



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER
For The People & The Press

NEWS Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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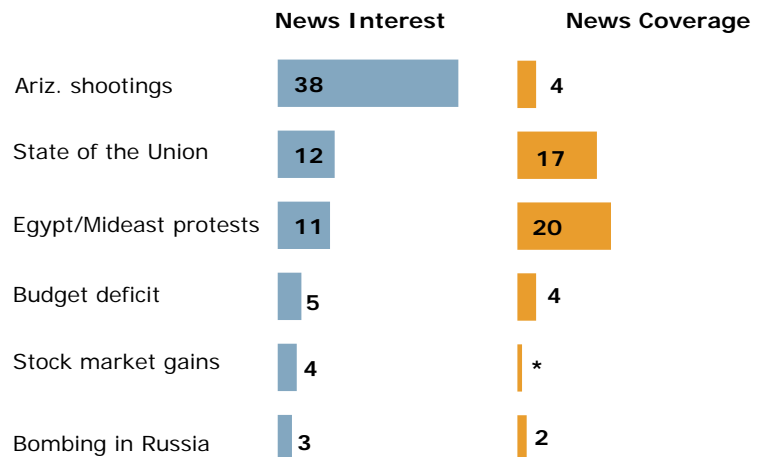
Turmoil Draws Extensive Media Coverage Limited Public Interest in Egyptian Protests

So far, the extraordinary anti-government protests in Egypt have drawn much more attention from the news media than from the American public.

Only about one-in-ten (11%) cite news about protests in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries as the story they followed most closely last week. By contrast, more than three times that number (38%) followed news about the aftermath of the Jan. 8 Arizona shooting rampage most closely last week, according to the latest News Interest Index survey conducted Jan. 27-30 among 1,007 adults.

For its part, the media devoted more attention to news about unrest in the Middle East (20% of coverage) than any other story last week, according to a separate analysis by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ). Just 4% of coverage was devoted to the aftermath of the Arizona shootings.

News Coverage vs. News Interest



News interest shows the percentage of people who say they followed this story most closely, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, January 27-30, 2011. News coverage shows the percentage of news coverage devoted to each story, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, January 24-30, 2011.

As the crisis grew last weekend, so did coverage. From Jan. 27-30, as the survey was being conducted, unrest in the Middle East accounted for 36% of all news coverage, with coverage of Egypt alone accounting for 30% of the newshole.

Public interest in the ongoing drama in Egypt and the Middle East, while modest, is in line with interest in other overseas protests in recent years. In fact, more than twice as many said they followed the Egyptian protests very closely than the protests in Tunisia a week earlier (17% vs. 7%).

However, the dramatic protests in Iran in mid-2009 – and the subsequent government

crackdown – attracted much more public interest. Nearly three-in-ten (28%) followed the protests very closely the week of June 19-22, 2009, and 31% followed the crackdown on election protestors very closely the following week (June 26-29).

Interest in Overseas Protest Movements

	% following very closely
Iranian crackdown on election protestors (June 2009)*	31
Civil unrest and rioting in Belgrade (Oct 2000)	18
Anti-gov. protests in Egypt and other Middle eastern countries (Jan 2011)	17
Pro-democracy protests in Burma (Sept 2007)	13
Protests in Tibet against Chinese gov. (Oct 2008)	12
Protests and political changes in Lebanon (Mar 2005)	10
Tunisian instability following collapse of gov. (Jan 2011)	7
Crackdown on protestors in Thailand (May 2010)	7
Protests in Belgrade against Pres. Milosevic (Jan 1997)	7
The collapse of the Lebanese government (Jan 2011)	4

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*Highest percentage shown for stories measured more than once.

The Week's News

Last week, the aftermath of the Jan. 8 shooting rampage in Tucson continued to top the public's news interest, though coverage had dropped significantly. About four-in-ten (42%) say they very closely followed news about the rampage that killed six and severely injured Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, little changed from a week earlier (45%). Nearly four-in-ten (38%) say this was the news they followed most closely, with women much more likely to say this than men (48% most closely vs. 29%).

News about the shootings – focused on Giffords' recovery and new revelations about suspected shooter Jared Loughner – accounted for 4% of the coverage analyzed by PEJ. In the week immediately following the shootings, the various story lines accounted for 57% of coverage.

Just more than one-in-ten (12%) say they followed news about President Obama's Jan. 25 State of the Union speech most closely. Nearly three-in-ten (28%) say they followed this news very closely. That's less than both the 33% that followed Obama's 2010 State of the Union and the 37% that followed the president's speech to a joint session of Congress shortly after taking office in February 2009 very closely. News about the State of the Union accounted for 17% of coverage.

Nearly half of Democrats (46%) say they followed this year's speech very closely, compared with 19% each of Republicans and independents.

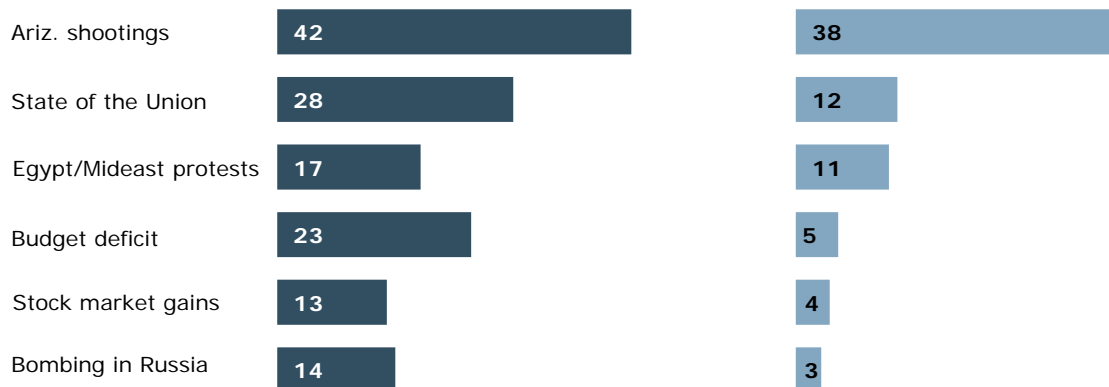
Nearly a quarter (23%) of the public says they followed news about projections of a record high federal budget deficit this year very closely; 5% say this was the story they followed most closely. The media devoted 4% of coverage to the deficit projections.

In January 2009, amidst a worsening economic crisis and just before Obama took office, 35% said they were very closely following news about projections of a record deficit for that year.

News Interest

% following each story closely

Which one story did you follow most closely?



PEW RESEARCH CENTER January 27-30, 2011.

Fewer (13%) say they very closely followed news about recent gains in the stock market; 4% say this was the news they followed most closely. News about the stock market accounted for less than 1% of the coverage analyzed by PEJ.

Meanwhile, 14% say they very closely followed news about a suicide bombing in Russia that killed at least 35 people; 3% say this was the news they followed most closely. The story accounted for 2% of coverage.

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 January 24-30, and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week were collected January 27-30, from a nationally representative sample of 1,007 adults.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted January 27-30, 2011 among a national sample of 1,007 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (676 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 331 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 144 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/detailed>.

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 2010 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2010 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 sample sizes and 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	1007	4.0 percentage points
Republicans	281	7.5 percentage points
Democrats	325	7.0 percentage points
Independents	299	7.0 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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:

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER NEWS INTEREST INDEX
JANUARY 27-30, 2011 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1007

ASK ALL:

PEW.1 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>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
a. Projections of a record high federal budget deficit this year					
January 27-30, 2011	23	28	18	29	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
December 2-5, 2010: <i>Discussions in Washington about how to address the federal budget deficit</i>	35	25	21	17	2
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	*
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	*
b. News about a congresswoman and others shot in Tucson, Arizona					
January 27-30, 2011	42	32	13	13	*
January 20-23, 2011	45	33	13	9	1
January 13-16, 2011	49	28	12	11	1
January 9, 2011 ¹	31	33	13	23	1
c. Anti-government protests in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries					
January 27-30, 2011	17	26	21	35	*
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
January 20-23, 2011: <i>Political instability in Tunisia following the collapse of the government</i>	7	15	25	53	1
January 13-16, 2010: <i>The collapse of the Lebanese government</i>	4	11	20	64	*

¹ Question asked about “news about a congresswoman shot in Tucson, Arizona,” and was asked on January 9, 2011, only, following the shooting on January 8.

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
May 20-23, 2010: <i>A government crackdown on protestors in Thailand</i>	7	14	27	52	1
July 31-August 3, 2009: <i>The Iranian government's crackdown on opposition protestors</i>	18	23	26	31	2
July 2-5, 2009: <i>News about controversy surrounding the recent Iranian election</i>	22	31	23	23	*
June 26-29, 2009: <i>The Iranian government's crackdown on election protestors</i>	31	27	18	23	1
June 19-22, 2009: <i>Protests in Iran over disputed elections</i>	28	28	21	22	1
March 20-24, 2008: <i>Violent protests in Tibet against the Chinese government</i>	12	27	26	35	*
September 28-October 1, 2007: <i>Pro-democracy protests by Buddhist monks in Burma</i>	13	27	20	39	1
March 17-21, 2005: <i>Protests and political changes in Lebanon</i>	10	28	25	36	1
October 6-8, 2000: <i>Civil unrest and rioting in Belgrade, Yugoslavia</i>	18	27	24	31	*
January 9-12, 1997: <i>Protests and demonstrations in Belgrade against Serbian President Milosevic</i>	7	14	29	49	1
d. Recent gains in the stock market					
January 27-30, 2011	13	17	20	49	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
August 12-15, 2010: <i>Recent ups and downs in the stock market</i>	17	21	20	42	1
March 26-29, 2010	13	23	23	40	1
October 16-19, 2009: <i>Recent gains in the stock market</i>	15	23	19	43	*
July 24-27, 2009	23	25	24	28	*
March 13-16, 2009	38	31	14	17	0
March 6-9, 2009: <i>Recent major drops in the U.S. stock market</i>	35	31	15	19	*
February 20-23, 2009	31	32	20	17	*
November 21-24, 2008	50	23	15	12	*
October 17-20, 2008: <i>Recent major ups and downs in the U.S. stock market</i>	54	31	9	6	*
October 10-13, 2008: <i>Recent major drops in the U.S. stock market</i>	59	26	9	6	*
July 3-7, 2008: <i>Recent major ups and downs in the U.S. stock market</i>	22	29	23	26	*
March 14-17, 2008	25	31	23	21	*
January 25-28, 2008	29	28	19	23	1
August 17-20, 2007	21	24	22	33	*
July 27-30, 2007	15	26	21	37	1
March 2-5, 2007: <i>The recent drop in the U.S. stock market</i>	21	28	25	26	*
Early September, 2002: <i>Recent major ups and downs in the U.S. stock market</i>	27	30	20	22	1
Late July, 2002	33	33	15	18	1
March, 2001	27	27	18	27	1
Mid-October, 2000	20	26	23	31	1
April, 2000	18	28	23	31	*
Early April, 2000	19	29	20	32	*
Early April, 2000	19	29	20	32	*

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
March, 2000	23	29	21	26	1
March, 1999	18	29	22	31	*
January, 1999	24	28	19	28	1
Early September, 1998	32	31	20	17	*
Mid-August, 1998	17	23	21	39	*
January, 1998	21	25	23	31	*
Mid-November, 1997	25	36	18	20	1
Early November, 1997: <i>Thinking about last Monday when the stock market dropped, how closely did you follow what was happening?</i>	16	29	22	33	*
September, 1997: <i>Recent major ups and downs in the stock market</i>	14	22	23	40	1
April, 1997	17	21	22	40	*
February, 1996	12	20	25	42	1
e. Suicide bombing at an airport in Russia that killed at least 35 people					
January 27-30, 2011	14	30	24	31	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
April 1-5, 2010: Suicide bombings in Russia	10	26	24	40	*
July 17-20, 2009: <i>The bombing of two hotels in Indonesia</i>	13	26	23	36	2
December 5-8, 2008: <i>The terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India</i>	29	37	20	14	*
July 6-9, 2007: <i>Investigation into who was responsible for car bombs that were discovered in London and a car bomb that went off at an airport in Scotland</i>	34	30	19	16	1
June 29-July 2, 2007: <i>London car bomb</i>	34	31	16	18	1
August, 2006: <i>British officials stop terror plot</i>	54	26	9	9	2
October, 2005: <i>The recent terrorist bombings in Bali, Indonesia</i>	13	31	26	29	1
July, 2005: <i>The terrorist bombings in London, England</i>	48	37	11	4	*
March, 2004: <i>The terrorist bombings in Madrid, Spain</i>	34	35	18	12	1
Late October, 2002: <i>The terrorist bombing of a nightclub in Bali, Indonesia</i>	20	34	25	20	1
September, 2004: <i>The killing of Russian school children by Chechen rebels</i>	48	30	11	10	1
March, 2004: <i>The terrorist bombings in Madrid, Spain</i>	34	35	18	12	1
Late October, 2002: <i>The terrorist bombing of a nightclub in Bali, Indonesia</i>	20	34	25	20	1
January, 2000: <i>The conflict between the Russian military and the rebels in Chechnya</i>	10	25	30	34	1
December, 2009	11	22	31	34	1
February, 1995: <i>Russia's fighting in Chechnya</i>	10	27	27	35	1
f. Barack Obama's State of the Union speech					
January 27-30, 2011	28	22	13	36	1
January 29-February 1, 2010	33	22	17	29	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
February 27-March 2, 2009: <i>Barack Obama's first address to a joint session of Congress</i>	37	26	14	23	*

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
February 1-4, 2008: <i>President Bush's State of the Union address</i>	18	17	20	45	*
January 26-29, 2007: <i>Reports about George Bush's State of the Union address</i>	25	26	20	28	1
February, 2006: <i>George W. Bush's State of the Union address</i>	24	22	19	34	1
February, 2003	36	24	15	24	1
January, 1994: <i>Reports about Bill Clinton's State of the Union address</i>	26	25	18	31	*
February, 1992: <i>President Bush's State of the Union Address</i>	26	26	20	27	1

ASK ALL:

PEW.2 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.]**

Jan 27-30

2011

38	News about a Congresswoman and others shot in Tucson, Arizona
12	Barack Obama's State of the Union speech
11	Anti-government protests in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries
5	Projections of a record high federal budget deficit this year
4	Recent gains in the stock market
3	The suicide bombing at an airport in Russia that killed at least 35 people
8	Some other story (VOL.)
18	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

PEW.3 Did you happen to watch President Obama's State of the Union address on Tuesday night, or didn't you get a chance to see it?

TREND FOR COMPARISON:

Jan 27-30		Jan 29- Feb 1	President Obama's speech about health care
<u>2011</u>		<u>2010</u>	<u>Sep 11-14, 2009</u>
40	Yes, watched	45	41
59	No, didn't watch	55	59
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1	*