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Security and Prosperity: A Preliminary Report on the January 2004 By the People Citizen Deliberations

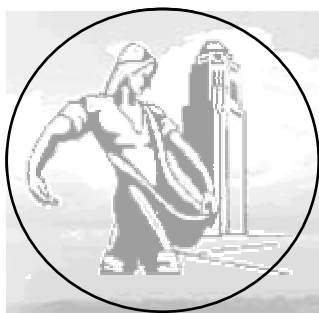
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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PUBLIC POLICY CENTER

Focusing on Nebraska

Security and Prosperity: A Preliminary Report on the January 2004 *By the People* Citizen Deliberations

February 4, 2004

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Saturday, January 24, 2004, a random sample of rural Nebraskans participated in a national dialogue about America's **national security and involvement in Iraq**, and **international free trade** as one of ten communities (and the only rural community) selected to participate in **MacNeil/Lehrer Productions' *By the People* Citizen Deliberations**. The Deliberations were videotaped by Nebraska Educational Television and will be included in national and state televised broadcasts. Participants in Nebraska and in the other communities completed surveys to measure their opinions about America's security interests, the intervention in Iraq, and trade policies.

Working in partnership with **MacNeil/Lehrer Productions**, the Nebraska event was convened through a collaboration of the **Nebraska Educational Television**, the **University of Nebraska at Kearney**, and the **University of Nebraska Public Policy Center**. This report and subsequent reports about the Nebraska and national results of the *By the People* Citizen Deliberations may be found at:

University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (<http://www.ppc.nebraska.edu>)

Nebraska Educational Television (<http://mynptv.org/nptv/>)

MacNeil/Lehrer Productions' *By the People* (<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/btp/index.html>)

National Security and Involvement in Iraq

Nebraskan respondents were strikingly more *satisfied with and supportive of the war in Iraq and the war on terror* than were respondents from the other communities. The Nebraskans tended to respond similarly to one another and were in substantial unanimity in their agreement with the actions of the Bush Administration.

- A significantly higher percentage of the sample of Nebraskans are **satisfied with the war on terror** and do not believe that the war in Iraq has diverted the war on terror.

- A statistically significant higher percentage of the sample of Nebraskans agrees with taking **unilateral action** against countries that pose a threat to the U.S. than does the national sample (54% Nebraskans versus 33% from the national sample).
- A statistically significant higher percentage of the sample of Nebraskans **approve of the cost of the U.S. intervention in Iraq and the importance of establishing a democracy there**. However, when faced with choosing between spending in Iraq and spending domestically, they prefer spending domestically.

International Free Trade

Nebraskans had less uniformity in their opinions regarding free trade and, ergo, only partially support current Administration policy.

- A majority of the Nebraska sample thinks **NAFTA has helped** the nation's economy, but 25% thinks it has hurt it.
- Almost half of the Nebraska sample agrees that **free trade helps to support jobs** in the U.S., yet Nebraskans are **supportive of subsidies and tariffs** as a way to protect American industry.
- Nebraskans are **not supportive of the Cuban trade embargo**: 44% feel that it has hurt Nebraska farmers, whereas 21% feel that it has not hurt.
- 49% of Nebraskans believe the U.S. should require foreign governments to accept **Genetically Modified Food** products (in contrast, 22% disagree). However, 53% believe that the U.S. **should obey World Trade Organization** decisions that do not support American positions, but 36% do not believe so.

INTRODUCTION

On Saturday, January 24th, 2004, Nebraskans gathered at the University of Nebraska at Kearney to participate in **MacNeil/Lehrer Productions' *By the People* Citizen Deliberations** project (see <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/btp/index.html>).¹ The *By the People* project began in January of 2003 with a national issues convention commencing national dialogue about America's role in the world. In January 2004, ten communities across the country, including **Kearney, Nebraska**, participated in simultaneous dialogue about international issues and their implications for Americans. Other communities included Baton Rouge, Green Bay, Kansas City, Minneapolis-St.Paul, Pittsburgh, Rochester, San Diego, Sarasota County (Florida), and Seattle. Over 700 citizens across the nation participated in the community dialogues. Working in partnership with MacNeil/Lehrer Productions, the Nebraska event was convened through a collaboration of the Nebraska Educational Television (NETV), the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.

The *By the People* Citizen Deliberations were modeled after the Deliberative Opinion Poll® format developed by Professor James S. Fishkin (<http://cdd.stanford.edu/>; see also <http://www.la.utexas.edu/research/delpol/>). Deliberative Opinion Polls involve the use of small group discussions among participants about particular public policy or electoral issues. Participants are identified through scientific random sampling to statistically represent voting age members of the public. Deliberative Polling aims to measure changes in attitudes about public policy issues after individuals have an opportunity to discuss and think about them in an informed way. Participants have an opportunity to interact with each other, and experts, about the issues and reflect on the advantages, disadvantages, and trade-offs of policy options. The *By*

¹ Professor Fishkin of Stanford University, Center for Deliberative Polling, and Professor Cynthia Farrar, of Yale University, Institution for Social and Policy Issues, are the principal investigators of the *By the People* deliberation project.

the People Deliberations in January 2004 focused on current United States foreign policy, with particular reference to two topics: **national security and involvement in Iraq**, and **international free trade**.

METHODS

By the People participants were selected by the Survey Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley, using a random-digit telephone dialing process. The Survey Research Center extended invitations to the Citizen Deliberation and asked participants a series of attitudinal and demographic questions about themselves and America's international and economic security. Nebraskans consenting to participate in the Citizen Deliberation event in January 2004 were sent background briefing materials and other information from the Survey Research Center and the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center. A control group was also identified, and both the control and the deliberative participants were surveyed by the Survey Research Center in the weeks preceding the event. Control group data are not presented in this Report.

The participants surveyed represented a statistical random sample of the ten communities selected to participate in *By the People*. Although taken together the participants did not comprise an actual national sample, the communities were selected to obtain geographic and demographic diversity, and, when aggregated, generalize to Americans' attitudes and beliefs about the international issues.

Nebraska Educational Telecommunications initiated a media campaign to generate interest and awareness of the event in the Kearney area and across the state. The Kearney Hub newspaper and University of Nebraska at Kearney were also active partners in the media campaign. The Public Policy Center also offered a pre-event policy seminar to the community on

the topic of nation-building at the University of Nebraska at Kearney campus the day before the *By the People* event to generate further public interest in the national project.

On January 24, 2004, **85 participants** convened at the University of Nebraska at Kearney to participate in the Citizen Deliberation. Approximately 44% of the participants identified their political affiliation as Republican, 29% as Democrat, and 24% as Independent (2% were No Preference or Other). Participants were equally divided by gender. 100% of participants identified their race as white. 45% were aged 50 years old or above, 35% were between 35-49 years of age, and 20% were between 18-34 years of age. A majority of participants had either graduated from college (40%), or attended, but not graduated from, college (31%).

Following a welcome and viewing of two videotapes (produced by MacNeil/Lehrer Productions) presenting the complexity of international security and free trade policy, participants broke into ten small groups. The smallest group was composed of 7 participants, and the largest was 12. In the morning, each group participated in two, 75 minute discussions facilitated by a moderator (one moderator was a news director/anchor, the rest were academics from the University of Nebraska at Kearney) on the topics of “international security” and “international economics.” At the end of each discussion, each small group selected at least one question on each topic to pose to the expert plenary panel. Nebraska Educational Television videotaped one of the small groups and also the plenary sessions. These were taped for state and national broadcasts.

After a break for lunch, the participants gathered to hear an **expert panel** respond to questions selected by representatives from NETV and the Public Policy Center. Expert input is part of the deliberative polling structure (see, e.g., <http://www.la.utexas.edu/research/delpol/bluebook/execsum.html>). Expert panel members at the Nebraska session included Congressman Doug Bereuter (R-NE),

Lisa Dominisse (Director of Rural Development, Nebraska Department of Economic Development), Doug Kristensen (Chancellor of the University of Nebraska at Kearney and former Speaker of the Nebraska Unicameral), Professor Patrice McMahon (Political Science, University of Nebraska – Lincoln), Congressman Tom Osborne (R-NE), and Professor Andrew Wedeman (Political Science, University of Nebraska – Lincoln). Because of time constraints, not all questions developed by the small groups were answered.

Participants gathered for a final small group discussion session following the plenary session. At the conclusion of the small group discussion, participants completed a survey similar to the one they had completed prior to the deliberation. Participants were asked, again, about their perspectives and opinions regarding international security and economics. Additions to the pre-survey included two new questions from *By the People* and four questions developed by the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (administered to the Kearney participants only). (See Tables 1 and 2, which provide many, but not all, of the survey items.)

Participants were compensated \$75.00 for their time. The Public Policy Center entered Kearney participant data on a secured web-site and electronically submitted them to The Survey Research Center where they were combined with survey results from the other participating communities. The Survey Research Center provided initial national and Nebraska-specific data to Nebraska collaborators on the evening of January 24, 2004. This Report presents **preliminary analyses and conclusions** from the January 2004 *By the People* Citizen Deliberations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The *By the People* citizen deliberations revealed a range of opinions about America's security interests, the intervention in Iraq, and trade policies. The survey questions and

Nebraskans' responses are presented in Table 1, and comparisons of Nebraska to the National responses are presented in Table 2.

Nebraskans' perspectives diverged from other Deliberative Opinion Poll® event participants, particularly in regard to questions of national security. The 85 Nebraskans who participated in the deliberative poll are **more supportive of the Administration's national security stance than the national sample. Nebraskans' perspectives on economic issues more closely reflect that of the national sample, with the exception of the use of subsidies and tariffs to support American industry.** Although they generally support the Administration's policies, there are several issues on which Nebraskans split on their support.

National Security and Involvement in Iraq

Nebraskans are *more supportive* than other participants across the nation of the Bush Administration's policies in Iraq. Indeed, there was striking divergence from the national sample in the extent to which the Nebraska sample was satisfied with and supportive of the war in Iraq and the war on terror.

- **Nebraskans substantially approve of the cost of the U.S. intervention in Iraq and the establishment of democracy there.**

61% of the Nebraska sample agree strongly or agree that it has been worth the cost in lives and dollars in Iraq, compared to 35% of the national sample ($p < .001$) (Q4). 60% of Nebraskans believe the rebuilding is going very well or somewhat well, compared to 28% of the national sample ($p < .001$) (Q22). 55% of the Nebraska sample believe it is absolutely necessary or extremely important to establish *democracy* in Iraq before the U.S. ends its occupation of Iraq, compared to 29% of the national sample ($p < .001$) (Q1). 54% of the Nebraska sample disagree strongly or disagree somewhat that establishing democracy in other countries is "too difficult,"

compared to 31% of the national sample ($p<.001$) (Q5). However, Nebraskans, like the national participants, believe that a *stable* government is absolutely or extremely important, even if it is not democratic (81% of the Nebraskan participants, 83% national participants) (Q2).

However, Nebraskans do not endorse a unilateral approach to rebuilding Iraq. 80% of the Nebraskans believe the U.S. should share control of Iraq with the U.N. or other countries in return for sharing the military and financial burden (82% of the national sample responded similarly); only 14% disagreed that the U.S. should share control (11% nationally) (Q6).

Despite Nebraskans general support of the war and rebuilding effort, when faced with choosing between spending in Iraq and spending domestically, they prefer spending domestically. 53% of Nebraskans indicate they would prefer to spend available government funds to improve the economic well-being of America's rural communities rather than on securing Iraq's economic well-being compared to only 17% who prefer the opposite (Q24).

- **Nebraskans are mostly satisfied with the war on terror and do not believe that the war in Iraq has diverted the war on terror.**

64% of the Nebraska sample believes the war on terror is going very well or somewhat well, compared to 45% of the national sample ($p<.001$) (Q23). 54% of Nebraskans disagree strongly or disagree somewhat that the war in Iraq has diverted us from the war on terror, compared to 33% of the national sample ($p<.001$) (Q7). Indeed, 61% of Nebraskans disagree that too much money is being spent on Homeland Security to protect possible targets in the U.S. such as rural Nebraska, compared to 20% who agree that too much money is being spent (Q25).

- **There are few issues involving national security or Iraq that reveal significant disagreements among Nebraskans.**

For the most part, as indicated previously, Nebraskans substantially approve of the cost of the U.S. intervention in Iraq and the establishment of democracy there, and agree with the Administration's war on terror. The only disagreements are regarding whether it is appropriate to invade other countries that pose a serious and immediate threat, even without international support. 54% of Nebraskans do not believe the war in Iraq interferes with the war on terror, 33% believe it has (Q7). 54% of the Nebraska sample agrees the U.S. should be willing to invade other countries, 36% disagrees (Q8). Interestingly, the 54% of the Nebraskans who agree with taking unilateral action against countries that pose a threat to the U.S. is much higher than the 33% of the national sample who agree ($p < .001$) (Q7).

International Free Trade

Nebraskans do not display the same degree of internal consistency about trade opinions as they do about national security issues or the U.S.'s involvement in Iraq. Whereas Nebraskans are fairly uniform in support of the Administration's positions on security, there is more of a split among Nebraskans regarding how they feel about trade policy issues.

- **Nebraskans are less distinct from the national sample on trade issues than they are on security and Iraq issues, although they still differ at times from the rest of the nation.**

47% of the Nebraska sample agrees that free trade helps to support jobs in the U.S. (similar to 43% nationally), while 38% disagrees (Q17). Yet Nebraskans are supportive of subsidies and tariffs as a way to protect American industry (3.4 on a 1-7 scale with 1 supporting subsidies/tariffs and 7 supporting free trade) (Q13), slightly more so than the national sample (4.0 on the same scale). On the other hand, Nebraskans are not supportive of the Cuban trade embargo: 44% feel that it has hurt Nebraska farmers, 17% feel that it has not hurt (Q26).

Nebraskans, however, do not exclusively protect their own interests: 53% believe that the U.S. should obey World Trade Organization decisions that do not support American positions, but 36% do not believe so (Q18). 58% of the Nebraska sample thinks NAFTA has helped the nation's economy (compared to 39% of the national sample, $p < .001$), but 25% thinks it has hurt (Q16). 49% of Nebraskans believe the U.S. should require foreign governments to accept Genetically Modified Food products, and 22% disagree (Q27).

CONCLUSION

Nebraskans are fairly uniform in their support of the current administration's national security policy, in contrast to the national sample. A majority of Nebraskans are generally very supportive of the current administration's engagement in Iraq, believing it is both worthwhile and has not interfered with the war on terror. However, although a majority of Nebraskans favor the notion of taking unilateral military action without international support, a clear majority of Nebraska respondents believe that the U.S. should share control of Iraq with other nations or the U.N., a belief also shared by the national sample.

Nebraskans, at first blush, appear to be extremely supportive of free trade. A majority of Nebraskans believe that NAFTA has benefited the national economy and that foreign import barriers should be lifted for the export of Genetically Modified foods. Most believe that the current Cuban trade embargo is detrimental to the state's agricultural exporters. However, Nebraskans do not completely endorse free trade positions. The Nebraska participants approve of the continued use of government subsidies and tariffs to protect sectors of the national economy from foreign competition. Finally, although these findings suggest that Nebraska respondents appear to place their own economic interests over wholesale approval of a pure free market

system, they nonetheless endorse following the decisions of the World Trade Organization even when the outcomes are not favorable to American economic positions.

Table 1. Nebraska Survey Responses, Post-Deliberation

	Absolutely necessary	Extremely important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important at all	Haven't thought much about that
Before the U.S. ends its occupation of Iraq...						
1. How important is it that a democracy be established there?	17%	39%	35%	8%	1%	0%
2. That a stable government be established there even if it is not democratic?	34%	47%	15%	2%	0%	1%
3. That Iraq's economy be on its feet again?	15%	39%	41%	4%	1%	0%
	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Haven't thought much about that
4. By the time we leave Iraq, the results will have been worth the cost in lives and dollars.	29%	32%	13%	12%	13%	1%
5. It's just too difficult to establish democracy in countries like Iraq.	5%	21%	20%	26%	28%	
6. The U.S. should share its control of Iraq with other countries or the U.N. in return for their sharing more of the military and financial burden.	44%	37%	6%	12%	2%	
7. The war in Iraq has got in the way of the war on terror.	9%	24%	12%	22%	32%	1%
8. In general, the U.S. should be willing to invade other countries we believe pose a serious and immediate threat, even if we don't have a lot of international support	14%	40%	9%	15%	21%	
	Helped a lot	Helped somewhat	Not had much effect	Hurt somewhat	Hurt a lot	Haven't thought much about that
16. What sort of impact would you say that NAFTA has had so far on the American economy?	5%	53%	13%	19%	6%	5%

	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly		
17. On the whole, more free trade means more jobs, because we can sell more goods abroad.	4%	44%	15%	29%	8%		
18. The U.S. should generally obey WTO decisions that go against us.	4%	50%	8%	23%	14%		
	Very well	Somewhat well	Neither well nor poorly	Somewhat poorly	Very poorly	Haven't thought much about that	
22. How would you say the rebuilding of Iraq is going?	14%	46%	24%	13%	1%	1%	
23. How would you say the war on terrorism is going?	7%	57%	21%	11%	4%		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Seven point scale: 1 representing the viewpoint that America should spend limited resources in Iraq and 7 representing the viewpoint that America should spend limited resources on rural communities.	1%	4%	12%	22%	18%	28%	7%
	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Haven't thought much about that	
25. Too much money is being spent as part of Homeland Security to prevent terrorism from occurring in unlikely targets in the United States, such as rural Nebraska.	1%	19%	16%	28%	33%		
26. American embargo on agricultural exports to Cuba hurts Nebraska farmers.	6%	38%	19%	12%	5%		
27. United States should require foreign governments to eliminate their trade barriers that interfere with Nebraska producers' overseas sale of Genetically Modified crop products (e.g., corn, wheat, etc.).	32%	18%	20%	16%	5%		

Table 2. Comparison of Nebraska to National² Survey Responses, Post-Deliberation

Percent saying necessary or absolutely necessary			
	Nation	Nebraska	Total
Before the U.S. ends its occupation of Iraq...			
1. How important is it that a democracy be established there?	29% (182 / 628)	55% (47 / 85)	32% (229 / 712)
2. That a stable government be established there even if it is not democratic?	85% (532 / 629)	81% (69 / 85)	84% (601 / 714)
3. That Iraq's economy be on its feet again?	58% (360 / 625)	54% (46 / 85)	57% (406 / 709)
Percent agreeing somewhat or agreeing strongly			
	Nation	Nebraska	Total
4. By the time we leave Iraq, the results will have been worth the cost in lives and dollars.	35% (223 / 630)	61% (52 / 85)	38% (275 / 715)
5. It's just too difficult to establish democracy in countries like Iraq.	52% (327 / 631)	26% (22 / 85)	49% (349 / 716)
6. The U.S. should share its control of Iraq with other countries or the U.N. in return for their sharing more of the military and financial burden.	84% (523 / 626)	80% (68 / 85)	83% (591 / 712)
7. The war in Iraq has got in the way of the war on terror.	56% (349 / 628)	33% (28 / 85)	53% (377 / 714)
8. In general, the U.S. should be willing to invade other countries we believe pose a serious and immediate threat, even if we don't have a lot of international support.	x ³ % (___ / ___)	54% (46 / 85)	x ³ % (___ / ___)

² National responses exclude Nebraska respondents.³ Data currently unavailable.

Seven Point Scale			
	Nebraska Mean		National Mean
9. <i>I</i> representing the viewpoint that the U.S. should be promoting democracy and 7 representing the viewpoint that how other countries are governed is not our concern.	3.4 (76)		4.1 (623)
10. <i>I</i> representing the viewpoint that the U.S. should make its own decisions about when to take military action to protect its security and 7 representing the viewpoint that we should obtain international approval and cooperation first.	3.4 (84)		4.1 (621)
13. <i>I</i> representing the viewpoint that the U.S. should use subsidies or tariffs to protect American industries threatened by foreign competition and 7 representing the viewpoint that both American and foreign companies should be left free to compete without any special protection.	3.4 (81)		4.1 (603)
Percent saying helped somewhat or helped a lot			
	Nation	Nebraska	Total
16. What sort of impact would you say that NAFTA has had so far on the American economy?	37% (233 / 622)	58% (49 / 85)	40% (282 / 707)
Percent agreeing somewhat or agreeing strongly			
	Nation	Nebraska	Total
17. On the whole, more free trade means more jobs, because we can sell more goods abroad.	43% (271 / 626)	47% (40 / 85)	44% (311 / 711)
18. The U.S. should generally obey WTO decisions that go against us.	45% (279 / 622)	53% (45 / 85)	46% (324 / 706)
Percent saying somewhat well or very well			
	Nation	Nebraska	Total
22. How would you say the rebuilding of Iraq is going?	28% (176 / 623)	60% (51 / 85)	32% (227 / 707)
23. How would you say the war on terrorism is going?	45% (284 / 626)	64% (54 / 85)	48% (338 / 709)



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