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**The People, The Press and The War  
In The Gulf: Part II**

**A Special Times Mirror  
News Interest Index**

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## **Gulf War Coverage Assessed**

### **PUBLIC COMMENDS BOTH PRESS AND MILITARY CENSORS**

In the afterglow of victory in the Gulf the public offers little criticism of the press for the way it covered the war and shows almost no reservations about the military restrictions placed on war news.

Over eight in ten Americans rated news coverage of the war as excellent or good, with fully 45% rating it excellent. This is an improvement on the 36% who rated press coverage of the war as excellent in Times Mirror's mid-war survey (Jan. 25 - Jan. 27).

Not only does the press get better overall grades for the way it covered the war, the current poll finds fewer Americans than in January taking issue with the news media for some of its more controversial practices.

By a margin of 52% to 38% the public said they approved of American news organizations broadcasting censored news from Iraq during the war. In late January the public was evenly divided on this question - 43% approve, 45% disapprove.

Views about whether American news organizations were careful not to give Saddam Hussein too much of a platform to promote his cause have changed as well. In the current survey 50% felt that such care was taken, while 39% believed that the Iraqi dictator was given too much of a platform. During the war the public was evenly divided on this question - 44% to 44%. The post-war poll finds only Republicans and Southerners divided on this issue. GOP adherents *lean* to the view that the press was careful not to give Saddam too much media opportunity - 48% to 43%, while Southerners divide similarly 45% to 43%.

The survey finds little indication that the Gulf war's most controversial newsmen, Peter Arnett, became an object of public disfavor for his CNN broadcasts from Baghdad. Arnett achieved a 53% favorability rating in absolute terms and the ratio of Arnett's unfavorable to favorable ratings is only somewhat greater than Dan Rather's (.80/.20 to .85/.15).

Despite all of the speculation as to how the public was responding to the coverage of the sometimes fractious daily military press briefings, they were rated as highly as any other aspect of war coverage. Eighty-four percent gave the press an excellent or good grade. Coverage of the Scud attacks on Saudi Arabia and Israel and the liberation of Kuwait city were rated comparably (84% and 82%, respectively). Evaluations of broadcasts from Baghdad during the war and coverage of the allied bombing of the civilian air raid shelter were somewhat less positive, but nonetheless solid majorities of the public gave both excellent or good grades (76% for live reports from Baghdad, 68% for the coverage of the bombing of the civilian air raid shelter).

The only substantial criticism of the press voiced in the poll was 58% saying that journalists who went out on their own and were captured had gone too far to try to get the story. Just 36% of the public thought these journalists were doing what "they ought to have been doing".

Patterns of support and criticism of the press for its war coverage come from unusual quarters. People who thought military censorship was a bad idea were more likely than the average to say the press did only a fair or poor job (29% vs. 15% nationwide). Republicans were more apt to feel the press did an excellent job than were Democrats and Independents (50% vs 42%).

Opinion of the military's role in the Gulf news coverage shows the same pattern. The public is even more positive about censorship and more confident that the military provided accurate information than it was during the war itself.

The percentage of the public saying they had a great deal of confidence that the military was providing an accurate picture of how the war was proceeding increased from 29% in late January to 44% in the current survey. In total, close to nine in ten expressed a great deal or fair amount of confidence in the accuracy of the military's reports in the current poll.

A huge 83% majority thought that military restrictions on news reports during the conflict were a good thing, not a bad thing. This is a marginal increase over the 79% in Times Mirror's January poll who thought military restrictions were a good thing.

Looking back on the war, only 13% of the public would have preferred less censorship and an almost equally small number (17%) would have wanted more restrictions. Overall, most Americans (68%) felt there was neither too little nor too much censorship.

Americans appear to be well aware of the fact that information about the war was kept from the public as a consequence of military censorship. Thirty-six percent believed a lot about the war was kept from the public and another 36% felt at least some information was kept from the public.

### *Censorship No Longer A Dirty Word?*

Public contentment with the type of relationship the military and the press had in the Gulf has had at least a short-term effect on long held beliefs about the general concept of censorship.

Since 1985, Times Mirror has periodically asked the American public to judge the relative importance of censorship for the sake of national security vs. the news media's ability to report stories it feels is in the national interest. Each time this question has been previously asked, the public was either evenly divided on the issue or came down clearly on the side of the media. The current survey finds a nearly two to one majority feeling that military censorship is more important than the media's ability to report important news!

The belief that the government's ability to censor is more important than the media's ability to report is evident among all major demographic groups except among blacks, who divided 39% to 51% in favor of the media. Republicans were especially likely to place greater importance on censorship. They divide 70% to 22% in favor of censorship.

### *A Neutral, Not Pro-American Press Sought*

Despite the change in public sentiments about censorship, the public continues to value the press's watchdog role and look for neutral unbiased reports, even in war time.

As in previous Times Mirror surveys, the public takes the position that press criticism of the military does more to strengthen the nation's defense than to weaken it. In fact, the current survey finds the largest margin in support of that view recorded since these measures began in 1985.

When asked directly, a three to one majority of respondents told Times Mirror pollsters they would prefer that news coverage of wars be neutral rather than pro-American. This overwhelming sentiment was recorded among all demographic and political groups, even including people who thought there should have been more military censorship of war news.

### *"Collateral Damage" An Effective Euphemism*

The Times Mirror poll did a small experiment to test the effectiveness of one of the most widely quoted military euphemisms of the Gulf War, "collateral damage."

When questioned, twenty-one percent of a random half of the Times Mirror sample said it was very concerned about *the amount of "collateral damage"* caused by the allied bombing of Iraq and 34% reported being fairly concerned.

When the other random half of the sample was asked the same question about *"the number of civilian casualties and other unintended damage"* caused by allied bombing of Iraq, 49% reported being very concerned, and 33% fairly concerned.

Interestingly, the term "collateral damage" provoked even less anxiety among Americans who knew exactly what it meant. Just 28% of Americans who could correctly define the terms said they were very concerned about the amount of collateral damage caused by Iraq.

### *No Nostalgia for War News*

Although many reported being addicted to war news during the conflict, most Americans appear to have kicked the habit. Seventy-six percent of the public said they did not miss watching the war on TV while 21% said they did. Similarly, 74% denied having problems getting interested in non-Gulf news, while only 23% said this was a problem for them.

A more important legacy of the Gulf war for the news media may be the 49% of respondents who said they are generally more interested in the news than they were prior to the war. Such reports were higher among traditional light users of the news media, such as less well-educated people and younger people. Fifty-six percent of people under 30 said they were now more interested in the news and 55% of people who never attended college held this view.

### *Media Choices and the War in the Gulf*

If the Gulf war shapes media habits for a long time to come, chances are TV news will be the beneficiary of that change, given the degree to which it dominated the public's consciousness. By a margin of 72% to 11%, the public thought that television reporters dug harder to get Gulf war news than newspaper reporters. And among people who said they had read accounts in newspapers of events in the Gulf they had previously seen on TV, 67% said that the newspaper accounts pretty much covered the same ground, while 27% felt they were given a better understanding of what they had seen on TV. College-educated people were more likely to say that newspaper accounts gave them a better understanding of events they had seen on TV, but even among this more newspaper-oriented group, the balance of opinion was that newspaper stories covered the same ground as TV reports (57% to 39%).

### *CNN and Network TV News Gain Most Esteem*

As in all previous Times Mirror polls about coverage of the Gulf, the public credited CNN as the network that did the best job of covering the war. CNN was the network of choice in the current survey by almost the same lopsided margin as was found in the January mid-war poll. Fifty-eight percent chose CNN, 12% ABC, 10% NBC and 8% CBS. In the January poll, 61% chose CNN, 12% ABC, 7% NBC and 7% CBS.

While the public offered the most praise to CNN, the entire news media gained in public esteem as a consequence of the Gulf war. The public rated seven out of seven types of news organizations and prominent journalists more positively than in previous Time Mirror surveys.

Network TV news showed the greatest gains in public favor, with the percentage rating it very favorably increasing by 18 percentage points since the spring of 1990. The percentage rating newspapers, local TV news and news magazines very favorably increased by 7 to 10 percentage points.

All three network anchors showed an increase in public regard. The percentage rating ABC anchorman, Peter Jennings, very favorably climbed from 27% in 1989 to 43%. NBC's Tom Brokaw almost matched Jennings' rise as highly positive opinions of him increased from 27% to 40%. Very favorable opinions of Dan Rather increased from 26% to 36%.

CNN's anchor, Bernard Shaw, and war correspondent, Peter Arnett, were given very favorable ratings by 25% and 21%, respectively. Many Americans are still unable to rate Shaw (30%) and Arnett (34%). When a ratio of favorable to unfavorable ratings is computed for these CNN journalists, Shaw's ratings are approximately the same as that of the broadcast anchors and Arnett's are somewhat below that level.

### *Schwarzkopf Given Record Favorability Rating*

All increases in public regard for the media pale in comparison to the extraordinary change in opinion of the military registered in this poll. The percent rating the military very favorably rose 42 percentage points since the spring of 1990 - from 18% to 60%.

However, in this era of good feeling even the public's rating of the Congress improved somewhat - from 6% very favorable in the spring 1990 to 16% in the current survey.

Americans' exultation also impacted on views of leading Congressional Democrats such as Thomas Foley and Richard Gephardt. They became better known and more highly regarded over the past year. The percentage unable to rate Gephardt and Foley fell by 14 and 23% points, respectively, since the spring of 1990. In turn, Foley's very favorable rating increased from 3% to 13% and Gephardt's from 3% to 11%.

In contrast, the Gulf war leadership made quantum leaps in public favor. The percentage who could not rate Richard Cheney fell from 69% to 26%, while the Defense Secretary's very favorable score soared from 3 to 33%!

Further down the chain of command, the public extended even greater accolades. Colin Powell was rated very favorably by 51% and Norman Schwarzkopf by no fewer than 62% of Times Mirror respondents. The Desert Storm commander's rating is the highest "*very favorable*" score achieved in over 150 Times Mirror public favorability ratings conducted since 1985. (The second highest rating was for John F. Kennedy -39% in the spring of 1987).

### *The News Interest Index*

The end of the Persian Gulf War and the homecoming of the first U.S. forces have attracted as large a news audience as have other phases of the conflict. Sixty-seven percent of Americans say they have followed news about the war's end and the return of U.S. troops very closely. This is the same percentage who said they were following war news very closely in the last week of January.

Although attention to the war's end remained high, Americans were less interested in the aftermath of the conflict. The subsequent fighting among Iraqis commanded less attention than the leading domestic stories, such as the videotaped beating of a suspect by Los Angeles police or reports about the economy. Only 34% of the public said they followed news about the Iraqi civil war very closely.

The Los Angeles police brutality story drew significantly more attention, with 46% saying they were highly attentive to this story. However, interest was considerably greater among blacks (66%) than among whites (43%). African Americans (74%) have also followed news about the war's end more closely than whites (66%), which marks one of the few times that black interest in the Gulf events has kept pace with or exceeded interest among whites.

Interest in news reports about the economy continued to register at a higher than average level. As has been the case since the onset of the recession, more than one in three Americans (36%) say they have been following such reports very closely.

Interest in the dramatically unfolding story of political unrest in the Soviet Union is somewhat higher than it was during the height of the Gulf crisis, but remains well below the levels of interest recorded for comparable stories in the early months of 1990. Twenty percent have followed Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's continuing difficulties very closely.

The findings of a committee investigating the "Keating Five" Senators attracted the same small audience that the opening of the investigation reached; only 12% say they have followed the story very closely. In early January 1991, before the committee had finished its investigation, nine percent said they were following accounts of the inquiry very closely.

## PERCENT FOLLOWING EACH NEWS STORY "VERY CLOSELY"

	The War's End and the Home- coming of U.S. Forces	Civil War in Iraq	Videotaped Beating by the LA Police of a Suspect They Apprehended in an Auto Chase	Reports About the Condition of the U.S. Economy	N
Total	67	34	46	36	(1857)
<u>Sex</u>					
Male	63	33	44	38	(928)
Female	70	34	47	34	(929)
<u>Race</u>					
White	66	33	43	35	(1562)
*Non-white	72	38	62	41	(281)
Black	74	39	66	42	(157)
<u>Age</u>					
Under 30	65	28	45	26	(457)
30-49	65	36	46	40	(801)
50+	70	34	47	38	(588)
<u>Education</u>					
College graduate	63	37	46	44	(495)
Other college	65	34	43	38	(465)
High school grad.	69	32	47	31	(650)
Less than h.s. grad.	70	33	46	34	(242)
<u>Region</u>					
East	71	37	48	36	(427)
Midwest	63	31	42	35	(472)
South	71	34	46	38	(636)
West	59	32	48	34	(322)
<u>Party ID</u>					
Republican	73	36	44	35	(668)
Democrat	68	35	53	39	(522)
Independent	61	31	41	35	(584)

*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.*

\*Non-white include blacks  
CONTINUED...

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	Mikhail Gorbachev's Political Problems in the Soviet Union	The Findings of the Keating Five Investigation
Total	20	12
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	21	14
Female	18	10
<u>Race</u>		
White	19	11
*Non-white	21	19
Black	18	19
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	14	5
30-49	20	10
50+	23	19
<u>Education</u>		
College graduate	24	15
Other college	20	14
High school grad.	16	10
Less than h.s. grad.	20	10
<u>Region</u>		
East	20	10
Midwest	17	12
South	20	11
West	21	16
<u>Party ID</u>		
Republican	19	11
Democrat	18	14
Independent	21	12

*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.*

*\*Non-white include blacks*

## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

The survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted among 1,857 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period March 14 - 18, 1991. 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 2 percentage points. The sample was divided into two random halves (Form I - 919 interviews; Form II - 938 interviews). The sampling error for results of questions based on Form I **or** Form II **only** 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  
MARCH 1991  
March 14 - 18, 1991  
N=1,857

SEX: 1[ ]Male 2[ ]Female

INTERVIEWER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TIME STARTED: \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEWER'S I. D. : \_\_\_\_\_

TIME FINISHED: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

LENGTH: \_\_\_\_\_

REPLICATE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

REGION: 1 East  
2 Midwest  
3 South  
4 West

STRATUM: 1 Stratum One  
2 Stratum Two  
3 Remainder

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

March 14-18, 1991

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INTRODUCTION: Hello, I am \_\_\_\_\_ calling from the Princeton Survey Research Associates from Princeton, New Jersey. We are conducting a public opinion poll and I'd like to ask a few questions of the youngest male, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home (**IF NO MALE, ASK:** May I please speak with the oldest female, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home?)

Q. 2 Do you happen to read any daily newspaper or newspapers regularly?

		<u>NEWS INTEREST INDEX</u>			
		<u>JAN 3</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>SEPT</u>
72	Yes	72	74	72	69
28	No	27	26	28	31
$\frac{*}{100}$	Don' t know	$\frac{1}{100}$	$\frac{0}{100}$	$\frac{0}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$

Q. 3 Do you happen to watch any TV news programs regularly, or not?

		<u>NEWS INTEREST INDEX</u>			
		<u>JAN 3</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>SEPT</u>
91	Yes	88	80	81	79
9	No	12	20	19	21
$\frac{*}{100}$	Don' t know	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{0}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$

Q. 4 Do you listen to the news on the radio regularly or not?

		<u>NEWS INTEREST INDEX</u>			
		<u>JAN 3</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>SEPT</u>
57	Yes	55	55	54	51
43	No	45	45	46	49
$\frac{*}{100}$	Don' t know	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$

Q.6 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 war's end and the homecoming of U.S. forces from the Gulf	67	25	6	2	*=100
b. The civil war in Iraq between Shiite Iraqis and forces loyal to Saddam Hussein	34	38	18	9	1=100
c. The videotaped beating by Los Angeles police of a suspect they apprehended in an auto chase	46	30	13	10	1=100
d. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	36	39	17	7	1=100
e. Mikhail Gorbachev's political problems in the Soviet Union	20	41	26	12	1=100
f. The findings of the committee that investigated five Senators for doing favors for Charles Keating in exchange for campaign contributions	12	22	29	35	2=100

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about the War in the Gulf

Q.7 In general, how would you rate the job the press did in covering the War in the Gulf; excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

NEWS INTEREST INDEX

		<u>JAN 25</u>	<u>JAN 3</u>	<u>NOV<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>OCT<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>SEPT<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>AUG<sup>1</sup></u>
45	Excellent	36	31	28	30	39	36
38	Good	42	47	47	51	47	50
11	Only Fair	15	15	18	13	9	10
5	Poor	5	5	4	4	3	2
$\frac{1}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{2}{100}$	$\frac{2}{100}$	$\frac{3}{100}$	$\frac{2}{100}$	$\frac{2}{100}$	$\frac{2}{100}$

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<sup>1</sup> Asked of those who said Iraq's occupation of Kuwait was the story they had followed most closely.

59% in November, 62% in October, 62% in September, 72% in August

Q.8 As I read a list of topics tell me how you rate the job the press did in covering them - excellent, good, only fair, or poor? **(READ ITEMS BELOW REPEATING SCALE AFTER EACH ITEM) (ROTATE)**

**FORM I**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. The daily military briefings during the war	45	39	10	3	3=100
b. The allied bombing of a civilian air raid shelter in Baghdad	28	40	17	10	5=100
c. The liberation of Kuwait city	42	40	13	2	3=100
d. The Scud attacks on Saudi Arabia and Israel	43	41	10	2	4=100
e. Live reports from Baghdad during the war	38	38	14	7	3=100
f. Covering the civil war in Iraq	16	38	29	6	11=100

Q.9 I'd like to ask you a few questions about how you felt about news coverage of the war. For each statement that I read tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. **(INTERVIEWER: REPEAT STRONGLY AGREE?, AGREE? OR DISAGREE? AFTER EACH PHRASE)**

**FORM II**

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Dis-Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. I am now more generally interested in the news than I was before the war	15	34	42	7	2=100
b. I find it hard to get interested in news stories that don't deal with the Gulf in some way	3	20	60	14	3=100
c. While I am very glad the war is over, I miss watching the war on TV	4	17	43	33	3=100

Q. 9d In your opinion, how much information was kept from the public about the war?

**FORM II**

36 A lot  
 36 Some  
 14 Little  
 10 Almost nothing  
 $\frac{4}{100}$  Don't know

**ASK ALL:**

Q. 10 In your opinion, which TV network did the best job of covering the War in the Gulf - ABC, CBS, NBC or CNN?

		NEWS INTEREST INDEX		
		<u>JAN 25</u>	<u>JAN 3</u>	<u>SEPT</u>
12	ABC	12	18	21
8	CBS	7	17	14
10	NBC	7	13	13
58	CNN	61	30	27
$\frac{12}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{13}{100}$	$\frac{22}{100}$	$\frac{25}{100}$

Q. 11 Do you think military restrictions on news reports were a good idea or bad idea?

		NEWS INTEREST INDEX
		<u>JAN 25</u>
83	Good idea	79
12	Bad idea	16
$\frac{5}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{5}{100}$

Q. 12 Would you have liked to have seen more military censorship of Gulf news reports, less military censorship of Gulf news or do you think that military censorship was about right?

17	More censorship
13	Less censorship
68	Censorship about right
$\frac{2}{100}$	No opinion

**ASK ALL:**

Q. 13 Did you approve or disapprove of American news organizations broadcasting news from Iraq that had been censored by the Iraqi government?

		NEWS INTEREST INDEX
		<u>JAN 25</u>
52	Approve	43
38	Disapprove	45
$\frac{10}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{12}{100}$

Q. 14 Just your impression, who dug harder to get the news in the Gulf, TV reporters or newspaper reporters?

**FORM I**

		NEWS INTEREST INDEX
		<u>JAN 25</u>
72	TV	75
11	Newspaper	7
7	Same (VOLUNTEERED)	5
$\frac{10}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{13}{100}$



Q. 15 During the war did you see accounts in newspapers of events in the Gulf that you had seen previously on TV?

**FORM I**

		NEWS INTEREST INDEX
		<u>JAN 25</u>
75	Yes - GO TO Q. 16	69
18	No S))))))))) /Q GO TO Q. 17	27
$\frac{7}{100}$	Don't know S)) -	$\frac{4}{100}$

**IF ANSWERED '1' YES TO Q. 15 ASK Q. 16:**

Q. 16a Did you also read these accounts in newspapers to get more information or did you skip over them?

**FORM I**

57	Read them
41	Skip over them
$\frac{2}{100}$	Don't know

Q. 16b Did you find that newspaper accounts gave you a better understanding of what you had seen on TV or did they pretty much cover the same ground?

**FORM I**

		NEWS INTEREST INDEX
		<u>JAN 25</u>
27	Better understanding	23
67	Same ground	73
$\frac{6}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{4}{100}$

Q. 22 Do you happen to know... did reporters go out on their own to cover the fighting or did they cover the war through press pools organized by the military?

**FORM II**

33	Go out on own
36	Pool s -- GO TO Q. 22b
$\frac{31}{100}$	No opi ni on

Q. 22b Overall, do you think the press pool system served the public interest very well, fairly well or not so well?

**FORM II**

35 Served well  
 51 Fairly well  
 13 Not so well  
 $\frac{1}{100}$  No opinion

Q. 22c In a number of cases American reporters who went out on their own to cover the war were captured by Iraqi forces. Do you think these reporters were trying to do what journalists ought to be doing or do you think they were going too far to try to get a story?

**FORM II**

36 Doing what they should be  
 58 Going too far  
 $\frac{6}{100}$  Don't know

**ASK ALL:**

Q. 17 Some people think that by criticizing the military, news organizations weaken the country's defenses. Others think that such criticism helps keep our nation militarily prepared. Which position is closer to your opinion?

		THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS V		
		AUG 1989	DEC 1986	JUNE 1985
28	Weakens defenses	33	31	31
59	Keeps nation prepared	56	57	51
$\frac{13}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{11}{100}$	$\frac{12}{100}$	$\frac{18}{100}$

Q. 18 Which is more important to you: that the government be able to censor news stories it feels threaten national security OR that the news media be able to report stories they feel are in the national interest?

		THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS V		
		AUG 1989	JUNE 1985	OCT 1985
58	Government able to censor	40	44	38
32	News media able to report	52	38	50
5	Both equal (VOLUNTEERED)	5	9	6
$\frac{5}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{3}{100}$	$\frac{9}{100}$	$\frac{6}{100}$

Q. 19 During the war, how much confidence did you have that the military was giving the public an accurate picture of how the war was going? (READ CHOICES 1-4)

		NEWS INTEREST INDEX JAN 25
44	A great deal of confidence	<u>29</u>
46	A fair amount of confidence	58
7	Not too much confidence	9
2	No confidence at all	2
<u>1</u> 100	Don't know	2

Q. 20 In trying to keep the public informed during the war, do you think that news organizations gave Saddam Hussein too much opportunity to promote his cause or do you think news organizations were careful not to give Saddam Hussein too much opportunity to promote his cause?

		NEWS INTEREST INDEX JAN 25	PEOPLE, PRESS AND TERRORISM 1986
39	Gave too much opportunity	44	56
50	Careful	44	34
<u>11</u> 100	No opinion	<u>12</u> 100	<u>10</u> 100

Q. 21 In your opinion, which is better that news coverage of a war be pro-American or that news coverage of a war be neutral?

22	Pro-American
71	Neutral
<u>7</u> 100	No opinion

Q. 23a During the war military briefers used the term collateral damage, do you happen to know what it meant?

**Form II**

34	Yes - What did it mean?	21	Civilian casualties, unintended damage from bombing
$\frac{66}{100}$	No	$\frac{13}{100}$	Other answers

Q. 23b During the war how concerned were you with the amount of collateral damage caused by allied bombing of Iraq?

**Form II**

21	Very concerned
34	Fairly concerned
27	Not concerned
$\frac{18}{100}$	No opinion

Q. 23c During the war how concerned were you with the number of civilian casualties and other unintended damage caused by allied bombing of Iraq?

**Form I**

49	Very concerned
33	Fairly concerned
17	Not concerned
$\frac{1}{100}$	No opinion

Q.24 I'd like your opinion of some people and organizations. As I read from a list, please tell me which category best describes your overall opinion of who or what I name. First, would you describe your opinion of **(INSERT FIRST ITEM)** as very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

**FORM I**

	<u>Very Favorable</u>	<u>Mostly Favorable</u>	<u>Mostly Unfavorable</u>	<u>Very Unfavorable</u>	<u>(VOL) Never Heard Of</u>	<u>(VOL) Can't Rate</u>
a. The Congress	16	50	19	7	0	8 =100
b. The Military	60	34	2	2	0	2 =100
c. Network television news	40	51	5	2	0	2 =100
d. Local TV news	37	52	6	2	*	3 =100
e. News magazines	22	40	6	2	1	29 =100
f. The daily newspaper you are most familiar with	30	55	7	3	*	5 =100
g. Peter Jennings	43	45	3	2	1	6 =100
h. Dan Rather	36	41	10	4	1	8 =100
i. Tom Brokaw	40	43	5	1	3	8 =100
j. Bernard Shaw	25	36	7	2	12	18 =100
k. Peter Arnett	21	32	9	4	17	17 =100
l. Norman Schwarzkopf	62	22	2	1	5	8 =100
m. Colin Powell	51	28	2	1	7	11 =100
n. Richard Cheney	33	35	4	2	10	16 =100
o. Richard Gephardt	11	35	11	3	17	23 =100
p. Thomas Foley	13	29	7	3	23	25 =100

### TREND IN FAVORABILITY RATINGS

	Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	DK/Never Heard of/ Can't Rate
<u>Dan Rather</u>					
March, 1991	36	41	10	4	9
January, 1989	26	51	10	4	9
May, 1988	19	52	13	6	10
January 8-17	20	46	15	11	8
October, 1987	24	49	9	5	13
April /May	24	60	6	2	8
<u>Tom Brokaw</u>					
March, 1991	40	43	5	1	11
January, 1989	27	54	5	1	13
May, 1988	22	54	6	1	17
January	22	57	6	1	14
October, 1987	23	46	6	2	23
<u>Peter Jennings</u>					
March, 1991	43	45	3	2	7
January, 1989	27	54	5	2	12
May, 1988	24	53	6	1	16
January	23	55	6	1	15
October, 1987	25	49	5	2	19
<u>Daily Newspapers</u>					
March, 1991	30	55	7	3	5
Spring, 1990	22	56	12	5	5
August, 1989	25	52	12	5	6
January, 1989	22	56	13	4	5
May, 1988	19	59	13	4	5
January 27	19	62	11	3	5
January 7-18	21	59	12	4	4
October, 1987	21	58	9	4	8
April /May	22	59	12	3	4
January	19	57	13	6	5
July, 1986	28	51	11	6	4
June, 1985	25	56	8	3	8
<u>Network TV News</u>					
March, 1991	40	51	5	2	2
Spring, 1990	22	60	12	3	
		3			
August, 1989	28	54	11	3	4
January, 1989	21	61	12	3	3
May, 1988	20	58	14	4	4
January 27	12	69	13	3	3
January 7-18	18	60	14	4	4
October, 1987	19	62	10	3	6
April /May	21	63	11	3	2
January	19	55	16	6	4
July, 1986	30	53	10	4	3
June, 1985	25	59	8	2	6

	<u>Very Favorable</u>	<u>Mostly Favorable</u>	<u>Mostly Unfavorable</u>	<u>Very Unfavorable</u>	<u>DK/Never Heard of/ Can't Rate</u>
<u>Local TV News</u>					
March, 1991	37	52	6	2	3
August, 1989	27	53	11	4	5
June, 1985	27	57	9	2	5
<u>News Magazines</u>					
March, 1991	22	40	6	2	30
August, 1989	15	44	11	3	27
June, 1985	16	49	8	3	24
<u>Congress</u>					
March, 1991	16	50	19	7	8
Spring, 1990	6	53	25	9	7
May, 1988	8	56	23	5	8
January, 1988	6	58	25	4	7
May, 1987	10	64	16	4	6
January, 1987	7	52	23	8	10
<u>Military</u>					
March, 1991	60	34	2	2	2
Spring, 1990	18	55	15	6	6
January, 1988	20	57	14	3	6
May, 1987	17	63	12	4	4
January, 1987	19	54	11	5	11
July, 1986	32	53	7	3	5
June, 1985	24	53	13	5	5
<u>Richard Cheney</u>					
March, 1991	33	35	4	2	26
Spring, 1990	3	17	8	3	69
<u>Richard Gephardt</u>					
March, 1991	11	35	11	3	40
Spring, 1990	3	26	12	5	54
<u>Thomas Foley</u>					
March, 1991	13	29	7	3	48
Spring, 1990	3	17	6	3	71

# TIMES MIRROR DATABASE

## PUBLIC ATTENTIVENESS TO MAJOR NEWS STORIES (1986 - 1991)

### 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)
- 67 THE WAR'S END AND THE HOMECOMING OF U.S. FORCES FROM THE GULF (MARCH 91)**
- 66 Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the deployment of U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia (Aug 90)
- 63 Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the deployment of U.S. forces to the Persian Gulf (Oct 90)
- 63 Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the deployment of U.S. forces to the Persian Gulf (Sept 90)
- 62 Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the presence of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf (Nov 90)
- 62 Recent increases in the price of gasoline (Oct 90)
- 60 Invasion of Panama (Jan 90)
- 60 Destruction caused by Hurricane Hugo (Oct 89)
- 59 Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the presence of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf (Jan 91)
- 58 U.S. air strikes against Libya (July 86)
- 57 The plight of the American hostages and other Westerners detained in Iraq (Sept 90)
- 57 Recent increase in the price of gasoline (Aug 90)
- 56 Recent increases in the price of gasoline (Sept 90)
- 53 Crash of a United Airlines DC-10 in Sioux City, Iowa (Aug 89)
- 52 Alaska Oil Spill (May 89)
- 51 The release of American hostages and other westerners from Iraq and Kuwait (Jan 91)
- 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 The plight of American hostages and other Westerners detained in Iraq and Kuwait (Nov 90)
- 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 The plight of American hostages and other Westerners detained in Iraq and Kuwait (Oct 90)
- 47 Political upheaval in China (July 89)
- 47 Supreme Court decision on abortion (July 89)
- 46 THE VIDEOTAPED BEATING BY LOS ANGELES POLICE OF A SUSPECT THEY APPREHENDED IN AN AUTO CHASE (MARCH 91)**
- 46 Nuclear accident at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union (July 86)
- 46 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)



PERCENT FOLLOWED  
VERY CLOSELY

- 39 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy (Nov 90)
- 39 News about the presidential campaign in 1988 (Aug 88)
- 38 News about the candidates and elections in your state (Nov 90)
- 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)
- 36 REPORTS ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE U.S. ECONOMY (MARCH 91)**
- 36 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy (Jan 91)
- 36 The murder of five people by a serial killer around the University of Florida campus in Gainesville (Sept 90)
- 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 THE CIVIL WAR IN IRAQ BETWEEN SHIITE IRAQIS AND FORCES LOYAL TO SADDAM HUSSEIN (MARCH 91)**
- 34 Congressional and administration efforts to reach a budget deficit agreement (Nov 90)
- 34 Attempts by Congress and the Administration to find ways to reduce the budget deficit (Oct 90)
- 34 Reports about flooding in Texas and other southwestern states (June 90)
- 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)
- 32 Criticisms of George Bush for being inconsistent in what he said about taxes and what he said about Persian Gulf policy (Nov 90)
- 31 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 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy (Aug 90)
- 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)
- 30 President Bush's call for higher taxes to help reduce the federal deficit (July 90)
  
- 29 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy (Sept 90)
- 29 Reports about the fires in Southern California (July 90)
- 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)

PERCENT FOLLOWED  
VERY CLOSELY

- 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 Deployment of U.S. marines to Liberia to protect the lives of Americans caught in the civil war (Aug 90)
- 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 Bush/Gorbachev summit meeting in Helsinki (Sept 90)
- 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 Supreme Court decision that found laws against flag burning unconstitutional and the attempt in Congress to amend the Constitution (July 90)
- 24 Nelson Mandela's visit to the U.S. (July 90)
- 24 Deployment of the Hubble Space Telescope (May 90)
- 24 Difficulties the government is having in getting people to fill out Census forms (May 90)
- 24 The NCAA Basketball playoffs (April 90)
- 24 Supreme Court decision regarding a person's right to die (July 90)
- 23 Attempt in Idaho to pass a bill that would severely restrict abortions (April 90)
- 23 Greyhound bus drivers' strike (April 90)
- 23 Discussion of the reunification of Germany (March 90)
- 23 The World Series (Nov 89)
- 22 Congressional hearings about U.S. Persian Gulf policy (Jan 91)
- 22 Reunification of Germany (Oct 90)
- 22 Washington Mayor Barry's trial (July 90)
- 22 The 54 year old Oregon woman suffering from Alzheimers who ended her life by using a suicide machine (July 90)
- 22 President Bush's visit to Colombia to attend a drug summit (March 90)
- 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)

PERCENT FOLLOWED  
VERY CLOSELY

- 21 Controversy surrounding the way Roseanne Barr sang the National Anthem at a San Diego Padres baseball game (Aug 90)
- 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 Scandal involving HUD (Aug 89)
- 20 MIKHAIL GORBACHEV'S POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN THE SOVIET UNION (MARCH 91)**
- 20 Resignation of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the election of her successor (Jan 91)
- 20 The murder on a New York subway platform of a Utah man attempting to protect his family from attack by teenage muggers (Sept 90)
- 20 Earthquake in Iran (July 90)
- 20 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 Attempts by Congress and the Administration to find ways to reduce the budget deficit (Aug 90)
- 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 News about the candidates and election campaigns in your state (Oct 90)
- 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 Nomination of David Souter to the U.S. Supreme Court to replace Justice William Brennan (Aug 90)
- 16 Washington DC Mayor Marion Barry's trial ending in a mistrial (Aug 90)
- 16 Financial troubles of Donald Trump (July 90)
- 16 Dispute between the President and Congress over allowing Chinese students to remain in America (Feb 90)

PERCENT FOLLOWED  
VERY CLOSELY

- 15 Resignation of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze (Jan 91)
- 15 Senate confirmation of Supreme Court Justice David Souter (Oct 90)
- 15 Controversy over the exclusion of blacks from membership in many country clubs at which national golf championship matches are played (Aug 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 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)
- 13 U.S. Department of Education prohibition of racially based college scholarships (Jan 91)
- 13 Worsening economic conditions in the Soviet Union (Sept 90)
- 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 **THE FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE THAT INVESTIGATED FIVE SENATORS FOR DOING FAVORS FOR CHARLES KEATING IN EXCHANGE FOR CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS (MARCH 91)**
- 12 Major League Baseball's decision to force George Steinbrenner to give up active control of the New York Yankees (Aug 90)
- 12 Pledge of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress to end the armed struggle in South Africa (Aug 90)
- 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 Academy Awards (April 90)
  
- 9 Purchase of entertainment giant, MCA by the Japanese consumer electronics company, Matsushita (Jan 91)
- 9 The investigation of five U.S. Senators for doing favors for Charles Keating in exchange for campaign contributions (Jan 91)
- 9 Aids conference in San Francisco (July 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)
- 8 The murder in New York city of Jewish militant rabbi Meir Kahane (Nov 90)
- 7 First reports from the 1990 U.S. census (Sept 90)

*PERCENT FOLLOWED  
VERY CLOSELY*

- 6 William Bennett's change of mind about heading the Republican National Committee (Jan 91)
- 6 Continuing political unrest in the Ukraine and in other republics of the Soviet Union (Nov 90)
- 6 United Nations Children's Summit held in New York (Oct 90)
- 6 Elections in Romania (June 90)
- 6 The visit to the United States of Vaclav Havel, the new president of  
Czechoslovakia (March 90)
- 6 Trip of high ranking officials to China (Jan 90)
- 6 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 Dismissal of Pakistan's Prime Minister Bhutto by Pakistan's President (Aug 90)
- 4 Civil war in Cambodia (May 90)
- 2 Tom Cruise's separation from his wife (April 90)