The Morning Call
Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion

SURVEY OF PENNSYLVANIANS ON
THE ISSUE OF MILITARY FORCE IN IRAQ

KEY FINDINGS REPORT

FEBRUARY 14, 2003
KEY FINDINGS:

1. A slight majority of Pennsylvanians support the use of military force in Iraq, with about a third of Keystone State residents opposing this option.

2. Support for the use of military force among Pennsylvanians mirrors nationwide opinion on the issue.

3. While a majority of Pennsylvanians support the use of military force in Iraq, most would prefer military intervention under U.N. approval, with about 1 in 3 preferring that military action take place when the President feels it is needed.

4. Younger residents of the commonwealth are the most supportive of the use of military force in Iraq, with the greatest opposition to military intervention coming from the state’s senior citizens.

5. As is often the case in questions of military force, women in the state are less supportive of military intervention.

METHODOLOGY: The following key findings report summarizes data collected in a telephone survey of residents of the state of Pennsylvania between February 5-13, 2003. Individual households throughout Pennsylvania were selected randomly for inclusion in the study. The sample of phone numbers used in the survey was generated by Genesys Sampling Systems of Ft. Washington, PA. Interviewing was conducted by the staff of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion, with 418 surveys completed. This number of completions results in a margin of error of +/- 4.8% at the 95% confidence interval. However the margin of errors for sub groups (i.e. women, college educated, parents) is larger due to smaller sample size. Percentages throughout the survey have been rounded upward at the .5 mark, thus many totals in the results will not equal 100%. The survey questionnaire was designed by Christopher Borick, Ph.D. of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in consultation with staff members of the Morning Call. Analysis and report writing were completed by the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion under the direction of Dr. Borick.

SECTION ONE: Support for the Use of Military Force in Iraq

As war appears to be an ever nearing reality, a majority of Pennsylvania citizens support the use of military force to topple Sadaam Hussein from power, yet most would prefer such force to take place under United Nations approval. These are among the findings of the latest Morning Call/Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion survey of Pennsylvania. When asked their opinion on the use of military force in Iraq slightly over half (56%) of commonwealth respondents indicated support for military intervention, with about one third (30%) of their counterparts in the state opposing force as the means of removing the Iraqi leader from power. These findings closely resemble the latest national findings on the matter, with results of a Gallup Organization poll released February 11th showing 63% of Americans supporting an invasion of Iraq, and 34% opposing such measures.
When looking closer at the demographic characteristics of respondents we find that age appears to be a major factor in shaping attitudes toward the use of force in Iraq. More specifically, individuals under the age of 35 are most likely to support (64%) a military invasion of Iraq, while senior citizens appear to be the least support (38%) of this option. We also find that gender is playing a role in shaping opinion on the use of force with Pennsylvania men more likely (61% to 52%) than their female counterparts to support the use of military action to depose Hussein.

There also appears to be an educational divide at play in terms of views on military intervention, with individuals possessing lower levels of education (high school diploma or less) least likely to support military force. While 41% of individuals with a high school diploma or less support the use of force, 61% of individuals with at least some college education favor the use of military action in Iraq. This lower level of support appears most related to indecision on the issue, with those without any college education twice as (21% to 9%) likely to indicate that they are unsure of the views on the use of force.

Finally, there appears to be racial division in the state in terms of using force to remove Hussein from power. While 6 out of 10 white Pennsylvanians support the use of force in Iraq, only 3 out of 10 non-whites favor the use of military force in Iraq.

SECTION TWO: Conditions for the Use of Military Force in Iraq

While a majority of Pennsylvania residents support military intervention in Iraq, there is less support for the use of force without United Nations authorization. More specifically, when asked under what conditions military force should be introduced, 54% of Pennsylvanians indicated that the United States should not invade Iraq unless there is a new United Nations resolution authorizing military action. Conversely, 37% of state residents should invade Iraq when the Bush Administration decides that it is time even if there is non new resolution on the matter. These numbers closely approximate the previously cited nationwide study by Gallup that showed 39% of Americans believe the U.S. should invade Iraq even if there is no new U.N. vote on the matter, with 57% preferring either military intervention after a new resolution or none at all.

Once again we find a very obvious gender gap at play in terms of views on military intervention. While Pennsylvania men are divided on whether military intervention should take place with out a new United Nations’ resolution (45% wanting a new resolution and 45% in favor of using force without a new resolution), women in the state overwhelmingly (61% to 30%) indicate that the United States should not invade unless there is a new U.N. vote authorizing military action.

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