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**Times Mirror News Interest Index  
June 1990**

**Public Interest and  
Awareness of the News**

*FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:*

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

## **BUSH-GORBACHEV SUMMIT EVOKES MODERATE INTEREST**

Thirty-eight percent of the American public followed the Bush-Gorbachev summit "*very closely*" according to a new Times Mirror News Interest Index released today. While interest in the Washington summit was almost twice as great as public interest in last December's meeting of the two world leaders off the coast of Malta (21%), the latest summit failed to draw as much attention as last month's top story, the Mideast hostage release (46%).

Although this past week's meeting generated only moderate public attention, it surpassed interest in many other Bush Administration activities that have been covered by the Times Mirror News Interest Index. February's Colombian drug summit was followed very closely by 22%, the education summit in September 1989 by 15%. Only the Bush proclamation of a war on drugs last summer attracted more public attention (42%).

At least part of the reason for the subdued public response to the summit was that it failed to engage the interest of younger Americans. Among the 18-30's age group, the summit was the number two story of the month, with only 26% following very closely. Among 30-49 year olds, 35% followed the summit very closely, compared to 49% among those 50 and older.

The floods in Texas and other Southwestern states rivaled the summit for public attention in May. Thirty-four percent of Times Mirror respondents said they followed news of this natural disaster very closely. In the South and among younger adults, interest in the floods surpassed interest in the Bush-Gorbachev meetings. Forty-three percent of Southerners followed very closely news about the floods in their home region, compared to 36% who paid close attention to the summit. Among those under 30, 29% followed the story very closely.

Gorbachev's visit may have deflected some American attention from one of his biggest problems back home. Public interest in the tensions between Moscow and the Baltic Republics slipped this month. Twenty-one percent said they were following this story closely, compared to 28% in each of the last three preceding months.

Nonetheless, Gorbachev's chief political rival was able to penetrate the public's consciousness during the week of the summit. As many as 20% of the Times Mirror respondents were able to say on an unprompted basis why Boris Yeltsin had been in the news recently. Among college graduates and among "serious" news consumers, 45% correctly identified Yeltsin as the new leader of the Russian Republic.

The budget summit got far less public attention than did the diplomatic one, even though the economic summit got a considerable amount of air time on network evening news in May. Fewer than one in five (18%) said they paid very close attention to the special meetings between the Administration and congressional leaders to find ways to reduce the budget deficit.

The other major economic story of the month, the continuing saga of the savings and loan scandal, achieved the same level of public attention (18%), despite the fact that the budget summit received four times as much air time on network television news. (Four percent of all network air time was devoted to the economic summit compared to one percent for the S&L crisis. The Bush-Gorbachev summit was the top network news story, registering 6% of network air time).

Interest in news about both economic problems was sharply higher among those over fifty years of age, and among better educated people, but these stories attracted the most attention among serious news consumers -- those who represent the core audience for programs such as MacNeil Lehrer, NPR and intellectual magazines, such as *The Atlantic*, *Harper's* and *The New Yorker*. 35% and 34% of *serious* news consumers followed very closely the budget summit and the S&L crisis, respectively.

The savings and loan scandal has not yet become personalized for most Americans, even though a large majority (79%) know taxpayers will ultimately bear the burden of the cost of the financial debacle. Fewer than one in four (23%) are aware of a savings and loan bank in their community that has been taken over by the federal government. The incidence of such reports was only somewhat higher in the West (32%).

Racial tension in New York City was followed very closely by 17% of the public at large, but interest in these reports surpassed interest in all other stories among non-white Americans. Thirty-eight percent of non-whites paid close attention to reports of racial tension emanating from the Bensonhurst verdicts and the black boycott of Korean grocers in Brooklyn, New York.

Those who followed this story closely gave the press low marks for the way the story was reported. Only seven percent rated this news coverage as *excellent* - well below the 25% excellent mark given the typical story tracked in the monthly news interest index. As many as

58% gave coverage of racial problems in New York City a negative rating of "only fair" or "poor". In contrast, coverage of the Bush-Gorbachev summit received better than average ratings with 33% rating it excellent and only 14% fair or poor.

Renewed Palestinian rioting in Israel and the elections in Romania evoked little interest among Americans. Eleven percent said they closely followed the Palestinian disturbances that followed the incident in Gaza in which a deranged Israeli killed seven Palestinians. Even fewer (6%) paid close attention to news about the elections in Romania. The Mideast story achieved a significantly larger audience among serious news consumers (23%), but the Romanian elections failed to attract much attention even among this most sophisticated audience segment (12%).

#### *Other Public Interests*

A third of the public (32%) said they had "heard a lot" about legislative attempts to curb cigarette advertising, and 27% had "heard a lot" about Senate passage of a bill to ban assault rifles. Only 21% had "heard a lot" about the Clean Air Act, now making its way through Congress. Overall awareness -- having heard a lot or something -- about each of these legislative efforts was considerably higher; further restrictions on cigarette advertising (76%), Senate bill to ban assault rifles (74%), and the Clean Air Act (65%).

Nearly two in three (62%) had heard something about the problems of Neil Bush, the President's son, whose role as director of a failed savings and loan bank has been called into question. But very few said they had heard a lot about this story (14%).

*The Hype Index*

More Americans say they have heard a lot about the "Dick Tracy" movie than say they have heard a lot about ABC's unusual series, "Twin Peaks". Two-thirds of the public are already familiar with the soon-to-be-released "Dick Tracy" movie, and 27% say they have heard a lot about it, compared to 62% and 24%, respectively, for "Twin Peaks".

"Dick Tracy's" edge in public attention over "Twin Peaks" is a result of more awareness among those under 30 and the less well-educated.

## PERCENT FOLLOWING EACH NEWS STORY "VERY CLOSELY"

|                      | Bush/<br>Gorbachev<br>U.S. Summit | Racial<br>Tensions<br>in NYC | Tensions<br>Between<br>Moscow and<br>the Baltic<br>Republics | Renewed<br>Palestinian<br>Rioting | Continuing<br>News About<br>S&L Scandal | N       |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|---------|
| Total                | 38                                | 17                           | 21   | 11                                | 18                                      | (1,231) |
| <u>Sex</u>           |                                   |                              |  |                                   |   |         |
| Male                 | 39                                | 16                           | 24   | 14                                | 19                                      | (612)   |
| Female               | 37                                | 17                           | 18   | 9                                 | 16                                      | (619)   |
| <u>Race</u>          |                                   |                              |  |                                   |   |         |
| White                | 39                                | 13                           | 21   | 10                                | 18                                      | (1,048) |
| Non-white            | 34                                | 38                           | 18   | 16                                | 15                                      | (166)   |
| <u>Age</u>           |                                   |                              |  |                                   |   |         |
| Under 30             | 26                                | 16                           | 12   | 8                                 | 7                                       | (258)   |
| 30-49                | 34                                | 15                           | 19   | 9                                 | 11                                      | (511)   |
| 50+                  | 49                                | 17                           | 28   | 15                                | 32                                      | (430)   |
| <u>Education</u>     |                                   |                              |  |                                   |   |         |
| College graduate     | 46                                | 16                           | 30   | 11                                | 23                                      | (340)   |
| Other college        | 41                                | 12                           | 24   | 8                                 | 16                                      | (298)   |
| High school grad.    | 33                                | 17                           | 16   | 12                                | 17                                      | (424)   |
| Less than h.s. grad. | 37                                | 20                           | 16   | 13                                | 15                                      | (154)   |
| <u>Region</u>        |                                   |                              |  |                                   |   |         |
| East                 | 44                                | 29                           | 26   | 15                                | 19                                      | (286)   |
| Midwest              | 36                                | 11                           | 18   | 10                                | 20                                      | (313)   |
| South                | 36                                | 16                           | 16   | 9                                 | 16                                      | (372)   |
| West                 | 36                                | 10                           | 23   | 12                                | 16                                      | (258)   |
| <u>Party ID</u>      |                                   |                              |  |                                   |   |         |
| Republican           | 42                                | 14                           | 22   | 11                                | 17                                      | (453)   |
| Democrat             | 37                                | 20                           | 20   | 10                                | 18                                      | (370)   |
| Independent          | 36                                | 15                           | 22   | 13                                | 19                                      | (344)   |
| <u>Serious News</u>  |                                   |                              |  |                                   |   |         |
| Consumers            | 56                                | 25                           | 38   | 23                                | 34                                      | (212)   |
| All Others           | 35                                | 15                           | 18   | 9                                 | 15                                      | (1,019) |

*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.*

CONTINUED...

... CONTINUED

|                      | Budget<br>Summit | Reports of<br>Flooding in<br>Texas and Other<br>Southwestern States | Elections<br>in Romania |
|----------------------|------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Total                | 18               | 34  | 6                       |
| <u>Sex</u>           |                  |   |                         |
| Male                 | 19               | 33  | 5                       |
| Female               | 17               | 35  | 7                       |
| <u>Race</u>          |                  |   |                         |
| White                | 17               | 34  | 6                       |
| Non-white            | 24               | 33  | 7                       |
| <u>Age</u>           |                  |   |                         |
| Under 30             | 9                | 29  | 4                       |
| 30-49                | 14               | 29  | 4                       |
| 50+                  | 28               | 44  | 9                       |
| <u>Education</u>     |                  |   |                         |
| College graduate     | 18               | 28  | 6                       |
| Other college grad.  | 16               | 32  | 6                       |
| High school grad.    | 18               | 33  | 4                       |
| Less than h.s. grad. | 19               | 44  | 7                       |
| <u>Region</u>        |                  |   |                         |
| East                 | 19               | 28  | 6                       |
| Midwest              | 16               | 31  | 7                       |
| South                | 20               | 43  | 5                       |
| West                 | 16               | 33  | 5                       |
| <u>Party ID</u>      |                  |   |                         |
| Republican           | 18               | 36  | 6                       |
| Democrat             | 19               | 37  | 4                       |
| Independent          | 17               | 31  | 7                       |
| Serious News         |                  |   |                         |
| Consumers            | 35               | 40  | 12                      |
| All Others           | 15               | 33  | 5                       |

*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

## STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY

|            | Bush/<br>Gorbachev<br>U.S. Summit | Racial<br>Tensions<br>in NYC | Tensions Between<br>Moscow and the<br>Baltic Republics | Floods |
|------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--------|
| Excellent  | 33                                | 7                            | 26   | 27     |
| Good       | 51                                | 35                           | 47   | 63     |
| Only Fair  | 13                                | 43                           | 21   | 9      |
| Poor       | 1                                 | 15                           | 2  | *      |
| Don't know | 2                                 | 0                            | 4  | 1      |
|            | ----                              | ----                         | ----   | ----   |
|            | 100                               | 100                          | 100  | 100    |

### PRESS PERFORMANCE

|            | MAY<br><u>1989</u> | JUL<br><u>1989</u> | AUG<br><u>1989</u> | SEP<br><u>1989</u> | OCT<br><u>1989</u> | NOV<br><u>1989</u> |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Excellent  | 19                 | 26                 | 25                 | 19                 | 32                 | 41                 |
| Good       | 43                 | 42                 | 45                 | 50                 | 45                 | 41                 |
| Only Fair  | 24                 | 21                 | 21                 | 22                 | 18                 | 13                 |
| Poor       | 10                 | 10                 | 8                  | 7                  | 3                  | 3                  |
| Don't Know | 4                  | 1                  | 1                  | 2                  | 2                  | 2                  |
|            | ----               | ----               | ----               | ----               | ----               | ----               |
|            | 100%               | 100%               | 100%               | 100%               | 100%               | 100%               |

|            | DEC<br><u>1989</u> | JAN<br><u>1990</u> | FEB<br><u>1990</u> | MAR<br><u>1990</u> | APR<br><u>1990</u> | MAY<br><u>1990</u> |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Excellent  | 22                 | 33                 | 23                 | 26                 | 23                 | 28                 |
| Good       | 45                 | 48                 | 50                 | 48                 | 54                 | 49                 |
| Only Fair  | 25                 | 14                 | 19                 | 20                 | 16                 | 17                 |
| Poor       | 6                  | 3                  | 5                  | 4                  | 4                  | 5                  |
| Don't Know | 2                  | 2                  | 3                  | 2                  | 3                  | 1                  |
|            | ----               | ----               | ----               | ----               | ----               | ----               |
|            | 100%               | 100%               | 100%               | 100%               | 100%               | 100%               |

|            | JUNE<br><u>1990</u> |
|------------|---------------------|
| Excellent  | 25                  |
| Good       | 51                  |
| Only Fair  | 18                  |
| Poor       | 4                   |
| Don't Know | 2                   |
|            | ----                |
|            | 100%                |

*Question: In general, how would you rate the job the press has done in covering (STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY IN Q.4); excellent, good, only fair, or poor?*



## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

The survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among 1,231 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period of June 1-4, 1990. Interviewing services were provided by The Gallup Organization. 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  
 JUNE 1990  
 June 1-4, 1990  
 n = 1,231

**INTERVIEWER NOTE: PLEASE FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE RESPONSE CATEGORIES**

Q.1 What do you think is the most important news event that happened in the nation or in the world last month - in March? **(DO NOT READ)**

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <u>International Stories</u>  | 40       |
| Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to the U.S. for a Summit meeting   | 27       |
| Tensions between Moscow and the Baltic Republics of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania who wish to secede from the Soviet Union      | 6        |
| Developments in Germany, including discussion of German reunification   | 2        |
| The incident in Gaza in which a deranged Israeli killed seven Palestinians and the West Bank riots that followed                | 1        |
| Political changes taking place in the Soviet Union (NOT including mentions of Baltic independence)                              | 2        |
| Other mentions of political changes taking place in Eastern and Central Europe (NOT including mentions of German reunification) | 2        |
| The elections in Romania  | *        |
| <u>Domestic stories</u>   | 6        |
| Incidents of racial violence and tension in New York City   | 1        |
| Continuing news about the Savings & Loan scandal  | *        |
| Special meetings between the Bush Administration and Congressional leaders to find ways to reduce the federal deficit           | *        |
| Reports about flooding in Texas and other Southwestern states   | 2        |
| The environment - any mention of environmental disasters (tornadoes, oil spills, floods, etc.)                                  | 3        |
| OTHER SPECIFY   | 9        |
| DON'T KNOW  | 42       |
| REFUSED   | *        |
| CAN'T SAY/NONE  | <u>3</u> |
|   | 100      |

Q.2 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<br/>Closely</u> | <u>Fairly<br/>Closely</u> | <u>Not too<br/>Closely</u> | <u>Not<br/>at all<br/>Closely</u> | <u>DK</u> |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| a. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to the U.S. for a Summit meeting  | 38                      | 39                        | 13                         | 9                                 | * = 100   |
| b. Racial tension in New York City resulting from the Bensonhurst trial verdict and the black boycott of Korean grocers       | 17                      | 26                        | 26                         | 31                                | * = 100   |
| c. Tensions between Moscow and the Baltic Republics of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania who wish to secede from the Soviet Union | 21                      | 36                        | 22                         | 20                                | 1 = 100   |
| d. The incident in Gaza in which a deranged Israeli killed seven Palestinians and the West Bank riots that followed           | 11                      | 28                        | 30                         | 30                                | 1 = 100   |
| e. Continuing news about the Savings and Loan scandal   | 18                      | 30                        | 26                         | 25                                | 1 = 100   |
| f. Special meetings between the Bush Administration and Congressional leaders to find ways to reduce the federal deficit      | 18                      | 33                        | 28                         | 20                                | 1 = 100   |
| g. Reports about flooding in Texas and other Southwestern states  | 34                      | 39                        | 17                         | 10                                | * = 100   |
| h. The elections in Romania   | 6                       | 19                        | 34                         | 41                                | * = 100   |

Q.3 Which one of the stories I just mentioned, have you followed most closely? (DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.)

|   | <u>Story Followed<br/>Most Closely</u> |
|---|--|
| a. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to the U.S. for a Summit meeting  | 30                                     |
| b. Racial tension in New York City resulting from the Bensonhurst trial verdict and the black boycott of Korean grocers       | 9                                      |
| c. Tensions between Moscow and the Baltic Republics of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania who wish to secede from the Soviet Union | 11                                     |
| d. The incident in Gaza in which a deranged Israeli killed seven Palestinians and the West Bank riots that followed           | 3                                      |
| e. Continuing news about the Savings and Loan scandal   | 6                                      |
| f. Special meetings between the Bush Administration and Congressional leaders to find ways to reduce the federal deficit      | 4                                      |
| g. Reports about flooding in Texas and other Southwestern states  | 24                                     |
| h. The elections in Romania   | 1                                      |
| CAN'T SAY   | <u>12</u><br>100                       |

Q.4 Of all the stories mentioned, which of them, if any, received too much coverage? (DO NOT READ LIST, ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES, BE SURE TO PROMPT FOR "ANY OTHERS")

|   | <u>Received Too<br/>Much Coverage</u> |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| a. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to the U.S. for a Summit meeting  | 13                                    |
| b. Racial tension in New York City resulting from the Bensonhurst trial verdict and the black boycott of Korean grocers       | 13                                    |
| c. Tensions between Moscow and the Baltic Republics of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania who wish to secede from the Soviet Union | 3                                     |
| d. The incident in Gaza in which a deranged Israeli killed seven Palestinians and the West Bank riots that followed           | 3                                     |
| e. Continuing news about the Savings and Loan scandal   | 2                                     |
| f. Special meetings between the Bush Administration and Congressional leaders to find ways to reduce the federal deficit      | 2                                     |
| g. Reports about flooding in Texas and other Southwestern states  | 4                                     |
| h. The elections in Romania   | 1                                     |
| None  | 27                                    |
| Can't Say   | 34                                    |

**IF RESPONDENT SAID '0' CAN'T SAY IN Q.3, SKIP TO Q.6**

Q.5 In general, how would you rate the job the press has done in covering (**STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY IN Q.3**); excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

|                 |            | <u>STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY</u> |                              |                       |                 |
|-----------------|------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
|                 |            | <u>Summit</u>                      | <u>Racial Tension in NYC</u> | <u>Baltic Tension</u> | <u>Floods</u>   |
| 25              | Excellent  | 33                                 | 7                            | 26                    | 27              |
| 51              | Good       | 51                                 | 35                           | 47                    | 63              |
| 18              | Only Fair  | 13                                 | 43                           | 21                    | 9               |
| 4               | Poor       | 1                                  | 15                           | 2                     | *               |
| <u>2</u><br>100 | Don't know | <u>2</u><br>100                    | <u>0</u><br>100              | <u>4</u><br>100       | <u>1</u><br>100 |
|                 |            | (375)                              | (110)                        | (156)                 | (285)           |

**NOW I WANT TO ASK YOU JUST A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT SOME THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN IN THE NEWS - NOT EVERYONE WILL HAVE HEARD OF THEM.**

Q.6 As I read a list of names, places or events tell me if you have heard a lot about it, something about it or never heard of?

|  | <u>Heard A Lot About</u> | <u>Heard Something About</u> | <u>Never Heard of</u> | <u>Don't Know</u> |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| a. Twin Peaks  | 24                       | 35                           | 40                    | 1 =100            |
| b. The investigation of Neil Bush, the President's son, for his role as director of a failed savings & loan bank | 14                       | 48                           | 38                    | * =100            |
| c. The Dick Tracy movie  | 27                       | 40                           | 33                    | * =100            |
| d. The passage of a bill in the Senate banning assault weapons   | 27                       | 47                           | 26                    | * =100            |
| e. The passage of the Clean Air Act  | 21                       | 44                           | 35                    | * =100            |
| f. Proposed further restrictions on cigarette advertising  | 32                       | 44                           | 23                    | 1 =100            |

Q.7 Do you happen to know why Boris Yeltsin (PRONUNCIATION: YELLT-SIN) has been in the news lately? (IF YES, WHY?)

23 Yes -----> (IF "YES" ASK:) Why? (DO NOT READ)

|                   |                    |                                       |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| +0No              | 20                 | Elected President of Russian Republic |
| 771               |                    |                                       |
| *                 |                    |                                       |
| _____)0Don't know | +0Incorrect answer |                                       |
| 100               | <u>3S1</u>         |                                       |
|                   | 23                 | .0Don't know                          |

Q.8 Is it your impression that there is talk in Washington about increasing spending for defense or is there more talk of cutting spending for defense?

13 Increasing spending  
69 Cutting spending  
3 Keep same/Neither (Vol.)  
15 Don't know  
100

Q.9 Do you know of any Savings & Loan banks in your area that have been taken over by the federal government because they were in serious financial trouble?

23 Yes  
76 No  
1 Don't know  
100

Q.10 Which of the following groups will pay for the bail out of failed Savings & Loan banks (READ CATEGORIES 1 THRU 4) (ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES).

3 Former managers of these banks  
7 Stock holders of the banks  
5 People who had their savings in these banks  
79 Taxpayers like you  
1 None  
9 Don't know



# TIMES MIRROR DATABASE

## PUBLIC ATTENTIVENESS TO MAJOR NEWS STORIES (1986 - 1990)

### PERCENT FOLLOWED VERY CLOSELY

- 80 Explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger (July 86)
- 73 Destruction caused by the San Francisco earthquake (Nov 89)
- 69 Little girl in Texas who was rescued after falling into a well (Oct 87)
- 60 Invasion of Panama (Jan 90)
- 60 Destruction caused by Hurricane Hugo (Oct 89)
- 58 U.S. air strikes against Libya (July 86)
- 53 Crash of a United Airlines DC-10 in Sioux City, Iowa (Aug 89)
- 52 Alaska Oil Spill (May 89)
- 51 Supreme Court decision of flag burning (July 89)
- 50 Opening of the Berlin Wall between East and West Germany (Nov 89)
- 50 Flight of the space shuttle (Oct 88)
- 49 Murder of Marine Lt. Col. Higgins in Lebanon, and negotiations to free the other hostages in the mideast (Aug 89)
- 49 Drought and its effects on American farmers (Aug 88)
- 48 TWA hostage crisis that took place last summer in Beirut, Lebanon (July 86)
- 47 Political upheaval in China (July 89)
- 47 Supreme Court decision on abortion (July 89)
- 46 Nuclear accident at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union (July 86)
- 46 The freeing of two Americans who had been held hostage in the Mideast (May 90)
- 43 News about the presidential campaign in 1988 (Oct 88)
- 42 Hot weather this summer and the greenhouse effect (Aug 88)
- 42 Downing of an Iranian passenger plane by a U.S. Navy ship (Aug 88)
- 40 Bush administration's plan to deal with this country's drug problem (Sept 89)
- 40 The stock market crash (Oct 87)
- 39 News about the presidential campaign in 1988 (Aug 88)
- 38 SOVIET PRESIDENT MIKHAIL GORBACHEV'S VISIT TO THE U.S. FOR A SUMMIT MEETING (JUNE 90)**
- 38 Drug use and efforts to combat it (Jan 90)
- 38 U.S. Navy escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf (Sept 87)
- 37 U.S. Navy escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf (Oct 87)
- 37 Stories about Dan Quayle, the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate (Aug 88)
- 37 Sentencing of Oliver North (July 89)
- 35 Attempts to change the abortion laws (Dec 89)
- 35 Hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship in the Mediterranean (July 86)
- 35 Explosion and fire on the U.S. Battleship Iowa (May 89)
- 34 REPORTS ABOUT FLOODING IN TEXAS AND OTHER SOUTHWESTERN STATES (JUNE 90)**

PERCENT FOLLOWED  
VERY CLOSELY

- 34 The war between the Colombian government and the major drug traffickers (Sept 89)
- 33 Crash of the Colombian airliner near Kennedy airport in New York (Feb 90)
- 33 Congressional hearings about the Iran-Contra affair (Sept 87)
- 33 Guilty verdict in the trial of televangelist Jim Bakker (Oct 89)
- 31 The celebration of Earth Day (May 90)
- 31 The World Series (Oct 88)
- 31 Flight of East German refugees to West Germany (Oct 89)
- 31 Oliver North trial (May 89)
- 30 Freeing of jailed black South African leader Nelson Mandela (March 90)
- 30 Banishment of Pete Rose from baseball for life (Sept 89)
- 30 The Democratic convention (Aug 88)
  
- 29 Lithuania's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union and  
Moscow's response (April 90)
- 29 Suicide in Boston of Charles Stuart who murdered his pregnant wife and blamed it on a  
black man (Feb 90)
- 29 Political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany (Jan 90)
- 29 Political changes in East Germany and the flight of refugees to West Germany (Nov 89)
- 29 Attack and sexual assault on a female jogger in Central Park, New York, by a  
group of youths (May 89)
- 29 Failed coup attempt against Panamanian strongman Noriega (Oct 89)
- 28 The death of 87 people in a fire at a social club in the Bronx, New York (April 90)
- 28 Political changes taking place in the Soviet Union (March 90)
- 28 Arrest of Washington's Mayor Barry on drug use charges (Feb 90)
- 28 The revolution in Romania (Jan 90)
- 28 Political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany (Dec 89)
- 28 Problems at nuclear reactor plants (Oct 88)
- 28 The end of Gary Hart's candidacy and the Donna Rice allegations (Sept 87)
- 27 Lithuania's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union and  
Moscow's response (May 90)
- 27 Acquittal of the owners of the McMartin Day Care Center in California who were charged with  
sexually abusing children (Feb 90)
- 27 The NFL playoffs (Jan 90)
- 27 The Republican convention (Aug 88)
- 26 The death of Hank Gathers, a college basketball player, during a game (April 90)
- 26 Political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and  
East Germany (Feb 90)
- 26 Passage in Congress of a bill to bail out ailing savings and loan institutions (Aug 89)
- 25 Supreme Court's hearing of arguments in a Missouri abortion case (May 89)
- 24 The deployment of the Hubble Space Telescope (May 90)
- 24 The difficulties the government is having in getting people to fill out Census forms (May 90)
- 24 The NCAA Basketball playoffs (April 90)
- 23 The attempt in Idaho to pass a bill that would severely restrict abortions (April 90)
- 23 The Greyhound bus drivers' strike (April 90)
- 23 Discussion of the reunification of Germany (March 90)
- 23 The World Series (Nov 89)
- 22 President Bush's visit to Colombia to attend a drug summit (March 90)

PERCENT FOLLOWED  
VERY CLOSELY

- 22 The Super Bowl (Feb 90)
- 22 Letter bombings of federal judges (Jan 90)
- 22 Discoveries made by the spacecraft Voyager 2 (Sept 89)
- 22 Trial of televangelist Jim Bakker (Sept 89)
- 22 April hijacking of a Kuwaiti airplane by Shiite Moslems (May 88)
- 22 Cease fire in the war between Iran and Iraq (Aug 88)
- 22 News about the presidential campaign in 1988 (May 88)
- 22 Charges that Pete Rose has bet on baseball games (July 89)
- 21 TENSIONS BETWEEN MOSCOW AND THE BALTIC REPUBLICS OF LATVIA, ESTONIA AND LITHUANIA WHO WISH TO SECEDE FROM THE SOVIET UNION (JUNE 90)**
- 21 Discussions about German reunification (April 90)
- 21 Political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany and other countries of Eastern and Central Europe (March 90)
- 21 The scandal involving HUD (Aug 89)
- 20 The Gorbachev/Bush summit (Dec 89)
- 20 Attempts by the U.S. government to depose General Noriega in Panama (May 88)
- 20 Post-season baseball playoffs (Oct 89)
  
- 19 Elections in Nicaragua (March 90)
- 19 Coup attempt against the Filipino government (Dec 89)
- 19 Attempts in Congress to repeal the new catastrophic health insurance plan (Oct 89)
- 19 Incidents of racial violence in New York City and Virginia Beach (Sept 89)
- 19 Discussions of a U.S. Soviet arms agreement (Sept 87)
- 18 SPECIAL MEETINGS BETWEEN THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS TO FIND WAYS TO REDUCE THE FEDERAL DEFICIT (JUNE 90)**
- 18 CONTINUING NEWS ABOUT THE SAVINGS AND LOAN SCANDAL (JUNE 90)**
- 18 Reports about renewed inflation and rising interest rates (May 90)
- 18 Senator Moynihan's proposal to cut social security taxes (Feb 90)
- 18 The stock market crash (May 88)
- 18 Conflict in the Middle East between Palestinians and the Israelis in the occupied territories (May 88)
- 17 RACIAL TENSION IN NEW YORK CITY RESULTING FROM THE BENSONHURST TRIAL VERDICT AND THE BLACK BOYCOTT OF KOREAN GROCERS (JUNE 90)**
- 17 Discussions between the American and Japanese governments about trade issues (April 90)
- 17 A custody case involving a mother who went to jail and a little child taken to New Zealand by her grandparents (March 90)
- 17 Nomination of Robert Bork to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court (Sept 87)
- 16 Dispute between the President and Congress over allowing Chinese students to remain in America (Feb 90)
- 15 Education Summit held by Bush and the nation's Governors (Oct 89)
- 15 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)
- 14 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 Spy scandal involving a U.S. diplomat in Vienna (Aug 89)
- 14 Coverage of Democratic and Republican candidates for the Presidential nomination (Sept 87)
- 14 Pending divorce between Mike Tyson and Robin Givens (Oct 88)

PERCENT FOLLOWED  
VERY CLOSELY

- 13 Civil unrest and ethnic violence in Soviet Azerbaijan (Feb 90)
- 13 Resumption of fighting in Nicaragua between the Contras and government forces (Nov 89)
- 13 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)
- 12 Marital breakup of Donald and Ivana Trump (March 90)
- 12 Solidarity's role in governing Poland (July 89)
- 11 **THE INCIDENT IN GAZA IN WHICH A DERANGED ISRAELI KILLED SEVEN PALESTINIANS AND THE WEST BANK RIOTS THAT FOLLOWED (JUNE 90)**
- 11 Legalization of banned black opposition groups in South Africa and the promise to free Nelson Mandela (Feb 90)
- 10 Japanese purchase of Rockefeller center in New York City (Dec 89)
- 10 The spending and tax proposals made by Congressman Dan Rostenkowski to help reduce the budget deficit (April 90)
- 10 The Academy Awards (April 90)
- 9 May day protests in Moscow (May 90)
- 9 Bankruptcy of Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc. (March 90)
- 9 Trial of Hotel owner Leona Helmsley for tax evasion (Sept 89)
- 9 Stories about the 20th anniversary of the Woodstock Music Festival (Aug 89)
- 6 **ELECTIONS IN ROMANIA (JUNE 90)**
- 6 The visit to the United States of Vaclav Havel, the new president of Czechoslovakia (Mar 90)
- 6 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)
- 4 The civil war in Cambodia (May 90)
- 2 Tom Cruise's separation from his wife (April 90)