

FOR RELEASE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 11

Times Mirror News Interest Index
January 1990

Public Interest and
Awareness of the News

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Donald S. Kellermann, Director
Carol Bowman, Research Director
Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press
202/293-3126

HIGHLIGHTS AND ANALYSIS

In December, Americans paid great attention to the invasion of Panama. News of the Romanian revolution, however, attracted only a modest level of public interest. While sixty percent of the public followed events in Panama very closely, only 28% said that they were very attentive to the violent overthrow of the Ceausescu government. News about the on-going political changes in East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary got as much attention from the public as did the Romanian bloodbath (29%).

Fifty six percent believe that the invasion of Panama was the most important thing to happen last month. Political change in East Bloc countries, generally, (18%) and the revolution in Romania, specifically, (5%) are cited by a significantly lower number of Americans.

When asked to recall names of people in the news the public followed the same pattern. General Noriega attracts the most public attention (76%). His adversary, George Bush ranks second (58%). Gorbachev and Ceausescu are mentioned as newsmakers by 16% and 12%, respectively.

Even though events in Panama and Europe were seen as the most important ones of the month, news about drugs was the followed very closely by 38% of the public, making it the second most closely followed story during this period. Other domestic and foreign stories received considerably less attention from people of all ages. Only 22% followed very closely news about the letter bombing of Federal judges - interest was marginally greater in the South - 27%.

For most Americans the surprise trip of National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft and Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger to China in December remained a secret. Six percent said they followed the story very closely and another 18% said they followed the controversial visit fairly closely. The "fairly" closely response is regarded as a soft measure of attentiveness, but even at that, fewer than one in four Americans registered awareness of the China visit. Attention to this important foreign policy event is only marginally more extensive among the demographic groups who pay the most attention to such news (35% of those over 50 years of age paid at least some attention to the story, as did 33% of college graduates). The only element of the public to take note of the trip in significant numbers were those who are regular consumers of public media and quality magazines (see below).

News about the NFL playoffs was followed very closely by about the same number of Americans (27%) as those who paid close attention to events in Eastern and Central Europe. **Among Americans under 30 years of age, interest in the playoffs (39%) was higher than interest in all stories, domestic or foreign, except for Panama.** Interest in news about the

NFL playoffs is well above interest recorded in the baseball playoffs in October (20%) and even ahead of interest in the World Series this year (23%).

With the invasion of Panama at center stage for most Americans, General Noriega and his fortunes and fall was the dominant element in the story. Fifty two percent say they closely followed news about the former strong man and efforts to bring him into custody. The actual fighting between American forces and the PDF was followed very closely by one third of the public. At the same time relatively few (14%) report paying close attention to news about the new Panamanian government or to news about the US break in at the Nicaraguan Ambassador's residence (16%). Just about half the public paid any attention at all to these aspects of the Panamanian invasion story.

The public's information level about Panama is spotty. Only a minority of Americans can say in what way control of the Panama Canal will change in the future. Thirty six percent can volunteer that the Panamanian's will take over control, 18% give an incorrect answer, and 46% say they don't know. Men and college educated Americans were much more likely to know that the canal comes under Panamanian control in 1999 than are women and those without college training. (Sixty five% of college trained males are able to say, compared to 16% of women without college training.)

The extent of public attention to the invasion story is reflected in the fact that most Americans (82%) know that Noriega took refuge with the papal nuncio before turning himself in. However, relatively few (17%) could identify JCS Chairman Colin Powell.

The Times Mirror News Interest Index finds a surprisingly high level of knowledge about the outcome of the Romanian revolution, given the modest level of attention shown to the story. Sixty six percent know that the Romanian revolution succeeded and 70% can describe the fate of Ceausescu. However, the relatively modest level of interest in the on-going political changes in Czechoslovakia was matched by the fact that only one in ten Americans can correctly identify Vaclav Havel, the new President of Czechoslovakia.

The press got better than average marks for its coverage of the war in Panama and for coverage of political changes in Eastern and Central Europe. More than three in ten rated press coverage as excellent, compared to the 20% to 25% who typically so rate coverage of a major news story. However, there is some criticism of the press for over-covering Panama. Nineteen percent feel the press has devoted too much coverage to the Panamanian invasion. One in five (19%) feel that news organizations were too critical of the American military's actions, 9% feel the press was not critical enough, while the vast majority of the public believes the coverage was objective.

Beginning with this report the Times Mirror News Interest Index will highlight how specific groups among the public at large react to news, and what news they are following. In the current survey, we focus on a segment of the public that we call 'serious news consumers'. This group consists of those who report that they read newspapers and watch television news regularly and who identify themselves as part of the regular audience of Mc Neil Leher, NPR news programs such as Morning Edition and All Things Considered or say they are regular readers of magazines such as the New Yorker, the Atlantic or Harpers.

Serious news consumers by this definition represent only about one in ten Americans (11% in this survey). As might be expected this group is disproportionately college trained and contains a greater than average proportion of men, older people and those living the East and Far West.

In most cases serious news consumers are two to three times as likely to follow a story closely as are other Americans. A majority of the serious news group followed each of the major international stories very closely, with 83% saying they followed the Invasion story closely, 56% Romania and 58% other Central and Eastern European news. It is noteworthy that the trip of American officials to China was followed very closely by 14% of this group but a majority paid at least some attention to it. The NFL playoffs was the only story that attracted the same level of attention among serious news consumers and other Americans.

<u>Stories Covered By News Organizations</u>	<u>SERIOUS NEWS CONSUMERS</u>	<u>ALL OTHER RESPS.</u>
Invasion of Panama	83	58
Political Changes taking place in Eastern and Central Europe	58	26
Revolution in Romania	56	24
NFL Playoffs	27	26
Letter bombings of federal judges	31	21
Trip of high ranking American officials to China fairly closely	14 38	5 16
Drug use and efforts to combat it	52	36
Sample Size	(142)	(1065)

Serious news consumers make different judgements as to what were the most important events of December. They are almost as likely to see the European stories as important as to regard the invasion of Panama. Among other Americans, the invasion of Panama was the important story of the month, almost to the exclusion of European news.

<u>Most Important News Event</u>	<u>SERIOUS NEWS CONSUMERS</u>	<u>ALL OTHER RESPS.</u>
The invasion of Panama	47	58
The political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany	33	15
The revolution in Romania	9	4
Other	6	10
Can't Say	5 <u>100</u>	13 <u>100</u>

Serious news consumers are better informed about people in the news and about important news concepts; yet, Colin Powell and Vaclav Havel are hardly household names even to this group and the proportion able to describe how control of the Panama Canal is to change in the future is barely over 50%.

	<u>SERIOUS NEWS CONSUMERS</u>	<u>ALL OTHER RESPS.</u>
<u>Identified Colin Powell</u>		
Gave correct answer	39	14
Don't know	$\frac{61}{100}$	$\frac{86}{100}$
<u>Identified Vaclav Havel</u>		
Gave correct answer	25	8
Don't Know	$\frac{75}{100}$	$\frac{92}{100}$

	SERIOUS NEWS CONSUMERS	ALL OTHER RESPS.
<u>What happened to Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu?</u>		
Correct answer	86	68
Incorrect answer	4	4
Don't know	$\frac{10}{100}$	$\frac{28}{100}$
<u>Where General Manuel Noriega took refuge to escape capture by American troops</u>		
Correct answer	90	81
Incorrect answer	5	4
Don't know	$\frac{5}{100}$	$\frac{15}{100}$
<u>Panama Canal's Future</u>		
Correct answer	56	34
Incorrect answer	15	18
Don't know	$\frac{29}{100}$	$\frac{48}{100}$

The press gets better grades from people who represent the audience for public radio, public television and among those who read quality magazines. Forty one percent rated press performance as excellent compared to 30% among other Americans. However, serious news consumers were more apt than others to be critical of the way the press covered the American military. Rating the press as objective is only 57% among this group compared to 68% among others. Increased criticism comes in the form of feeling that the press was not critical enough of the military's actions.

	SERIOUS NEWS CONSUMERS	ALL OTHER RESPS.
<u>Press Performance</u>		
Excellent	42	30
Good	37	47
Only Fair	13	14
Poor	4	3
Don't Know	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>
	100	100

News organizations too critical
of American military's action
in Panama

Too critical	23	18
Not critical enough	16	8
About right	57	68
Don't know	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>
	100	100

% FOLLOWING EACH NEWS STORY "VERY CLOSELY"

	<u>Invasion of Panama</u>	<u>Political Changes in Eastern and Central Europe</u>	<u>Revolution In Romania</u>	<u>NFL Playoffs</u>	<u>Letter Bombings of Federal Judges</u>	<u>Trip of High Ranking American Officials To China</u>	<u>Drugs</u>
Total	60	29	28	27	22	6	38
<u>Sex</u>							
Male	66	33	33	37	22	6	37
Female	56	26	23	18	22	6	39
<u>Race</u>							
White	61	30	27	26	20	6	37
Non-white	57	24	29	34	32	9	46
<u>Age</u>							
Under 30	62	24	19	39	20	3	31
30-49	60	28	27	26	18	5	39
50+	61	33	34	21	27	10	42
<u>Education</u>							
College graduate	65	41	36	22	21	8	31
Other college	67	35	34	36	30	7	43
High school graduate	59	23	23	28	21	4	41
Less than h.s. grad.	50	23	21	22	17	7	35
<u>Region</u>							
East	58	28	29	26	20	4	41
Midwest	60	27	25	28	18	6	37
South	62	29	27	29	27	8	40
West	62	34	29	25	20	7	32
<u>Party ID</u>							
Republican	64	32	27	30	20	6	36
Democrat	55	26	28	26	24	6	41
Independent	62	30	27	25	21	7	38

Question: Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely.

PRESS COVERAGE RATINGS OF NEWS STORIES

	<u>STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY</u>				
	<u>Invasion of Panama</u>	<u>Political Changes in Eastern and Central Europe</u>	<u>Revolution in Romania</u>	<u>NFL Playoffs</u>	<u>Drug Use</u>
Excellent	38	35	24	27	20
Good	48	49	49	58	40
Only Fair	12	12	13	13	29
Poor	1	2	8	2	10
Don't know	<u>1</u> 100	<u>2</u> 100	<u>6</u> 100	<u>0</u> 100	<u>1</u> 100
Sample Size	(651)	(156)	(91)	(97)	(119)

PRESS PERFORMANCE

	<u>May 1989</u>	<u>July 1989</u>	<u>August 1989</u>	<u>September 1989</u>	<u>October 1989</u>	<u>November 1989</u>	<u>December 1989</u>
Excellent	19%	26%	25%	19%	32%	41%	22%
Good	43	42	45	50	45	41	45
Only Fair	24	21	21	22	18	13	25
Poor	10	10	8	7	3	3	6
Don't Know	<u>4</u> 100%	<u>1</u> 100%	<u>1</u> 100%	<u>2</u> 100%	<u>2</u> 100%	<u>2</u> 100%	<u>2</u> 100%
	Jan 1990						
Excellent	33						
Good	48						
Only Fair	14						
Poor	3						
Don't Know	<u>2</u> 100						

Question: In general, how would you rate the job the press has done in covering (STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY IN Q.6); excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

% FOLLOWING EACH NEWS STORY "VERY CLOSELY"

	<u>Fighting between American Troops and Noriega Loyalists</u>	<u>News About the New Panamanian Government</u>	<u>General Noriega and Efforts Take Him into American Custody</u>	<u>U. S. break in and Search of Ni caraguan Ambassador' s Residence</u>
Total	32	14	52	16
<u>Sex</u>				
Male	39	16	56	19
Female	25	13	48	13
<u>Race</u>				
White	31	14	52	15
Non-white	34	16	49	17
<u>Age</u>				
Under 30	30	10	52	13
30-49	30	12	50	15
50+	35	19	54	19
<u>Education</u>				
College graduate	32	16	55	19
Other college	34	15	57	22
High school graduate	30	14	51	15
Less than h. s. grad.	31	12	44	7
<u>Region</u>				
East	31	15	53	16
Midwest	28	14	52	15
South	37	14	54	15
West	28	13	49	18
<u>Party ID</u>				
Republican	31	13	54	17
Democrat	28	14	48	13
Independent	35	16	54	17

Question: You said earlier that you've been following news about Panama closely. I'd like to ask you a few more questions about this. How closely have you followed news about (ITEM BELOW) very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted by The Gallup Organization under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among 1,207 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period of January 4-7, 1990. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3 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 QUESTIONNAIRE

Times Mirror
 News Interest Index
 January 4-7, 1990
 n = 1,207

Q.1 What do you think is the most important news event that happened in the nation or in the world last month - in December?

- 56 The invasion of Panama
- 18 The political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany
- 4 The revolution in Romania
- 1 Drug use and efforts to combat it
- * The trip of high ranking American officials to China
- * The letter bombings of federal judges
- 0 The NFL playoffs
- 8 Other
- $\frac{13}{100}$ Can't say

Q.2 Can you tell me the names of any people who have been in the news a lot lately?

- 76 General Noriega
- 58 George Bush
- 16 Mikhail Gorbachev
- 12 Nicolae Ceausescu
- 2 David Dinkins
- 2 Zsa Zsa Gabor
- 2 Barbara Bush/Bush Family
- 1 Dan Quayle
- 1 Jim and Tammy Bakker
- 1 Vaclav Havel
- 21 Other
- 10 Don't know/Refused/Can't say

Q.3 Do you happen to know who Colin Powell is?

23 Yes -----> (IF "YES" ASK:) Who is he? (DO NOT READ)

+QNo
77S1
*

17 Joint Chief of Staff, Army
General - related answer

$\frac{100}{100}$.QDon't Know

4 Incorrect answer

$\frac{2}{23}$ Don't know

Q.4 Do you happen to know who Vaclav Havel is? (PRONUNCIATION VATS SLAV HOVEL)

15 Yes -----> (IF "YES" ASK:) Who is he? (DO NOT READ)

+QNo

10 Czech Leader - related answers

85S1

*
 $\frac{100}{100}$.QDon't know

4 Incorrect answer

$\frac{1}{15}$ Don't know

Q.5 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. **(READ AND ROTATE LIST)**

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK</u>
a. The invasion of Panama	60	31	6	2	1 = 100
b. The political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany	29	40	15	15	1 = 100
c. The Revolution in Romania	28	39	18	15	* = 100
d. The NFL playoffs	27	18	15	39	1 = 100
e. The letter bombings of federal judges	22	41	22	15	* = 100
f. The trip of high ranking American officials to China	6	18	35	40	1 = 100
g. Drug use and efforts to combat it	38	42	13	6	1 = 100

0.6 Which one of the stories I just mentioned, have you followed most closely? (DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.)

	<u>Story Followed Most Closely</u>
a. The invasion of Panama	55
b. The political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany	12
c. The Revolution in Romania	7
d. The NFL playoffs	8
e. The letter bombings of federal judges	3
f. The trip of high ranking American officials to China	*
g. Drug use and efforts to combat it	10
CAN'T SAY	<u>5</u>
	100

0.7 Of all the stories mentioned, which of them, if any, received too much coverage? (DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)

	<u>Received Too Much Coverage</u>
a. The invasion of Panama	19
b. The political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany	5
c. The Revolution in Romania	3
d. The NFL playoffs	8
e. The letter bombings of federal judges	2
f. The trip of high ranking American officials to China	3
g. Drug use and efforts to combat it	3
h. None	47
CAN'T SAY	13

IF RESPONDENT SAID '0' CAN'T SAY IN Q.6, SKIP TO Q.9

Q.8 In general, how would you rate the job the press has done in covering (STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY IN Q.8); excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY

		Invasion of Panama	Political Changes in Eastern and Central Europe	Revolution in Romania	NFL Playoffs	Drug Use	
33	Excellent	38	35	24	27		20
48	Good	48	49	49	58		40
14	Only Fair	12	12	13	13		29
3	Poor	1	2	8	2		10
$\frac{2}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{1}{100}$	$\frac{2}{100}$	$\frac{6}{100}$	$\frac{0}{100}$		$\frac{1}{100}$
		(651)	(156)	(91)	(97)	(119)	

IF RESPONDENT SAID '1' OR '2' VERY OR FAIRLY CLOSELY IN Q.5 ASK:

Q.9 You said earlier that you've been following news about Panama closely. I'd like to ask you a few more questions about this. How closely have you followed news about (ITEM BELOW) very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

		Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK
a.	The fighting between American troops and Noriega loyalists	32	42	14	2	* = 90
b.	News about the new Panamanian government	14	39	30	7	0 = 90
c.	General Noriega and efforts to take him into American custody	52	34	4	*	* = 90
d.	The U.S. break in and search of the Nicaraguan ambassador's residence	16	34	28	12	* = 90

ASK ALL:

Q.10 Do you think that news organizations have been too critical of the American military's actions in Panama, not critical enough of American military's actions or about right in their coverage?

- 19 Too critical
- 9 Not critical enough
- 66 About right

$\frac{6}{100}$ Don't know

ON ANOTHER SUBJECT...

ASK ALL:

Q. 11 To the best of your knowledge, did the rebels succeed or fail to overthrow the existing Romanian government?

66 Succeeded

11 Failed

$\frac{23}{100}$ Don't know

Q. 12 To the best of your knowledge, did American troops become involved in the revolution in Romania?

13 Yes

68 No

$\frac{19}{100}$ Don't know

ASK EVERYONE:

Q. 13 To the best of your knowledge, what happened to Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu?
(PRONUNCIATION CHOW CHESS CUE)

70 Correct answer - TRIED AND EXECUTED, SHOT - RELATED ANSWERS

4 Incorrect answer

$\frac{26}{100}$ Don't know

Q. 14 Do you happen to know where General Manuel Noriega took refuge to escape capture by American troops?

82 Correct answer - VATICAN SANCTUARY, CATHOLIC CHURCH

4 Incorrect answer

$\frac{14}{100}$ Don't know

Q. 15 Do you happen to know in what way control of the Panama Canal will change in the future:

36 Correct Answer - U.S. TURNS IT OVER TO PANAMA,
PANAMANIANS TAKE CONTROL - RELATED ANSWERS

18 Incorrect answer

$\frac{46}{100}$ Don't know

TIMES MIRROR DATABASE
PUBLIC ATTENTIVENESS TO MAJOR NEWS STORIES
(1986 - 1990)

	<u>Percent Very Closely</u>
The explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger (July 86)	80
The destruction caused by the San Francisco earthquake (Nov 89)	73
The little girl in Texas who was rescued after falling into a well (Oct 87)	69
THE INVASION OF PANAMA (JAN 90)	60
The destruction caused by Hurricane Hugo (Oct 89)	60
The U.S. air strikes against Libya (July 86)	58
The crash of a United Airlines DC-10 in Sioux City, Iowa (Aug 89)	53
The Alaska Oil Spill (May 89)	52
Supreme Court decision of flag burning (July 89)	51
The opening of the Berlin Wall between East and West Germany (Nov 89)	50
The flight of the space shuttle (Oct 88)	50
The murder of Marine Lt. Col. Higgins in Lebanon, and negotiations to free the other hostages in the mideast (Aug 89)	49
The drought and its effects on American farmers (Aug 88)	49
The TWA hostage crisis that took place last summer in Beirut, Lebanon (July 86)	48
The political upheaval in China (July 89)	47
The Supreme Court decision on abortion (July 89)	47
The nuclear accident at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union (July 86)	46
News about the presidential campaign in 1988 (Oct 88)	43
The hot weather this summer and the greenhouse effect (Aug 88)	42
The downing of an Iranian passenger plane by a U.S. Navy ship (Aug 88)	42
The Bush administration's plan to deal with this country's drug problem (Sept 89)	40
The stock market crash (Oct 87)	40
News about the presidential campaign in 1988 (Aug 88)	39
DRUG USE AND EFFORTS TO COMBAT IT (JAN 90)	38
The U.S. Navy escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf (Sept 87)	38
The U.S. Navy escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf (Oct 87)	37
The stories about Dan Quayle, the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate (Aug 88)	37
The sentencing of Oliver North (July 89)	37

	Percent <u>Very Closely</u>
Attempts to change the abortion laws (Dec 89)	35
The hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship in the Mediterranean (July 86)	35
The explosion and fire on the U.S. Battleship Iowa (May 89)	35
The war between the Colombian government and the major drug traffickers (Sept 89)	34
The Congressional hearings about the Iran- Contra affair (Sept 87)	33
The guilty verdict in the trial of televangelist Jim Bakker (Oct 89)	33
The world series (Oct 88)	31
The flight of East German refugees to West Germany (Oct 89)	31
The Oliver North trial (May 89)	31
The Banishment of Pete Rose from baseball for life (Sept 89)	30
The Democratic convention (Aug 88)	30
THE POLITICAL CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY AND EAST GERMANY (JAN 90)	29
The political changes in East Germany and the flight of refugees to West Germany (Nov 89)	29
The attack and sexual assault on a female jogger in Central Park, New York, by a group of youths (May 89)	29
The failed coup attempt against Panamanian strongman Noriega (Oct 89)	29
THE REVOLUTION IN ROMANIA (JAN 90)	28
The political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany (Dec 89)	28
The problems at nuclear reactor plants (Oct 88)	28
The end of Gary Hart's candidacy and the Donna Rice allegations (Sept 87)	28
THE NFL PLAYOFFS (JAN 90)	27
The Republican convention (Aug 88)	27
Passage in Congress of a bill to bail out ailing savings and loan institutions (Aug 89)	26
The Supreme Court's hearing of arguments in a Missouri abortion case (May 89)	25
The World Series (Nov 89)	23
THE LETTER BOMBINGS OF FEDERAL JUDGES (JAN 90)	22
The discoveries made by the spacecraft Voyager 2 (Sept 89)	22
The trial of televangelist Jim Bakker (Sept 89)	22
The April hijacking of a Kuwaiti airplane by Shiite Moslems (May 88)	22
The cease fire in the war between Iran and Iraq (Aug 88)	22
News about the presidential campaign in 1988 (May 88)	22
The charges that Pete Rose has bet on baseball games (July 89)	22
The scandal involving HUD (Aug 89)	21
The Gorbachev/Bush summit (Dec 89)	20
The attempts by the U.S. government to depose General Noriega in Panama (May 88)	20
The post-season baseball playoffs (Oct 89)	20

	Percent Very Closely
The coup attempt against the Filipino government (Dec 89)	19
The attempts in Congress to repeal the new catastrophic health insurance plan (Oct 89)	19
The incidents of racial violence in New York City and Virginia Beach (Sept 89)	19
Discussions of a U.S. Soviet arms agreement (Sept 87)	19
The stock market crash (May 88)	18
The conflict in the Middle East between Palestinians and the Israelis in the occupied territories (May 88)	18
The nomination of Robert Bork to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court (Sept 87)	17
The Education Summit held by Bush and the nation's Governors (Oct 89)	15
The ethics committee's investigation of Speaker of the House Jim Wright (May 89)	15
News about the Democratic candidates for the presidential nomination (Oct 87)	15
Conflict of interest allegations about Attorney General Ed Meese (May 88)	15
The scandal involving HUD (July 89)	15
The renewed fighting between government and the rebels in El Salvador (Dec 89)	14
House approval of a cut in the capital gains tax (Oct 89)	14
The spy scandal involving a U.S. Diplomat in Vienna (Aug 89)	14
Coverage of the Democratic and Republican candidates for the Presidential nomination (Sept 87)	14
The pending divorce between Mike Tyson and Robin Givens (Oct 88)	14
The resumption of fighting in Nicaragua between the Contras and government forces (Nov 89)	13
The elections in Virginia, New Jersey, New York City and other localities (Nov 89)	13
News about the Republican candidates for the Presidential nomination (Oct 88)	13
Solidarity's role in governing Poland (July 89)	12
The Japanese purchase of Rockefeller center in New York City (Dec 89)	10
The trial of Hotel owner Leona Helmsley for tax evasion (Sept 89)	9
Stories about the 20th anniversary of the Woodstock Music Festival (Aug 89)	9
THE TRIP OF HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS TO CHINA (JAN 90)	6
The scandal involving the Japanese Prime Minister and other high ranking officials (May 89)	6
The scandal involving Congressman Barney Frank and a male prostitute (Oct 89)	6