



THE DOMINION  
INSTITUTE



## Osama bin Laden Trumps President Bush as Most Dangerous to World Security

**Toronto – November 12, 2005** – According to a new Dominion Institute survey conducted by Innovative Research Group, both Canadians and Americans view Osama bin Laden as a bigger threat to world peace than is President George W. Bush. The survey also indicates that Canadians distinguish between their views of President Bush and Americans in general. And in other findings, two-fifths of Canadians believe that Canada has been free-riding on national defence since the end of World War II.

While terrorist leader Osama bin Laden is viewed in both Canada and the United States as a bigger danger to world security than is American President George W. Bush, there is a significant difference in intensity of feeling between the two countries. In the United States, three-quarters (73%) choose bin Laden compared to just one-half (49%) of Canadians.

Conversely, two-in-five (38%) Canadians opt for President Bush as the more dangerous of the two, while a significant one-in-five (21%) Americans view their own President in this light.

“Pro-Bush” Canadians (84%), Canadians who have a favourable view of Americans and of President Bush, are even more likely than Americans themselves to believe that Bin Laden is the bigger threat to world security. However despite having a favourable impression of the President, one-in-ten (10%) “Pro-Bush” Canadians still believes that Bush is a bigger threat to world safety than is bin Laden. In comparison, a majority (57%) of “Anti-American” Canadians, Canadians who have an unfavourable view of Americans and of President Bush, say that the President is more of a threat to the world than is Osama bin Laden (32%). “Bush Skeptics”, Canadians who have a favourable view of Americans but have an unfavourable view of President Bush, are divided on the issue (bin Laden 44% versus Bush 42%).

A majority in each region of Canada, except in Quebec (41%) and British Columbia (40%), believes bin Laden is more of a danger to world security than is George W. Bush. In these two provinces a larger proportion believes that President Bush is the bigger danger (Quebec 45%; British Columbia 44%).

In the United States, a majority in each region feels bin Laden is the bigger threat to world security. Interestingly, one-in-four (26%) Western residents, however, feel that the bigger danger is President Bush. This belief is also higher among non-whites (33% versus 18% of white Americans) and those with a post-graduate education (28%), compared to their counterparts with lower levels of educations (20%). Men (24%) are also more likely to hold this position than are women (21%).

## Canadians Make Distinction Between Opinion of Americans Overall and Opinion of President Bush

Canadians appear to make a distinction between a dislike of the American President and their overall feelings towards our American neighbours individually. In fact, while seven-in-ten (68%) Canadians have a favourable impression of Americans as individuals; the opinion of the President is a different story. Just one-in-five (21%) Canadians report having a favourable impression of President George W. Bush. In fact, close to half (46%) of Canadians report having a very unfavourable impression of the sitting U.S. President.

By comparison, one-half (48%) of Americans report a favourable opinion of their President, while 43% have an unfavourable opinion of President Bush.

When looking at both questions taken together, a majority (51%) of Canadians can be described as “Bush Skeptics”. That is, they have a favourable opinion of Americans individually, but hold an unfavourable opinion of President George W. Bush. One-quarter (26%) can be termed “Pro-Bush”, that is they have a favourable opinion of both Americans in general and President Bush individually. The final group, dubbed “Anti-American”, are those who hold an unfavourable opinion of both the President and Americans in general. This final group composes approximately one-in-five (18%) Canadians.

Regionally, Quebeckers are the most likely to have a negative impression of both Americans in general (34%), and of President George W. Bush (84%) individually. Interestingly, British Columbians are the most likely to have a positive outlook towards individual Americans (76%), while at the same time, being almost as negative towards the American Presidents (82%) as their Quebec counterparts. In general, residents of Alberta (32%) and Atlantic Canada (30%) are the most positive towards President Bush.

Canadians over 34 years of age (71%) are more likely than those aged 34 and younger (60%) to express a favourable impression of Americans overall. Young Canadians, aged 18 to 24 (37%) are most likely to hold an unfavourable impression of individual Americans.

Canadians with a high school (or less) education (27%) are more likely than other education subgroups to have a positive impression of President Bush, while those with a university undergraduate or graduate degree (82%) are more likely to hold an unfavourable opinion of the President.

As for Americans’ views of their President, only in the South do a majority hold a favourable impression of President Bush (52% compared to 41% in the American West). Furthermore, a majority of non-white Americans (51% vs. 41% of whites) have an unfavourable impression of George W. Bush. There also appears to be a significant difference between education groups on this topic, with Americans who have a post-graduate education (55%) being far more likely to hold an unfavourable impression of the President than either those with some college or a college degree (40%) or those with a high school diploma or less education (41%).

### About This Survey

**Innovative Research Group**, Inc. ([www.innovativeresearch.ca](http://www.innovativeresearch.ca)), a Toronto-based research firm, was commissioned to survey 1,016 randomly selected Canadians. The survey was

conducted between Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005 and has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ , 19 times out of 20. Innovative was also commissioned to survey 1,000 randomly selected Americans. The survey was conducted between Friday October 21<sup>st</sup> and Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> and has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

**The Dominion Institute** ([www.dominion.ca](http://www.dominion.ca)) was established in 1997 by a group of young professional concerned about the erosion of a common memory in Canada. In the space of eight short years, the Institute has had a far-reaching impact on Canadians' knowledge and perceptions of their history and shared citizenship, through groundbreaking public opinion research, high-profile Internet, education and television programming, book publications, and meaningful curriculum reform. The Institute is a non-partisan organization and a federally registered charity (#873968176 RR0001).

**The Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute** ([www.cdfai.org](http://www.cdfai.org)) is a charitable, independent, non-partisan, research institute with an emphasis on Canadian Foreign Policy; Defence Policy; and National Security. We provide Canadians with factual and comprehensive policy analysis to promote their understanding of Canada's foreign policy and the state of our military preparedness and national security by developing and sponsoring authoritative research and education programs.

#### Attribution

In the first instance of mentioning the poll results the survey should be identified as a "Dominion Institute / CDFAI survey conducted by Innovative Research Group".

All subsequent mentions can use the convention "Dominion Institute / CDFAI poll conducted by Innovative".

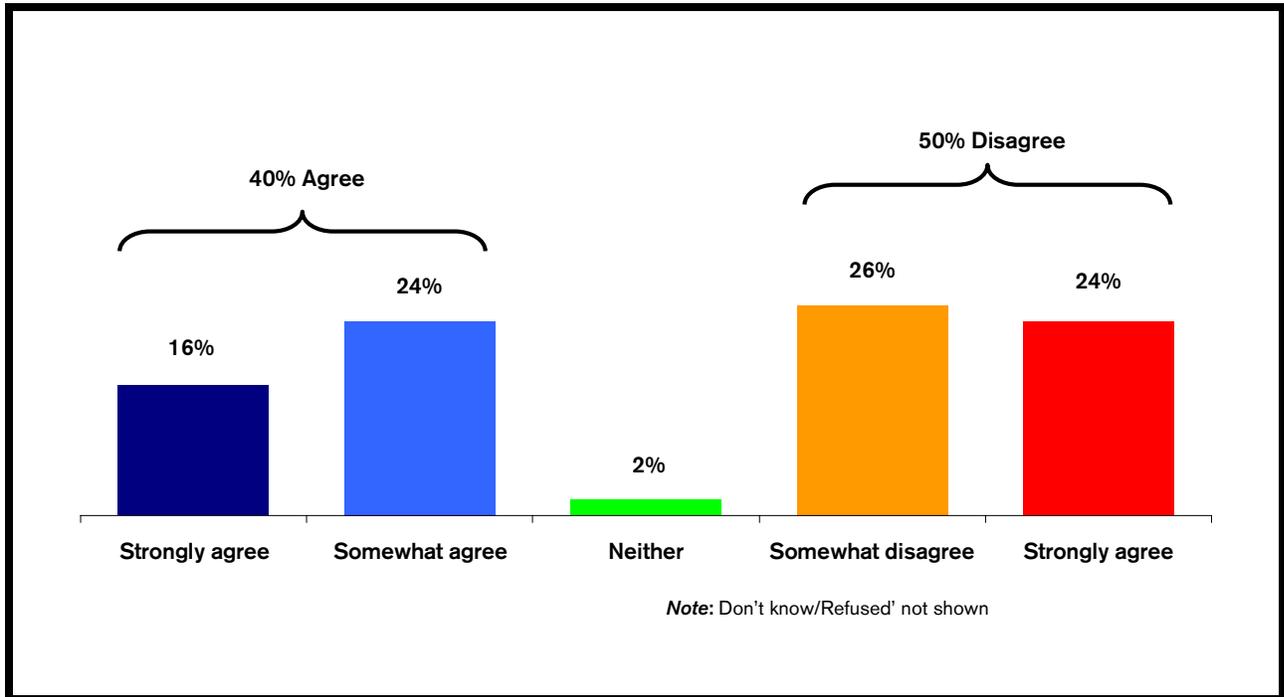
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#### Spokespersons

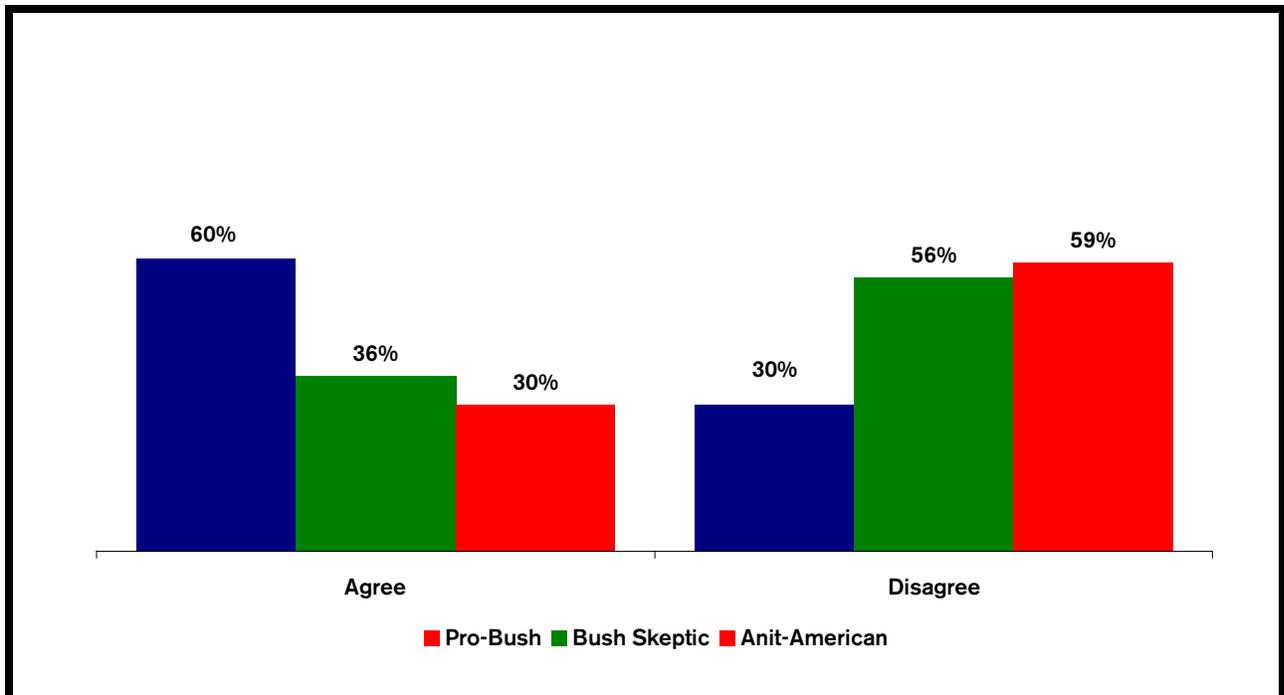
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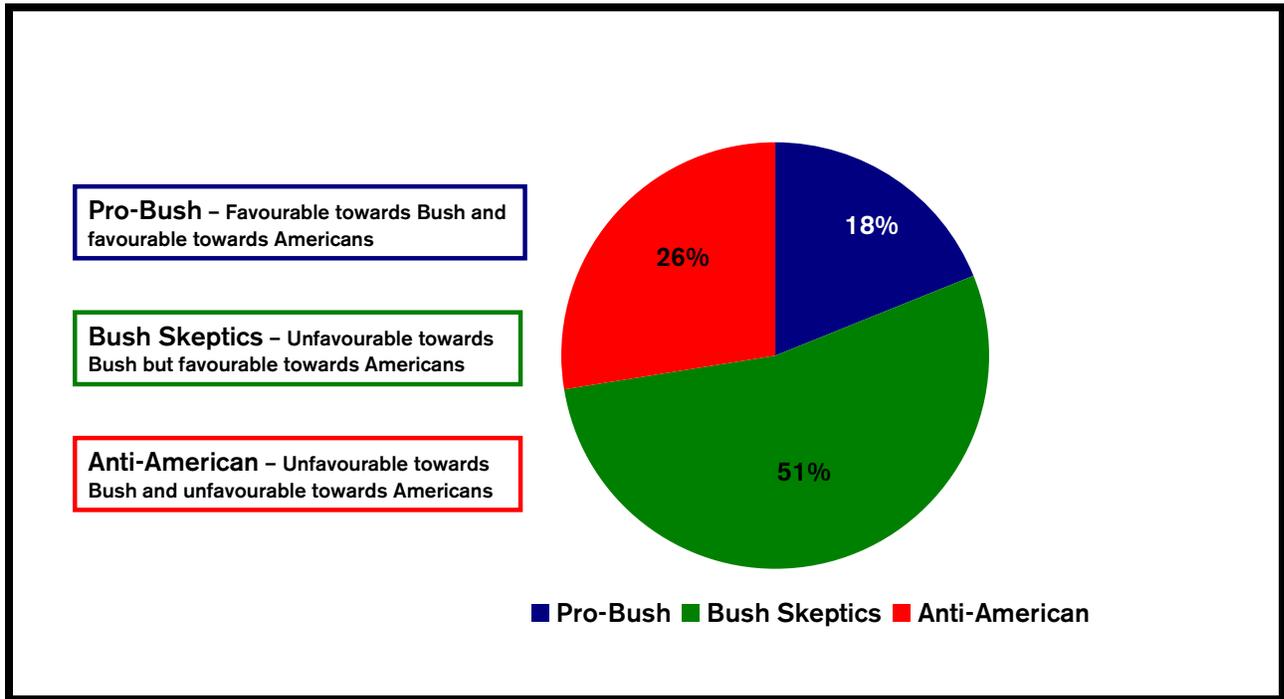
Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: When it comes to national defence, Canada has been getting a free ride from the United States since the end of the Second World War?



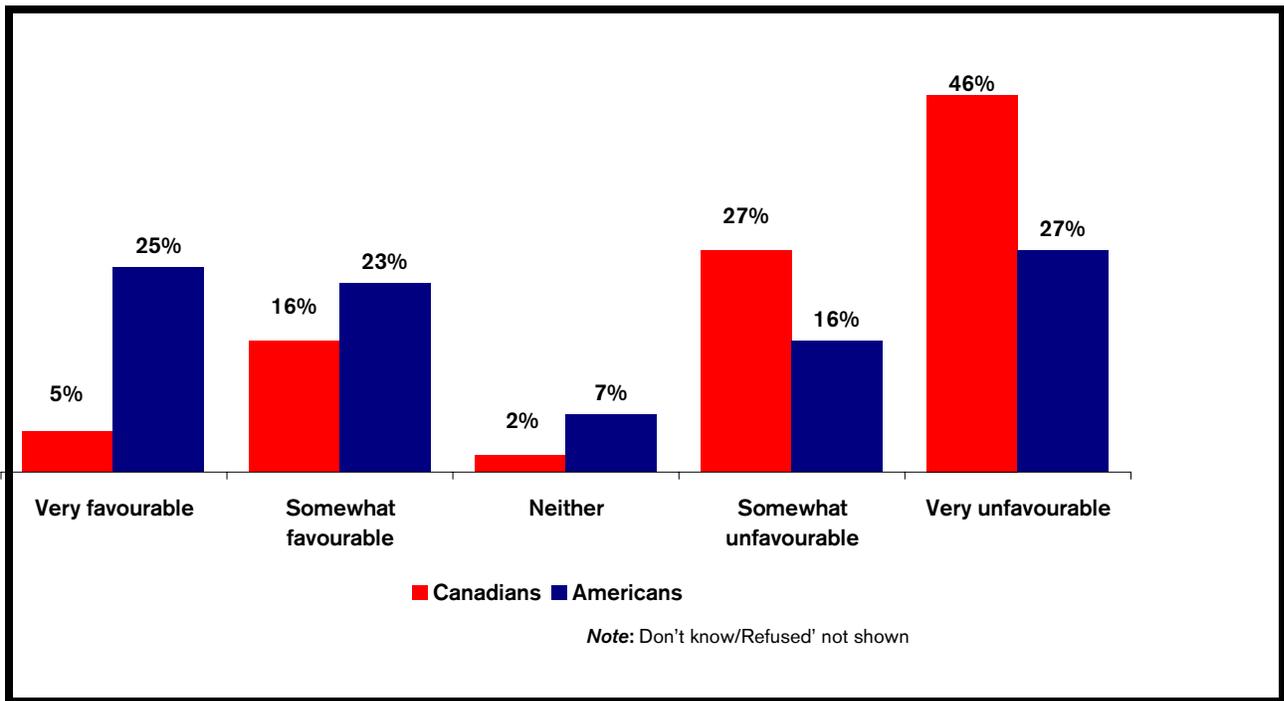
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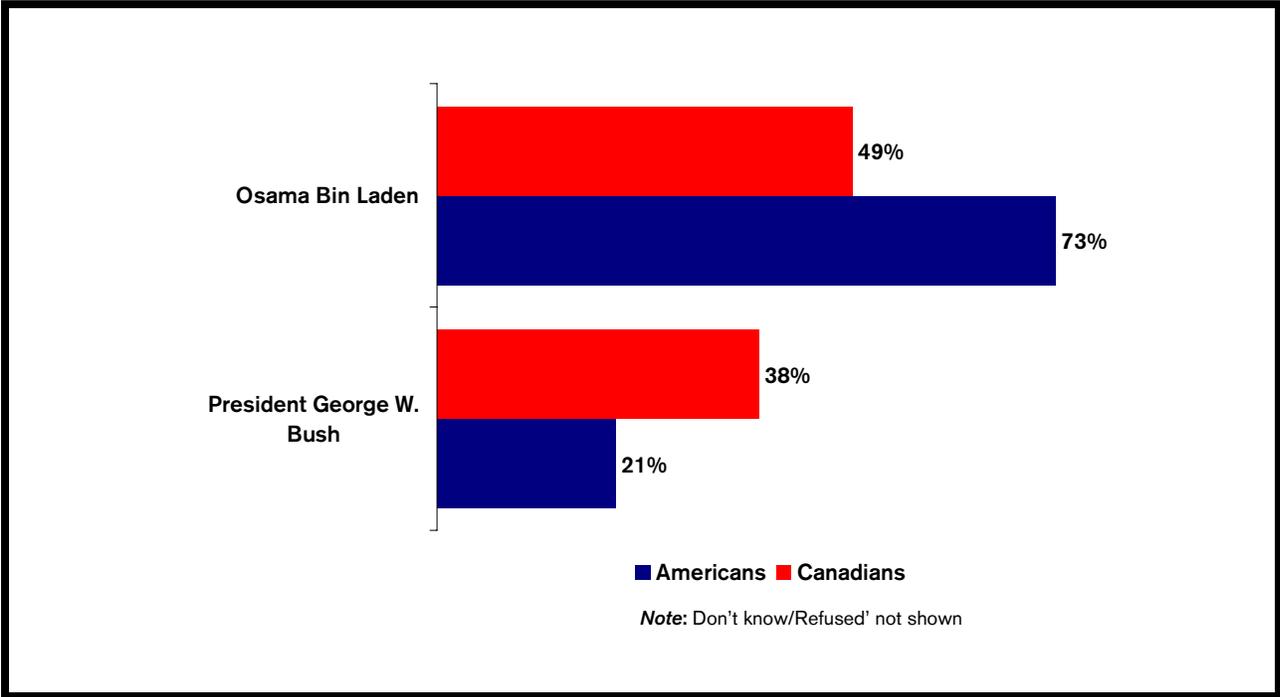
Segments of the Canadian Population on Bush sentiments versus Anti-American



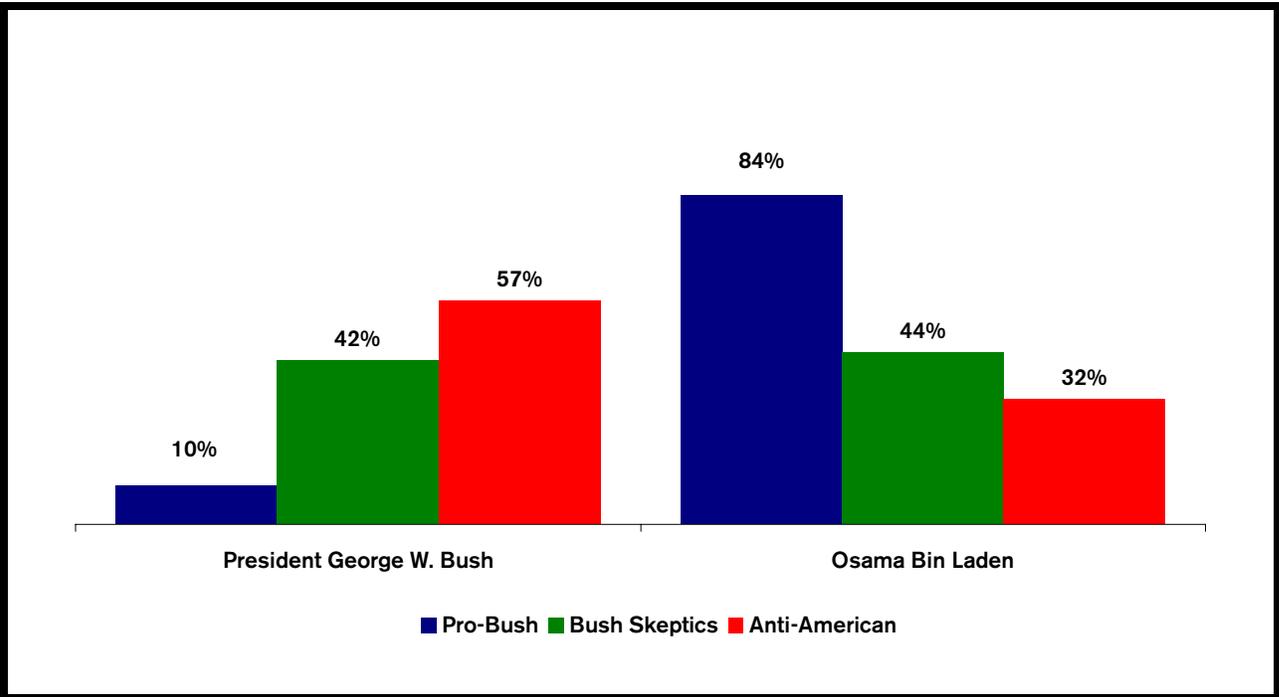
Do you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of the current President of the United States, George Bush?



Who is more dangerous to world security, President George W. Bush or Osama bin Laden?



Who is more dangerous to world security, President George W. Bush or Osama bin Laden? (Among Canadians)



## FULL TEXT QUESTIONS

1. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: When it comes to national defence, Canada has been getting a free ride from the United States since the end of the Second World War?

Strongly agree	1
Somewhat agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3 [VOLUNTEERED]
Somewhat disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Don't know	8 [VOLUNTEERED]
Refused	9 [VOLUNTEERED]

2. Do you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of Americans as individual people?

Very favourable	1
Somewhat favourable	2
Neither favourable nor unfavourable	3 [VOLUNTEERED]
Somewhat unfavourable	4
Very unfavourable	5
Don't know	8 [VOLUNTEERED]
Refused	9 [VOLUNTEERED]

[ASKED IN CANADA AND US]

3. Do you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of the current President of the United States, George Bush?

Very favourable	1
Somewhat favourable	2
Neither favourable nor unfavourable	3 [VOLUNTEERED]
Somewhat unfavourable	4
Very unfavourable	5
Don't know	8 [VOLUNTEERED]
Refused	9 [VOLUNTEERED]

[ASKED IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES]

4. Who is more dangerous to world security, President George W. Bush or Osama bin Laden?

President George W. Bush	1
Osama bin Laden	2
Don't know	8 (VOLUNTEERED)
Refused	9 (VOLUNTEERED)