

The last time Americans became deeply absorbed in a matter of foreign relations was December 1990, when no less than 90% of the public told the Gallup Organization that they were “very closely” or “fairly closely” following the situation in the Persian Gulf.

The previous August, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein had ordered the invasion and occupation of oil-rich neighbor Kuwait and declared it a province of Iraq. A series of escalating measures, including economic sanctions, a UN-imposed January 15 ultimatum for Iraqi withdrawal, and the movement of some 700,000 troops, including over half a million Americans, to Saudi Arabia, failed to force the end of the occupation. The

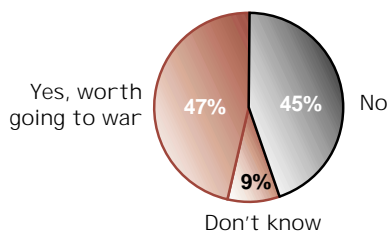
US and its allies prepared for war. For Americans, this meant the sundering of military families, the display of yellow ribbons, and a nearly obsessive attention to every development reported by the media. A bare majority still held out hope for peace.

But that hope dwindled as the holidays approached. At Christmastime 1990, editorial cartoons without captions depicted a shining star of Bethlehem suspended over troops amassed in a desert far away. And by January 1991, the nights in the Middle East would be silent no longer.

—Lisa Ferraro Parmelee

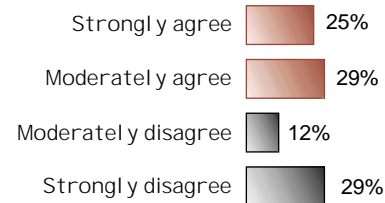
Lines in the Sand

Question: All in all, is the current situation in the Mideast worth going to war over, or not?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, December 6-9, 1990.

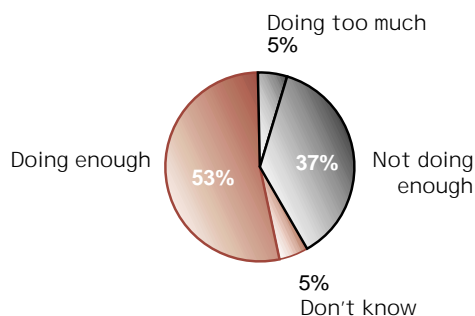
Question: ...[P]lease indicate whether you strongly agree, moderately agree, moderately disagree, or strongly disagree... The issues in the Middle East are so important that I would be willing to see my own children go fight there against Iraq.



Source: Survey by Gordon S. Black Corporation for *USA Today*, December 29-30, 1990.

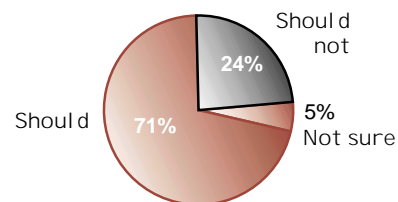
Commander in Chief

Question: Do you think President Bush is doing enough, doing too much or not doing enough to avoid a war with Iraq?



Source: Survey by Gordon S. Black Corporation for *USA Today*, December 29-30, 1990.

Question: Do you think President Bush should or should not be required to receive approval from Congress before taking offensive military action against Iraq?

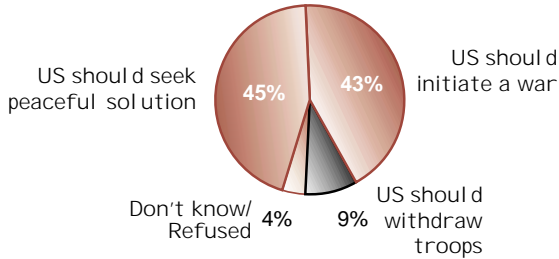


Note: Asked of registered voters.

Source: Survey by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, December 8-11, 1990.

Weighing the Costs

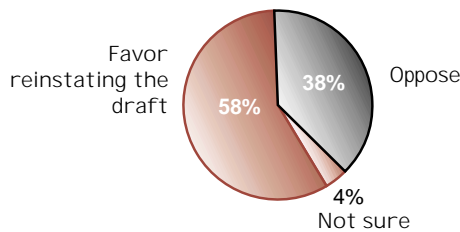
Question: Which of the following three statements comes closest to your opinion... The United States should withdraw its troops from Saudi Arabia, the US should continue to enforce sanctions/seek some form of peaceful solution to the crisis, no matter how long it takes, the US should initiate a war to drive Iraq out of Kuwait if Iraq does not change its position within the next several months...?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, December 13-16, 1990.

Young Blood

Question: Would you favor or oppose reinstating the draft if the United States goes to war in the Persian Gulf?

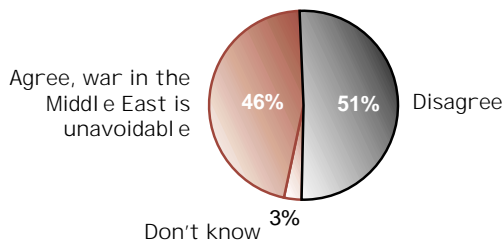


Note: Asked of registered voters.

Source: Survey by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, December 8-11, 1990.

Dona Nobis Pacem

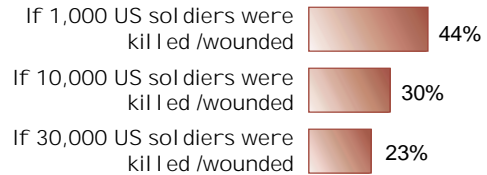
Question: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree... War in the Middle East now seems to be unavoidable.



Source: Survey by the Chevron Corporation, December 13-17, 1990.

Question: Would you support military action (after January 15, 1991) under the following circumstances...?

Percent responding would still support military action

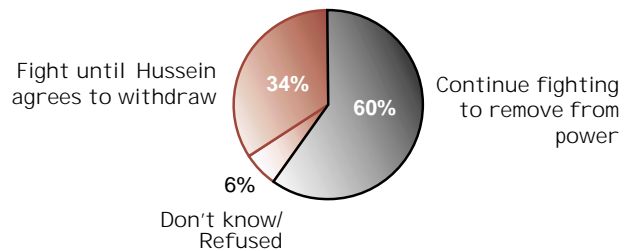


Note: Asked of those who support US attack after 1/15/91 deadline.

Source: Survey by Gordon S. Black Corporation for *USA Today*, December 29-30, 1990.

Best Intentions

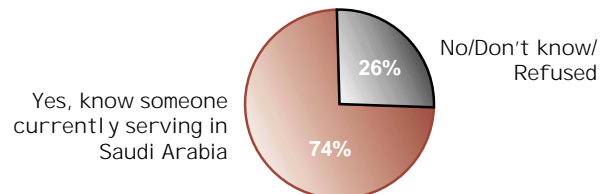
Question: If war breaks out, should we fight the war until Saddam Hussein agrees to withdraw from Kuwait or should we continue fighting to remove Hussein from power?



Source: Survey by Gordon S. Black Corporation for *USA Today*, December 29-30, 1990.

Keep the Home Fires Burning

Question: Do you know anybody in the military or National Guard who is currently serving in Saudi Arabia or who is likely to serve in Saudi Arabia if there is a war?



Source: Survey by Gordon S. Black Corporation for *USA Today*, December 29-30, 1990.