

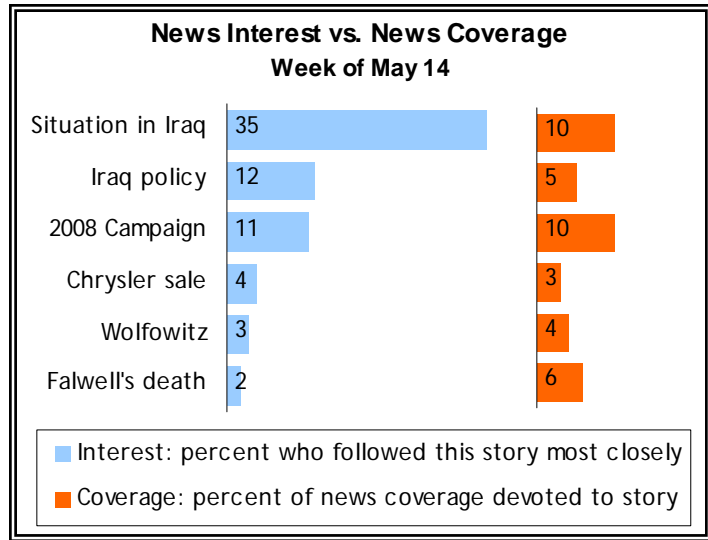


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:  
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**Republicans Tune into Campaign News**  
**IRAQ DOMINATES NEWS INTEREST**

While the national media divided its time last week among a host of major news stories, the public remained intensely focused on the situation in Iraq. Fully 36% of Americans paid very closely attention to events in Iraq and 35% said this was the news story they followed more closely than any other. Another 12% of the public listed the debate over Iraq policy as the story they followed most closely. News coverage of Iraq focused primarily on events on the ground,

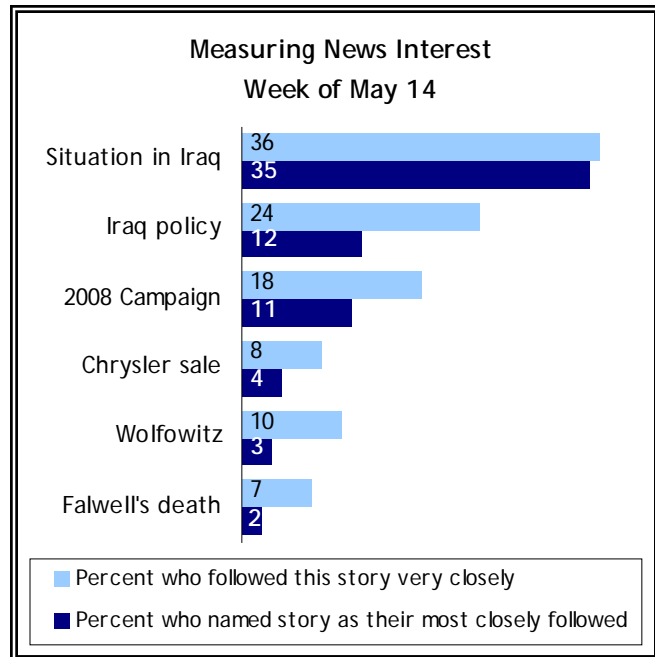


while the policy debate took a back seat. In previous weeks, the policy debate has received more media coverage than the situation in Iraq. However, dramatic events, including the capture of three American soldiers, altered the balance of coverage.

Interest in the 2008 presidential campaign has remained fairly consistent in recent weeks, even while the amount of coverage has fluctuated depending on campaign events and the demands of competing news stories. This past week 18% of the public followed campaign news very closely and another 31% followed it fairly closely. Roughly one-in-ten listed the campaign as their most closely followed story. For the first time since February, when Pew began tracking interest in the campaign, Republicans followed campaign news as closely as did Democrats (22% of both Republicans and Democrats paid very close attention to campaign news, as did 14% of independents). The news media had more to offer GOP loyalists this past week, as news of the Republican candidates outweighed news of the Democrats by a significant margin.

Throughout most of the year, press coverage of the campaign has consistently focused more on the Democratic candidates.

In other news this week, fewer than one-in-ten Americans (8%) paid very close attention to DaimlerChrysler's decision to sell Chrysler to a private equity firm. Another 20% paid fairly close attention to this story. Interest in news about Chrysler was somewhat higher in 1998 when the company initially merged with Daimler Benz.



One-in-ten Americans paid very close attention to Paul Wolfowitz's decision to resign as World Bank president and 3% said it was their most closely followed story of the week. Overall, the Wolfowitz story accounted for 4% of the week's news coverage. Republicans and Democrats followed the story in about equal proportions.

Only 7% of the public paid very close attention to news about the death of Reverend Jerry Falwell, 2% said this was the story they followed most closely. Falwell's death received a substantial amount of news coverage: 6% of the news on all sectors was devoted to this story, and it was the third most heavily covered story on cable television news (surpassing coverage of events in Iraq). Republicans followed Falwell's death more closely than did Democrats (34% of Republicans followed the story very or fairly closely vs. 25% of Democrats). And the story attracted more interest in the South than in other parts of the country.

***Names in the News***

When asked who they have heard the most about in the news lately, four-in-ten Americans (39%) name George W. Bush. Aside from the president, no single news figure emerges. Paris Hilton is a distant second place to Bush at 7%, and Anna Nicole Smith is named as often as Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama (3%). Alberto Gonzales is named by 2% of the public. Tony

**Top Newsmakers**

<i>Heard the most about in the news lately...</i>	<u>%</u>
George W. Bush	39
Paris Hilton	7
Anna Nicole Smith	3
Hillary Clinton	3
Barack Obama	3
Alberto Gonzales	2
Tony Blair	1
Britney Spears	1
Paul Wolfowitz	1
Jerry Falwell	1
Don Imus	1
John McCain	1
Mitt Romney	1
Other	13
No answer	<u>23</u>
	100

Blair, Britney Spears, Paul Wolfowitz and Jerry Falwell round out the top ten (all at 1%). GOP presidential hopefuls John McCain and Mitt Romney are also mentioned by 1% of the public.

## 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 Sunday through Friday) PEJ will compile this data to identify the top stories for the week. The News Interest Index survey will collect data from Friday through Monday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for the weekly surveys are based on telephone interviews among a nationwide sample of approximately 1,000 adults, 18 years of age or older, conducted under the direction of ORC (Opinion Research Corporation). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3.5 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, and that results based on subgroups will have larger margins of error.

For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to [www.journalism.org](http://www.journalism.org).

## 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 six 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  
Carolyn Funk, Richard Wike and Kim Parker, Senior Researchers  
Nilanthi Samaranyake, Survey and Data Manager  
April Clark, Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Robert Suls, Shawn Neidorf and Dan Cox, Research Associates  
James Albrightain, Executive Assistant

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**MAY 18-21, 2007 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**N=1,055**

Q.1 Can you tell me the name of the person you've heard the most about in the news lately? [**PROBE IF NECESSARY**: Just the name that comes to mind **FIRST** when you think about who's been in the news lately] [**OPEN END. RECORD FIRST MENTION ONLY**]

		March 30- <u>April 2, 2007</u>	Feb. 16-19, <u>2007</u>
39	George W. Bush	36	28
7	Paris Hilton		
3	Anna Nicole Smith	22	38
3	Hillary Clinton	3	3
3	Barack Obama	2	3
2	Alberto Gonzales	8	
1	Tony Blair		
1	Britney Spears	2	1
1	Paul Wolfowitz		
1	Jerry Falwell		
1	Don Imus		
1	John McCain		
1	Mitt Romney		
13	Other		
<u>23</u>	Don't know/Refused		
100			

Q.2 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, 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 ITEMS**] [**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>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. News about the current situation and events in Iraq					
<b>May 11-14, 2007</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>May 4-7, 2007</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>April 27-30</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>April 20-23, 2007</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>April 12-16, 2007</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>April 5-9, 2007</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 30-April 2, 2007</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>March 23-26, 2007<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>34</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 16-19, 2007</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>March 9-12, 2007</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 2-5, 2007</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>February 23-26, 2007</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>February 16-19, 2007</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>February 9-12, 2007</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>February 2-5, 2007</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>January 26-29, 2007</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*=100</b>
	<b>36</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>*=100</b>

<sup>1</sup> From May, 2003 to March 23-26, 2007, the story was listed as "News about the current situation in Iraq."

**Q.2 CONTINUED...**

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
<b>January 19-22, 2007</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>January 12-15, 2007</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1=100</b>
January, 2007	46	40	8	5	1=100
<b>January 5-8, 2007</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0=100</b>
December, 2006	42	39	12	7	*=100
<b>November 30-December 3, 2006</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>*=100</b>
Mid-November, 2006	44	38	12	6	*=100
September, 2006	33	43	14	8	2=100
August, 2006	41	39	12	7	1=100
June, 2006	37	43	13	6	1=100
May, 2006	42	35	15	7	1=100
April, 2006	43	36	13	7	1=100
March, 2006	43	38	12	6	1=100
February, 2006	39	42	12	6	1=100
January, 2006	40	40	12	7	1=100
December, 2005	45	38	11	5	1=100
Early November, 2005	41	40	13	6	*=100
Early October, 2005	43	36	15	6	*=100
Early September, 2005	32	40	20	7	1=100
July, 2005	43	37	13	6	1=100
Mid-May, 2005	42	42	11	5	*=100
Mid-March, 2005	40	39	14	5	2=100
February, 2005	38	45	13	4	*=100
January, 2005	48	37	11	4	*=100
December, 2004	34	44	15	6	1=100
Mid-October, 2004	42	38	11	8	1=100
Early September, 2004	47	37	9	6	1=100
August, 2004	39	42	12	6	1=100
July, 2004	43	40	11	6	*=100
June, 2004	39	42	12	6	1=100
April, 2004	54	33	8	5	*=100
Mid-March, 2004	47	36	12	4	1=100
Early February, 2004	47	38	10	4	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	48	39	9	4	*=100
December, 2003	44	38	11	6	1=100
November, 2003	52	33	9	5	1=100
September, 2003	50	33	10	6	1=100
Mid-August, 2003	45	39	10	5	1=100
Early July, 2003	37	41	13	8	1=100
June, 2003	46	35	13	6	*=100
May, 2003	63	29	6	2	*=100
April 11-16, 2003 <sup>2</sup>	47	40	10	2	1=100
April 2-7, 2003	54	34	9	2	1=100
March 20-24, 2003	57	33	7	2	1=100
March 13-16, 2003 <sup>3</sup>	62	27	6	4	1=100
February, 2003	62	25	8	4	1=100
January, 2003	55	29	10	4	2=100
December, 2002	51	32	10	6	1=100
Late October, 2002	53	33	8	5	1=100

<sup>2</sup> From March 20-24, 2003 to April 11-16, 2003, the story was listed as “News about the war in Iraq.”

<sup>3</sup> From Early October, 2002, to March 13-16, 2003, the story was listed as “Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will take military action in Iraq.”

**Q.2 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
Early October, 2002	60	28	6	5	1=100
Early September, 2002 <sup>4</sup>	48	29	15	6	2=100
b. The debate in Washington over U.S. policy in Iraq					
<b>May 11-14, 2007</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>May 4-7, 2007</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>April 27-30, 2007</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>April 20-23, 2007</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>April 12-16, 2007</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>April 5-9, 2007</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>March 30-April 2, 2007</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 30-April 2, 2007</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
<b>January 12-15, 2007: President Bush's proposal to increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1=100</b>
c. DaimlerChrysler's decision to sell Chrysler to a private equity firm					
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
<b>June, 1998: The merger of the Chrysler Corporation and Daimler Benz</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1=100</b>
	12	22	27	38	1=100
d. News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election					
<b>May 11-14, 2007</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>May 4-7, 2007</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>April 27-30, 2007</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>April 20-23, 2007</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>April 12-16, 2007</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>April 5-9, 2007</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 30-April 2, 2007</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 23-26, 2007</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>March 16-19, 2007</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>March 9-12, 2007</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>March 2-5, 2007</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>February 23-26, 2007</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>February 16-19, 2007</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>February 9-12, 2007</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>February 2-5, 2007</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>January 26-29, 2007</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>January 19-22, 2007<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>24</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>*=100</b>
<b>January 19-22, 2007<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1=100</b>
<b>2004 Presidential Election</b>					
November, 2004 (RVs)	52	36	8	4	*=100
Mid-October, 2004	46	30	12	11	1=100
August, 2004	32	38	16	14	*=100
July, 2004	29	37	18	15	1=100
April, 2004	31	33	19	16	1=100
Mid-March, 2004	35	34	18	13	*=100
Late February, 2004	24	40	23	12	1=100

<sup>4</sup> In Early September, 2002, the story was listed as "Debate over the possibility that the U.S. will invade Iraq."

<sup>5</sup> January 19-22, 2007 asked about "Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2008."

**Q.2 CONTINUED...**

	Very <u>Closely</u>	Fairly <u>Closely</u>	Not too <u>Closely</u>	Not at all <u>Closely</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
Early February, 2004 <sup>6</sup>	29	37	20	13	1=100
Mid-January, 2004	16	30	27	26	1=100
Early January, 2004	14	32	30	23	1=100
December, 2003	16	26	27	30	1=100
November, 2003	11	26	34	28	1=100
October, 2003	12	27	28	32	1=100
September, 2003	17	25	30	27	1=100
Mid-August, 2003	12	27	27	33	1=100
May, 2003	8	19	31	41	1=100
January, 2003	14	28	29	28	1=100
<b>2000 Presidential Election</b>					
Early November, 2000 (RVs)	39	44	12	5	*=100
Mid-October, 2000 (RVs)	40	37	15	8	*=100
Early October, 2000 (RVs)	42	36	15	6	1=100
September, 2000	22	42	21	15	*=100
July, 2000	21	38	20	20	1=100
June, 2000	23	32	23	21	1=100
May, 2000	18	33	26	23	*=100
April, 2000	18	39	22	20	1=100
March, 2000	26	41	19	13	1=100
February, 2000	26	36	21	17	*=100
January, 2000	19	34	28	18	1=100
December, 1999	16	36	24	23	1=100
October, 1999	17	32	28	22	1=100
September, 1999	15	31	33	20	1=100
July, 1999	15	38	24	22	1=100
June, 1999	11	25	29	34	1=100
<b>1996 Presidential Election</b>					
November, 1996 (RVs)	34	45	15	6	*=100
October, 1996	31	39	18	12	*=100
Early September, 1996	24	36	23	17	*=100
July, 1996	22	40	23	14	1=100
March, 1996	26	41	20	13	*=100
January, 1996	10	34	31	24	1=100
September, 1995	12	36	30	22	*=100
August, 1995	13	34	28	25	*=100
June, 1995	11	31	31	26	1=100
<b>1992 Presidential Election</b>					
October, 1992 (RVs)	55	36	7	2	0=100
September, 1992 (RVs)	47	36	11	6	*=100
August, 1992 (RVs)	36	51	11	2	0=100
July, 1992	20	45	26	9	*=100
May, 1992	32	44	16	8	*=100
March, 1992	35	40	16	9	*=100
January, 1992	11	25	36	27	1=100

<sup>6</sup> From May 2003 to Early February 2004 and in March 1992, the story was listed as “The race for the Democratic nomination.” In January 2003, the story was listed as “Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2004.” In September 2000, Early September and July 1996, and May 1992, the question asked about “the presidential election campaign.” In January, March and April 1996, the story was listed as “News about the Republican presidential candidates.” In August 1992, the story was listed as “News about the presidential election.” In July 1992, the story was listed as “News about the presidential campaign.” In January 1992, the story was listed as “News about the Democratic candidates for the presidential nomination.” In 1988, the story was introduced as being from “this past year” and was listed as “News about the presidential campaign in 1988.”



**Q.2 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
December, 1991	10	28	32	30	*=100
<b><i>1988 Presidential Election</i></b>					
October, 1988 ( <i>RVs</i> )	43	44	11	2	*=100
August, 1988 ( <i>RVs</i> )	39	45	13	3	*=100
May, 1988	22	46	23	6	3=100
November, 1987	15	28	35	21	1=100
September, 1987	14	34	37	14	1=100
e. The death of Reverend Jerry Falwell	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1=100</b>
f. Paul Wolfowitz's decision to resign as World Bank president	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>2=100</b>

Q.3 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. IF "IRAQ" UNSPECIFIED, PROBE: "Do you mean events IN Iraq or the debate over Iraq POLICY?"**)

- 35 News about the current situation and events in Iraq
  - 12 The debate in Washington over U.S. policy in Iraq
  - 11 News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election
  - 4 DaimlerChrysler's decision to sell Chrysler to a private equity firm
  - 3 Paul Wolfowitz's decision to resign as World Bank president
  - 2 The death of Reverend Jerry Falwell
  - 15 Some other story (**SPECIFY**)
  - 18 Don't know/Refused
- 100