

Poll: Reaction to media mixed

Americans have reservations about terrorism coverage

WASHINGTON (AP) — Many Americans have reservations about how the news media report terrorist incidents, but people also think news organizations do a good job of covering events like airplane hijackings, said a survey released Thursday.

These mixed feelings toward the news media were brought out in a Gallup Organization poll commissioned by the Times Mirror, a Los Angeles-based media organization.

"Americans are of two minds about press-related issues," Gallup President Andrew Kohut said. "They give the news media high marks on overall performance, but

sharply lower grades on specific press practices."

On specific stories, 84 percent of the respondents said the media did a good job covering the January explosion of the space shuttle Challenger; 80 percent felt that way about the TWA flight 847 hostage crisis in Beirut; 80 percent approved of coverage of the Achille Lauro hijacking in the Mediterranean; 79 percent thought the Chernobyl nuclear disaster was handled well, and 71 percent approved of the reporting of the Pan American World Airways hijacking in Pakistan this month.

Still, many Americans seem dis-

turbed by the role the media plays in terrorist incidents, the poll said.

For example, 51 percent of Americans said the news media give terrorist incidents too much attention, and 40 percent said coverage is about right.

The findings were based on telephone interviews with 1,504 people in July. Gallup said there is an error rate of 3 percent.

In a separate quiz, 776 people were interviewed in September about the case of Nicholas Daniloff, the U.S. News & World Report Moscow correspondent who has been arrested and charged with spying in

the Soviet Union. That survey had an error rate of 4 percent.

The poll showed 73 percent of Americans have followed the Daniloff case closely. Twenty-four percent thought there was no chance that Daniloff was a spy; 34 percent said "only a very small chance," 22 percent, "somewhat of a chance," and 10 percent, "a good chance." The remainder did not answer the question.

Kohut speculated that the poll reflected the public's skepticism toward the U.S. government and the news media.

Goals

(Continued from page 1)

someone is working to update the file.

And a tutorial program, which should be operating within a month, will allow students to find a tutor for any class, he says.

"We'll have a list, hopefully on computer — a tutorial catalog, if you will," he says. "It's like a Sears-Roebuck catalog for tutors."

Another idea being developed is the formation of a committee, composed of students or a combination of students and faculty members, to oversee daily happenings at the University Police Department.

"Lots of stuff happens at the UPD and sometimes, nobody really

knows what's going on," he says. "There's lots of revenue being generated through lots of parking tickets being given out, and I believe a question on most students' minds is: 'Where's that money going?'"

Sims also wants to have Student Government appear a unified, happy organization, he says.

To do that he must appear happy and motivated in his job, Sims says.

"I can tell that if I start having a bad day, it seems to affect the general attitude of the office up here," he says. "People look in that door to see what's happening here."

"And people that are enjoying their work are going to want to come up here and want to work and

produce things that help everybody."

Although Sims sees himself as a motivational force behind Student Government, he says he doesn't try to shoulder all of its burdens.

"This is the first environment I've found myself in that I can't run the whole thing by myself," he says. "The people up here (in Student Government) are outstanding individuals. They really do everything that happens here."

He tells people what shape he wants a project to take and lets them handle the job, he says.

"I don't care how it gets done, just so it's done effectively, efficiently and in somewhat of a professional manner," he says.

He stresses the word "some-

what."

"I think too many times, people get too wrapped up in the whole concept of professionalism," Sims says. "They get to the point of being stuffy. And I can't stand stuffiness."

Sims says he enjoys his job primarily because it gives him a chance to make a difference at A&M and to work with good people, but he admits it has professional benefits as well.

"It looks damn good on a resume, and that's no joke," he says. "Those contacts may prove useful in the future, since Sims says he plans to make politics his career."

"Certainly, I'd like to end up in Washington someday, somehow."

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