

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

Number of Stories per station



23



36



38

Anti-war Stories

WZZM 13 - 4

WOOD TV8 - 4

WXMI 17 - 4

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 Fleisher - 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

Grand Rapids Press Coverage

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 dter 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, Plaestine"
"Election Day Iraq: Saddam is only candidate"
"US backs off UN demand for right to use force"
"Seven more years: Saddam decries 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

Bush - 59
White House Staff : Rumsfeld - 11
Powell - 12
Ari Fleisher - 12
Cheney - 2
Rice - 4
Other - 35

US Congress - 45
Levin - 3
Ehlers - 4
Hoekstra - 5

US Military/CIA - 22
United Nations - 13
Foreign governments - 30
Iraqi government - 9
Saddam Hussein - 1
Academics/think tanks - 34
Former US govt. officials - 2
Clergy - 9
International Humanitarian agencies - 11
Business - 6
Students - 7
Iraqi dissidents - 11
Iraqi barber - 1
Citizens - 9
Jesse Jackson - 1

Anti-war voices (total) - 18

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

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

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

Grand Rapids Press photo gallery on Iraq



Photos of Bush and US lawmakers always appeared poised, confident and diplomatic.....

Congress appears ready to fall in step behind Bush

► A vote is expected next week on a resolution supporting possible military action against Iraq.

By Jim Abrams
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers joined President Bush in declaring that the security of America depends on averting weapons of mass destruction from Iraq President Saddam Hussein.

The measure of which has stirred the Saddam Hussein, said Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., at a White House news conference Wednesday to mark a bipartisan agreement on the contents of a congressional resolution authorizing the president to use military force, if needed, to protect the United States from the Iraq threat.



.....Saddam almost always has a weapon in his hand.

Seven More Years

Saddam decries 'American tyrant' as he takes oath

By Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — President Saddam Hussein swore himself to his seventh term (2003) to power Thursday with a speech warning the United States and warning Iraqis that Saddam would be at hand.

The Iraqi leader closed his 70th birthday by the end of the early of office, self-announced after a grand celebration (which he said Iraqis were 100 percent behind him) and 100 percent approval for his more than 30-year rule.

The ceremony was broadcast live on Iraqi TV.

The oath, delivered by state president and the United States, came in the shadow of a U.S. congressional resolution authorizing military force against Saddam.

"Referring to what he called 'the American tyrant,' Saddam said he would 'stand in ready to take the road of blood and violence.'

"The road of blood takes you to martyrdom," Saddam said he was ready to share the blood of others who would be killed in the effort," Saddam said in a speech following the ceremony before Parliament, the ruling body of Iraq, and Iraq's top legislative council.

"During the world from the ends of the American administration... will appear the people of the United States the American and Iraqis who are ready to take the road of blood and violence."

The Iraqi leader's No. 2 man, Iraq's vice president, the Revolutionary Command Council, presented Saddam with a sword and a mace as a gift from the parliament.

"We present the sword to be used at his own discretion, and the mace to other states," Saddam said.

Saddam promised to work to rally Iraq's 30 million people with the United States, saying of "terrorism" that "Saddam has been to the end of the world."



Iraq President Saddam Hussein (center) stands with a gift before being sworn in as president Thursday in Baghdad. He swore himself to the seventh term power.

Saddam said he was ready to share the blood of others who would be killed in the effort, that the United States and Iraqis will be ready to take the road of blood and violence.

"The road of blood takes you to martyrdom," Saddam said he was ready to share the blood of others who would be killed in the effort, that the United States and Iraqis will be ready to take the road of blood and violence."

AFTER SADDAM

U.S. considers occupation of Iraq



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



PRESS PHOTO: CHRIS CLARK

About 400 peace protesters march through downtown Saturday, a national day of action in the United States for people opposed to the invasion of Iraq. They then gathered at the Ford Federal Building.

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 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.

Front page News

Local business guru suggests that US invade Iraq, take possession of the oil to help the economy

The Grand Rapids Press
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Seidman 'bullish' on war

► The former FDIC chief says gaining control of Iraqi oil will make a vast difference to the economy

By Joe Strapper
The Grand Rapids Press

Hours after Congress authorized President Bush to use force in Iraq, an economic adviser under four U.S. presidents told Grand Rapids business leaders Friday that going to war "is probably the most bullish thing I can think of."

Former FDIC chairman Bill Seidman, who served during the Nixon, Ford, Reagan and the senior Bush administrations, said defeating Saddam

least as important as eliminating weapons of mass destruction.

Seidman, a chief commentator for CNBC, said the prevailing view that a war would prolong and even deepen a bear market is the "most misleading" in the market today.

"Oil prices fluctuating is a very large drag on the economy — ours and the world's," said Seidman, 81. "If we are in Iraq, nobody can use oil Iraq exports."

Speaking to a crowd of 35 at the Peninsular Club, Seidman had just arrived from a State Department briefing in which the Bush administration outlined for the first time a post-Saddam power structure in Iraq.

"I think probably the most bullish thing I can think of today is winning the war. We are planning to set up a MarArthur-Iraq government," said Seidman, referred to U.S. General

► Aquinas College teach-in focuses on Mideast policy, AS
► Detroit area Iraqis nervous about what's next, AS
► America plans for an Iraq without Saddam, AS

over Japan after its surrender in World War II.

"Getting control of that oil," and thereby gaining sway with neighboring Saudi Arabia's oil production, "will make a vast difference (to the economy) in all sorts of things, but particularly the price of oil."

"Having the two major oil producers not part of any radical Muslim or any other unfriendly government," he said after the speech, would be "a huge beneficial factor in the world's economy."



PHOTO COURTESY OF LANSING
CNBC commentator Bill Seidman says defeating Saddam Hussein and controlling Iraq's oil is "at least as important as eliminating weapons of mass