



**Journalists in Iraq:  
A survey of reporters on the front lines**

After four years of war in Iraq, the journalists reporting from that country give their coverage a mixed but generally positive assessment, but they believe they have done a better job of covering the American military and the insurgency than they have the lives of ordinary Iraqis. And they do not believe the coverage of Iraq over time has been too negative. If anything, many believe the situation over the course of the war has been worse than the American public has perceived, according to a new survey of journalists covering the war from Iraq.

Above all, the journalists—most of them veteran war correspondents—describe conditions in Iraq as the most perilous they have ever encountered, and this above everything else is influencing the reporting. A majority of the journalists surveyed (57%) report that at least one of their Iraqi staff had been killed or kidnapped in the last year alone—and many more are continually threatened. “Seven staffers killed since 2003, including three last July,” one bureau chief wrote with chilling brevity. “At least three have been kidnapped. All were freed.”

A majority of journalists surveyed say most of the country is too dangerous to visit. Nine out of ten say that about at least half of Baghdad itself. Wherever they go, traveling with armed guards and chase vehicles is the norm for more than seven out of ten surveyed.

Even the basics of getting the story are remarkably difficult. Outside of the heavily-fortified Green Zone, most U.S. journalists must rely on local staff to do the necessary face-to-face reporting. Yet nearly nine out of ten journalists say their local staff cannot carry any equipment—not even a notebook—that might identify them as working for the western media for fear of being killed. Some local staffers do not even tell their own families.

<b>Dangers in Reporting</b>	
<b>Local staff murdered or kidnapped in last year?</b>	
Yes	57%
No	40
No answer	2
<b>Verbal or physical threats to staff</b>	
Daily or several times a week	16%
Several times a month	46
Less than once a month	30
Never	1
<b>Can staff identify themselves as working for a news organization?</b>	
No	87%
Yes	9
No answer	5

Most journalists also have a positive view of the U.S. military's embedding program for reporters. While they acknowledge the limited perspective it provides, they believe it offers access to information they could not otherwise get.

And most journalists, eight out of ten, feel that, over time, conditions for telling the story of Iraq have gotten worse, not better.

The survey, conducted by the Project for Excellence in Journalism from September 28 through November 7, was developed to get a sense of the conditions journalists have faced in trying to cover the war over the last couple of years. It was not designed to poll their sense of the situation in Iraq at this one or any other particular moment in time, or to offer a referendum on the success of the surge. It will be followed, later this year, with a content analysis of coverage on the ground from Iraq.

The survey included responses from 111 journalists who have worked or are currently working in Iraq. The vast majority, 90 of them, were in Iraq when they took the survey or have worked there in 2007, and most have spent at least seven months in the country cumulatively since the war began.

The journalists are from 29 different news organizations (all of them U.S. based except for one) that have had staff in Iraq—including newspapers, wire services, magazines, radio, and network and cable TV. This represents, by best estimates, every news organization in the U.S. save one that has had a correspondent in Iraq for at least one month since January 2006.<sup>1</sup>

Nearly everyone surveyed also responded to open-ended questions – often at length – offering a vivid and sobering portrait of trying to report an extraordinarily difficult story under terrifying conditions.

“The dangers can't be overstated,” one print journalist wrote. “It's been an ambush – two staff killed, one wounded – various firefights, and our 'home' has been rocked and mortared (by accident, I'm pretty sure). It's not fun; it's not safe, but I go back because it needs to be told.”

Whatever the problems, a magazine reporter offered, “The press...have carried out the classic journalistic mission of bearing witness.”

“Welcome to the new world of journalism, boys and girls. This is where we lost our innocence. Security teams, body armor and armored cars will forever now be pushed in between journalism and stories,” one bureau chief declared.

The Project for Excellence in Journalism, which is non-partisan and non-political, is one of eight projects that make up the Pew Research Center in Washington, D.C., a

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<sup>1</sup> Once these news organizations were identified, and email addresses of the journalists who had worked in Iraq secured, the survey was conducted online with the promise that the individual identities of the correspondents, as in most surveys, would remain confidential. The response rate was 61%.

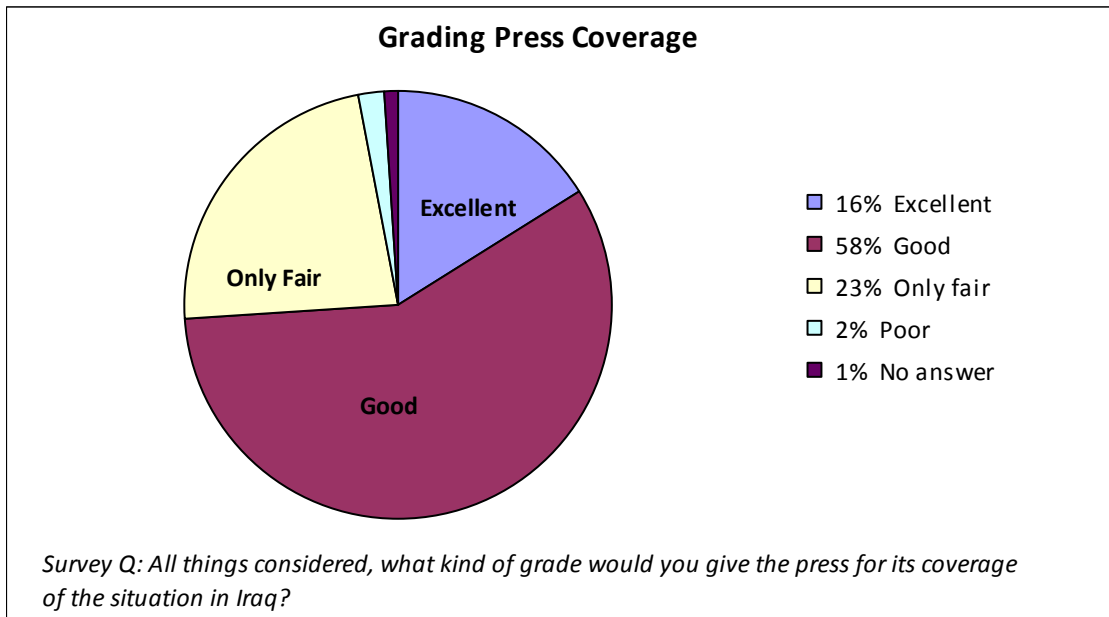
“fact tank” funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Princeton Survey Research was contracted to host and administer the online survey.

### Quality of Coverage

Overall, journalists working in Iraq give their own coverage a mixed but generally positive assessment. A majority (58%) regard press coverage in Iraq as “good,” the second-highest mark.

Another 16% rate the coverage as excellent.

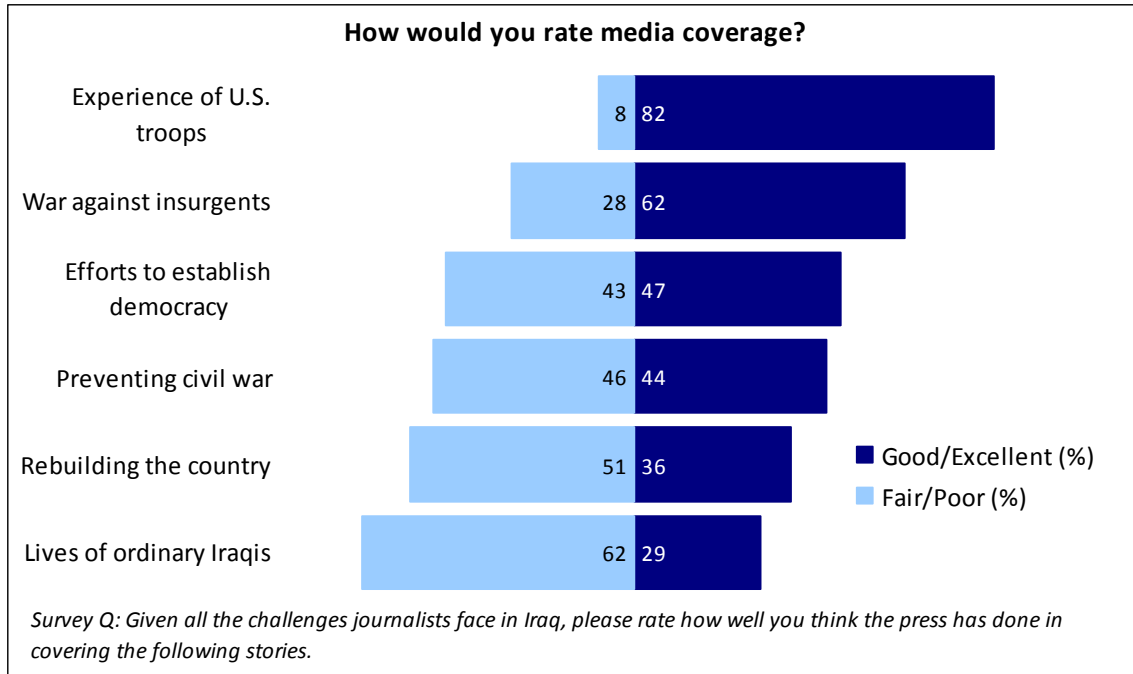
But nearly a quarter (23%) rate the coverage as only fair. Another 2% grade the coverage as poor.



Whatever the overall assessment, these journalists think they have covered some aspects of the story more effectively than others.

The Iraq press corps gives the highest marks to coverage of American troops. Eight-in-ten of the journalists (82%) rate the reporting on that topic as excellent or good.

“The press has been well placed and well equipped to cover the war from the point of view of the American military,” an editor at a broadcast outlet commented. A magazine correspondent elaborated, “The work of many embedded reporters was very good in the initial years of the occupation, and though the focus has shifted necessarily to political developments, many still turn out sterling work from military assignments.”



The second-highest marks came for coverage of the war against insurgents. Nearly two thirds of the journalists surveyed (62%) rate the coverage of that aspect of the story in Iraq as excellent or good.

The journalists are not as praiseworthy of their coverage of efforts to prevent civil war (44% excellent or good) or to rebuild the country (36% excellent or good).

Their lowest marks, however, are for coverage of the lives of ordinary Iraqis. A large majority of journalists (62%) regard that coverage as only fair to poor.

“There are too few reports that include Iraqi citizens – not Green Zone politicians but regular folks,” offered one TV journalist. “We need to hear their voices.”

“Suffering of ordinary Iraqis and the impact the war has had on average citizens”- that’s what the press has not covered particularly well, according to a newspaper correspondent.

“The daily attacks now seem to be covered pretty well, but generally lack the sort of context that puts them in perspective for readers,” according to a print reporter. “The greatest tragedy of the war has been how the media has in some way bored its audience with the violence.”

The journalists also considered some subjects to have been under covered and others to have been over covered.

When asked to volunteer their priorities, the largest number of journalists (40%) volunteered that the conflict’s impact on Iraqi civilians was the most “under covered”

story. In particular, the journalists surveyed mentioned the plight of the several million internally displaced Iraqis, Shiite versus Shiite violence in southern Iraq and events occurring virtually everywhere outside Baghdad. They also mentioned a lack of coverage of smaller towns and the day-to-day life of the population.

<b>Which Stories do you think are <i>Under Covered</i>?</b>	
	<b><u>%</u></b>
Impact on Iraqi civilians	42
Contractors	17
Economic problems/Infrastructure	16
Iraqi Politics	15
Failure to report Iraqi viewpoints	7
Sectarian conflicts	7
U.S. military strategy	7
Waste/corruption/crime	7
Events outside Baghdad	4
Refugees	4
Failure to know what U.S. troops are doing	3
Consequences of war	2
Insurgency	2
Mistakes/shortcomings of U.S. policy/action	2
Power of militias	2
Others*	1
None	1
No answer	15

**Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses.**  
*\*For full list of stories, see topline at the end of this report; Survey Q: Of the types of stories listed in the previous question and any others, which of these would you say is the most under covered right now?*

The second most-mentioned as a topic that was under covered was the role of private contractors in Iraq (17% of the journalists volunteered this), followed by economic issues (16%) and Iraqi politics (12%).

“There is a focus on the insurgency, militias, the drama of warfare, but not enough about the people – and it is ultimately the people and what (they) are going through that readers/viewers ideally relate to,” wrote a newspaper reporter.

“The coverage has been ethnocentric. There is not enough attention to the plight of the Iraqis,” offered another.

When asked what if anything had received too much coverage, the list of topics volunteered was smaller, and the numbers of journalists offering them not as great, but it tracked with the same topics journalists had described as covered well. The largest

number (29%) name news about U.S. military strategy as over covered. That was followed day-to-day violence (21%).

“There’s been too much coverage of the American military ‘surge’ and too much emphasis on framing stories in terms of the surge,” one newspaper correspondent wrote.

<b>Which Stories do you think are <i>Over Covered</i>?</b>	
	<b>%</b>
U.S. military strategy	29
Day-to-day violence, events	21
Contractors	10
Visits or statements by elected officials	7
Iraqi politics	6
Anbar Awakening/deals with sheiks	6
Sectarian conflicts	2
Consequences of war on U.S. politics	2
Failure to correct official statements	1
Involvement of other countries – Iran	1
Contractors - private security	1
Elected officials/high ranking military	1
Iraqi views on U.S. military	1
None	22
Don’t know/not sure	2
No answer	19

*Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses\* For full list of stories, see topline at the end of this report; Survey Q: Of the types of stories listed in the previous question and any others, which of these would you say is the most under covered right now?*

And a sizable minority of journalists surveyed (22%) say the war is so important that nothing is over covered.

“It’s the biggest story of our time,” said one print bureau chief. “Nothing can be under covered in Iraq,” echoed a broadcast editor. “There need to be more people and more coverage,” said another bureau chief. “Even U.S. military public affairs officers outside of Baghdad complain about lack of press attention,” one magazine reporter added.

### **Dangers to Journalists and their Staffs**

A major factor influencing what gets covered is the daily peril facing the journalists and their staffs.

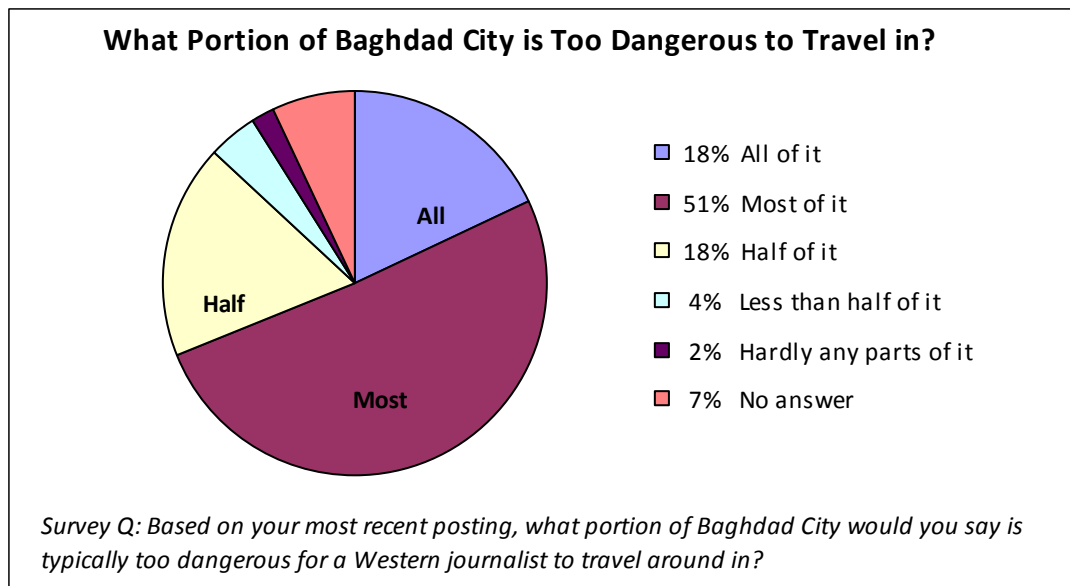
“Circumstances are so dangerous for American journalists,” a newspaper reporter responded, “that almost nothing can be reported in an ‘excellent’ fashion.”

“It has to be one of the most challenging countries to operate in,” wrote another print journalist. “From the lack of movement, the countless inhibiting factors, it’s constantly about trying to best put together the pieces of an inexplicable, intricate puzzle when you don’t have all the pieces ....”

The problem, journalists said, is often that many of the pieces lie in places too dangerous to reach.

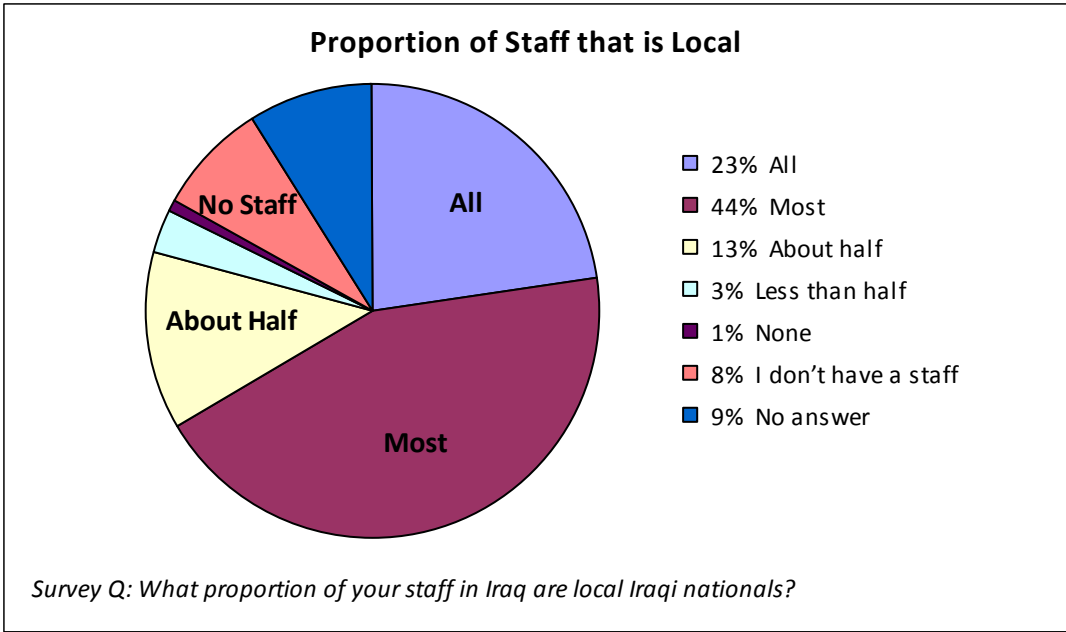
Virtually all of the journalists assigned to Iraq live in Baghdad, yet the vast majority, 87%, consider *at least* half the city too dangerous for a Western journalist to travel in.

And nearly one in five (18%) say that during their most recent stay the entire city was too dangerous for travel.



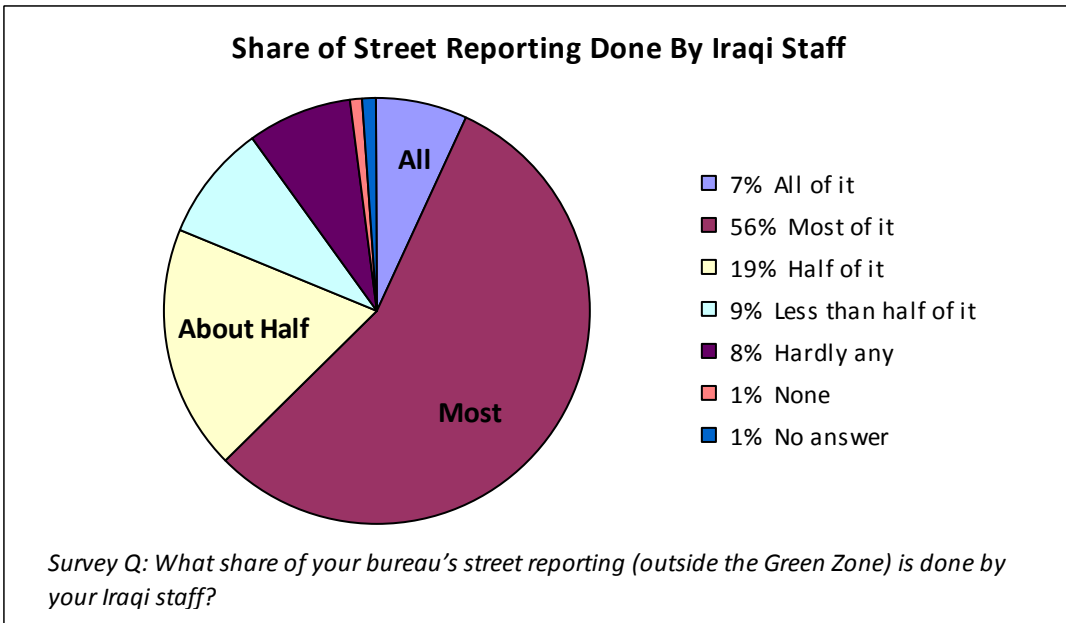
Virtually all the American news organizations rely on local Iraqi staffers, who go far beyond the role journalists traditionally expected of a “fixer” or a stringer.

A fixer is the person a visiting reporter might hire by the day or the week to arrange appointments, to translate and to “fix” whatever the reporter couldn’t efficiently or safely do himself. In many countries, news organizations and correspondents also hire local reporters as stringers, part-time contributors who do occasional reporting and writing.



In Iraq, local staffers fill the role of reporters, writers, translators. They are the people who know whether a Western journalist can safely visit a given destination, how best to travel there and who might be best to interview. But more often than not, these Iraqis are doing the reporting themselves.

Six out of ten (63%) of the journalists surveyed say that Iraqis staffers do all or most of the street reporting outside the Green Zone.



For these Iraqis, journalists say, the risks of telling the story are even higher than they are for their Western employers. A quarter (25%) of all print outlets using Iraqis said



these local staff are subject to daily intimidation and its even more (40%) for broadcast outlets.

Fully 62% of those surveyed report that threats or assaults against their Iraqi staffers occur at least several times a month; in some bureaus, they occur several times a week or even daily. “Our problems pale beside those of our Iraqi colleagues, who face extraordinary chances of death each day,” a bureau chief emphasized. “Few of us are as brave as them.”

And the threats are not idle.

A majority of those surveyed using Iraqi staff (57%)--representing a 58% of the news outlets involved--also report that at least one of these staffers have been kidnapped or murdered within the last 12 months. This includes every wire organization, every broadcast outlet and a third (33%) of the print outlets.<sup>2</sup>

“There have been several kidnappings,” recounted a newspaper correspondent, recounting the losses within his bureau. “Two of our Iraqi staff members have been murdered.”

“One kidnapping, unresolved; five local staff killed,” said another bureau chief.

As a consequence, the vast majority of journalists (nearly 90%) say their Iraqi staff must work essentially undercover, without any tools of newsgathering such as notebooks or cameras that might identify them as journalists.

“In my experience, most Iraqi staffers working for foreign news organizations keep their jobs secret from neighbors, relatives, even their close families,” the bureau chief of a print organization offered. “They often invent other jobs as cover stories. Few people working in Iraq as Iraqi journalists want to be identified with western agencies directly, unless they are living full time in the Green Zone, or in a security compound of some kind.”

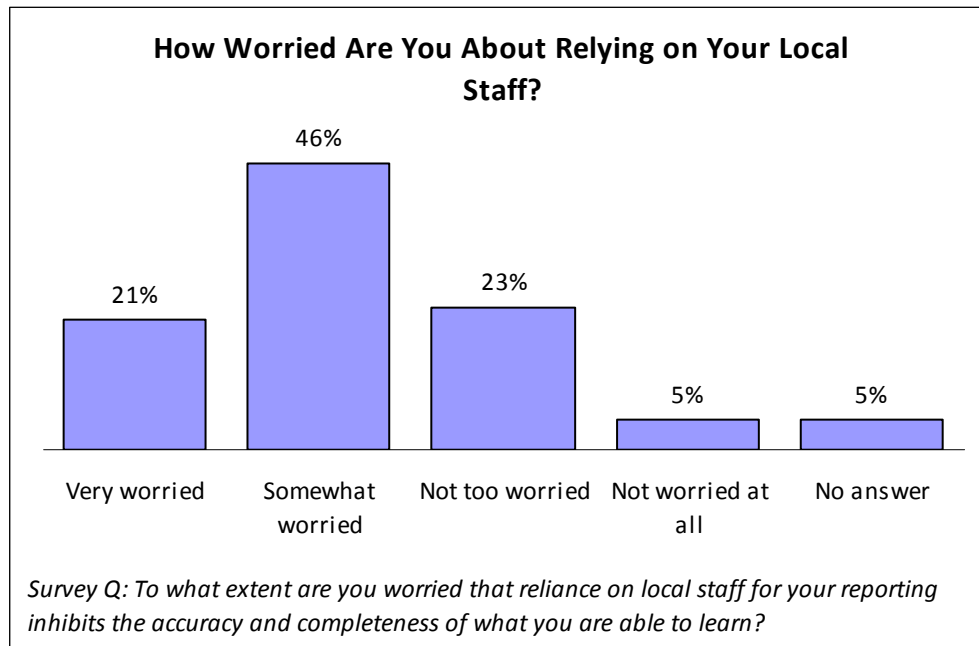
These dangers, journalists worry, come at a cost. A sizable number of the journalists surveyed worry the threats and inability to bring their tools or identify themselves affects the quality of the reporting. Almost half (44%) say that this constant intimidation impacts “a great deal” the ability of local staff to fully report or tell the story.

And given these threats, and their reliance on local staff, a sizable number of those surveyed, 67%, are at least somewhat concerned about the accuracy and completeness of what they know.

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<sup>2</sup>According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 30 Iraqi journalists were killed in 2006. Another 29 have been killed in the first 11 months of 2007, including six Iraqis working for Western news organizations. For statistics from 2006, see <http://www.cpj.org/killed/killed06.html#iraq>. For 2007 statistics, see <http://www.cpj.org/killed/killed07.html#iraq>.

More than one-in-five (21%) say they are “very worried” about the limitations on their knowledge.



“The pressure of living and working in Baghdad is unbelievable at times,” a print bureau chief explained. “It can be very stressful, especially if you are responsible for the safety and security of a lot of people like I am. That said, the greatest privilege I have had in my career so far is to have worked with my Iraqi staff – a group of very dedicated and brave men and women.”

The relationships forged with these Iraqi staffers were described in terms that often made them sound unusual and intense. “It often feels like a teacher student relationship; we teach them about journalism, and they teach us about Iraq,” one newspaper reporter wrote.

### **Conditions Deteriorate**

Most journalists surveyed believe their job has gotten harder. Despite current accounts in the press that the surge and alliances with tribal leaders are helping decrease violence, U.S. journalists there say over a broader length of time the violence and threat of violence has made reporting from Iraq more difficult.

Eight-in-ten journalists (79%) believe conditions have deteriorated for reporters since their own first posting in the country. Barely one in ten (8%) say that conditions have remained the same and only 2% say conditions for reporters have improved.

“It is dangerous and frustrating,” a broadcast editor wrote. “You want to go out and cover stories, but you cannot because of the threat of kidnapping or worse. It’s hard to

hear commentators back home say, ‘The media isn’t covering the full story.’ Well, there’s a reason for that, and it’s not bias. And when journalists cannot cover a playground being rebuilt because it’s too dangerous to travel around the city, then that playground is *not* the primary story.”

### **The Story Changes**

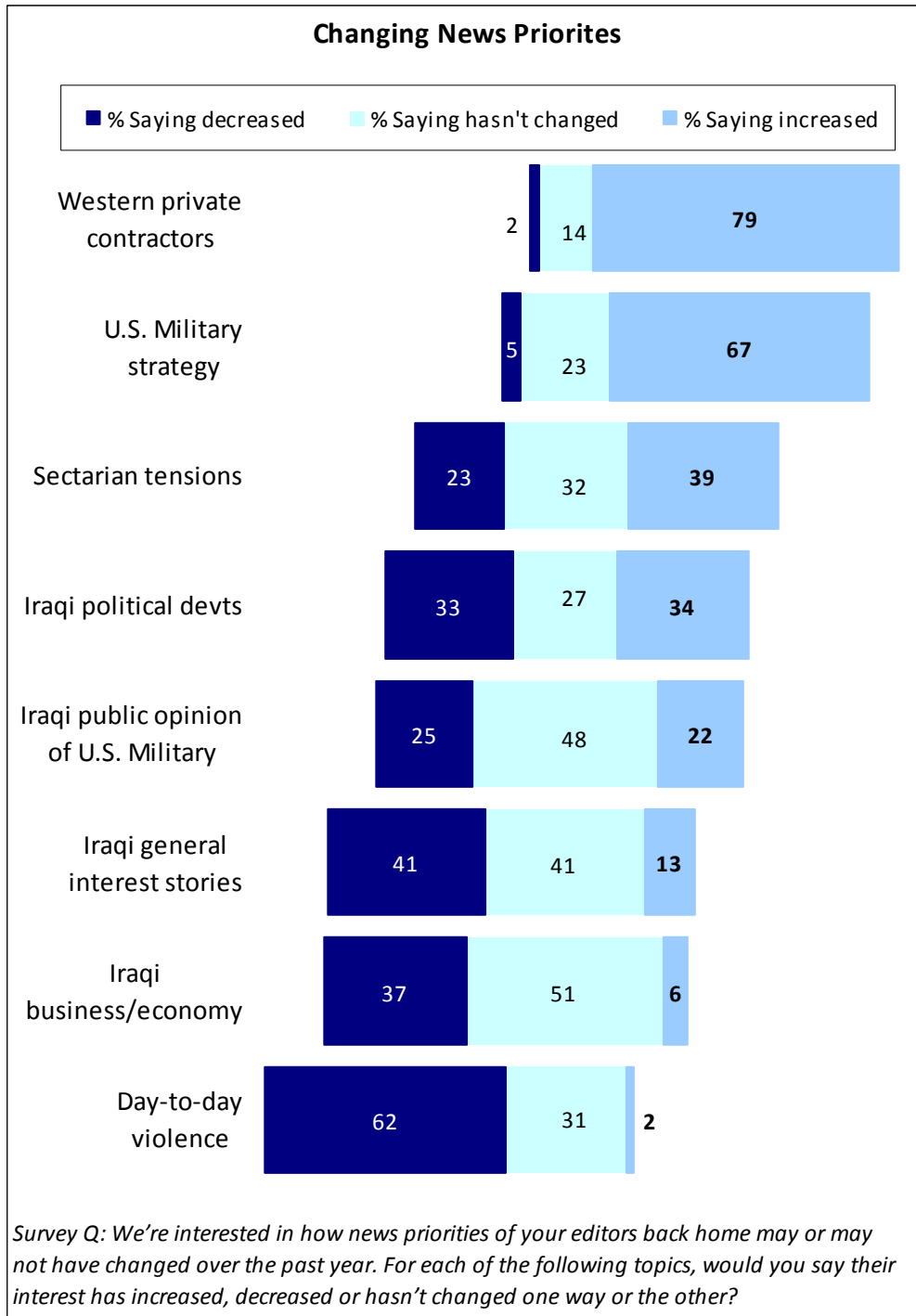
Journalists also say that over time the story their news organizations have been interested in has changed, often in ways that reflect how the domestic debate in the United States has shifted.

About two-thirds of the journalists surveyed (67%) say their news organizations now show greater interest in reports on U.S. military strategy, compared with 12 months ago. At the same time, a clear but somewhat smaller majority (62%) say their editors have a shrinking interest in stories on day-to-day violence.

The largest shift came in regard to coverage of private contractors. Fully 79% report new interest from their editors in covering the role of these contractors. (The survey was conducted in October and early November, shortly after guards employed by the private security firm Blackwater USA were accused of killing 17 Iraqis.)

Substantial numbers of journalists also say that their news organizations have shown less interest in general background stories about life in Iraq (41%) over the last year, and in stories on Iraq’s economy (37%).

Reporters were divided over whether interest in what Iraqis think about the U.S. military is up or down – 22% say interest at their news organizations in these stories has grown and a similar number (25%) say it has declined. Interest in Iraqi political developments is, overall, reported to be slightly higher than a year ago.



## Embedding

While the program has engendered controversy at home, particularly with those critical of the war or suspicious of the Administration, the journalists in Iraq who are in a position to use it generally view the system of embedding reporters with the U.S. military

favorably.

More than eight-in ten journalists (85%) surveyed have embedded with U.S. troops. And most of them see the program as the best available way to report on the actions, both large and small, of U.S. troops. It also is often the only safe way to gain access to Iraqi civilians in cities and towns beyond Baghdad.

<b>Embedding With The Military</b>	
<b>Have you Embedded?</b>	
Yes	85%
No	8%
No answer	7%
<b>Their View of Embedding</b>	
<b>1</b> - Mostly helps the Pentagon to control and manipulate what is being reported .....	2%
<b>2</b> .....	3%
<b>3</b> .....	27%
<b>4</b> .....	28%
<b>5</b> - Mostly offers journalists access to places and people they couldn't reach otherwise .....	32%
No answer .....	9%
<i>Survey Q: On the following scale of 1 to 5, check the one closest to your point of view regarding the practice of embedding journalists.</i>	

A majority of those surveyed (60%) tend to think embedding gives them access to places and people they could not otherwise reach. Only 5% say they see embedding as mostly helping the Pentagon control what is being reported.

The rest, less than a third, (27%) have largely neutral views.

“There is no problem with embedded reporting, unless it is relied on as the primary source of info on Iraq,” wrote one bureau chief. “If used as it should be – to provide another layer of understanding of what’s going on there – it is a very useful tool. And we have to remember that not every embed will produce strong stories.”

“It’s the only real way to get out of the security bubble that we all reside in during stays in Baghdad,” a newspaper correspondent volunteered. “And yet it is wholly limited by what the U.S. military will make happen. Double-edged journalistic sword if ever there was one.”

When asked to volunteer what they see as the advantages and disadvantages of the program, journalists cited access to dangerous places and insight into the life of soldiers as the top advantages.

And they saw restrictions and lack of context and perspective as the limitations. But the bargain, in short, seems worth it.

<b>Advantages to Embedding</b>	
	<u>%</u>
Access to places / soldiers/ locals	60
Insight into U.S. troops	25
Insight into U.S. military strategy	4
Saves news organizations' money	3
Security	1
<i>Survey Q: Are there any other advantages or limitations of being an embedded reporter that you would like to comment on?</i>	

<b>Limitations of Embedding</b>	
	<u>%</u>
U.S. military can restrict access/reporting/interviewing	30
Lack of context/Snapshot	21
Stories lack the Iraqi perspective	14
Iraqis less candid/cooperative due to military presence	10
Military tries to spin story/Just positive news	9
<i>Survey Q: Are there any other advantages or limitations of being an embedded reporter that you would like to comment on?</i>	

The rules for embedding vary by commander and the circumstances of the day. Most journalists (62%) have not needed officers' permission to interview individual soldiers, but a substantial number (35%) say they did. Most (59%) have not needed permission to take photographs but, again, many (40%) did. If it is a matter of photographing wounded soldiers, the rules tighten: most journalists (67%) have needed permission in those circumstances.

Having officers monitor conversations or review a story before publication is rare. A small number of journalists surveyed (4%) say they have encountered those restrictions. A handful of those surveyed offered anecdotes of military public affairs officers listening in on their interviews with soldiers.

More of a mystery for journalists is whether the U.S. military screens out reporters from the embedding program if they have previously written stories that were critical about the Administration's or the military's policies.

About half of the journalists (49%) say they don't know or can't say. Roughly a third (33%) of those surveyed say that such screening takes place. A smaller number (10%) say it does not.

Journalists did describe embedding relationships that have gone awry. "I was kicked off my embed when a new unit I was to go out with suffered its first casualties," one newspaper correspondent wrote, describing one of the most extreme situations

recounted by the journalists. “I was locked in a room for hours and then told I was no longer welcome with unit.”

Another reporter describes being warned by a military public affairs officer that he would be banned from future embeds if took a photo of guards at Abu Ghraib prison roughing up a detainee. Several reporters describe having greater freedom when embedded at the platoon level; when embedded with senior officers, there is “almost none.”

“Limitations are obvious,” a newspaper journalist wrote. “You go where they want you to go, embed with whom they allow you to embed. And they do always ‘spin’ (or the officers do). Advantages are it’s the best or only way to reach ‘real’ Iraqis in their homes.”

The contacts with Iraqis may be the most unanticipated benefit, even if the presence of the soldiers affects the reporting. “If you speak Arabic it enables you to interact directly with Iraqis in areas that you cannot reach,” wrote another newspaper correspondent. “Those Iraqis you come into contact with act far differently – and less candidly – when U.S. troops are around,” another offered.

### **Access to Sources**

One of the biggest challenges is access to certain kinds of sources. The hardest to reach, according to the journalists surveyed, are Iraqi insurgents. Nine-out-of-ten journalists say insurgents are hard or nearly impossible to reach. A large majority (81%) also consider Western private contractors as being hard or nearly impossible to access, while 17% say access to contractors is possible with some effort.

Journalists identify Iraqi civilians as among the easiest sources to reach: four-out-of-five journalists (79%) describe access to civilians as either easy or possible with some effort.

This presents something of a dichotomy. If Iraqi citizens are some of the easiest sources to access, that might make them a natural focus for journalists. But, according to these journalists, the conflict’s impact on civilians is among the most under-covered topics. With declining interest among editors back home, the dynamic may be difficult to shift.

Journalists described U.S. military personnel as the easiest sources to get. Nearly nine-in-ten (86%) journalists surveyed consider access to the military officers as easy or doable with some effort, a number that in turn may be connected to the embedding program.

### Access to Key Sources

	<u>Easy to access</u>	<u>Available with some effort</u>	<u>Hard to get</u>	<u>Nearly impossible</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Iraqi civilians	<b>38%</b>	<b>41</b>	19	2	1
Other international diplomats/officials	23%	57	14	5	2
Iraqi government officials	20%	60	17	2	1
High ranking American military officers	15%	71	12	2	0
American diplomats/officials	7%	59	26	7	1
Iraqi sectarian leaders	7%	46	31	15	1
Western private contractors	1%	17	<b>41</b>	<b>40</b>	1
Iraqi terrorists/insurgents	0%	10	<b>26</b>	<b>63</b>	1

Correspondents have more divergent experiences in trying to reach American diplomats and other senior officials, most of whom live inside the Green Zone. About two-thirds (66%) of the journalists consider access to senior civilian officials as easy or possible with some effort. But more than one-in-four (26%) say the officials are hard to reach, while 7% say access is nearly impossible. And those who work for major news organizations report having more success than others.

Iraqi government officials are slightly more accessible. Eight in ten (80%) of the journalists say access to Iraqi officials is easy or doable with some effort. Another 17% say access is hard. Correspondents find it more difficult to reach Iraqi sectarian leaders: about half the journalists (53%) find access easy or possible with some effort. One-in-three (31%) say those leaders are hard to reach. Less than one-in-five (15%) report that access is nearly impossible.

Being inside the Green Zone is the prerequisite for meeting many of those sources – American military officers, American diplomats, and Iraqi government officials. They work and, in many cases, live there. Virtually all the journalists (96%) consider access to the Green Zone as essential. About three-in-four (77%) go there at least weekly.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Green Zone, officially called the “International Zone,” includes offices and housing for senior U.S. officials as well as the offices of the Iraqi presidency and the Iraqi parliament.



## Mobility around Iraq

Given the dangers in Iraq, where do journalists go and not go?

The riskiest part of the country, journalists say, is Sadr City, the sprawling Shiite neighborhood that is home to about a third of Baghdad's population. Some 80% of the journalists characterize it as extremely or somewhat dangerous. Those dangers add to the newsworthiness, as Shiite militias there have become de facto governments. Despite the risks, and because of the newsworthiness, about one-in-three (32%) of the journalists have visited Sadr City within the last year.

The press corps ranks three other areas as only marginally less dangerous: Anbar Province, the vast area west of Baghdad where the United States says it has recently made significant progress in quelling violence; Fallujah, a city within Anbar where the U.S. military has conducted two major offenses; and Basra, in the country's south. More than 75% of the journalists describe all three areas as extremely or somewhat dangerous.

In evaluating eight other locations listed, most journalists (71%) consider Erbil, the largest city in the Kurdish-controlled north, as mostly safe – but no other. Journalists indeed regard all of the seven other cities listed in the survey – Amara, Karbala, Kirkuk, Mosul, Najaf, Nasiriyah and Tikrit – as dangerous.

Journalists talk, too, of threats extending to where they work and sleep. “Having to make sure your desk seat is not visible from outside ..., that you're not in risk of getting showered with shattered glass while you write, scanning every car on the street for low rides (too much weight) and weapons, is not journalism,” a bureau chief wrote. “It's amazingly scary.”

Percent who've visited in the last year	
Anbar	37%
Sadr City (Baghdad)	32
Erbil	20
Fallujah	20
Mosul	18
Basrah	15
Kirkuk	14
Najaf	12
Tikrit	8
Amara	7
Karbala	5
Nasiriyah	5

*Survey Q: Which of the following places have you been to in the last 12 months?*

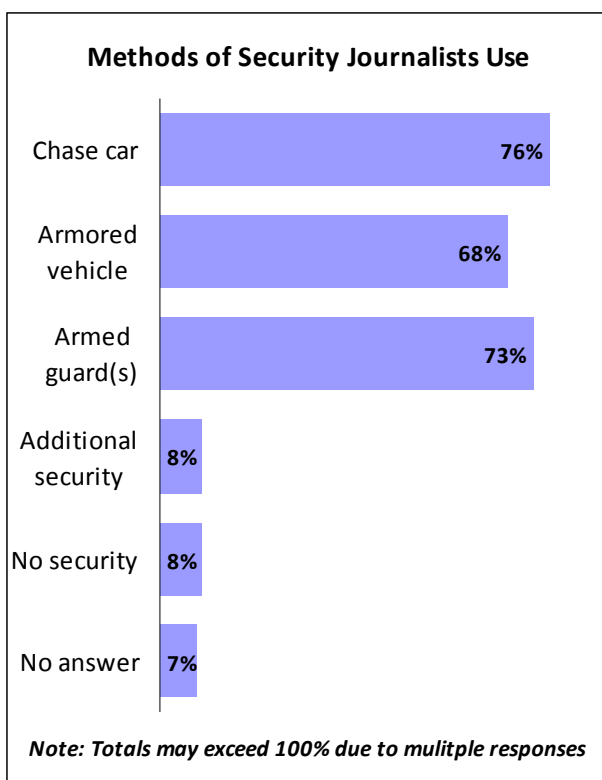
## Areas Considered Most Dangerous



*Survey Q: Based on what you know about the country as of today, how safe are each of these places for a reporter to go to (excluding when they are embedded)?*

Given the dangers, journalists conduct their reporting under remarkable security constraints. It is nearly as much the norm for reporters and producers to travel with armed guards and get-away vehicles as it is to carry notebooks, tape recorders and cameras.

Nearly eight in ten of the journalists surveyed (77%) work for news organizations that have hired a professional security firm or security guards. The same number (77%) say that their organization has emergency plans in place in case their bureaus come under fire. When the journalists go out for reporting, they are usually accompanied by armed guards (73%), go with a chase car (76%) and travel in an armored vehicle (68%). A small number (8%) have additional security.



Only 8% of those surveyed says they work without any security at all.

Security issues also extend inside the Green Zone, the heavily protected area within Baghdad where senior American officials, the Iraqi president and the Iraqi parliament have offices. Most journalists (84%) say security restrictions within the Green Zone hinder their reporting somewhat or a great deal.

Television reporters and producers say the risks to them are especially high. “We are so much [more] conspicuous,” wrote one TV journalist. “We must go out to get the pictures that TV requires ... My radio and newspaper colleagues are now beginning to travel around certain neighborhoods of Baghdad again to report, but our equipment makes it much

more difficult to follow suit.”

### Staff Stability

Given the dangers to their local staff, it might seem reasonable, in such an environment, for journalists to have to cope with their Iraqi staffers quitting their jobs after only a brief stint. But journalists report these local staffers seem remarkably devoted to the work, despite the risks. Most journalists 55% characterize the staffing as “very stable.”

When it comes to hiring local staff, factors unique to Iraq play a significant role. According to comments, many news organizations require a new hire to have recommendations from Iraqis already on the staff and find them through word of mouth. At some bureaus, the recommendations take the form of family or tribal connections to other employees. In our survey, almost every journalist who described a hiring process said newcomers must be vetted by staffers trusted by the news organization.

In their hiring some bureaus make efforts to employ both Shiites and Sunnis, to help give journalists entrée into both communities.

“Usually they are recommended by someone, an existing staff member, a fellow journalist, etc.,” one print correspondent said of his bureau’s new hires. “We bring them in for a period, say a month, and see how they work out. It’s relatively informal; there’s quite a group of Iraqis now working with the foreign press, mostly people with no

previous journalistic experience who have learned quickly, and are extremely, extremely courageous. We basically could not work the way we do without them.”

### **Tone of Coverage**

Finally, one question that has hovered over the coverage from the beginning of the war was whether journalists have been too negative in their assessments of the situation in Iraq. Early on, this was a common criticism among some in the Administration. Those criticisms have become less pronounced over time, but they have not disappeared.

“The new political-military strategy is beginning to show results, “Senator John McCain, who is campaigning for the Republican presidential nomination and supports the surge, wrote in the April 8, edition of the Washington Post. “But most Americans are not aware because much of the media are not reporting it or devote far more attention to car bombs and mortar attacks that reveal little about the strategic direction of the war ...”<sup>4</sup>

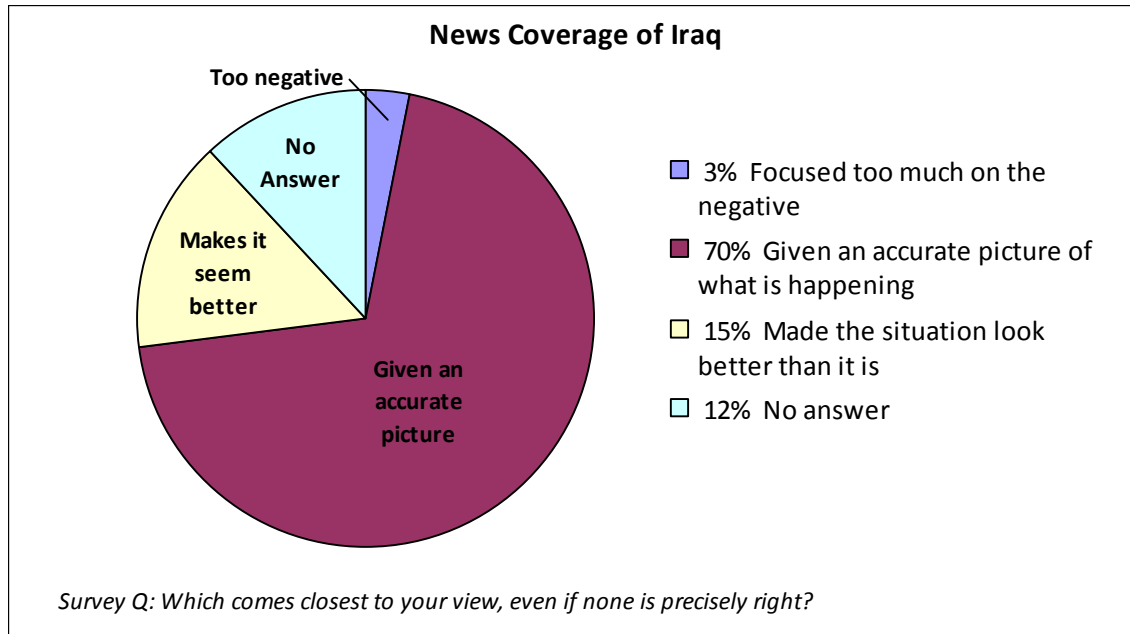
“What the media are missing is how we will get out of Iraq and leave a stable Iraq behind,” said Col. Steve Boylan, spokesman for Army Gen. David Petraeus, commander of coalition forces.<sup>5</sup>

The journalists surveyed tend to disagree. Most (70%) of those surveyed believe their coverage overall has given an accurate picture of what is happening there. About one-in-six (15%) believe the coverage makes the situation look better than it is. Hardly any (3%) believe it focuses too much on the negative.

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<sup>4</sup> John McCain, “The war you’re not reading about,” Washington Post, April 8, 2007. Online at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/06/AR2007040601781.html>

<sup>5</sup> Sig Christenson, “A reporter speaks out about the Iraq war and news coverage,” Nieman Watchdog Report, August 6, 2007. Online at: <http://www.niemanwatchdog.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=background.view&backgroundid=199>



The public, while divided on the question, is far more likely than the journalists to view the coverage as too negative. A Pew public opinion survey in August found that more than a third of the public (37%) believed news reports were making the situation in Iraq seem worse than it really was. Roughly a third (34%) thought the press portrayed Iraq accurately. Just under a quarter (21%) believed the media made the situation seem better than reality.<sup>6</sup>

Journalists also do not believe the coverage has been too hard on the Bush Administration. Indeed, about four in ten of those surveyed (43%) say coverage of Iraq has been “too easy” on the Administration. Roughly the same number (44%) say they find the coverage to be basically fair. Only 1% describe coverage as too critical of the Administration. (And 8% did not respond to the question.)

### **Who They Are**

The press corps in Iraq is, generally, an experienced group of journalists who have covered war before. Of those who took part in our survey, most (60%) have worked in journalism for at least 11 years. Another 28% have 5 to 10 years experience, and only 1% has less than five years experience. This last category might also account for the 10% of our respondents who were younger than 30 years old. The rest (79% of them) were between 30 to 64 years.

Most of the press corps (77%) is well versed in reporting from conflict zones. Their experience spans practically all the global conflicts, particularly the Middle East. The most substantial numbers covered events in Afghanistan (48%); Israel, the West Bank

<sup>6</sup> Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, News Interest Index Survey, August 24-27, 2007. Question 5; online at <http://people-press.org/reports/questionnaires/352.pdf>

and Gaza (48%); Lebanon (53%) and the Balkans (26%).

As part of their preparation for assignment to Iraq, most have taken a conflict survival course (79%) and first-aid training (63%). About one-in-seven (16%) received no special training.

One skill that most of the journalists lack, however, is fluency in Arabic. Fully 82% have minimal to no knowledge of the language, while 10% have moderate skill. Only 7% describe themselves as fluent.

A substantial number of the journalists (39%) have worked in Iraq for a cumulative total of more than 12 months. Another 20% have worked there for seven to 12 months, 31% for two to seven months, and 10% two months or less.

Where are they based in Iraq? Most of them (86%) are working within a 5 kilometer radius of the Green Zone, but none live inside. Most journalists are clustered on the east bank of the River Tigris (across from the Green Zone and at some distance).

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## **Methodology**

Results of this survey are based on 111 responses to an online questionnaire. Data collection was managed by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI). The surveys were completed from September 28 through November 7, 2007.

Requests for participation were sent to a total of 181 individuals via e-mail, with a link to an online Web address where the survey was hosted by PSRAI. The response rate was 61%.

Each respondent had a unique identification number with which he or she could log in to answer the questions. Individuals in the sample received e-mail reminders that the survey would close on November 7.

### *Design & Identification of the Media Sample*

Respondents were selected using a two-stage sampling procedure. In the first stage, news media organizations were selected and in the second stage individuals were chosen from those organizations.

The sample was drawn from all traditional wire, print, radio and television organizations that have a bureau and/or have sent reporters to Iraq between 2003 and September 2007. We used media databases including Lexis-Nexis, Barrons and Factiva to identify news organizations that had stories about Iraq with a dateline in any Iraqi city since July 2006. This included all major national and regional newspapers, as well as

broadcast news organizations and news services with staff in Iraq on a regular basis. All but one of these news organizations agreed to participate. The sample included four wire services, 13 daily newspapers, five magazines, two radio networks, and five broadcast and cable networks.

This gave us a tally of 29 organizations. We then consulted with individuals familiar with the press corps in Iraq, the Media Yellow Book and individual news organizations to produce a list of names of foreign editors and journalists with Iraq experience. In all this correspondence, we asked for suggestions about other organizations and/or individuals who had covered Iraq in the last year. The final list consisted of 181 individuals, which we believe approximates a census of journalists who have covered Iraq for American news organizations.

Given the sensitive nature of the survey, we first informed the foreign editors of each news organization that we would be sending this survey to journalists in their organization. Individual journalists were contacted directly where no foreign editor/ editor was available. It was made clear from the first that no individual responses would be shared with the news organization. It was also clarified that no individual respondent would be identified in the published report.

No new names or organizations were added after the survey was launched on September 28, 2007.

#### *Design of Survey Questionnaire*

There were a total of 46 substantive questions in the survey, of which seven were open-ended. There were three housekeeping questions at the end.

The open ended questions were asked for the critical and sensitive aspects of covering the story in Iraq. They were meant to get the journalists to elaborate and/or describe in their own words the complexity of the situation, and reach at issues that cannot be quantified. They included their perception of what stories were covered well or not, what topics were under or over covered, as well as their thoughts on embedding, screening local staff and their experience in other war zones. The survey concluded with an open ended question on any other thoughts they might wish to share about reporting in Iraq (see Topline.)

**Princeton Survey Research Associates International  
For  
Project for Excellence in Journalism**

**Survey of Journalists Who Have Worked in Iraq**

**FINAL TOPLINE**

N = 111 web-administered interviews with journalists who have worked in Iraq  
Interviewing Dates: September 28 – November 7, 2007

**INTRODUCTION SCREEN**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Project for Excellence in Journalism's survey of journalists. PEJ is a non-partisan (and non-profit) research organization. You can see our work at <http://www.journalism.org/>.

We recognize that events in Iraq are among the most important and difficult stories of our time. The survey is our effort to learn more about the hurdles facing you and your support staff.

We would like for you to answer each question, but if you do not want to answer a given question, just skip it and move on to the next question. PEJ will keep all responses to the survey confidential. We will not identify any reporter or news organization by name in any of our reports.



**Note: Respondents were given the opportunity to skip over questions during the web survey. The “No answer” results reflect those who did not answer a given question.**

**Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%.**

We'd like to begin with some general questions about your experience in Iraq.

**Q1** Are you currently posted to Iraq?

<u>%</u>	
27	Yes
72	No
1	No answer

**Q1a** When did your current posting begin and when do you expect it to be completed?

***Based on those who are currently posted in Iraq [N=30]***

<u>%</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
7	2002
7	Jan. 2003 – March 2003
7	April 2003 – Dec. 2003
7	2004
3	2005
17	2006
47	2007
7	No answer

<u>%</u>	<u>End Date</u>
50	2007
23	2008
10	2009
17	No answer

**Q1b** When was your most recent posting in Iraq?

***Based on those who are not currently posted in Iraq [N=80]***

<u>%</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
1	Jan. 2003 – March 2003
3	April 2003 – Dec. 2003
1	2004
10	2005
16	2006
69	2007

<u>%</u>	<u>End Date</u>
5	2005
20	2006
75	2007

**Q2** Roughly how many times have you been posted in Iraq?

<u>%</u>	
9	Once
14	Twice
14	3-4 times
14	5-6 times
18	7-11 times
27	12 or more times
5	No answer

**Q3** How many weeks in total have you been posted in Iraq?

<u>%</u>	
10	Two months or less
8	More than 2 months to 4 months
22	More than 4 months to 7 months
10	More than 7 months to 9 months
10	More than 9 months to 1 year
39	More than 1 year
2	No answer

**Q4** Thinking of the current conflict, when was your first posting in Iraq?

***Based on those who have been posted in Iraq more than once [N=96]***

<u>%</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
8	2002
26	Jan. 2003 – March 2003
33	April 2003 – Dec. 2003
9	2004
6	2005
11	2006
4	2007
1	No answer

<u>%</u>	<u>End Date</u>
6	2002
3	Jan. 2003 – March 2003
48	April 2003 – Dec. 2003
13	2004
4	2005
16	2006
8	2007
2	No answer

**Q5** Have you reported from other conflicts/war zones?

<u>%</u>	
77	Yes
23	No
1	No answer

**Q5a** Which conflict or war zones have you reported from? [**OPEN-ENDED**]

***Based on those who have reported from other conflicts or war zones [N=85]***

<u>%</u>	
48	Afghanistan
46	Israel/Palestine/Gaza/West Bank
43	Lebanon
26	Balkans
21	Iraq / Gulf War/ Kuwait
18	Haiti
17	Somalia
12	India/Pakistan/Kashmir
11	Congo
11	Sudan
9	Chechnya
8	Rwanda

Q5a continued...

Q5a continued...

<u>%</u>	
7	Central America/El Salvador/Nicaragua
7	East Timor
7	Liberia
6	Angola
6	Colombia
5	Ethiopia/Eritrea
5	Indonesia
5	Philippines
5	Sri Lanka
5	Armenia
4	Iran
4	Mozambique
4	Northern Ireland
4	South Africa
4	Uganda
4	Zaire
4	Azerbaijan
2	Burundi
2	Cambodia
2	Georgia
2	Grenada
2	Ivory Coast
2	Nigeria
2	Peru
2	Sierra Leone
2	Nagorno-Karabakh
1	Central African Republic
1	Cyprus
1	Detroit
1	East Germany
1	Equatorial Guinea
1	Guinea
1	Korea
1	Mexico
1	Namibia
1	New Orleans
1	Romania
1	Russia
1	Tajikistan
1	Vietnam
1	Libya
1	Guinea-Bissau
1	Fiji
1	Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)
1	No answer

*Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses*

**Q6** All things considered, what kind of grade would you give the press for its coverage of the situation in Iraq?

%  
16 Excellent  
58 Good  
23 Only fair  
2 Poor  
1 No answer

**Q7** What do you think the press has covered particularly well about the situation in Iraq? **[OPEN-ENDED]**

%  
29 Reality for U.S. Troops  
27 Impact on Iraqi civilians  
26 U.S. military strategy  
25 Accurate picture of conflict  
23 Iraqi Politics  
10 Correcting official versions of events  
10 Sectarian conflicts  
9 Day-to-day violence, events  
8 Mistakes/Shortcomings of U.S. policy/action  
7 U.S. political strategy  
3 Reconstruction/Rebuilding  
3 Waste/corruption/Crime  
2 Economic problems/Infrastructure  
2 Impact on Iraqi civilians in Baghdad  
1 Contractors  
1 Cost of war  
1 Regional issues  
1 Other  
3 Very little/None  
11 No answer

*Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses*

**Q8** What do you feel the press has not covered particularly well about the situation in Iraq? **[OPEN-ENDED]**

<u>%</u>	
37	Impact on Iraqi civilians
13	Events outside Baghdad
11	Complexity of conflict
9	Failure to explore reasons for going to war
7	Waste/Corruption/Crime
6	Civilian casualties
6	Failure of Iraqi politics
5	Contractors
5	Failure of U.S. Strategy
5	Failure to correct official versions of events
5	Impact on Iraqi civilians outside Baghdad
5	Refugees
4	Failure to know what U.S. troops are doing
4	Involvement of other countries
4	Reconstruction, Rebuilding
4	Regional issues/implications
3	Consequences of war
3	Failure to report Iraqi viewpoints
3	Insurgency
3	Power of Militias
3	Reality for U.S. Troops
3	U.S. Military strategy
2	Day-to-day violence, events
2	Inaccurate picture of war
2	Influence of religion/clerics
2	Reality for U.S. Troops – Isolation
2	Sectarian conflicts
1	Exaggeration of Al Qaida
1	Failure to correct official statements
1	Failure to know what U.S. troops are doing – successes
1	Humanitarian aid
1	Ignorance of U.S. Officials
1	Insurgency - insurgents' views
1	Involvement of other countries – Iran
1	Reality for U.S. Troops – Abuse, crimes
1	Reality for U.S. Troops – Ambivalence
1	U.S. Political strategy
4	Other
1	None
9	No answer

*Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses*

Now we'd like to ask you about your security conditions in Iraq.

**Q9** To prepare for working in Iraq, did you receive any of the following training?  
**[Check all that apply]**

%  
79 Hostile environment/conflict survival course  
63 Emergency medical and first-aid training  
41 Use of safety equipment  
10 Arabic language training  
6 Other (SPECIFY)  
16 No, none of the above  
2 No answer  
*Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses*

**Q10** How would you describe your Arabic language skills?

%  
7 Fluent  
10 Moderate  
41 Minimal  
41 None  
1 No Answer

**Q11** Thinking about your most recent posting in Iraq, what security usually accompanies you when going out and reporting (excluding when embedded)?  
**[Check all that apply]**

%  
73 Armed guard(s)  
68 Armored vehicle  
76 Chase car  
8 Additional security beyond these  
8 No security  
7 No answer  
*Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses*

**Q12** Thinking about your most recent posting, did your news organization hire a professional security firm or security guards for you and/or your bureau in Iraq?

%  
77 Yes  
16 No  
6 No answer

**Q13** Have you, personally, ever carried firearms in Iraq to protect yourself?

%  
5 Yes  
95 No  
1 No answer

**Q14** Does your news organization have a plan in place if you or your bureau in Iraq come under fire and/or need to be evacuated?

%  
77 Yes  
14 No  
8 No answer

**Q14a** Which of these best describes the plan?

***Based on those whose news organizations have an emergency or evacuation plan [N=86]***

%  
65 The organization has its own private security personnel responsible for evacuation  
9 The organization has an agreement with the U.S. military for evacuation  
23 Other (**please explain**)  
2 No answer

**Q15** Based on your most recent posting, what portion of Baghdad City would you say is typically too dangerous for a Western journalist to travel around in?

%  
18 All of it  
51 Most of it  
18 Half of it  
4 Less than half of it  
2 Hardly any parts of it  
7 No answer



**Q16** Which of the following places have you been to in the last 12 months?  
**[Check all that apply]**

- %
- 7 Amara
- 37 Anbar
- 15 Basrah
- 20 Erbil
- 20 Fallujah
- 5 Karbala
- 14 Kirkuk
- 18 Mosul
- 12 Najaf
- 5 Nasiriyah
- 32 Sadr City (Baghdad)
- 8 Tikrit
- 15 Have not been in Iraq in the last 12 months
- 9 None of the above
- 5 No answer

*Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses*

**Q17** Based on what you know about the country as of today, how safe are each of these places for a reporter to go to (excluding when they are embedded)?

	<u>Extremely dangerous</u>	<u>Somewhat Dangerous</u>	<u>Mostly Safe</u>	<u>Don't know/ Can't Say</u>	<u>No answer</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Amara	33	19	2	42	4
b. Anbar	52	25	7	12	4
c. Basrah	39	38	2	18	4
d. Erbil	2	8	71	15	4
e. Fallujah	45	34	4	14	4
f. Karbala	28	38	10	20	5
g. Kirkuk	22	48	10	16	5
h. Mosul	42	30	7	16	5
i. Najaf	27	35	16	17	5
j. Nasiriyah	30	36	1	29	5
k. Sadr City (Baghdad)	52	28	7	10	3
l. Tikrit	47	24	2	23	5

We'd like to now touch briefly on the Green Zone in Baghdad.

**Q18** Thinking about your most recent posting, how often does your reporting take you to the Green Zone?

%  
19 Almost every day  
58 Weekly  
11 Once or twice a month  
10 Less often  
2 Never  
1 No answer

**Q19** How close is your organization's bureau or place of work to the Green Zone?

%  
16 Within 1 kilometer  
36 Within 2 kilometers  
34 Within 5 kilometers  
4 Further than 5 kilometers  
10 No answer

**Q20** In your experience, how much have security restrictions in the Green Zone impeded your ability to fully report stories?

%  
32 A great deal  
52 Somewhat  
9 Only a little  
5 Not at all  
2 No answer

**Q21** How essential do you think it is for a journalist to have access to people in the Green Zone?

%  
80 Very essential  
16 Somewhat essential  
1 Not too essential  
1 Not at all essential  
2 No answer

Now we want ask you questions about challenges in getting the story in Iraq.

**Q22** Please rate your ability to gain access to the following sets of sources in Iraq.

	<u>Easy to access</u>	<u>Available with some effort</u>	<u>Hard to get</u>	<u>Nearly impossible</u>	<u>No answer</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. High ranking American military officers	15	71	12	2	0
b. American diplomats/officials	7	59	26	7	1
c. Western private contractors	1	17	41	40	1
d. Iraqi civilians	38	41	19	2	1
e. Iraqi government officials	20	60	17	2	1
f. Iraqi terrorists / insurgents	0	10	26	63	1
g. Iraqi sectarian leaders	7	46	31	15	1
h. Other international (including U.N.) diplomats / officials	23	57	14	5	2

**Q23a** When interviewing Iraqi sources, what mode of contact do you use MOST often?

<u>%</u>	
29	Giving questions to local staffer who does interview
25	Telephone
23	Going in-person to meet them
7	Getting fixers to bring sources to you
5	E-mail
7	Other ( <b>please specify</b> )
4	No answer

**Q23b** When interviewing Iraqi sources, what mode do you use SECOND most often?

<u>%</u>	
26	Telephone
23	Going in-person to meet them
15	Getting fixers to bring sources to you
12	Giving questions to local staffer who does interview
11	E-mail
5	Other ( <b>please specify</b> )
9	No answer

**Q24** Thinking about your most recent posting, typically how often do you communicate with your editors back in the U.S. when in Iraq?

- %
- 55 Multiple times a day
- 29 Once a day
- 11 A few times a week
- 3 Less often
- 3 No answer

**Q25** We're interested in how news priorities of your editors back home may or may not have changed over the past year. For each of the following topics, would you say their interest has increased, decreased or hasn't changed one way or the other?

	<u>Increased</u>	<u>Decreased</u>	<u>Hasn't changed</u>	<u>No answer</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Day-to-day incidents of violence	2	62	31	5
b. Iraqi political developments	34	33	27	5
c. Sectarian tensions	39	23	32	5
d. Iraqi public opinion about the U.S. Military	22	25	48	5
e. U.S. Military strategy	67	5	23	5
f. Iraqi general interest/ backgrounder stories	13	41	41	5
g. Iraqi business / economy	6	37	51	5
h. Role of Western private contractors	79	2	14	5

**Q26** Of the types of stories listed in the previous question and any others, which of these would you say is the most under covered right now? Please elaborate. **[OPEN-ENDED]**

- %
- 40 Impact on Iraqi civilians
- 17 Contractors
- 16 Economic problems/Infrastructure
- 12 Iraqi Politics
- 7 Failure to report Iraqi viewpoints
- 7 Sectarian conflicts
- 7 U.S. military strategy
- 7 Waste/corruption/Crime
- 4 Events outside Baghdad
- 4 Refugees
- 3 Failure of Iraqi politics
- 3 Failure to know what U.S. troops are doing

Q26 continued...

<u>%</u>	
2	Civilian casualties
2	Consequences of war
2	Insurgency
2	Mistakes/Shortcomings of U.S. policy/action
2	Power of Militias
1	Complexity of conflict
1	Failure to correct official versions of events
1	Impact on Iraqi civilians outside Baghdad
1	Involvement of other countries
1	Reconstruction, Rebuilding
1	Regional issues/implications
1	Sectarian conflicts – Decreases
1	U.S. military strategy – surge
1	All/Everything
1	Other
1	None
15	No answer

*Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses*

**Q27** Of the types of stories listed in the previous question and any others, which of these would you say is the most over covered right now? Please elaborate.

**[OPEN-ENDED]**

<u>%</u>	
21	Day-to-day violence, events
18	U.S. Military strategy
10	U.S. military strategy – surge
1	U.S. military strategy – successes
10	Contractors
7	Visits or statements by elected officials
6	Iraqi politics
6	Anbar Awakening/Deals with sheiks
2	Sectarian conflicts
2	Consequences of war on U.S. politics
1	Failure to correct official statements
1	Involvement of other countries – Iran
1	Contractors - private security
1	Elected officials/High ranking military
1	Iraqi views on U.S. military
22	None
2	Don't know/Not sure
19	No answer

*Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses*

We'd now like to ask about your reliance on local staff. Throughout this section, by local staff, we mean local Iraqis that you hire full time, part time or on an ad-hoc basis to help you report.

**Q28** What proportion of your staff in Iraq are local Iraqi nationals?

%  
23 All  
44 Most  
13 About half  
3 Less than half  
0 Hardly any  
1 None  
8 I don't have a staff  
9 No answer

**Q29** What share of your bureau's street reporting (outside the Green Zone) is done by your Iraqi staff?

***Based on those whose staff in Iraq is made up of at least some local Iraqi nationals [N=91]***

%  
7 All of it  
56 Most of it  
19 Half of it  
9 Less than half of it  
8 Hardly any  
1 None  
1 No answer

**Q30** What is the turnover rate of your local Iraqi hires?

***Based on those whose Iraqi staff does at least some street reporting outside of the Green Zone [N=82]***

%  
55 Very stable – few have left since they began  
44 Somewhat stable - we hire new people fairly often  
1 Unstable - we hire new people constantly  
0 No answer

**Q31** Is it safe for your Iraqi staff to carry equipment when they go out and/or otherwise identify themselves as working for a news organization?

***Based on those whose Iraqi staff does at least some street reporting outside of the Green Zone [N=82]***

%  
9 Yes  
87 No  
5 No answer

**Q32** How frequently is your local Iraqi staff subject to verbal or physical intimidation/assaults or threats because of their job?

***Based on those whose Iraqi staff does at least some street reporting outside of the Green Zone [N=82]***

<u>%</u>	
6	Daily
10	Several times a week
46	Several times a month
30	Less than once a month
1	Never
6	No answer

**Q33** Have any of your local Iraqi staffers have been kidnapped or murdered in the last 12 months?

***Based on those whose Iraqi staff does at least some street reporting outside of the Green Zone [N=82]***

<u>%</u>	
57	Yes
40	No
2	No answer

**Q33b** How many times in total have your local Iraqi staffers been kidnapped or murdered? **[OPEN-ENDED]**

***Based on those whose local Iraqi staffers have been kidnapped or murdered in the last 12 months [N=47]***

<u>%</u>	
94	Gave response
6	No answer

**Q34** To what extent has intimidation of your local Iraqi staff or threats of kidnapping or murder affected their ability to fully report and tell the story?

***Based on those whose Iraqi staff does at least some street reporting outside of the Green Zone [N=82]***

<u>%</u>	
44	A great deal
41	Somewhat
10	Only a little
2	Not at all
2	No answer

**Q35** How are local Iraqis hired and vetted – can you describe the screening process?  
**[OPEN-ENDED]**

***Based on those whose Iraqi staff does at least some street reporting outside of the Green Zone [N=82]***

%  
30 Referrals -- from existing Iraqi staff  
21 Referrals -- from other news organizations  
18 Hiring/vetting by existing local staff/office manager  
18 Thorough interviewing process  
17 Hire friends/family of existing staff  
15 Staff has been with organization since the war started  
11 Probationary/Trial period after hired  
8 Word-of-mouth  
6 Background checks  
6 Background checks - references from trusted sources  
6 Religion or sect a factor  
5 Hiring/vetting by news staff, usually the bureau chief  
3 English language skill a factor  
2 Background checks - check work history with other news orgs  
0 Misc. skills/knowledge a factor  
20 Not sure/Not involved in this process  
2 Refused  
20 No answer

*Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses*

**Q36** To what extent are you worried that reliance on local staff for your reporting inhibits the accuracy and completeness of what you are able to learn?

***Based on those whose Iraqi staff does at least some street reporting outside of the Green Zone [N=82]***

%  
21 Very worried  
46 Somewhat worried  
23 Not too worried  
5 Not worried at all  
5 No answer

ASK ALL: We'd now like to ask you a few questions on the system of embedding reporters.

**Q37** First, have you ever embedded with the U.S. Military in Iraq?

%  
85 Yes  
8 No  
7 No answer



**Q38** What, if any, restrictions have you faced when embedded?

***Based on those who have ever embedded with the U.S. Military in Iraq  
[N=94]***

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Permission required to interview soldiers	35	62	3
b. Permission required to take any pictures	40	59	1
c. Permission required to photograph wounded soldiers	67	30	3
d. Communication with editor/bureau was monitored	3	94	3
e. Military review of story before publication	4	91	4
f. Other restrictions ( <b>please specify</b> )	43	51	6

**Q39** On the following scale of 1 to 5, check the one closest to your point of view regarding the practice of embedding journalists.

<u>%</u>	
2	1 - Mostly helps the Pentagon to control and manipulate what is being reported
3	2
27	3
28	4
32	5 - Mostly offers journalists access to places and people they couldn't reach otherwise
9	No answer

**Q40** Are there any other advantages or limitations of being an embedded reporter that you would like to comment on? **[OPEN-ENDED]**

<u>%</u>	<u>Advantages</u>
23	Access to places
21	Insight into the reality for U.S. troops
17	Access to soldiers and other military personnel
10	Access
10	Access to insurgents, locals, tribal leaders or officials
4	Insight into U.S. military strategy
3	Getting to know U.S. troops
3	Saves news organizations money
1	Security
1	Use of military resources like translators/communications
0	Military help to obtain story
0	Frontline experience
3	Other advantages

Q40 continued...

<u>%</u>	<u>Limitations</u>
21	U.S. military can restrict access/reporting/interviewing (General)
21	Lack of context/Snapshot
14	Stories lack the Iraqi perspective
10	Iraqis less candid/cooperative due to military presence
9	U.S. military can restrict access/reporting/interviewing (with Iraqis)
9	Military tries to spin story/Just positive news
3	Military can refuse future embeds
3	Time-consuming/Long periods of waiting
3	Lack of insight into interaction between U.S. military and Iraqi locals
3	Keep professional distance from troops
1	Have to embed
1	Experience varies by military unit
4	Other limitations
37	No answer

*Note: Total may exceed 100% due to multiple responses*

**Q41** To the best of your knowledge, does the U.S. Military screen out reporters whose coverage of the war has been critical in the past?

<u>%</u>	
33	Yes
10	No
49	Don't know/Cannot say
8	No answer

We have just a few final general questions...

**Q42** On the whole, how have reporting conditions improved or deteriorated for an American media person since your first posting in Iraq?

<u>%</u>	
79	Changed for the worse – harder to report /cover the situation
8	No significant change
2	Changed for the better – easier to report/cover the situation
11	No answer

**Q43** Which comes closest to your view, even if none is precisely right?

<u>%</u>	
3	News coverage of Iraq has focused too much on the negative.
70	News coverage of Iraq has given an accurate picture of what is happening.
15	News coverage of Iraq has made the situation look better than it is.
12	No answer

**Q44** How would you describe the press coverage in Iraq as it relates to the Bush Administration in particular? The coverage has been...

%  
 1 Too critical  
 44 Basically fair  
 43 Too easy  
 12 No answer

**Q45** Given all the challenges journalists face in Iraq, please rate how well you think the press has done in covering the following stories.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>No answer</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. The war against insurgents	14	48	24	4	10
b. Efforts to establish democracy	13	34	36	7	10
c. Rebuilding the country	5	31	31	20	10
d. Preventing civil war	6	38	38	8	10
e. The lives of ordinary Iraqis	12	17	31	31	10
f. The experience of U.S. troops	39	43	6	2	10

**Q46** Is there anything else you'd like to mention about the conditions that Western / U.S. journalists face while covering Iraq? **[OPEN-ENDED]**

%  
 54 Gave response  
 46 No answer

To wrap up the survey, a few questions about yourself...

**Q47** How old are you?

%  
 10 18-29  
 55 30-49  
 24 50-64  
 0 65 or older  
 11 No answer

**Q48** What is your current title? **[OPEN-ENDED]**

<u>%</u>	
90	Gave response
10	No answer

**Q49** How many years of journalism experience do you have?

<u>%</u>	
1	Less than 5 years
28	5-10 years
26	11-20 years
34	More than 20 years
11	No answer

### **EXIT SCREEN**

Thank you for completing the survey.

The Project for Excellence in Journalism will be providing a report on the survey later this year. Please check the PEJ web site for the report. If you'd like to receive a copy of the report, or have any additional comments, please e-mail us.