



**THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**For The People & The Press**

***NEWS Release***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**Wednesday, December 8, 2010**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**  
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## Mixed Reactions to Media Coverage Most Say WikiLeaks Release Harms Public Interest

Most Americans following news about the WikiLeaks website's release of a huge trove of classified documents about U.S. diplomatic relations see the revelations – which have received extensive media coverage – doing more harm than good.

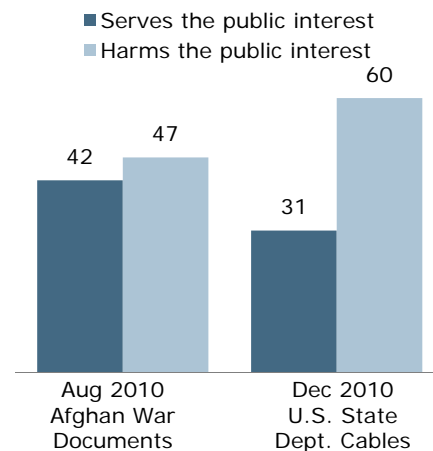
Six-in-ten (60%) of those paying attention to the story say they believe the release of thousands of secret State Department communications harms the public interest. About half that number (31%) say the release serves the public interest, according to the latest News Interest Index survey conducted Dec. 2-5 among 1,003 adults.

Yet the public makes a distinction between WikiLeaks itself and the press' handling of the document release. While nearly four-in-ten (38%) of this group say news organizations have gone too far in reporting the confidential material, a comparable number (39%) say the media has struck the right balance. Just 14% say news organizations have held back too much of the classified material.

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### Current Leaks Seen as More Harmful Than Afghan Leaks

*WikiLeaks release of classified documents...\**



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 2-5, 2010.

\*Based on those who followed or heard about the releases by WikiLeaks.

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In August, the public was more divided about the impact of the release by WikiLeaks of thousands of classified documents about the war in Afghanistan. At that point, 47% of those who had heard at least a little about the story said the release harmed the public interest, while 42% said it served the public interest.

Economic news topped the public's news interest last week with 25% saying they followed news about the economy more closely than any other top story; 52% say they followed economic news very closely, the highest number since mid-summer. Three-in-ten (30%) say they followed the WikiLeaks developments very closely. This was the top story for 7%.

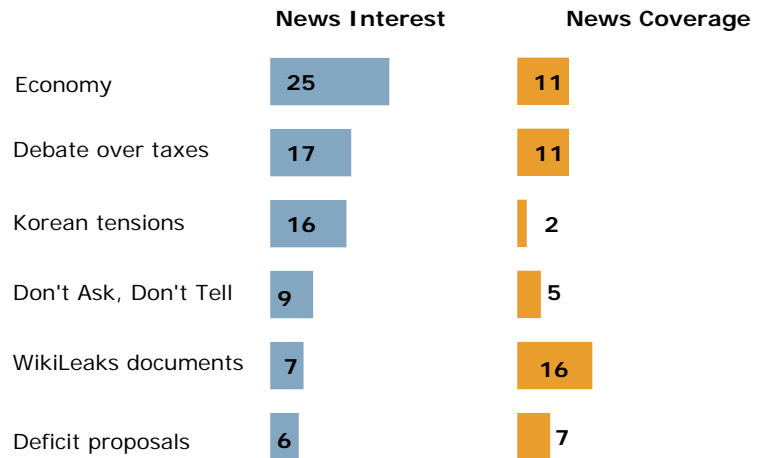
For its part, the media devoted 16% of coverage to the WikiLeaks story, according to a separate analysis by the Pew Research

Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism. Tallying together the economic themes, PEJ found them receiving more than a quarter of coverage: the economy in general (11%), the debate over what to do about the Bush era income tax cuts (11%) and discussions in Washington about how to reduce the federal deficit (7%).

In the survey, nearly two-in-ten (17%) say they followed the debate over tax cuts most closely, while 6% say they followed news about deficit reduction proposals that closely.

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### News Interest vs. News Coverage



News interest shows the percentage of people who say they followed this story most closely, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Dec 2-5, 2010. News coverage shows the percentage of news coverage devoted to each story, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, Nov. 29-Dec. 5, 2010.

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## Partisan Differences on WikiLeaks

Fully three-quarters of Republicans following news about the WikiLeaks release of classified diplomatic communications say it harms the public interest (75%), while about two-in-ten (19%) say it serves the public interest. The balance of opinion among Democrats and independents tilts the same way, but the divide is narrower.

Just more than half of Democrats (53%) say the release harms the public interest while 36% say it serves the public interest. Among independents, the numbers are comparable (57% harms, 36% serves public interest).

In mid-summer, following release of classified documents about the war in Afghanistan, partisan differences were slight. About half of Republicans (52%) said that release harmed the public interest, compared with 44% of Democrats and 46% of independents. About four-in-ten of each said the release served the public interest.

Looking at the media's handling of the recently leaked State Department cables, more Republicans (47%) than Democrats (35%) or independents (34%) say news organizations have gone too far in reporting the material, but none of these is a majority. By the same token, 45% of Democrats, 38% of independents and 36% of Republicans say the media has struck the right balance.

### Republicans More Likely to See Leaks as Harmful to Public Interest

<i>Release of diplomatic documents...</i>	<b>Serves public interest</b>	<b>Harms public interest</b>	<b>Neither/Both</b>	<b>DK</b>
<b>Dec 2-5*</b>	31	60	4	5=100
Republican	19	75	4	2=100
Democrat	36	53	5	6=100
Independent	36	57	4	3=100
<i>Release of Afghan war documents...</i>				
<b>Jul 29-Aug 1**</b>	42	47	6	5=100
Republican	39	52	4	5=100
Democrat	40	44	9	7=100
Independent	44	46	7	3=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec 2-5, 2010.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

\*Based on those following diplomatic leaks very, fairly or not too closely.

\*\*Based on those who read or heard about Afghanistan leaks.

### Mixed Reactions to Press Handling of Leaked Material

<i>In reporting leaked material, did news organizations...</i>	<b>Go too far</b>	<b>Hold back too much</b>	<b>Strike right balance</b>	<b>DK</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Total	38	14	39	8=100
Republican	47	11	36	6=100
Democrat	35	13	45	6=100
Independent	34	19	38	8=100
<i>View of WikiLeaks release...</i>				
Serve public	18	28	50	4=100
Harm public	51	7	34	7=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER December 2-5, 2010.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Based on those following diplomatic leaks very, fairly or not too closely.

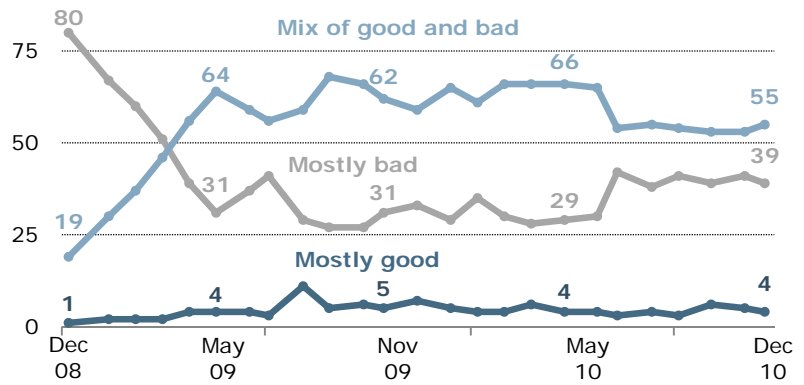
About half (51%) of those who say the leaks harm the public interest also say news organizations have gone too far in reporting on the leaked material. Still, 34% of this group say the media has struck the right balance. Half of those who say the leaks serve the public interest say the media has struck the right balance, but nearly three-in-ten (28%) say news organizations have held back too much; 18% say they have gone too far.

### Little Change in Perceptions of Economic News

The public's perceptions of economic news remain mixed and far less positive than earlier in 2010. More than half (55%) say they are hearing a mix of good and bad news about the economy; 39% say they are hearing mostly bad news while just 4% say they are hearing mostly good news. Those numbers have changed little since July, when perceptions of economic news took a turn for the worse.

Partisan perspectives are largely unchanged over the past month. Republicans remain more likely than Democrats to say they are hearing mostly bad news (50% vs. 29%); Democrats are more likely to say they are hearing a mix of good and bad economic news (65% vs. 47%). Among independents, 55% say they are hearing a mix of good and bad news and 40% say they are hearing mostly bad news about the economy.

#### Most See Mix of Economic News



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 2-5, 2010.

#### Partisan Differences in Perceptions of Economic News

Recent economic news...	Mostly good news	Mostly bad news	Mixed news	DK
	%	%	%	%
Total	4	39	55	1=100
Republican	3	50	47	1=100
Democrat	6	29	65	0=100
Independent	4	40	55	*=100
<i>Following economic news...</i>				
Very closely	5	44	50	*=100
Less closely	3	34	61	2=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER December 2-5, 2010. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

## Jobs, Real Estate News Mostly Bad, Better News on Retail Sales

Looking at coverage of different sectors of the economy, the public continues to see mostly bad news about jobs and real estate. But after news reports about solid retail sales around Thanksgiving, Americans give a relatively upbeat assessment about retail news.

Two-thirds (66%) say they are hearing mostly bad news about the job situation, while 62% say they are hearing mostly bad news about real estate values. Those numbers are little changed from the last time this question was asked in early September.

Just 18% say that news about retail sales has been mostly bad. A third (33%) say this news has been mostly good, more than double the percentage saying this for any of the other sectors in the question; 45% say the news about retail sales has been a mix of good and bad news.

Perceptions of news about the financial markets and consumer prices show only slight changes since September. About four-in-ten (41%) say news about food and consumer prices has been mostly bad; 39% say this news has been mixed. A similar 38% say news about financial markets has been mostly bad, while 44% say this news has been mixed.

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### Impressions of News About Economic Sectors

<i>Recent news about...</i>	Mostly good news %	Mostly bad news %	Mixed news %	DK %
<i>The job situation</i>				
Dec. 2-5	6	66	27	1=100
Sept. 2-6	5	65	28	2=100
July 1-5	5	64	30	1=100
May 7-10	9	52	38	2=100
<i>Real estate values</i>				
Dec. 2-5	6	62	28	4=100
Sept 2-6	6	57	32	5=100
July 1-5	9	49	35	7=100
May 7-10	12	41	42	5=100
<i>Financial markets</i>				
Dec. 2-5	13	38	44	4=100
Sept. 2-6	9	43	40	8=100
July 1-5	4	46	44	6=100
May 7-10	6	41	49	3=100
<i>Food, consumer prices</i>				
Dec. 2-5	16	41	39	5=100
Sept. 2-6	12	35	42	10=100
July 1-5	9	32	48	10=100
May 7-10	8	37	46	9=100
<i>Retail Sales</i>				
Dec. 2-5	33	18	45	4=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER December 2-5, 2010

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## The Week's News

With the government's release of worse-than-expected employment numbers on Dec. 3, about half of the public (52%) says they followed economic news very closely last week. That's the highest number to say this since mid-summer. A quarter (25%) say they followed news about the economy more closely than any other top story.

About four-in-ten (39%) say they very closely followed news about the debate over whether to extend the Bush era income tax cuts; 17% say this was the story they followed most closely.

Though the tensions between North and South Korea amounted to just 2% of the week's newshole, Americans took an interest in the story: 35% say they followed this news very closely, while 16% say this was the news they followed most closely.

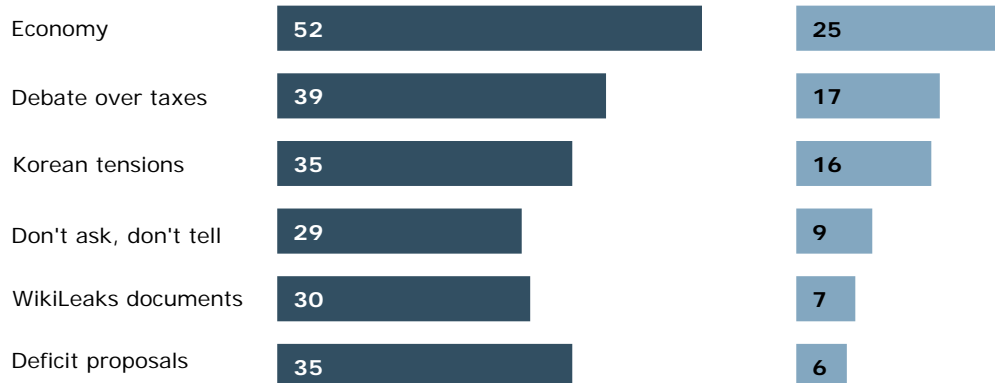
Continued debate in Washington about whether to end the Pentagon's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy concerning gays and lesbians in the military – including Congressional hearings and the release of a survey of military personnel – accounted for 5% of coverage, according to PEJ. Nearly three-in-ten (29%) say they followed this news very closely; this was the top story for 9%.

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## News Interest

*% following each story very closely*

*Which one story did you follow most closely?*



PEW RESEARCH CENTER. Dec. 2-5, 2010.

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Three-in-ten (30%) say they followed news about the WikiLeaks release very closely, while 7% say they followed this story most closely. The story accounted for 16% of coverage.

About a third (35%) very closely followed news about recommendations for reducing the federal deficit, while 6% say this was the news they followed most closely. Those stories accounted for 7% of coverage.

More Democrats say they tracked news about the ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ policy very closely (39%) than Republicans (25%) or independents (23%). On the other stories, partisan differences were slight.

These findings are based on the most recent installment of the weekly News Interest Index, an ongoing project of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The index, building on the Center’s longstanding research into public attentiveness to major news stories, examines news interest as it relates to the news media’s coverage. The weekly survey is conducted in conjunction with The Project for Excellence in Journalism’s News Coverage Index, which monitors the news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets on an ongoing basis. In the most recent week, data relating to news coverage were collected November 29 to December 5, and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week were collected December 2-5, from a nationally representative sample of 1,003 adults.

## About the News Interest Index

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events. This project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, an ongoing content analysis of the news. The News Coverage Index catalogues the news from top news organizations across five major sectors of the media: newspapers, network television, cable television, radio and the internet. Each week (from Monday through Sunday) PEJ compiles this data to identify the top stories for the week. (For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to [www.journalism.org](http://www.journalism.org).) The News Interest Index survey collects data from Thursday through Sunday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a national sample of 1,003 adults living in the continental United States, 18 years of age or older, from December 2-5, 2010 (671 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 332 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 146 who had no landline telephone). Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2009 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status based on extrapolations from the 2009 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,003	4.0 percentage points
Republicans	265	7.5 percentage points
Democrats	322	7.0 percentage points
Independents	308	7.0 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.



## **About the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press**

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

Andrew Kohut, Director

Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research

Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors

Michael Remez, Senior Writer

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For more information about the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press' weekly News Interest Index, go to [www.people-press.org](http://www.people-press.org).

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER NEWS INTEREST INDEX  
DECEMBER 2-5, 2010 OMNIBUS  
FINAL TOPLINE  
N=1003**

**PEW.1 THROUGH PEW.2 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.3 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy					
December 2-5, 2010	52	28	11	9	*
November 18-21, 2010	46	31	11	11	*
November 11-14, 2010	38	30	15	16	1
November 4-7, 2010	44	32	11	13	*
October 28-November 1, 2010	39	34	11	15	1
October 21-24, 2010	41	29	14	14	1
October 14-17, 2010	42	33	12	13	*
October 7-10, 2010	36	33	15	15	1
September 30-October 3, 2010	43	35	10	11	1
September 23-26, 2010	43	34	13	9	1
September 16-19, 2010	37	30	16	16	1
September 2-6, 2010	43	31	13	12	*
August 19-22, 2010	39	31	14	15	1
August 5-8, 2010	39	33	14	13	1
July 29-August 1, 2010	51	33	11	5	*
July 22-25, 2010	46	33	14	6	1
July 15-18, 2010	37	33	14	15	1
July 8-11, 2010	36	33	15	16	*
July 1-5, 2010	48	30	13	8	*
June 24-27, 2010	37	37	15	11	1
June 17-20, 2010	38	34	15	13	*
June 10-13, 2010	39	35	17	9	*
June 3-6, 2010	35	33	16	14	1
May 27-30, 2010	43	29	13	15	*
May 20-23, 2010	40	35	13	11	*
May 13-16, 2010	49	32	11	8	1
May 7-10, 2010	42	34	11	12	*
April 30-May 3, 2010	32	37	17	14	1
April 23-26, 2010	42	31	13	14	*
April 16-19, 2010	40	32	14	14	0
April 9-12, 2010	40	32	15	13	*
April 1-5, 2010	33	34	14	19	*
March 19-22, 2010	41	32	14	13	*
March 12-15, 2010	41	35	12	12	*
March 5-8, 2010	40	34	12	13	*
February 26-March 1, 2010	31	33	17	19	*
February 19-22, 2010	38	34	15	12	*
February 12-15, 2010	35	34	15	16	*
February 5-8, 2010	43	36	13	9	*
January 29-February 1, 2010	45	32	13	10	*
January 22-25, 2010	41	34	14	10	*
January 15-18, 2010	37	38	14	11	*
January 8-11, 2010	39	33	15	12	*
December 18-21, 2009	45	31	14	10	0
December 11-14, 2009	42	31	14	13	*

## PEW.3 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
December 4-7, 2009	41	36	13	9	1
November 13-16, 2009	38	33	14	15	*
October 30-November 2, 2009	34	32	17	16	*
October 23-26, 2009	44	30	15	10	1
October 9-12, 2009	41	29	16	13	*
October 2-5, 2009	44	30	15	11	0
September 25-28, 2009	44	37	10	10	*
September 18-21, 2009	44	34	15	7	*
September 11-14, 2009	45	32	14	9	*
September 3-6, 2009	41	31	15	13	*
August 28-31, 2009	45	30	13	12	1
August 21-24, 2009	50	27	13	10	1
August 14-17, 2009	41	37	11	12	*
August 7-10, 2009	42	34	13	10	*
July 31-August 3, 2009	46	34	11	8	*
July 24-27, 2009	45	35	12	8	*
July 17-20, 2009	43	35	11	11	1
July 10-13, 2009	37	38	13	11	*
July 2-5, 2009	38	35	15	12	*
June 19-22, 2009	42	33	15	10	*
June 12-15, 2009	41	35	12	12	*
June 5-8, 2009	41	34	11	14	*
May 29-June 1, 2009	43	37	11	8	*
May 21-24, 2009	44	35	13	9	*
May 15-18, 2009	44	35	12	8	*
May 8-11, 2009	42	34	12	12	*
May 1-4, 2009	47	36	11	5	1
April 17-20, 2009	52	30	10	7	1
April 9-13, 2009	48	29	13	10	0
March 27-30, 2009	48	32	10	10	*
March 20-23, 2009	52	34	8	6	*
March 13-16, 2009	48	33	9	10	*
February 27-March 2, 2009	56	30	8	6	*
February 13-16, 2009	55	29	10	6	*
January 30-February 2, 2009	52	31	12	5	*
January 23-26, 2009	57	30	8	5	0
January 16-19, 2009	43	35	13	9	*
January 2-4, 2009	42	36	15	7	*
December 12-15, 2008	51	33	9	7	*
December 5-8, 2008	42	38	13	7	*
November 21-24, 2008	59	24	9	8	*
November 14-17, 2008	56	29	9	6	*
November 7-10, 2008	54	31	8	7	*
October 31-November 3, 2008	63	27	6	4	*
October 24-27, 2008	52	35	7	5	1
October 17-20, 2008	62	29	6	3	*
October 10-13, 2008	65	25	7	3	*
October 3-6, 2008	69	23	5	3	*
September 26-29, 2008	70	22	5	3	*
September 19-22, 2008	56	27	12	5	*
September 5-8, 2008	44	33	16	7	*
August 29-31, 2008	41	34	13	11	1
August 15-18, 2008	39	36	15	10	*
August 8-11, 2008	39	35	16	10	*
August 1-4, 2008	47	34	11	8	0
July 25-28, 2008	46	32	10	12	*
July 18-21, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
July 11-14, 2008	44	33	12	10	1
June 27-30, 2008	49	31	12	7	1

## PEW.3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
June 13-16, 2008	42	33	14	11	*
May 9-12, 2008	45	31	13	11	*
May 2-5, 2008	43	31	15	10	1
April 18-21, 2008	41	35	13	10	1
April 4-7, 2008	39	37	12	12	*
March 28-31, 2008	42	36	14	8	*
March 20-24, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
February 29-March 3, 2008	38	35	15	11	1
February 15-18, 2008	37	36	11	16	8
February 1-4, 2008	40	37	14	8	1
January 18-21, 2008	42	31	16	11	*
January 11-14, 2008	36	32	15	16	1
November 2-5, 2007	27	37	16	19	1
October 19-22, 2007	25	34	20	21	*
August 10-13, 2007	28	36	18	18	*
Mid-November, 2006	31	40	17	11	1
December, 2005	35	35	18	11	1
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*

## PEW.3 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1
b. The release of classified documents about U.S. diplomatic relations by the Wikileaks website December 2-5, 2010	30	23	20	25	2
c. Tensions between North Korea and South Korea December 2-5, 2010	35	30	19	16	1
May 27-30, 2010	19	24	24	32	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
June 19-22, 2009: <i>New military threats from North Korea</i>	27	31	21	21	*
May 29-June 1, 2009: <i>Reports about North Korea testing nuclear weapons and missiles</i>	34	36	17	13	*
April 3-6, 2009: <i>North Korea's plans to test a long range missile</i>	23	31	19	27	*
June 27-30, 2008: <i>North Korea takes steps to halt its nuclear weapons program</i>	19	30	26	24	1
February 16-19, 2007: <i>Recent negotiations to shut down North Korea's nuclear weapons program</i>	15	31	22	31	1
Late October, 2006: <i>North Korea's announcement that it recently tested a nuclear weapon</i>	45	33	13	8	1
February, 2005: <i>North Korea's nuclear weapons program</i>	22	34	22	22	*
September, 2003	19	32	27	21	1
May, 2003	27	40	22	11	*
March, 2003	34	34	19	12	1
February, 2003	33	34	18	13	2
January, 2003	33	34	18	14	1
Late October, 2002: <i>North Korea's admission that it has been secretly developing nuclear weapons</i>	25	31	23	20	1
June, 1994: <i>Reports about North Korea's building of nuclear weapons and refusal to allow U.N. inspections</i>	27	33	26	14	*
d. Discussions in Washington about how to address the federal budget deficit December 2-5, 2010	35	25	21	17	2
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
November 11-14, 2010: <i>Proposals made by leaders of the federal budget deficit commission</i>	15	21	21	41	1
January 9-12, 2009: <i>Projections of a record high federal budget deficit this year</i>	35	30	19	16	*
November, 1990: <i>Congressional and administration efforts to reach a budget deficit agreement</i>	34	33	20	11	2
October, 1990: <i>Attempts by Congress and the administration to find ways to reduce the budget deficit</i>	34	37	17	12	*
August, 1990	19	30	27	23	1
July, 1990: <i>President Bush's call for higher taxes to help reduce the federal deficit</i>	30	34	22	14	*

## PEW.3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
June, 1990: <i>Special meetings between the Bush administration and congressional leaders to find ways to reduce the federal deficit</i>	18	33	28	20	1
April, 1990: <i>The spending and tax proposals made by Congressman Dan Rostenkowski to help reduce the budget deficit</i>	10	22	26	42	*
e. The debate in Washington over the federal income tax cuts passed when George W. Bush was president					
December 2-5, 2010	39	26	17	17	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
September 16-19, 2010: <i>The debate in Washington over competing Democratic and Republican tax plans</i>	21	24	21	34	*
September 9-12, 2010	16	19	22	42	1
May 8-11, 2009: <i>The debate in Washington over the federal budget</i>	22	28	19	31	*
March 27-30, 2009: <i>Debate over Barack Obama's budget proposal</i>	28	34	18	19	1
February 27-March 2, 2009: <i>Barack Obama's budget proposal for next year that raises taxes on wealthy Americans and increases spending on health care, education and other programs</i>	47	34	9	10	*
February, 2002: <i>Debate in Congress over G.W. Bush's budget and tax cut plan</i>	17	31	28	23	1
April, 2001	24	38	20	18	*
February, 2001: <i>G.W. Bush's tax cut plan</i>	31	35	19	14	1
f. News about the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy concerning gays in the military					
December 2-5, 2010	29	23	25	21	2
October 21-24, 2010	20	28	22	28	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
October 14-17, 2010: <i>A federal judge's decision to block the enforcement of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy concerning gays in the military</i>	20	24	25	30	1
September 23-26, 2010: <i>Debate about whether Congress should repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy concerning gays in the military</i>	24	30	22	22	2
May 27-30, 2010: <i>Congressional debate over whether to repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy concerning gays in the military</i>	16	22	24	37	1
February 5-8, 2010: <i>Military leaders saying they support allowing gays to serve openly in the military</i>	19	31	26	24	*
August, 1993: <i>Bill Clinton's decision to ease the ban on homosexuals in the military</i>	44	37	13	5	1
February, 1993: <i>Bill Clinton's attempts to lift the ban on gays in the military</i>	45	35	14	6	*

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.4 Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following MORE closely? **[DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.]**

Dec 2-5

2010

- 25 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy  
The debate in Washington over the federal income tax cuts passed when George W. Bush was president
- 17
- 16 Tensions between North Korea and South Korea
- 9 News about the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy concerning gays in the military
- 7 The release of classified documents about U.S. diplomatic relations by the Wikileaks website
- 6 Discussions in Washington about how to address the federal budget deficit
- 9 Some other story **(VOL.)**
- 11 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.5 From what you've read and heard, do you think the release of classified documents about U.S. diplomatic relations by WikiLeaks **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**:

		<b>BASED ON THOSE FOLLOWING LEAKS VERY, FAIRLY OR NOT TOO CLOSELY</b>		<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON</b>	
		Dec 2-5 <u>2010</u>	Jul 29-Aug 1 <u>2010</u> <sup>1</sup>	Mar <u>2007</u>	Jul <u>1986</u>
Dec 2-5					
<u>2010</u>					
29	Serves the public interest [OR]	31	42	42	43
53	Harms the public interest	60	47	44	42
7	Neither/Both <b>(VOL.)</b>	4	6	--	--
11	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	5	5	14	15
		(N=779)	(N=758)		

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.6 In your view, did news organizations **[RANDOMIZE: Go too far in reporting the leaked material, hold back too much of the leaked material]** or did they strike the right balance?

		<b>BASED ON THOSE FOLLOWING LEAKS VERY, FAIRLY OR NOT TOO CLOSELY</b>
		Dec 2-5 <u>2010</u>
Dec 2-5		
<u>2010</u>		
34	Go too far in reporting the leaked material	38
14	Hold back too much of the leaked material [OR]	14
36	Strike the right balance	39
16	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	8
		(N=779)

<sup>1</sup> For July 29-August 1, 2010 the question was asked only of those who heard a lot or a little about the Wikileaks release and was worded "...do you think the release of the classified documents about the war in Afghanistan by WikiLeaks serves the public interest [OR] harms the public interest?" In March 2007 and July 1986 question was worded "Which comes closer to your opinion: news leaks serve the public interest more by providing Americans with information they should have OR news leaks harm the public interest by revealing information that people ought not to have?" In these years, question was asked only of those who had heard of the term "news leak" and could correctly identify it as "a government official providing information."

**ASK ALL:**

Thinking about recent economic news ...

PEW.7 Are you hearing mostly good news about the economy these days, mostly bad news about the economy or a mix of both good and bad news?

	Hearing mostly <u>good news</u>	Hearing mostly <u>bad news</u>	A mix of good and <u>bad news</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
December 2-5, 2010	4	39	55	1
November 11-14, 2010	5	41	53	2
October 7-10, 2010	6	39	53	2
September 2-6, 2010	3	41	54	2
August 5-8, 2010	4	38	55	3
July 1-5, 2010	3	42	54	1
June 10-13, 2010	4	30	65	1
May 7-10, 2010	4	29	66	1
April 1-5, 2010	6	28	66	*
March 5-8, 2010	4	30	66	1
February 5-8, 2010	4	35	61	*
January 8-11, 2010	5	29	65	1
December 4-7, 2009	7	33	59	1
October 30-November 2, 2009	5	31	62	2
October 9-12, 2009	6	27	66	1
September 3-6, 2009	5	27	68	1
August 7-10, 2009	11	29	59	1
July 2-5, 2009	3	41	56	*
June 12-15, 2009	4	37	59	*
May 8-11, 2009	4	31	64	1
April 9-13, 2009	4	39	56	1
March 13-16, 2009	2	51	46	1
February 13-16, 2009	2	60	37	1
January 16-19, 2009	2	67	30	1
December 5-8, 2008	1	80	19	*

**ASK ALL:**PEW.8 Thinking about some specific aspects of the nation's economy...Please tell me if you are hearing mostly good news, mostly bad news or a mix of both good and bad news about each of the following. **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

	Hearing mostly <u>good news</u>	Hearing mostly <u>bad news</u>	A mix of good and <u>bad news</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
a. The financial markets				
December 2-5, 2010	13	38	44	4
September 2-6, 2010	9	43	40	8
July 1-5, 2010	4	46	44	6
May 7-10, 2010	6	41	49	3
April 1-5, 2010	15	30	50	6
March 5-8, 2010	11	26	59	4
January 8-11, 2010	16	32	47	6
October 30-November 2, 2009	12	33	48	7
August 7-10, 2009	20	31	43	6
June 12-15, 2009	9	43	45	3
b. Real estate values				
December 2-5, 2010	6	62	28	4
September 2-6, 2010	6	57	32	5
July 1-5, 2010	9	49	35	7
May 7-10, 2010	12	41	42	5
April 1-5, 2010	12	44	38	6
March 5-8, 2010	8	45	42	5
January 8-11, 2010	11	43	40	5



<b>PEW.8 CONTINUED...</b>	Hearing mostly <u>good news</u>	Hearing mostly <u>bad news</u>	A mix of good and <u>bad news</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
October 30-November 2, 2009	13	43	37	6
August 7-10, 2009	11	40	41	7
June 12-15, 2009	11	45	40	3
c. Prices for food and consumer goods				
December 2-5, 2010	16	41	39	5
September 2-6, 2010	12	35	42	10
July 1-5, 2010	9	32	48	10
May 7-10, 2010	8	37	46	9
April 1-5, 2010	10	35	46	9
March 5-8, 2010	9	34	50	7
January 8-11, 2010	12	37	45	6
October 30-November 2, 2009	12	39	42	7
August 7-10, 2009	10	36	46	9
June 12-15, 2009	9	39	46	6
d. The job situation				
December 2-5, 2010	6	66	27	1
September 2-6, 2010	5	65	28	2
July 1-5, 2010	5	64	30	1
May 7-10, 2010	9	52	38	2
April 1-5, 2010	9	56	33	2
March 5-8, 2010	5	59	35	1
January 8-11, 2010	6	61	31	2
October 30-November 2, 2009	3	68	27	2
August 7-10, 2009	6	61	32	1
June 12-15, 2009	1	71	27	1
e. Retail sales				
December 2-5, 2010	33	18	45	4

**PEW.8F THROUGH PEW.9 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**