

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MARCH 2007 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
March 21-25, 2007
N=1503

QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 6 ALREADY RELEASED

Q.7 Now thinking about some groups and organizations ... Is your overall opinion of [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS] very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable?

		-----Favorable-----			----Unfavorable----			(VOL.) Never	(VOL.) Can't
		<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Heard of</u>	<u>Rate/Ref.</u>
a.	The news media	45	7	38	49	17	32	*	6=100
	Early January, 2007	45	8	37	49	17	32	*	6=100
	April, 2006	48	8	40	46	15	31	*	6=100
	February, 2006	59	12	47	37	10	27	0	4=100
	Late October, 2005	52	11	41	42	13	29	0	6=100
	Mid-March, 2005	56	12	44	40	13	27	0	4=100
	December, 2004	43	8	35	51	18	33	*	6=100
	Late October, 2000 (RVs)	50	7	43	45	14	31	0	5=100
	February, 1999	49	6	43	49	15	34	0	2=100
	March, 1998	48	9	39	50	16	34	*	2=100
	October, 1997	50	7	43	48	14	34	*	2=100

QUESTION 8 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

QUESTIONS 9 THROUGH 35 ALREADY RELEASED

ASK ALL:

On another subject...

Q.36 Have you ever heard the term "news leak"?

IF YES IN Q.36, ASK:

Q.37 In your opinion does a news leak happen when a reporter finds out something newsworthy on his own or when a government official gives newsworthy information to a reporter?

BASED ON TOTAL:

		July <u>1986</u>
75	Yes	84
12	Reporter finds on his own	19
55	Gov't official provides information	55
8	Don't know	10
25	No	16
*	Don't know	*
<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>

Q.38 Why do you think, generally, that officials leak information to the press? [OPEN END; ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES. PROBE FOR CLARITY – DO NOT PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL MENTIONS. IF MORE THAN ONE MENTION, RECORD ALL IN ORDER OF MENTION]

BASED ON THOSE WHO HAD HEARD OF A NEWS LEAK (1 ON Q.36) AND WHO IDENTIFIED IT AS A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL PROVIDING INFORMATION (2 ON Q.37) [N=893]:

		July <u>1986</u> ¹
26	For personal advancement/personal agenda	33
12	To influence or manipulate the press/public	2
11	For a worthy cause/public interest ²	15
10	For partisan political purposes	15
8	To seek revenge against an opponent	4
7	To get the information out there	-
4	To put something out there without being held accountable	-
4	To stir things up (generally)	-
3	Dissatisfaction/disagreement with government handling/policy	2
3	For financial gain/to get paid	-
2	To test public opinion/reaction	5
2	To gain favor with reporters	7
1	Inadvertently/mistakenly/unintentionally	3
1	Intentional “unofficial” announcements	12
0	To help enemies of the U.S.	1
13	Other	6
8	Don’t know/Refused	13

Q.39 Which comes closer to your opinion: news leaks serve the public interest more by providing Americans with information they should have OR news leaks harm the public interest by revealing information that people ought not to have?

BASED ON THOSE WHO HAD HEARD OF A NEWS LEAK (1 ON Q.36) AND WHO IDENTIFIED IT AS A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL PROVIDING INFORMATION (2 ON Q.37): [N=893]

		July <u>1986</u>
42	Serves public interest	43
44	Harms public interest	42
<u>14</u>	Don’t know	<u>15</u>
100		100

¹ The July 1986 trend on this question is for broad comparisons only. Because the original verbatim answers are not archived, the current coding may not match the procedures used in 1986 exactly. In particular, the current category for “influence or manipulate the press/public” is a more inclusive code than the 1986 category “manipulate the press.”

² In July 1986, the category was: “for a worthy cause.”

ASK ALL:

Q.40 Why do you think the government often criticizes the press for reporting stories about national security issues?

		July <u>1986</u> ³
32	More because the government believes the stories would harm national security	39
	OR	
58	More because the government is trying to cover up problems with national security	49
<u>10</u>	Don't know	<u>12</u>
100		100

Q.41 How much, if anything, have you read or heard about the trial of former vice presidential aide Lewis "Scooter" Libby for perjury and obstruction of justice? **[READ]**

25	A lot
39	A little
35	Nothing at all
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused [VOL. DO NOT READ]
100	

³ Question wording in July 1986 was: "Why do you think the government often criticizes the press for reporting stories about national security issues? More because the government believes the stories would harm the nation's defenses? OR More because the government is trying to cover up problems with the nation's defenses?"