

**Analysis of Zogby Poll Commissioned by
DraftWesleyClark.com**

The Race for the Democratic Nomination –
The Potential for a Wesley Clark Candidacy

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Table of Contents		Page
Introduction		3
A. The Standing of the Democratic Race		3
B. Strength of Support for Democratic Candidates		5
C. Is too Late to Enter the Race?		7
D. The Importance of National Security/Military Experience		8
E. Wesley Clark Candidacy – Blind Bio Polling Against a Field of Six Democratic Candidates		9
F. Wesley Clark Candidacy – One-on-One Blind Bio Polling Against Top Four Democratic Candidates		10
G. Top Five Democratic Candidates vs. President George W. Bush		12
H. Wesley Clark Blind Bio vs. President George W. Bush		13
Summary		14
Tables		Page
Table 1. Current Standing of the Democratic Race		4
Table 2. Trend of the Democratic Race		5
Table 3. Strength of Support Among All Democratic Likely Primary Voters		6
Table 4. Strength of Democratic Support by Candidate		6
Table 5. Is it too late to Support a New Candidate		7
Table 6. Importance of National Security/Military Experience Among All Likely Voters		8
Table 7. Standing of Democratic Field – Comparison Based on Blind Bios		10
Table 8. One-on-One Blind Bio Polling - Wesley Clark vs. Select Candidates		11
Table 9. President Bush vs. Select Democratic Candidates		12
Table 10. Wesley Clark vs. President George W. Bush: Breakdown by Party ID		13
Table 11. Wesley Clark (Bio) vs. President George W. Bush		13
Appendix		Page
Appendix 1 – Trend of Support Gallup Data		15

Introduction

With about five months before the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire Primary, the race for the Democratic nomination continues among nine candidates. As of yet, no clear or solid frontrunner or dominant political candidate has emerged. A tenth candidate, General Wesley Clark, may soon enter the race. The Zogby International poll was designed and commissioned to explore the opportunity, standing, and potential of a Clark Candidacy – both against other Democrats, the elite set of Democratic candidates, and President George W. Bush.¹ Overall, the results of the Zogby Poll are telling and suggest, at a minimum, that the following insights can be drawn:

- (1) Likely primary voters continue to remain extremely unsure which candidate to support.
- (2) Wesley Clark, even without being a declared candidate or having any formal campaign, polls among the top five candidates. Clark polls higher than Edwards, Graham, Sharpton, Moseley-Braun, Sharpton, and Kucinich.
- (3) The strength of support for individual Democratic candidates is mixed, and in some cases weaker than might be expected. Wesley Clark's supporters appear quite committed to his potential candidacy.
- (4) Likely primary voters do not believe it is too late for another candidate to enter the nomination race. Primary voters are extremely open to supporting another candidate if one chooses to declare his or her candidacy.
- (5) A substantial majority of all voters (Democrats, Republicans, and Independents) consider national security or military experience an important quality in a Presidential candidate.
- (6) In a blind biographical poll of Wesley Clark versus the blind biographies of six Democratic candidates, Wesley Clark comes in first.
- (7) In a one-on-one Blind Bio poll of Clark versus Dean, Gephardt, Kerry, and Lieberman, Clark beats Dean and Lieberman and is statistically tied with Kerry and Gephardt.
- (8) In one-on-one contests against the top five Democrats, President George W. Bush appears increasingly vulnerable to defeat in 2004.
- (9) In a blind biographical poll of Wesley Clark versus President George W. Bush, Wesley Clark defeats President Bush by a significant percentage.

A. The Standing of the Democratic Race

Among likely Democratic voters, the results of the Zogby poll conducted between August 16th-19th, 2003 indicate that the Democratic race remains wide open (see Table 1). Among the declared candidates, Howard Dean is now the clear leader among all Democrats. Wesley Clark, however, displays a surprising percentage of support even though he has yet to declare his formal candidacy, raise or spend a single campaign dollar, or conduct any formal campaign. Given the margin of error, however, it is difficult to suggest that a single candidate among the top five candidates is the definitive frontrunner. To the contrary, each of the five leading campaigns – Dean, Gephardt, Lieberman, Kerry, and Clark – are in a position to contend for the Democratic nomination.

¹ Zogby International conducted interviews of 1,019 likely voters chosen at random nationwide. All calls were made from Zogby International headquarters in Utica, N.Y., from Saturday, August 16 to Tuesday August 19, 2003. The margin of error is +/- 3.2% for the overall sample, and +/- 4.1% for the sample of likely Democratic primary voters. Slight weights were added to region, party, age, race, religion and gender in both samples to more accurately reflect the voting population. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

In contrast, the candidacies of a number of other Democrats appear to be in some jeopardy. Specifically, Edwards and Graham have failed to resonate with likely primary voters, and now poll near or at the bottom among the ten Democratic candidates. Among the bottom five candidates – Sharpton, Moseley-Braun, Kucinich, Edwards, and Graham – no candidate has more than 2.7 percent (Sharpton) of support. The increasing division between the top five and bottom five candidates may suggest that likely primary voters are beginning to focus their attentions on a set of candidates (Dean, Gephardt, Lieberman, Kerry, and Clark) that represent a so-called “elite” of the Democratic field. Yet, a definitive statement of which Democratic candidate is viable or not is all but impossible because a significant number of likely primary voters remain undecided.

Question 1: *Thus far, the Democratic candidates for President in 2004 are Wesley Clark, Howard Dean, John Edwards, Richard Gephardt, Bob Graham, John Kerry, Dennis Kucinich, Carol Moseley-Braun, Joe Lieberman, and Al Sharpton. If the primary were held today, for whom would you vote?*

Table 1. Current Standing of the Democratic Race

Zogby Poll: August 16 th -19 th , 2003	Current Standing
Howard Dean	16.6%
Dick Gephardt	11
Joe Lieberman	10.1
John Kerry	9.2
Wesley Clark	4.9
Al Sharpton	2.7
Carol Moseley-Braun	2.1
John Edwards	1.8
Dennis Kucinich	1.8
Bob Graham	1.6
Other	6
Unsure	32
n=584 +/- 4.1%	

The most striking statistic is the high number of undecided voters. With months of campaigning by the respective field of nine candidates, 32 percent of likely primary voters are still unsure whom to support. The high number of undecided suggests that likely Democratic voters remain unconvinced – at this point – by the current policy positions, message, and/or image of the respective candidates. Among likely primary voters, more Independents (36.2%) than Democrats (30.2%) are undecided. The high number of undecided voters indicates that a dramatic change in the position of individual candidates is more than possible. Also, with six critical fall debates preceding the primary season, and months of campaigning still remaining, the standing of the Democratic race may change substantially over the next five months. Essentially, with such high numbers of undecided, no Democratic candidate can even begin to suggest that they are the proverbial “frontrunner.” To the contrary, the number of undecided indicates that no specific candidacy, even those with low standing, can be completely disregarded. As the race evolves, substantial swings in the Democratic race are quite possible. Essentially, the Democratic race remains wide open.

Table 2. Trend of the Democratic Race

Zogby Poll	3/5-7/ 2003	7/16-17/ 2003	8/16-19/ 2003
Howard Dean	4%	12%	16.6%
Dick Gephardt	11	12	11
Joe Lieberman	18	12	10.1
John Kerry	9	9	9.2
Wesley Clark	-	-	4.9
Al Sharpton	4	4	2.7
Carol Moseley Braun	1	2	2.1
John Edwards	4	3	1.8
Dennis Kucinich	1	2	1.8
Bob Graham	1	1	1.6
Other	7	6	6
Undecided	37	39	32
	n=504, +/- 4.4%	n=504, +/-4.4%	n=584, +/-4.1%

In terms of the trend of voter support, the most dramatic change is the position of Howard Dean (see Table 2). Governor Dean has rocketed from a four percent standing in the March 5th-7th, 2003 Zogby poll to 16.6 percent in the current August 16th-19th, 2003 Zogby poll. Among the nine current candidates, only Howard Dean is trending in a positive direction. In comparison, the standing of all other Democratic candidates remains either stagnant or trending in reverse. A similar descriptive trend of support is also evident in Gallup polling of the Democratic race (see Appendix 1). Among the declared candidates, the character of such trending suggests that Dean's message and/or candidacy has increasingly resonated with some Democrats.

Wesley Clark, in comparison, has the support of about five percent of likely primary voters in the Zogby poll. Surprisingly, *Clark is fifth among the current field of candidates, and his level of support exceeds that of Edwards, Graham, Sharpton, Moseley-Braun, and Kucinich.* While the actual percentage of support is small, it is substantial given the lack of a formal Clark campaign or declared candidacy. At present, the trend of support for a Wesley Clark candidacy is impossible to assess without greater data. However, the high number of undecided likely primary voters indicates that a Clark candidacy remains quite viable. Arguably, the high percentage of undecided voters provides a strategic opportunity for a Clark candidacy where if he enters the race, he could effectively challenge for the nomination by gaining the substantial support of the undecided voter.

B. Strength of Support for Democratic Candidates

Determining the relative standing of candidates in an election contest does not always capture the underlying dynamics that affect voter preferences. In other words, while a voter may prefer a particular Democratic candidate, it is also important to assess the strength or intensity of such commitment for that candidate. The intensity of voter support, or how strong one's support is for a candidate, helps gauge the stability of voter preferences.

"Very strong" support, for example, would suggest that likely voters are less likely to change their position or preference for their respective candidate. High-level support would indicate that the voter has a strong bond to a current candidate and clearly prefers that candidate to all others. In terms of the entire field of candidates, the higher level of likely Democratic primary voters who have a "very strong" level of support, the more likely the nomination race will remain stable. In contrast, a lower level of support implies that while the voter may support a respective candidate, there is the possibility that the voter would consider another candidate. Essentially, because such voters are less committed in their support for a candidate, the very nature of a Democratic race can change because of changes in voter preferences.

Question 2: How strong is your support for [insert choice from Q1] – very strong, somewhat strong, or not at all strong?

Table 3. Strength of Support Among All Democratic Likely Primary Voters

	All Likely Primary Voters	Democratic	Independent
Very Strong	32%	33.6%	27.4%
Somewhat Strong	52	51.1	54.7
Not at all Strong	13.6	13	15.5
Not Sure	2.4	2.4	2.5
n=397	+/- 4.1%		

With respect to the current Democratic race, the majority of likely Democratic primary voters (52%) hold only a *somewhat strong* level of support (see Table 3). In comparison, only a third of likely primary voters have a *very strong* level of support. At the lowest level, 13.6 percent of all likely Democratic primary voters have an especially weak level of support. In terms of party identification, Independent voters appear less committed than Democratic voters. Overall, a majority of both Democrats and Independents hold a *somewhat strong* preference for a specific candidate in the nomination race.

In terms of the overall race, the results suggest that a degree of fluidity still exists within the race for the nomination. Because a clear majority of likely Democratic primary voters (65.6%) hold to a “somewhat strong” or “not at all strong” level of support, it is indeed quite possible that voters may come to prefer another candidate as the current Democratic race evolves over the next five months. Basically, these findings reaffirm the position that the race for the Democratic nomination remains in flux because of tepid to weak support for the Democratic candidates.

In terms of the specific candidates, the strength of support provides a different picture of the nomination race (see Table 4). Interestingly, among the top five candidates, Wesley Clark enjoys the highest level of *very strong* support (47.8%). Again, these results are surprising in light of the lack of a formal campaign or a declared candidacy. Among all candidates, Sharpton has the most intense level of support (84.7%). Edwards also enjoys a high level of very strong support that raises some questions as to why his candidacy has not proved more successful. Interestingly, among the four elite candidates with the highest level of support in the field (Dean, Gephardt, Lieberman, and Kerry), only Gephardt is in the top five among candidates with very strong support.

Question 2: How strong is your support for [insert choice from Q1] – very strong, somewhat strong, or not at all strong?

Table 4. Strength of Democratic Support by Candidate

	Overall Primary Standing	Very strong	Somewhat strong	Not at all strong	Not sure
Overall	--	32%	52%	13.6%	2.4%
Sharpton	2.7%	84.7	8.6	6.7	--
Clark	4.9	47.8	44.4	7.7	--
Edwards	1.8	44	48.1	7.9	--
Kucinich	1.8	36.8	63.2	--	--
Gephardt	11	33.7	53	10	3.3
Graham	1,6	28.7	66.9	--	4.4
Kerry	9.2	27.2	56.5	14.4	1.9
Dean	16.6	23.8	55.6	18.9	1.7
Lieberman	10.1	22	54.6	23.4	--
Moseley-Braun	2.1	4.9	95.1	--	--
Other candidate	6	44	33	10.3	12.7
n=397	+/- 4.1%				

Among Dean, Kerry, and Lieberman, the strength of support for each of these candidates is lower than all other candidates except one (Moseley-Braun). Given the high standing of these candidates within various national polls, the lack of very strong support raises questions as to how committed likely Democratic primary voters are to their candidacies. In particular, among likely Howard Dean voters, only 23.8 percent have a *very strong* level of support for his candidacy. This statistic is surprising as it belies the anecdotal evidence that would have suggested, prior to this poll, that Dean supporters would have been among the most strongly committed. For Dean, these results suggest that while a greater percentage of likely Democratic primary voters may prefer his candidacy to the others, they remain unsure how strongly committed they are to his candidacy. In other words, support for Dean is softer than the current polls would capture.

The lack of very strong support for a number of the top tier of Democratic candidates (Dean, Kerry, and Lieberman) implies that while voters may prefer their candidacies to the others, the actual level of commitment remains softer than might be expected. Arguably, a lack of strength of support may explain the dramatic reversal of Lieberman from the clear frontrunner to his current position behind Dean and Gephardt. The surprising strength of support for Wesley Clark suggests a real commitment among those supporting his candidacy. For Clark, if he declares, the potential exists that as voters become aware of his candidacy, they may also become very committed to him. Overall, while likely primary voters do enjoy a somewhat strong level of support for most of their respective candidates, it is open to question how stable such support will prove in the near future. The lack of very strong support among the declared candidates implies that shifts in support are quite possible.

C. Is it too Late to Enter the Race?

One of the most enduring questions facing a possible Wesley Clark candidacy is whether it is still possible to gain the support of likely primary voters.² Clearly, if Democratic voters were unwilling to consider supporting another candidate, then the very notion of a Clark candidacy would be placed in some doubt. According to the Zogby poll, an overwhelming number of likely primary voters would indeed consider supporting another candidate – irrespective of whether it is Wesley Clark or another Democrat who might enter the race.

Question 3: *If another Democratic candidate were to enter the race for the presidential nomination, is it still possible to win your support for that candidate or is it too late?*

Table 5. Is it too Late to Support a New Candidate?

	All Likely Primary Voters	Democratic	Independent
Possible to win support	84.1%	88.8%	72%
Too Late	10	6.1	20.3
Not Sure	5.8	5.1	7.7
n=584	+/- 4.1%		

² A number of comments by pundits and experts have directly questioned whether it is too late for Clark to enter the race. Larry Sabato, for example, suggests that it is already too late: Please see, Linda Feldman, "Can Wesley Clark be the Democrats' Ike?" Christian Science Monitor, August 19th, 2003. www.csmonitor.com. Also, Senator Biden is no longer considering entering the Democratic race, in part, because of the lateness of a possible campaign start. Please see: Edward Walsh, "Biden Won't Enter Presidential Race, Saying it's Too Much of a Long Shot." Washington Post, August 12th, 2003. Page A4.

An overwhelming majority of likely primary voters (84.1%) would consider supporting another candidate if they chose to enter the nomination race at this stage. Interestingly, more Democrats (88.8%) than Independents (72%) are open to supporting another candidate. The results suggest that a strategic opportunity exists for Wesley Clark should he decide to enter the race for the Democratic nomination.

The most formidable obstacle for Clark, which is whether it is still possible to gain the support of a majority of likely primary voters, simply does not exist. A clear opportunity does exist where voters would consider supporting a Clark candidacy. To what extent voters would actually support Clark is difficult to determine.

In sum, the state of the nomination race is indeed wide open and in flux. Taken in context with previous results, the Zogby poll indicates that a substantial percentage of primary voters remain unsure whom to support, that the majority of primary voters who do prefer a Democratic candidate have a somewhat strong level of commitment to that candidate, and that an extremely large percentage of primary voters would consider supporting another Democratic candidate if they chose to enter the race. The results from the first three questions of this Zogby poll describe a race for the Democratic nomination that is still wide open.

D. The Importance of National Security/Military Experience

In light of the events of September 11th, the War in Afghanistan, the War in Iraq, and the ongoing War against Terrorism, both the current Democratic race and the 2004 Presidential election will be defined by the debate over national security issues. Arguably, national security will prove to be the defining theme in the next presidential election. The dilemma facing the Democrats, as emphasized by recent DLC polling by Mark Penn, is the perception that Democrats are not the party of national security.³ In light of the many challenges the nation will face, such a perception may place the Democratic nominee – whomever it should be – in a great disadvantage against a wartime Commander-in-Chief. But how much does national security or military experience matter to the voter?

Question 4: *In general, how important do you think it is that a candidate has national security or military experience to run for President of the United States?*

Table 6. Importance of National Security/Military Experience Among All Likely Voters

	All Likely Voters	Democratic	Republican	Independent
Very Important	25.9%	24.1%	26.1%	28.1%
Somewhat important	47.6	46	52.2	44
Not Important	18.5	20.8	15.5	18.6
Not at All Important	7.5	8.5	5.4	8.8
Not Sure	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.5
n=1019	+/- 3.2%			

A poll of all likely voters confirms the substantial importance a large majority places on national security or military experience when judging a presidential candidate (see Table 6). Specifically, a clear majority of all voters (73.8%) hold the opinion that military or national security experience is a “very” or “somewhat” important quality in a potential candidate for President of the United States. In terms of party identification, more Republicans (78.3%) than Democrats (70.1%) consider it important that a presidential candidate have military or national security experience to run for President. As for the critical independent vote, slightly more Independents (72.1%) than Democrats believe national security or military experience is important.

³ Mark J. Penn, “The Democratic Party and the 2004 Election.” DLC. July 2003

The polling results suggest that any potential Democratic nominee without military or national security experience may be at a disadvantage during the general election. Among the current field, for example, Kerry is the only candidate to have military experience. Other Democratic candidates like Gephardt, Lieberman, Graham, and Edwards, while lacking overt military experience, gain a degree of national security credibility from having served in senior positions in the House and Senate. The candidacy of Howard Dean, because he lacks formal national security and military experience, could be most affected by the importance of national security or military experience for likely voters. If Dean were to win the nomination, the results imply that his candidacy could be negatively impacted if voters, by the time of the general election, still hold the opinion that national security or military experience is important. The challenge for all of the current Democratic candidates is to convince the voter that they have the necessary military or national security experience necessary to defeat a wartime President.

With respect to a potential Wesley Clark candidacy, a substantial level of military and national security experience suggests that Clark would be uniquely positioned among all the current Democratic candidates to win the support of voters who believe that national security/military experience is important. If Wesley Clark were to enter the race, only Clark and Kerry could claim to have both military and national security experience. To what extent Clark's impressive military and national security bona fides translate into a specific level of support among voters is unclear and difficult to gauge. Nevertheless, if voters continue to hold national security/military experience as a factor in which candidate they support, it would imply that a Clark candidacy will benefit from the credibility and experience provided by his extensive military and national security background.

E. Wesley Clark Candidacy – Blind Bio Polling Against a Field of Six Democratic Candidates

Blind biographical polling is a technique used to assess the potential candidacy of a current or future candidate who may have less name recognition or who may confront a field of candidates with substantial name recognition. The value of blind bio polling is that it helps gauge how receptive voters may be to a candidate's history and qualities. Blind bio polling also provides insight into the qualities and characteristics that voters may be looking for in a respective candidate during a given election cycle. Because Wesley Clark is not a declared candidate with no formal campaign, and because Wesley Clark has far less name recognition, blind bio polling was utilized to assess Clark's relative standing to six other Democratic candidates (Dean, Kerry, Lieberman, Gephardt, Edwards, and Graham).⁴

The blind bio poll of a seven Democratic candidate primary field indicates real potential for a Clark candidacy compared to all others (see Table 7). In the question pitting only the candidates' biographies against each other, nearly one in four (22.9%) of likely primary voters would choose Wesley Clark. Both Democrats (23.7%) and Independents (21%) prefer Clark to all other candidates. Overall, based on biographies, the shift in the relative standing of Clark in the current primary race suggests that a Clark candidacy has the potential to be very competitive. At a minimum, Clark's bio appeals most to likely primary voters. Such strength of support toward a Clark bio implies that if Clark does enter the race, he has the opportunity to become a competitive candidate. Specifically, if Clark can capture the attention of the likely primary voters with the apparent attractiveness of his bio, he has the opportunity to translate that initial attention into support for his policy positions. To what extent Clark's political potential becomes political reality will depend on the effectiveness of his formal campaign. Notwithstanding, these results do suggest that Clark represents an appealing image to the Democratic and primary voter – a level of appeal that far exceeds his actual standing in the current polls.

⁴ The six Democratic candidates were selected on the basis of current poll standing and fundraising. Ideally, a blind bio poll with all nine candidates would have been preferred, but time/financial constraints prevented a more extensive survey.

Question 5: *If the primary election for president were held today, for which of the following candidates would you vote – Candidate [insert bio]?*

Table 7. Standing of Select Democratic Field – Comparison Based on Blind Bios

	Blind Bio Primary Standing	Overall Primary Standing
Clark	22.9%	4.9%
Kerry	16.5	9.2
Dean	16.3	16.6
Gephardt	10.9	11
Graham	9.3	1.6
Lieberman	7.6	10.1
Edwards	1.1	1.8
Someone Else	3.9	6
Not Sure	11.6	32
	n=390 +/- 4.1%	n=584 +/- 4.1%

An analysis of the relative standing of all the candidates based on their biographic descriptions presents both a strikingly different, but also a somewhat similar, picture of the current Democratic race (see Table 7). When compared to the actual standing of the Democratic field as determined by name, Clark, Kerry, and Graham show increasing strength against the field of candidates based on bios alone. Given that Kerry and Graham are already declared candidates, such improvements over the current standing in the Democratic race would imply that the potential exists for their candidacies to gain strength. However, such a marked difference between their current standing raises additional questions as to how effective their respective campaigns have been at capturing the support of voters who appear to be attracted to their biographical qualities. With respect to Gephardt, Dean, and Edwards, they capture roughly the same percentage of support in their bios as they do in their current standing in the primary race. Lieberman, however, does display a degree of weakening from his previous position.

F. Wesley Clark Candidacy – One-on-One Blind Bio Polling Against Top Four Democratic Candidates

To further gauge the potential of a Clark candidacy, one-on-one bio polling was conducted against the top four current Democratic contenders (Dean, Gephardt, Kerry, and Lieberman). Again, such blind bio polling offers an insight into how the respective biographical qualities of declared candidates match against the biographical qualities of Wesley Clark (see Table 8).

In one-on-one biographical polling, Clark beats Lieberman and Dean. Against Dean, for example, Clark has the support of a slight majority of Independents (50.4%) and Democrats (50.6%). In contrast, against Lieberman, Clark garners a clear majority of support from Democrats (59.5%), but does not achieve a majority of support among Independents (46.4%).

Question 6: *If the primary election for president were held today, for which of the following two candidates would you vote – Candidate A or B?*

Table 8. One-on-One Biographical Polling – Wesley Clark vs. Select Candidates

	Candidate A (Clark)	Candidate B (Other)	Someone else	Not sure
Candidate A (Clark) vs. Candidate B (Lieberman)	55.8%	25.5%	7.5%	11.1%
Candidate A (Clark) vs. Candidate B (Dean)	50.5	34.9	5.1	9.5
Candidate A (Clark) vs. Candidate A (Gephardt)	41.3	41.6	5.4	11.7
Candidate A (Clark) vs. Candidate A (Kerry)	40.9	42.9	4.7	11.5
n=584 +/- 4.1%				

In a one-on-one bio contest against Kerry and Gephardt, Clark is statistically tied. Based on biographies, the choice between Kerry and Clark proves quite difficult for Democrats and Independents. A slightly greater percentage of Democrats prefer Kerry to Clark, but a slightly greater percentage of Independents prefer Clark to Kerry. In the case of the battle over Independents, a substantial percentage (17.6%) of Independents are unsure whom to support between these two candidates. Similarly, against Gephardt, Clark gains substantial support among Independents (Clark - 43.5% vs. Gephardt - 26.2%), but a critical percentage of Independents remain undecided (17%). Among Democrats, Gephardt garners greater support than does Clark (Clark - 40.5% vs. Gephardt - 47.5%).

Overall, the results of the one-on-one blind bio polling offer insight into how competitive Clark could be against the upper tier of the Democratic field. Against Dean and Lieberman, Clark would seem to have greater appeal for both Democrats and Independents. However, in a contest against Kerry and Gephardt, Democrats and Independents appear to be far more conflicted. From one perspective, these results suggest that the success of a Clark candidacy is by no means a given, but depends greatly on which set of candidates Democrats may have to choose from. To be successful against Kerry and Gephardt, Clark would have to gain the support of a greater percentage of Democrats, and greater support among the substantial number of undecided voters.

Essentially, the prospective viability of a Clark candidacy seems to depend on which candidates the primary voter must choose between. Based on sets of blind bio questions versus the field of Democrats and the elite set of Democrats, the results suggest that a Clark candidacy has the potential to be very competitive. Again, to what extent Clark's actual candidacy is successful depends on whether Clark can translate the apparent attraction likely primary voters have for his biography into a real and substantive electoral support. If Clark is successful in this endeavor, he would prove an especially viable and competitive candidate during the race for the Democratic nomination.

G. Top Five Democratic Candidates vs. President George W. Bush

With over a year before the next presidential election, the race for the White House appears to be tightening. Based on a national sample of likely voters, President Bush fails to gain a majority of voter support against any of the top five Democratic candidates (Dean, Gephardt, Lieberman, Kerry, and Clark). Although President Bush still enjoys a lead in support against the top five Democratic candidates, the President's advantage varies substantially. With less than a year before the next presidential election, and given the percentage of undecided, these results suggest the President is now vulnerable to defeat in 2004 (see Table 9).

Table 9. President Bush vs. Select Democratic Candidates

	Democratic Candidate	Bush	Someone Else	Not Sure
Lieberman	43.2%	48.1%	3%	5.7%
Gephardt	43	48.5	2.9	5.6
Kerry	40.6	49.6	2.2	7.6
Dean	39.8	49.6	2.4	8.3
Clark	37.4	48.6	4.3	9.6
n=1019	+/-3.2%			

Among the Democratic candidates, Lieberman and Gephardt have the highest level of support against the President. Lieberman's standing against the President is aided by surprising support among Republicans (10.6%), but weaker support from Democrats (76.1%) and Independents (38.2%). President Bush, however, is able to gain the support of a substantial number of Democrats (15.9%) and Independents (43.8%). In contrast, Gephardt garners slightly greater support from Independents than President Bush (42.3% vs. 40.9% respectively), but Gephardt also suffers from a lack of party support. Against Gephardt, President Bush is able to gain a small, but critical, percentage of democratic support (15.6%). Interestingly, while Lieberman and Gephardt suffer from a lack of party line support, President Bush achieves a substantial degree of support among Republican voters. In contests against Gephardt and Lieberman, President Bush enjoys nearly 90 percent party line support. Still, if the election were held today, the President would be vulnerable to defeat depending on the shifts in support among undecided voters, and if Gephardt and Lieberman were able to gather greater support among Democrats.

Kerry and Dean, in comparison, are less competitive and have the lowest level of support in a contest with President Bush among the declared elite candidates. As with Gephardt and Lieberman, both Kerry and Dean suffer from a lack of party support. Dean only gains 72.9 percent of Democrats and 36.4 percent of Independents. In comparison, Kerry has 73.9 percent support among Democrats and 37.4 percent among Independents. President Bush, however, gains the support of just over 15 percent of Democrats, and slightly more than 45 percent support among Independents in both contests. Still, an election between Bush and Kerry or Bush and Dean could prove competitive if Kerry and Dean were able to attract greater support among Independents, Democrats, and the undecided.

With respect to Wesley Clark, it is difficult to determine how competitive a contest with President Bush could prove during the general election (see Table 10). Because Wesley Clark has yet to declare his partisan affiliation or declare his candidacy, it is unclear to what extent Clark suffers from poor name recognition in a contest with President Bush. In contrast, Dean, Kerry, Lieberman, and Gephardt have been actively campaigning for months and enjoy a much higher level of name recognition than Clark. Still, even against Clark – who has yet to declare his candidacy – President Bush fails to gain the support of a majority of likely voters. Also, nearly 10 percent of voters are undecided as to whether to support Clark or Bush.

Table 10. Wesley Clark vs. President George W. Bush: Breakdown by Party ID

	All Likely Voters	Democratic	Republican	Independent
Wesley Clark	37.4%	70.5%	4.5%	32.3%
George W. Bush	48.6	16.2	90.9	40.3
Other	4.3	4.6	1.4	7.4
Not Sure	9.6	8.7	3.1	19.9
n=1019 +/-3.2%				

Compared to other candidates, Clark enjoys a lower level of support among Democratic voters (70.5%). This may be explained in part by the lack of name recognition among some Democratic voters or a reluctance of Democrats to support a candidate who yet to declare whether he will run for the nomination. Clark gains the support of 32.3 percent of Independents, but 19.9 percent of Independents remain undecided whether to support Clark or Bush. As with previous Democratic candidates, the President is able to add to his relative standing by gaining the support of Democratic voters (16.2%).

Although more than a year still remains before the next general election, the one-on-one poll results indicate that the race for the White House is becoming more competitive. At a minimum, a failure to gain the support of a majority of voters against any Democrat (even an undeclared candidate), coupled with the number of undecided, suggests that likely voters are becoming conflicted over whether to support the President or a Democrat in 2004. For the Democrats, the opportunity to win back the White House is emerging. However, the consistent high level of support among Republicans for the President, coupled with a consistent failure to achieve similar levels of support among Democrats, suggests that a Democratic candidate must increase support among Democrats if he or she is to effectively challenge the President for the White House.

H. Wesley Clark Blind Bio vs. President George W. Bush

Because of Wesley Clark's lack of name recognition, and in order to more accurately assess the viability of a Clark candidacy against President Bush, an additional blind bio poll tested Clark's biography against President Bush.

Question 7: *If the presidential election were held today, which of the following two candidates would you vote to be the next president? The Democratic candidate is a former four-star general and NATO supreme commander during the Clinton Administration. He was first in his class at West Point, a Rhodes Scholar, is a decorated Vietnam Veteran, and is a national security expert. He is a successful businessman leading the effort to reduce our dependence on oil. Is a moderate on domestic policy issues and is from the South. The Republican candidate is George W. Bush.*

Table 11. Wesley Clark Bio vs. President George W. Bush

	All Likely Voters	Democratic	Republican	Independent
The Democrat Bio – (Wesley Clark)	49.4%	84.2%	10.7%	49.7%
George W. Bush	40.2	9.6	80.3	32.5
Other	2.6	2	1.8	4.4
Not Sure	7.8	4.2	7.3	13.4
n=1019 +/-3.2%				

The results of the blind bio of Wesley Clark versus President Bush are striking (see Table 11). When likely voters were asked to choose between a Democratic candidate with Clark's bio and President George W. Bush, nearly 50 percent of likely voters in a national election prefer the Clark-type candidacy to a sitting President of the United States. Previous levels of support the President enjoyed among Democrats, Republicans, and Independents decline substantially – seemingly collapsing. The President's support among Republicans declines by 10 percent and the number of Republican undecided almost doubles. For Clark, the support among Democrats, Republicans, and Independents increases dramatically. Clark's support among Democrats increases from 70.5 percent to 84.2 percent. Additionally, Clark's support among Republicans more than doubles, and nearly 50 percent of Independents would prefer Clark to President Bush. Essentially, the President's level of support among critical bases of support almost seem to collapse if, it seems, voters are offered a viable alternative.

Summary

The results of the Zogby poll provide interesting insights into the viability of a Wesley Clark candidacy. Without question, the race for the Democratic nomination remains wide open. With such a significant number of undecided, a Clark candidacy cannot be immediately discounted. To the contrary, while Clark's percentage of support may be small, his position among the top five Democratic candidates is surprising. Without any formal campaign, Clark's position is higher than candidates (like Graham and Edward) who have established serious campaigns to win the nomination. The poll results also question the premise, put forth by many pundits, that it is "too late to enter the race." Overall, when one considers the somewhat soft strength of support Democratic candidates enjoy, as well as the number of likely primary voters who are open to the possibility of supporting a new candidate, it appears that the race for the Democratic nomination is, arguably, as wide open now as it was months ago.

Against the Democratic field, the blind bio polling suggests that a Clark candidacy has a potential attraction for likely primary voters. While a bio, in and of itself, cannot determine how effective or successful a Wesley Clark candidacy could be, the results do suggest real potential for Clark to be competitive. As stated previously, if Clark can translate this political potential into political reality, Clark will prove a substantial Democratic candidate and a contender for the Democratic nomination.

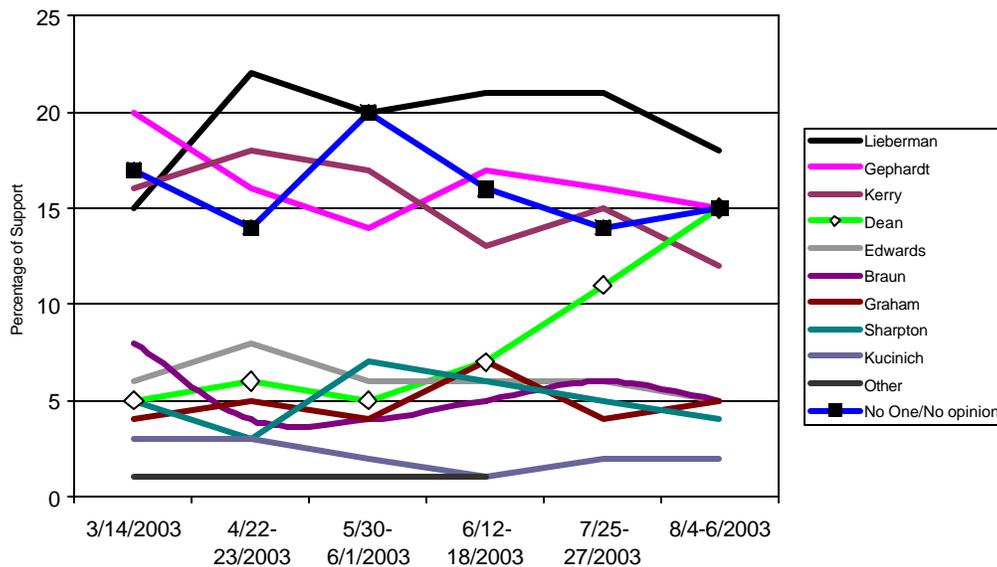
In terms of the race for the White House, the President displays a degree of weakness against a select Democratic field. Against the top five Democratic candidates, the President fails to gain a majority of likely voter support. The President, in one-on-one contests with Lieberman, Gephardt, Dean, Kerry, and Clark, is bolstered by substantial support from Republicans and surprising support from a critical percentage of Democrats. For Democrats, irrespective of who the nominee is, increasing support among fellow Democrats and Independents will be instrumental to determining their competitiveness against President Bush.

With respect to Wesley Clark, in the one-on-one contest with President Bush, Clark performs, almost as well as both Dean and Kerry. Interestingly, even without a declared candidacy, and far less name recognition, the President is still unable to gain the support of a majority of likely voters. The most significant results, arguably, are those of the one-on-one contest between a Clark bio and President Bush. Clark defeats the President by a significant percentage – one of the first Democrats to do so in such a resounding fashion. While such results do not mean that Wesley Clark would defeat the President, it does suggest Clark has the potential to be the type of candidate a majority of voters are willing to prefer over President Bush. Of course, the real challenge for Wesley Clark will be to translate his political potential into political reality. If Wesley Clark can exploit this unique opportunity by entering what is a wide open Democratic race, and if he can translate this potential into reality, it is quite possible that General Wesley Clark could indeed become the next Democratic nominee and the President of the United States.

Appendix – Trend of Support Gallup Data

Nationally, none of the current nine Democratic candidates, not Governor Howard Dean, Senator Joe Lieberman, Senator John Kerry, Senator Bob Graham, Congressman Dick Gephardt, Senator John Edwards, Congressman Dennis Kucinich, Rev. Al Sharpton, or former Ambassador Carol Moseley-Braun, have yet to emerge as the frontrunner or dominant political candidate. Interestingly, none of the six congressional candidates – even with some very impressive professional accomplishments and political networks – have been able to capture the attention or support from wide swaths of Democratic voters. Among the nine candidates, only the campaign of the former governor of Vermont Howard Dean, who many pundits thought had little chance back in January 2003 when his polls numbers were at 3 percent, can be thought of as surging forward.⁵ Aside from Dean's growing trend of support, the state of the Democratic race can be accurately described as divided among campaigns that are, at best, either truly stagnant or trending in reverse (see Figure 1). As of yet, the Gallup polls do not have data on Wesley Clark.

Figure 1 -The Trend of Democratic Public Opinion



⁵ Howard Dean's national support among Democrats in January and February 2003 ranged between 3 and 5 percent. For a review of the select Zogby and Gallup polls, please go to www.pollingreport.com/wh04dem.htm, www.zogby.com, and www.gallup.com.

Appendix 2 – List of Bios

(Clark) “A” was a former four-star general and NATO supreme commander during the Clinton Administration. He was first in his class at West Point, a Rhodes Scholar, is a decorated Vietnam Veteran, and is a national security expert. He is a successful businessman leading the effort to reduce our dependence on oil. Is a moderate on domestic policy issues and is from the South.

(Lieberman) “B” is a senator from a northeastern state who is widely regarded as a centrist and the moral voice of the party. He stood on the senate floor and was critical of Bill Clinton during the impeachment scandal. This candidate is willing to defy party leaders by recommending reforms like school vouchers. He would be the first Jewish nominee.

(Kerry) “C” is a decorated Vietnam War veteran who is generally considered a liberal. He is regarded as articulate on a wide range of issues. He supported the war in Iraq, but is now critical of how the Bush administration is handling the aftermath. He has been a state attorney general, a lieutenant governor, and has been a United States senator from a northeastern state for 20 years.

(Gephardt) “D” has run for president before and receives strong support from labor unions. He is a congressman from a Midwestern state and has been both majority and minority leader in the House of Representatives. He is the first candidate to propose an extensive health care reform package.

(Dean) “E” is a physician and has served as lieutenant governor and until recently, was governor of a small New England state. He is running as a liberal, campaigning as a populist. He steadfastly opposed the war in Iraq and he signed a bill into law allowing civil unions for gay couples. He attracts large crowds and has surprised pundits with his recent success in raising money.

(Edwards) “F” is a first term senator from a southern state. He is young and is a successful trial lawyer. He is running a populist campaign, though he is regarded as a centrist in the party. He supported the war in Iraq and has raised a lot of money in the first two quarters.

(Graham) “G” is a senator from a large and important southern state. He has served as a state senator, a governor, and has now been in the United States senate for 17 years. He is critical of the Bush administration on homeland security and is the only senator running who did not support the war in Iraq. Once a month he spends time doing different jobs like waiting on tables, general laborer, etc. to better understand how regular people live.