

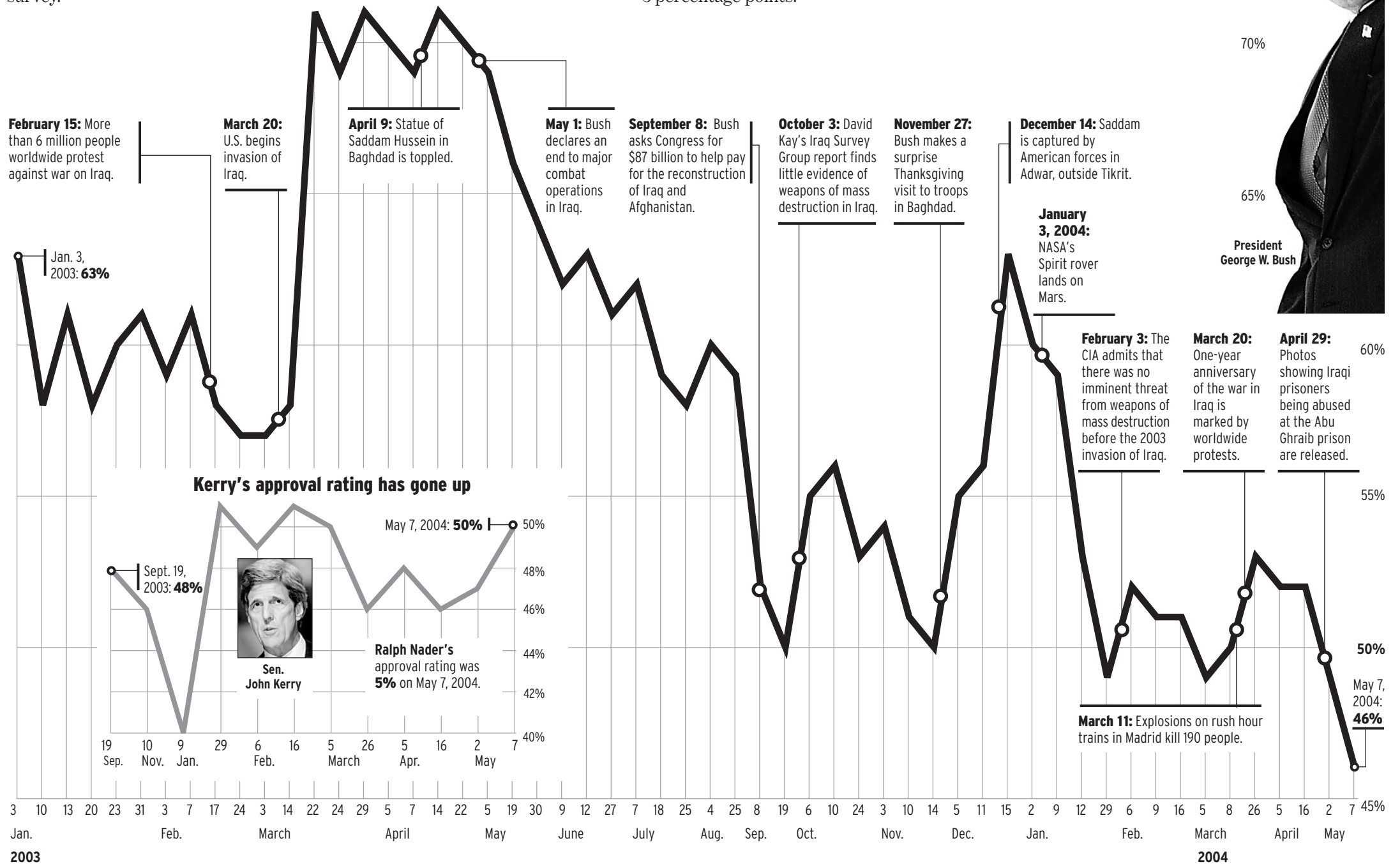
Bush approval rating drops to record low

President George W. Bush's job approval rating has dipped to 46%, the low point of his administration and a drop of three percentage points from last week, according to a CNN-USA Today poll released Tuesday.

Meanwhile, for the first time Americans appear to be evenly divided as to whether Bush or Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry would do a better job of handling Iraq. Bush polled 48 percent in his race against Kerry, a four-term senator from Massachusetts who received 47 percent, a statistical tie in the Gallup survey.

Forty-eight percent of adults surveyed thought the president would better handle "the situation in Iraq," compared with 45 percent for Kerry.

Americans said they were bothered by the U.S. military's abuse of Iraqi prisoners. Fifty-four percent said they were bothered "a great deal," and 25 percent said they were bothered "a fair amount." Seventy-three percent of those surveyed said there were "no circumstances" under which such behavior by U.S. soldiers was justified. The poll of 1,003 adults was taken May 7 to May 9 and has a margin of error of 3 percentage points.



Source: Gallup poll; The Associated Press

Reporting by: Michael Doss / The Register

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