Local Media Iraq Coverage

From September 12, 2002 (the day Bush spoke before the United Nations) through November 8, 2002, GRIID documented the Grand Rapids-based TV news stations and the Grand Rapids Press coverage of Iraq. GRIID surveyed all stories - international, national and local that were related to Iraq. We documented the number of stories, sources used (voices), reasons given for US policy, headlines, language and images used in depicting Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi people.

TV Coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Number of Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOX 17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WZZM 13</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WXMI 17</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources/Voices

*In support of a pre-emptive strike*
- Bush - 23
- Ehlers - 3
- Hoekstra - 3
- Rumsfeld - 3
- Levin - 2
- Annan - 2
- Stabbenow - 2
- Gephart - 2
- Cheney - 1
- Powell - 1
- Condeleza Rice - 1
- Lieberman - 1
- Rep. Bayh - 1
- Ari Flesher - 1
- Gulf War vet - 2
- Soldier’s family - 2

*Opposed to a pre-emptive strike*
- Rep. Byrd - 1
- Rep. Kaptor - 1
- Madaline Albright - 1
- Muskegon Peace & Justice group/Pastor - 1
- AQ student - 1
- GR Peace Team - 1
- Ali Abunimah - 1
- Jim Goode - 1

Iraqi Foreign Minister - 1
Headlines
"Stand up to Iraq, Bush tells UN"
"Bush speech places UN on defensive"
"Break Iraq's 'unholy alliance,' Powell urges UN"
"Lawmakers back Bush's stance on Iraq"
Iraqi Compliance doubted as Powell lobbies UN"
"Bush won't wait for UN to 'show backbone''
"Iraq has plenty of company"
"Saudi's shift hikes pressure on Iraq"
"Powell pushes UN for pressure on Iraq"
"Support unravels for action on Iraq"
"Bush tells Congress: Give me power to use force"
"US: Al-Qaida gets Iraqi help with chemical weapons"
"President summons congressional leaders to urge quick action"
"Economy early casualty in talk of war with Iraq"
"Conflict imperils airlines, executive says"
"Afghan government fears Iraq will distract Washington"
"Request for power to wage war forces Democrats off the fence"
"First clash in war on Iraq will be at home"
"Preemptive strike part of military doctrine"
"Saddam rejects UN: top US general says forces are ready to go"
"US war planners envision an intensive focused attack"
"Experts say war on Iraq would be a humanitarian disaster"
"Who put the dad in Baghdad? Not Bushes, insiders say"
"Forum participants say attack on Iraq hard to justify"
"Rumsfeld: Iraqis are 'hostages' of Saddam"
"Gore denounces Bush"
"Experts: War likely to start with airstrikes"
"Nations cautious on Iraq evidence"
"Military town braces for war"
"Congress seeks pact on Iraq resolution"
"Kurds would seize oil fields if US attacks, official says"
"An Uneasy Defiance: Iraq boasts of having world support, but things could change"
"US mulls Israeli plan to disarm Iraq missiles"
"Is US ready for army of occupation?"
"Before attack, coup likely would oust Saddam, US experts say"
"Iraq perplexes American media"
"US strategy divides Iraqi opposition"
"Saddam favored in re-election"
"Bush's vast coalition vs. Iraq is slow to assemble"
"Bush accepts power to oust Saddam"
"Bush presses Sharon over Iraq"
"Will Iraq's refusal be final straw?"
"President returns to Iraq debate"
"weapons Inspector press Iraq for total access to sensitive sites"
One Bullet - US hints to Iraqis that death of saddam would solve crisis"
"House leaders OK resolution on Iraq: Senate still reticent"
Security Council members say changes needed in inspections"
"Visit to Baghdad puts officials in the hot seat"
"UN talks going well arms inspectors say"
"Congress appears ready to fall in step behind Bush"
"Aquinas war protestors hope others will speak out"
"UN - nobody's leaving for Baghdad yet"
"After Saddam: US considers occupation of Iraq"
"Bush prepares nation for war"
"Then & Now: Diplomatic climate not as warm to US as in Gulf War"
"Anti-war protests staged nationwide"
"Religious leaders send caution to Bush"
"Bush speech seeks nation's support"
"Bush asks nation to take aim at homicidal dictator"
"Activists discouraged by president's speech"
"Iraq war could cost $200 billion"
"Pentagon vies to deter Iraqi arsenal"
"Wanna be a weapons inspector - be prepared for the ultimate game of hide & seek"
"Senate hopefuls spar over tax cuts/Iraq turmoil"
"Iraq vows tough response to any US action"
"Saddam unlikely to hit first"
"War & Peace - Congress signs off on action Against Iraq"
"Local sentiment divided on next step in Iraq"
"In no-fly zone allied planes already give Saddam a real pounding"
"Iraq gives reporters peek at plant US suspects is nuclear arms site"
"Security Council agrees to wide debate"
"Seidman bullish on war"
"State's Iraqis ponder war prospects"
"Postwar plans under consideration"
"Seminar explores policy on Iraq, Palaestine"
"Election Day Iraq: Saddam is only candidate"
"US backs off UN demand for right to use force"
"Seven more years: Saddam decrees American tyrant as he takes oath"
"US offers compromise resolution on Iraq"
"US strike on Iraq likely won't take place for months"
"Tough Iraq plan goes to UN for vote"
"New Defense Department team digs deep for Iraq - al - Qaida link"
"Hope students rally against war in Iraq"
"Russia, France challenge US resolution on Iraq"
"Thousands march to protest talk of pre-emptive war on Iraq"
"If UN fails, US will lead anti-Iraq coalition, Bush says"
"France may offer UN its own resolution on Iraq"
"Iraqi missiles are still a threat"
"Errant e-mail about Iraq vote angers Democrats"
"Protestors march against war"
"US military testing HQ in Gulf"
"Kuwait closes territory for US forces"
"Powell presses France on Iraq resolution"
"US claims majority for Iraq resolution"
"US pilots stay alert with ‘go pill’"
"Carter adviser says media failing to spark debate on war with Iraq"
"In Iraq, mustaches speak for themselves"
"UN vote sends strong message to Iraq"
"Road to Iraq gains twists, turns"
"UN clock on Iraq shows T-minus 1"
### Sources/Voices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bush</td>
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<tr>
<td>White House Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rumsfeld</td>
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<td>Powell</td>
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<td>Ari Fleisher</td>
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<td>Cheney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>US Congress</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Levin</td>
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<td>Ehlers</td>
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<td>Hoekstra</td>
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<td>US Military/CIA</td>
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<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>Foreign governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraqi government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saddam Hussein</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academics/think tanks</td>
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<td>Former US govt. officials</td>
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<td>Clergy</td>
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<td>International Humanitarian agencies</td>
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<td>Students</td>
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<td>Iraqi dissidents</td>
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<td>Iraqi barber</td>
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<td>Citizens</td>
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<td>Jesse Jackson</td>
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<td>Anti-war voices (total)</td>
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### Language/terms used for Iraq/Saddam

- Iraqi threat
- Saddam's hold on Iraq
- Terrorist proxies
- Iraqi defiance
- Regime
- Dictatorship
- Tyrant
- Crafty
- Iraqi intransigence
- Cliff hanger
- Brutal elimination
- Bitterly divides
- Saddam has deftly manipulated
- Evil
- Unholy alliance
- A decade of defiance
- Suspected ties to terrorist organizations

### Reasons/justifications for action against Iraq

- Violation of UN resolutions - 27
- Weapons of Mass Destruction - 55
- Assassination attempt on Bush Sr. - 3
- Hostages - 1
- Connection to Al-Qiada - 1
- Oil - 4
- Human Rights abuses - 1
- National Security - 2

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For more resources/information on Iraq go to  
http://www.griid.org/iraq.shtml

Previous GRIID Media Alert on Iraq coverage  
http://www.griid.org/mediaalerts.shtml

GRIID Iraq Coverage Recommendations  
(see next page)

GR Press Photo Gallery - after Recommendations
We Demand Better Media Coverage

1. **News with a Context**
   Complicated issues like foreign policy need to be reported within some historical context. Reminding the public that Saddam Hussein was an American ally for years, received military aid and the materials to produce weapons of mass destruction from the US is essential for understanding the current policy.

2. **Framing a news story**
   In the case of Bush wanting to escalate the war with Iraq, how the story is framed can make all the difference as to how the public perceives what’s at issue. **Example:** Reporting that Iraq is currently violating UN resolutions is true, but adding that Israel, Turkey and Morocco are as well (all US allies) can significantly change public opinion.

3. **Official Sources**
   Since September 12, when Bush spoke before the UN, most of the opinions or voices presented in mainstream news have been from the US government, military and conservative think tank sources. How would the public view the current crisis if we heard/read international perspectives, progressive voices, anti-war opinions or the voices of Iraqi civilians?

4. **Polls & Public Opinion**
   Polls are not honest reflections of public opinion. A great deal of it has to do with the question that people are asked. If you ask people ‘Do they support going to war with Iraq?’, many might say yes. However, if you ask people the same question and add ‘...even if it means the great chance of further terrorist attacks against the US?’ - you will get a much different response. Therefore, Public Opinion often reflects the narrow perspectives provided.

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**Contact Local News Departments**

**GR Press 222-5455**

**WOODTV8 - News Dir. 456-8888 patti.mcgettigan@lintv.com**

**WZZM 13 - News Dir. 559-1315 cgrant@wzzm.gannett.com**

**WXMI FOX 17 News Dir. 364-1717 tdye@wxmi.com**
Photos of Bush and US lawmakers always appeared poised, confident and diplomatic......

.....Saddam almost always has a weapon in his hand.
Iraqi children have been victimized by the US bombing campaign and sanctions - over 500,000 dead - yet the only image we see of them are these school children with pictures of Saddam.

Iraqi women’s voices have been completely absent from the debate on going to war. They have had to watch their children die - this is the only image of an Iraqi woman that appeared in the Grand Rapids Press during the period studied.
...not front page news

an estimated 450 people march against US policy with Iraq in Grand Rapids

Protesters march against war

The Grand Rapids Press

Several hundred protesters demonstrated anti-war sentiments Saturday evening as they marched through downtown Grand Rapids.

Activists of all ages, several carrying anti-war signs — including blow-ups of President George W. Bush wearing a yellow paper crown and Vice President Dick Cheney with blood dripping from his mouth — marched from Veterans Memorial Park to the Ford Federal Building.

On the steps of the federal building, speakers presented their arguments against a war with Iraq and expressed concern about biased media coverage.

Erica Freshour, 22, of Grand Rapids said she is frustrated that she isn’t hearing more anti-war voices in local media.

“I don’t believe that a majority of American people are in favor of bombing Iraq,” she said.

A study by the Grand Rapids Institute for Information Democracy of media reports since Sept. 13 determined that Bush’s pro-war view on war with Iraq has dominated media reports, Freshour said.

Several passing motorists honked in support of the protesters. One guy yelled out his window a contrasting view.

“Remember 9/11,” he yelled.

“Redneck,” came the response from someone in the crowd.

Claire O’Neill, a sophomore at Grand Haven High School, attended the rally with her parents and two siblings.

“I don’t want my generation having to fight like in Vietnam,” she said. “We need to find more peaceful ways.”

The People’s Alliance for Justice and Change will continue weekly protests from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. in front of the federal building.
Local business guru suggests that US invade Iraq, take possession of the oil to help the economy