 33.6 percent of respondents who correctly estimated that the unilateral view was the minority view agreed with this statement, likelihood ratio chi-square  $G^2(1) = 6.56$ ,  $p < .01$ . Similarly, the former respondents (42.0 percent) were more likely to agree with a presidential decision to invade Iraq without the approval of the UN Security Council than the latter respondents (26.9 percent),  $G^2(2) = 12.05$ ,  $p < .002$ , and more likely to strongly approve the shift in the defense strategy of the United States from deterrence to preemptive action (35.1 percent versus 14.2 percent respectively),  $G^2(3) = 18.06$ ,  $p < .001$ .

However, as was shown above, estimates of public opinion and personal attitudes are highly correlated, and such tests could be misleading. For example, unilateral attitudes can predict both overestimates of public support for unilateral views and support for specific policies. In order to control for this confound, we divided respondents into those who never endorsed a unilateral position on the first three questions (respondents with multilateral attitudes,  $N = 160$ ) and those who endorsed one or more unilateral positions (respondents with unilateral attitudes,  $N = 174$ ). Given the small sample size, collapsing across finer distinctions such as between respondents who always endorsed a unilateral position ( $N = 15$ ) and others was justified.

For each of the questions of interest (invading Iraq now, supporting the president’s decision, and approval of the shift in the defense strategy), we conducted a log-linear analysis using as additional dimensions perceived support for unilateral views (perceived unilateral majority versus perceived unilateral minority) and respondents’ attitudes (unilateral versus multilateral). If perceived support for unilateral views has an independent effect on support for specific policies, then the interaction of perceived support and agreement

**Table 4.** Support for Invading Iraq as a Function of Respondents' Attitudes and Perceived Support for Unilateral Views

Attitudes		Perceived support for unilateral views	
		Majority	Minority
Unilateral			
	U.S. should invade Iraq now	64.2% (64.7)	46.9% (53.5)
	U.S. should wait	35.8% (35.3)	53.1% (46.5)
	<i>N</i>	68	101
Multilateral			
	U.S. should invade Iraq now	13.3% (16.1)	23.6% (19.0)
	U.S. should wait	86.7% (83.9)	76.4% (81.0)
	<i>N</i>	31	126

NOTE.—See Appendix for the exact wording of question. The percentages are weighted to reflect population estimates. The raw sample percentages are presented in parentheses.

with the specific question should be significant, controlling for the other two-way interactions.<sup>3</sup> We also expected that respondents with unilateral attitudes should be more likely to support specific unilateral policies than respondents with multilateral attitudes (interaction of respondents' attitudes and question), and that the former respondents should be more likely to perceive the unilateral view as the majority view (interaction of respondents' attitudes and perceived support for unilateral views).

Should the United States invade Iraq now rather than wait? As shown in table 4, among respondents with unilateral attitudes, incorrectly perceiving majority support for unilateral views resulted in an increase of 17 percent in the agreement that the United States needs to attack Iraq now rather than wait. For respondents with multilateral attitudes, if anything there was trend in the opposite direction. However, the triple interaction of question, attitudes, and perceived support was not significant. It should be noted that among respondents with multilateral attitudes there were only 31 respondents who perceived that the unilateral view was the majority view, and that the percentage differences were not that large for the nonweighted data. The best model fitting the data allowed for the interactions of attitudes and perceived support,

3. It should be noted that a two-way interaction effect in a log-linear model with three or more variables is not necessarily equivalent to an effect collapsing across the other variables. For example, in a three-way table (e.g., tables 4–10), if all two-way interactions are significant, the table is not collapsible. Further, the goal of log-linear analysis is to improve the fit of the model, that is, to minimize the differences between expected and observed frequencies. In this context, the significance of an effect means that if the model does not include the effect (e.g., a two-way interaction), the fit of the model will be significantly reduced. A well-specified model is important because the strength of the relationship between two variables is derived from the expected rather than from the observed frequencies.

**Table 5.** Agreement with a Presidential Decision to Invade Iraq without the Approval of the UN Security Council as a Function of Respondents' Attitudes and Perceived Support for Unilateral Views

Attitudes		Perceived support for unilateral views	
		Majority	Minority
Unilateral			
	I would agree with the president's decision	49.4% (55.1)	46.4% (51.0)
	I would disagree, but I would still support the president	30.1% (29.0)	25.8% (26.5)
	I would disagree with the president's decision	20.5% (15.9)	27.8% (22.5)
	<i>N</i>	69	102
Multilateral			
	I would agree with the president's decision	23.3% (19.4)	11.9% (11.1)
	I would disagree, but I would still support the president	43.3% (45.2)	33.3% (34.1)
	I would disagree with the president's decision	33.3% (35.5)	54.8% (54.8)
	<i>N</i>	31	126

NOTE.—See Appendix for the exact wording of questions. The percentages are weighted to reflect population estimates. The raw sample percentages are presented in parentheses.

$G^2(1) = 16.49$ ,  $p < .001$ , and attitudes and question,  $G^2(1) = 55.71$ ,  $p < .001$ ; data fit,  $G^2(2) = 2.27$ ,  $p = .32$ .

As shown in table 5, for both respondents with unilateral and multilateral attitudes, incorrectly perceiving the unilateral view as the majority view was associated with increased support for a presidential decision to invade Iraq without the approval of the Security Council of the UN. The interaction of perceived support for unilateral views and question approached significance,  $G^2(2) = 4.51$ ,  $p = .10$ . Given that the first two categories in the question expressed support for the presidential decision ("agree" and "disagree but support"), we collapsed across these categories and refit the log-linear model. As expected, all two-way interactions were significant:  $G^2(1) = 4.50$ ,  $p < .03$ , for perceived support and question;  $G^2(1) = 10.43$ ,  $p < .001$ , for perceived support and attitudes; and  $G^2(1) = 29.24$ ,  $p < .001$ , for attitudes and question. This model allowing for all two-way interactions fit the data very well,  $G^2(1) = 0.38$ ,  $p = .54$ . From this model, it could be estimated that respondents who incorrectly perceived the unilateral view as the majority view were 1.84 times more likely to support a presidential decision to

**Table 6.** Approval of Shift in Defense Strategy as a Function of Respondents' Attitudes and Perceived Support for Unilateral Views

Attitudes		Perceived support for unilateral views	
		Majority	Minority
Unilateral			
	Strongly approve	44.4% (47.1)	23.0% (25.0)
	Approve	46.9% (44.1)	57.0% (55.8)
	Disapprove	6.2% (7.4)	16.0% (14.4)
	Strongly disapprove	2.5% (1.5)	4.0% (4.8)
	<i>N</i>	68	104
Multilateral			
	Strongly approve	10.0% (9.7)	7.3% (7.2)
	Approve	30.0% (38.7)	45.2% (38.4)
	Disapprove	46.7% (35.5)	37.9% (40.0)
	Strongly disapprove	13.3% (16.1)	9.7% (14.4)
	<i>N</i>	31	125

NOTE.—See Appendix for the exact wording of questions. The percentages are weighted to reflect population estimates. The raw sample percentages are presented in parentheses.

invade Iraq than respondents who correctly perceived the unilateral view as the minority view.

As shown in table 6, the perceived support affected the approval of the shift in the defense strategy of the United States for respondents with unilateral attitudes. For example, among respondents who strongly approved this shift, there was a 21.4 percentage point difference between those who incorrectly perceived majority support for the unilateral view and those who perceived minority support for this view.<sup>4</sup> Although perceived support did not seem to affect respondents with multilateral attitudes (the pattern was more consistent for the nonweighted data), the log-linear analysis showed that the interaction of perceived support and approval was significant,  $G^2(3) = 8.80$ ,

4. At the same time, there was a difference of 10.1 percentage points in the opposite direction for those who approved the shift. However, the overall rate of approval was higher for respondents who incorrectly perceived the unilateral view as the majority view (91.3 percent) than for respondents who perceived this view as the minority view (80.0 percent) among respondents with unilateral attitudes. Given the small number of respondents for each response category, it is normal to expect such fluctuations. Because this question was measured on different degrees of approval, it is also possible to test for effects of attitudes and perceived support on the approval of the shift in the defense strategy using analysis of variance. Consistent with the log-linear analysis, this 2 (attitudes: unilateral versus multilateral)  $\times$  2 (perceived support for unilateral views: majority versus minority) analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed two reliable main effects,  $F(1, 328) = 16.41$ ,  $p < .001$  for the effect of attitudes, and  $F(1, 328) = 3.89$ ,  $p < .049$  for the effect of perceived support,  $F < 1$  for the interaction.

$p < .03$ . The other two-way interactions were also significant:  $G^2(1) = 6.06$ ,  $p < .01$ , for perceived support and attitudes; and  $G^2(3) = 60.57$ ,  $p < .001$ , for attitudes and question. A model that allowed for all two-way interactions fit the data very well,  $G^2(3) = 1.81$ ,  $p = .61$ .

Although the findings are not as strong as in the case of documenting the misperceptions of public opinion, they do suggest that such misperceptions<sup>5</sup> could have important implications for judgments and behaviors. Incorrectly believing that the majority supports unilateral views could increase support for specific unilateral policies, as well as for general policies that allow for potentially unprovoked unilateral interventions.

#### THE IDEA OF LEGITIMACY OF FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The foreign policy actions of the administration provide the most salient cues for people to make inferences about the beliefs of the public. If one believes that these actions provide valid cues to understand the beliefs of the American public, one is likely to overestimate public support for unilateral views. Alternatively, if one overestimates support for unilateral views, one is more likely to believe that the actions of the administration reflect the opinions of the American people. As shown in table 7, that was the case for both respondents with unilateral and multilateral attitudes. A model that allowed for all two-way interactions fit the data well,  $G^2(2) = 0.95$ ,  $p = .62$ . The statistics for the two-way interactions were as follows: for perceived support and question,  $G^2(2) = 5.94$ ,  $p < .051$ ; for perceived support and attitudes,  $G^2(1) = 10.74$ ,  $p < .001$ ; and for attitudes and question,  $G^2(2) = 27.99$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Misperceptions of public opinion were associated with the belief that the foreign policy of the administration reflects the opinions of the American public. Given that the correspondence between public opinion and foreign policy provides legitimacy to this policy, it is important to explore the effect of perceived legitimacy on support for specific policies. Further, whereas only one-third of the sample was asked to estimate the proportion of Americans endorsing unilateral and multilateral views, all respondents were asked the

5. An important question concerns the source of these misperceptions. Respondents who reported higher interest in foreign policy (question 7 in Appendix) were more likely to perceive majority support for unilateral views. The best model fitting the data allowed for the interaction of perceived support and importance,  $G^2(2) = 11.29$ ,  $p < .004$ , and the interaction of perceived support and attitudes,  $G^2(1) = 17.01$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $G^2(4) = 1.39$ ,  $p = .85$  for the fit of this model. If one assumes that respondents for whom foreign policy is important are more likely to follow the coverage of this policy, this finding is consistent with the hypothesis that the media covers unilateral views more extensively than multilateral views. In a recent study (Mandisodza and Todorov 2003, unpublished data), after we asked undergraduate students to estimate support for unilateral views, we asked them to list the sources of information that they used to arrive at their estimate. Respondents who mentioned media as one of the sources provided more biased estimates. Finally, a survey with 68 graduate students in public and international policy showed that the estimates of this more informed public were actually more extreme than the estimates of the general public on two of the three questions asked in the current survey.

**Table 7.** Agreement that the Foreign Policy of the Administration Reflects the Opinions of the American Public as a Function of Respondents' Attitudes and Perceived Support for Unilateral Views

Attitudes		Perceived support for unilateral views	
		Majority	Minority
Unilateral			
	A great deal	41.5% (43.5)	26.0% (31.1)
	Somewhat	45.1% (43.5)	62.5% (56.3)
	Not very much	13.4% (13.0)	11.5% (12.6)
	<i>N</i>	69	103
Multilateral			
	A great deal	22.6% (25.0)	11.7% (10.9)
	Somewhat	58.1% (46.9)	51.6% (53.9)
	Not very much	19.4% (28.1)	36.7% (35.2)
	<i>N</i>	32	128

NOTE.—See Appendix for the exact wording of questions. The “not very much” and “not at all” response categories were collapsed because only eight respondents responded “not at all.” The percentages are weighted to reflect population estimates. The raw sample percentages are presented in parentheses.

legitimacy question. Thus, the analyses were conducted on data from the whole sample.

To explore the effect of perceived legitimacy, we conducted a log-linear analysis for each of the questions asking about specific policies. Each analysis included the respondents' attitudes (unilateral versus multilateral), the perceived legitimacy of the current foreign policy (a great deal versus somewhat versus not very much), and the response categories for the specific question. Consistent with the above analyses, we expected that respondents with unilateral attitudes would be more supportive of the specific policies than respondents with multilateral attitudes, and that the former would be more likely to perceive the foreign policy as legitimate. Most important, respondents who perceive the foreign policy as more legitimate should be more likely to support specific unilateral policies, and this effect should be independent of the respondents' attitudes. Thus, the prediction for each question is that a model allowing for all two-way interactions should fit the data.

As shown in table 8, the extent to which respondents believed that the foreign policy of the administration reflects the opinions of the American people was a strong predictor of the belief that the United States should invade Iraq now rather than wait,  $G^2(2) = 109.09$ ,  $p < .001$ . Similarly, respondents with unilateral attitudes were more likely to agree that the United States should invade Iraq now than respondents with multilateral attitudes,  $G^2(1) = 110.42$ ,

**Table 8.** Support for Invading Iraq as a Function of Respondents' Attitudes and Beliefs that the Foreign Policy Reflects the Opinions of the American Public

Attitudes		Administration's foreign policy is representative		
		A great deal	Somewhat	Not very much
Unilateral				
	U.S. should invade Iraq now	77.7% (78.8)	50.6% (52.2)	27.8% (30.3)
	U.S. should wait	22.3% (21.2)	49.4% (47.8)	78.2% (69.7)
	<i>N</i>	170	268	76
Multilateral				
	U.S. should invade Iraq now	38.4% (43.4)	22.2% (20.6)	8.6% (6.0)
	U.S. should wait	61.6% (56.6)	77.8% (79.4)	91.4% (94.0)
	<i>N</i>	76	252	183

NOTE.—See Appendix for the exact wording of questions. The percentages are weighted to reflect population estimates. The raw sample percentages are presented in parentheses.

$p < .001$ . Respondents with unilateral attitudes were also more likely to believe that the foreign policy reflected the opinions of the American people,  $G^2(2) = 22.40$ ,  $p < .001$ . The model allowing for all two-way interactions provided a very good fit of the data,  $G^2(2) = 1.20$ ,  $p = .55$ .

As shown in table 9, the pattern was identical for the question about the agreement with a presidential decision to invade Iraq without the approval of the UN Security Council. Respondents with unilateral attitudes were both more likely to support this decision and to perceive the foreign policy as more legitimate than respondents with multilateral attitudes,  $G^2(2) = 116.64$ ,  $p < .001$ , and  $G^2(2) = 7.55$ ,  $p < .02$ , respectively. And most important, respondents who perceived the foreign policy as legitimate were more likely to support the presidential decision,  $G^2(4) = 264.68$ ,  $p < .001$ . The model allowing for all two-way interactions provided a very good fit of the data,  $G^2(4) = 1.87$ ,  $p = .76$ .

As shown in table 10, respondents with unilateral attitudes were more likely to approve the shift in the defense strategy of the United States,  $G^2(3) = 76.94$ ,  $p < .001$ , and more likely to perceive the foreign policy as legitimate,  $G^2(2) = 16.76$ ,  $p < .001$ . And as in the previous two questions, independent of these effects, respondents who perceived the policy as legitimate were more likely to approve the shift in the defense strategy,  $G^2(6) = 258.08$ ,  $p < .001$ . The fit of the model was very good,  $G^2(6) = 6.02$ ,  $p = .42$ .

In all three questions, the perceived legitimacy of the current foreign policy was a powerful predictor of support for specific policies. Both respondents

**Table 9.** Agreement with a Presidential Decision to Invade Iraq Without the Approval of the UN Security Council as a Function of Respondents' Attitudes and Beliefs that the Foreign Policy Reflects the Opinions of the American Public

		Administration's foreign policy is representative		
		A great deal	Somewhat	Not very much
Attitudes				
Unilateral				
	I would agree with the president's decision	76.3% (78.6)	43.7% (45.7)	27.4% (23.7)
	I would disagree, but I would support the president	17.8% (18.5)	35.9% (37.9)	21.9% (23.7)
	I would disagree with the president's decision	5.9% (2.9)	20.4% (16.4)	50.7% (52.6)
	<i>N</i>	173	269	76
Multilateral				
	I would agree with the president's decision	46.6% (43.4)	18.4% (16.6)	2.7% (4.4)
	I would disagree, but I would support the president	34.2% (38.2)	48.3% (47.8)	15.7% (14.3)
	I would disagree with the president's decision	19.2% (18.4)	33.3% (35.6)	81.6% (81.3)
	<i>N</i>	76	253	182

NOTE.—See Appendix for the exact wording of questions. The percentages are weighted to reflect population estimates. The raw sample percentages are presented in parentheses.

with unilateral and multilateral attitudes were more likely to support an invasion of Iraq and the shift in the defense strategy of the United States to the extent that they believed that the foreign policy of the administration reflects the opinions of the American public.

#### EFFECTS OF INFORMATION AND ESTIMATION ON SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC POLICIES

As outlined in the methods section, respondents were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions, which differed with respect to the first three broad questions about the role of the United States in the world: reporting attitudes, reporting attitudes and estimating attitudes, and reporting attitudes and

**Table 10.** Approval of Shift in Defense Strategy as a Function of Respondents' Attitudes and Beliefs that the Foreign Policy Reflects the Opinions of the American Public

Attitudes		Administration's foreign policy is representative		
		A great deal	Somewhat	Not very much
Unilateral				
	Strongly approve	48.8% (53.5)	23.2% (25.2)	11.8% (11.5)
	Approve	47.0% (43.0)	63.7% (61.3)	39.5% (35.9)
	Disapprove	2.4% (2.3)	12.0% (12.4)	26.3% (30.8)
	Strongly disapprove	1.8% (1.2)	1.1% (1.1)	22.4% (21.8)
	<i>N</i>	172	266	78
Multilateral				
	Strongly approve	27.4% (26.7)	9.6% (8.8)	4.3% (4.3)
	Approve	43.8% (48.0)	63.5% (61.0)	22.0% (20.7)
	Disapprove	24.7% (20.0)	23.7% (26.5)	49.5% (46.2)
	Strongly disapprove	4.1% (5.3)	3.2% (3.6)	24.2% (28.8)
	<i>N</i>	75	249	184

NOTE.—See Appendix for the exact wording of questions. The percentages are weighted to reflect population estimates. The raw sample percentages are presented in parentheses.

receiving information about the actual public opinion. Thus far, we have not examined the effects of the experimental condition.

The experimental conditions did not differ overall in their effect on subsequent questions that dealt with specific policies. The only significant difference that emerged was for the question on whether the foreign policy of the current administration reflects the opinions of the American public,  $G^2(6) = 13.62$ ,  $p < .034$ . Respondents in the information group were more likely to think that this policy did not reflect these opinions (29.0 percent) than respondents in the other two groups (23.4 percent). However, the shift in responses was less than 6 percentage points.

Two major conclusions could be drawn from these findings: asking people to estimate the attitudes of Americans toward the role of the United States in the world did not change the report of their own attitudes toward specific foreign policies, and providing information about the actual distribution of public opinion on broad principles was not sufficient to change people's preferences for specific policies. With the benefit of hindsight, there are at least two different reasons for the failure of the information manipulation: there was no specific rationale for the provided information, and the information was provided after respondents reported their own attitudes. Without rationale, the information about public opinion could have been dismissed by respondents who hold attitudes inconsistent with this information. Further, asking respondents for their

own attitudes and then providing them with information about public opinion could make respondents suspicious of an influence attempt, producing a response shift in the opposite direction of the information for some respondents.

## Discussion

Public opinion about the role of the United States in the world has been remarkably stable over the years (Kull and Destler 1999; Page and Shapiro 1992). For example, in the last seven years the group of Americans who think that the United States should do its fair share in solving international problems has been more than four times larger than the group of Americans who think that the United States should be the preeminent world leader in solving such problems. General multilateral and unilateral attitudes are important because, as shown here, they are strong predictors of support for specific policies, such as invading Iraq despite the disapproval of the Security Council of the UN and the shift in the defense strategy of the United States.

However, general attitudes are not the only determinants of support for specific foreign policies. The perceived public opinion on these policies, and especially this opinion as a source of the legitimacy of the policies, is another important determinant. Indeed, we found widespread misperceptions of public opinion about the role of the United States in the world. Whereas Americans have a strong preference for multilateral policies, they underestimate public support for such policies and overestimate public support for unilateral policies.

### CONSEQUENCES OF MISPERCEPTION OF PUBLIC OPINION

In times of social change, often there is a discrepancy between actual attitudes and perceptions of attitudes (Shamir and Shamir 1997). Such discrepancies could have important implications for behavior (Noelle-Neumann 1984). Consider an early survey on racial attitudes. In a survey conducted in 1970, O'Gorman and Garry (1976) showed that support for the position that "whites had the right to keep blacks out of their neighborhood" was a function not only of attitudes (pro-segregation versus antisegregation) but also of the perceived public opinion. For respondents who believed that the public shared their attitudes (the majority opinion), the difference between pro-segregation and antisegregation respondents was large: 68 percent versus 10 percent supported the item, respectively. This difference practically disappeared for respondents who believed that the majority did not share their attitudes (the minority opinion): 33 percent of pro-segregation respondents versus 30 percent of antisegregation respondents.

Although the findings were not as dramatic in the current survey, perceived public opinion did affect respondents' agreement with specific policies. Respondents who incorrectly perceived the unilateral view as the majority view were more likely to support the invasion of Iraq and the shift in the defense strategy of the United States from deterrence to preemptive action.

For two of the three questions in the survey, the data seem to suggest that such effects could be stronger for respondents with unilateral attitudes than for respondents with multilateral attitudes. Although these trends were not reliable (see also footnote 4), they are consistent with the notion that perceiving majority support for one's views could bolster attitudes consistent with these views (Holtz 2003; Holtz and Miller 1985).

Misperceptions of public opinion were also associated with the belief that the current foreign policy reflects the opinions of the American public. In turn, the perceived legitimacy of the foreign policy was a powerful predictor of support for specific policies. For example, respondents who believed that the foreign policy of the administration reflects public opinion a great deal were 3.54 times more likely to support a presidential decision to invade Iraq without the support of the UN Security Council than respondents who perceived the foreign policy as somewhat reflecting the public. The latter respondents were 6.95 times more likely to support the decision than respondents who did not perceive the foreign policy as reflecting the public. For comparison, respondents with unilateral attitudes were 3.46 times more likely to support this decision than respondents with multilateral attitudes. Thus, the perceived legitimacy of the foreign policy was a strong predictor of support for specific policies, and just as important as respondents' attitudes.

If perceptions of public opinion are an important determinant of respondents' judgments, why did providing information about public opinion fail to produce any changes in judgments? This information should remove any misperceptions, and those respondents should be less likely to support specific unilateral policies. However, we did not find evidence consistent with this hypothesis. There are several possible reasons for this failure. We did not provide a specific rationale for the information, and the discrepancy between the subjective estimates of public opinion and reported public opinion was not brought to the attention of the respondents. For example, in the information condition respondents reported their own attitudes, after which they were given the information, but they did not estimate public opinion on the questions. Information about public opinion provided without a rationale could be perceived as information that is intended to influence the respondent, and people do resist blatant attempts at persuasion (Todorov 2002; Todorov, Lalljee, and Hirst 2000).

Subtle forms of providing information about public opinion could be more successful in affecting judgments. Information about specific policy facts has been effective in changing policy attitudes (Gilens 2001). For example, the majority of Americans believe that the United States spends too much on foreign aid. However, when asked to estimate what percentage of the federal budget goes to foreign aid, Americans think that it is more than 10 percent. The actual percentage is less than one. Gilens has shown that by simply unobtrusively presenting respondents with this fact (as an inquiry about a newspaper article about foreign aid), the proportion of respondents who wanted to cut foreign aid was reduced by almost 20 percent.

Of course, there is a difference between presenting policy facts and information about public opinion. The relevance of policy facts could be much more immediate in terms of the specific attitude judgment than the relevance of public opinion. However, when respondents perceive public opinion as relevant to the judgment, they could incorporate it in their judgments. In fact, the information manipulation in the current survey did not fail completely. Respondents who were given information about public opinion were less likely to believe that the current foreign policy reflects the opinions of the American public, although this effect was small.

#### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The question about the relation between policy and public opinion is far from clear. However, there is some evidence that public opinion constrains foreign policy decisions (Holsti 1996; Sobel 2001) and that there is a general correspondence between public opinion and policy decisions (Page and Shapiro 1983; but see Monroe 1998 and Jacobs and Shapiro 2000 for declining trends). It is certainly clear that public opinion provides an important input to policy decisions. Ironically, perceived public opinion could be mistaken for actual public opinion. That is, policymakers could react to perceived rather than to actual attitudes.

In the case of foreign policy, an implication of the present findings is that misperceptions of public opinion in the current political context will serve policymakers who pursue a unilateral foreign policy. Such policymakers could feel empowered and be more efficient in pursuing specific policies. In contrast, policymakers who pursue multilateral policies could be deterred by falsely perceiving lack of public support for their positions. At the same time, knowing the difference between actual and perceived public preferences could actually make a difference. As the present findings show, perceived correspondence between public opinion and foreign policy is a powerful source of support for specific policies even in the face of personal attitudes that are inconsistent with these policies. To the extent that this correspondence is grounded in misperceived public opinion rather than in actual public opinion, it could potentially be undermined and support for specific unilateral policies could be reduced.

## Appendix

#### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1. Which statement comes closest to your opinion?

As the sole remaining superpower, the U.S. should continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems.

The U.S. should do its fair share in efforts to solve international problems with other countries.

The U.S. should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems.

Q2. Do you think that the U.S. has the responsibility to play the role of "world policeman," that is, to fight violations of international law and aggression wherever they occur?

Yes

No

Q3. What do you think is the more important lesson of September 11: that the U.S. needs to work more closely with other countries to fight terrorism or that the U.S. needs to act on its own more to fight terrorism?

Needs to work more closely with other countries.

Needs to act on its own.

Q4. Which statement do you agree with more? Iraq presents such a clear danger to American interests that the U.S. needs to act now, even without the support of its allies, or the U.S. needs to wait for its allies before taking any action against Iraq?

The U.S. needs to act now.

The U.S. needs to wait.

Q5. Suppose that most of the members of the UN Security Council do not approve an invasion of Iraq, but President Bush decides that the U.S. should undertake an invasion of Iraq, even if the U.S. has to do so on its own. Would you agree or disagree with the president's decision to invade Iraq without the support of the UN Security Council?

I would agree with this decision.

I would disagree with this decision.

I would disagree, but I would still support the president.

Q6. The current administration has promoted a major shift in the defense strategy of the U.S. from a policy of deterrence to a policy of preemptive action. The policy of deterrence means that the U.S. will engage in a military action against a country only if it is attacked by this country. The policy of preemptive action means that the U.S. will engage in a military action against a country or a terrorist organization if they are perceived as a sufficient threat to the security of the U.S. Do you approve or disapprove of the shift from deterrence to preemptive action in the U.S. defense strategy?

Strongly approve

Approve

Disapprove

Strongly disapprove

Q7. How important is the international policy of the U.S. to you?

Very important

Important

Not very important

Not at all important

Q8. How much would you say the international policy of the Bush administration reflects the opinions of the American public?

A great deal

Somewhat

Not very much

Not at all

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