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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Andrew Kohut, Director
Carroll Doherty, Editor

But 'Embeds' Viewed Favorably
TV COMBAT FATIGUE ON THE RISE

Wall-to-wall media reports on the war in Iraq have not resulted in significant improvement in the public's view of the media's coverage of this war compared with the first Persian Gulf conflict. However, there are signs that 24-7 televised images of war are taking an increasing psychological toll. In recent days, more than four-in-ten (42%) expressed the view that "It tires me out to watch" TV coverage of the war, up from about one-in-three who agreed with that statement in the early days of the conflict.

There also have been notable increases in the numbers reporting other emotional reactions to watching coverage of the war. Over the past three days (March 25-27), 67% said they felt sad when they watched war coverage, up from 56% during the first days of the conflict (March 20-22). Similarly, the proportion who said it was "frightening" to watch war coverage increased from 45% to 58% over the same period.

The Pew Research Center's tracking poll on war opinion shows that, in general, public evaluations of war coverage are not much different than they were a dozen years ago during the first Persian Gulf War. Three-in-ten Americans say they have a great deal of confidence in the accuracy of war reports, while 51% have a fair amount of confidence. Similarly, about three-quarters give the coverage a rating of excellent (34%) or good (41%). In both cases, opinion is about the same as it was in late January 1991, during the air war in Iraq (and prior to the start of the ground campaign).

Personal Toll Rises, Public Grows Weary			
	-----March-----		
	20-22	23-24	25-27
	%	%	%
<i>Have felt depressed</i>			
Yes	30	35	40
No	69	63	59
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Feel sad when watching</i>			
Agree	56	63	67
Disagree	41	34	31
Don't know	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Tires me out to watch</i>			
Agree	33	31	42
Disagree	64	68	56
Don't know	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Frightening to watch</i>			
Agree	45	51	58
Disagree	51	46	40
Don't know	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100
Number of cases	(903)	(592)	(539)

More Americans have a great deal of confidence in the accuracy of military reports on the war than they do in media coverage (40% vs. 30%), though overall positive assessments for the military and media are similar. The number expressing a high degree of confidence in military reports also has risen since the first Persian Gulf War (40% now, 29% then).

Initial public reactions to the practice of news organizations embedding journalists with the troops have been favorable, though not overwhelmingly so. Nearly six-in-ten think it is a good thing that TV and newspaper reporters are traveling with U.S. forces and filing dispatches from the field, while a third say it is a bad thing.

A sample of respondents who took a negative view of the practice of embedding journalists with military forces were asked why they felt this way. Most said they felt that the reporters were providing too much information. Among these, many expressed concerns that the coverage provides intelligence to the enemy that could compromise the military campaign, while about an equal number suggested that the coverage was not good for Americans to see, or was just “too much.”

A number of people also said they worried about the dangers confronting the reporters themselves, and a few expressed concern that journalists may hinder or encumber the troops. Only a few people thought the presence of journalists with U.S. forces would result in biased reports, either in favor of the war or against it.

Most Like ‘Embeds,’ Press Ratings Same as 1991			
	Jan	Mar	
<i>Quality of</i>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>Today</u>
<i>media coverage</i>	%	%	%
Excellent	36	45	34
Good	42	38	41
Fair	15	11	16
Poor	5	5	7
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Embedded reporters are...</i>			
Good thing	--	--	58
Bad thing	--	--	34
Don't know	--	--	<u>8</u>
			100
<i>Confidence in press accuracy</i>			
Great deal	26	--	30
Fair amount	59	--	51
Not much	13	--	15
Don't know	<u>2</u>	--	<u>4</u>
	100		100
<i>Confidence in military accuracy</i>			
Great deal	29	44	40
Fair amount	58	46	44
Not much	11	9	12
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100	100

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Results for the *Late March War Tracking* survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 2,034 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period March 20-27, 2003. Results are reported separately for the periods of March 20-22 (N=903), March 23-24 (N=592), and March 25-27 (N=539). In addition, certain questions were asked only for the period of March 24-27 (N=814).

For results based on March 20-22 and March 24-27, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 4 percentage points. For results based on March 23-24 and March 25-27, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 4.5 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

The sample for this survey is a random digit sample of telephone numbers selected from telephone exchanges in the continental United States. The sample was released for interviewing in replicates, with fresh replicates introduced on each night of the tracking poll, and retired from the sample after five nights of interviewing. Non-response in telephone interview surveys produces some known biases in survey-derived estimates because participation tends to vary for different subgroups of the population, and these subgroups are likely to vary also on questions of substantive interest. In order to compensate for these known biases and ensure that tracking trends are not unduly influenced by demographic variation across the field period, the sample data for each period of the tracking poll (March 20-22, 23-24 and 25-27) are weighted to approximate the demographic parameters derived from the most recently available Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (March 2002).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
LATE MARCH 2003 WAR TRACKING
FINAL TOPLINE
March 20 - 27, 2003
March 20-22, 2003 N=903
March 23-24, 2003 N=592
March 25-27, 2003 N=539

PRC6 In general, how would you rate the job the press has done in covering the war in Iraq...excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<i>March 25-27, 2003</i>	34	41	16	7	2=100
<i>March 23-24, 2003</i>	34	42	14	5	5=100
<i>March 20-22, 2003</i>	42	38	11	4	5=100
December, 2001 ¹	32	45	15	5	3=100
Mid-November, 2001	30	47	16	5	2=100
Mid-October, 2001	32	42	17	6	3=100
Early October, 2001	48	37	10	3	2=100
Mid-September, 2001	56	33	6	3	2=100
March, 1991	45	38	11	5	1=100
Late January, 1991	36	42	15	5	2=100

ASKED MARCH 24-27, 2003 ONLY [N=814]:

REP1 How much confidence do you have that the U.S. military is giving the public an accurate picture of how the war is going?

		Afghanistan		
		Mid-Nov <u>2001</u>	March <u>1991</u>	Late Jan <u>1991</u>
40	A great deal of confidence	28	44	29
44	A fair amount of confidence	52	46	58
12	Not too much/No confidence at all	17	9	11
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
100		100	100	100

REP2 How much confidence do you have that the press is giving the public an accurate picture of how the war is going?

		Late Jan <u>1991</u>
30	A great deal of confidence	26
51	A fair amount of confidence	59
15	Not too much/No confidence at all	13
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>
100		100

¹ From Mid-October to December 2001, the question was worded "...covering the terrorist attacks and the war against terrorism." In Early October and Mid-September 2001 the question was worded "...covering the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon?" In March and Late January 1991 the question was worded "...covering the War in the Gulf."

ASK ALL:

PRC8 Have you yourself felt depressed by the war in Iraq?

----March 2003----				Early	Mid-	Early	Mid-	Late
<u>25-27</u>	<u>23-24</u>	<u>20-22</u>		Nov	Oct	Oct	Sept	Jan
				<u>2001²</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>1991</u>
40	35	30	Yes	24	31	42	71	50
59	63	69	No	75	66	57	27	49
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	1
100	100	100		100	100	100	100	100

PRC11 I'd like to ask you a few questions about how you feel when you are watching coverage of the war on TV.³
For each statement that I read tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

[ROTATE. READ STATEMENT.]

	Strongly			Strongly	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a. I can't stop watching news about the war					
<i>March 25-27, 2003</i>	14	27	47	10	2=100
<i>March 23-24, 2003</i>	11	31	46	9	3=100
<i>March 20-22, 2003</i>	12	27	45	12	4=100
Mid-October, 2001	17	32	39	8	4=100
Mid-September, 2001	24	39	30	4	3=100
Late January, 1991	11	39		48	2=100
b. I feel sad when watching					
<i>March 25-27, 2003</i>	23	44	24	7	2=100
<i>March 23-24, 2003</i>	20	43	28	6	3=100
<i>March 20-22, 2003</i>	15	41	30	11	3=100
Mid-September, 2001	47	45	5	1	2=100
Late January, 1991	22	52		25	1=100
c. It's frightening to watch					
<i>March 25-27, 2003</i>	17	41	32	8	2=100
<i>March 23-24, 2003</i>	13	38	38	8	3=100
<i>March 20-22, 2003</i>	12	33	38	13	4=100
Mid-October, 2001	26	43	26	3	2=100
Mid-September, 2001	33	44	19	2	2=100
Late January, 1991	17	50		32	1=100
d. It tires me out to watch					
<i>March 25-27, 2003</i>	10	32	43	13	2=100
<i>March 23-24, 2003</i>	7	24	57	11	1=100
<i>March 20-22, 2003</i>	7	26	50	14	3=100
Mid-September, 2001	12	33	43	8	4=100
Late January, 1991	6	28		64	2=100

² In Early November and Mid-October 2001 the question was worded "...concerns about terrorist attacks or the war against terrorism?" In Early October and Mid-September 2001, the question was worded " ...the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon?"

³ In 2001 the question was worded, "...coverage of terrorism on TV."

PRC11 Continued...

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
e. The war doesn't seem real					
<i>March 25-27, 2003</i>	9	22	46	21	2=100
<i>March 23-24, 2003</i>	6	17	51	23	3=100
<i>March 20-22, 2003</i>	8	21	45	23	3=100
Late January, 1991	7	26		66	1=100

ASKED MARCH 24-27, 2003 ONLY [N=814]:

REP3 Television and newspaper reporters are traveling with allied military forces in Iraq and submitting dispatches from combat areas. Do you think it's a good thing or a bad thing that reporters are doing this?

58 Good thing
 34 Bad thing
8 Don't know/Refused
 100

REP4 This weekend, Iraqi television showed videotape of U.S. soldiers who were being held as prisoners of war. In general, do you think that American television networks should or should not broadcast videotape of American prisoners of war?

		<u>Aug 1989⁴</u>
37	Should	43
58	Should not	50
<u>5</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>7</u>
100		100

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In August 1989 the question was worded "Many news programs ran a videotape showing the hanging of Marine Lt. Col. William Higgins by his captors in Lebanon. Do you think these news organizations acted properly or improperly in showing the tape?"