

MAY 13, 2013

Reactions Split Along Partisan Lines

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# Benghazi Investigation Does Not Reignite Broad Public Interest

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## Reactions Split Along Partisan Lines

# Benghazi Investigation Does Not Reignite Broad Public Interest

The public paid limited attention to last week's congressional hearings on Benghazi. Fewer than half (44%) of Americans say they are following the hearings very or fairly closely, virtually unchanged from late January when Hillary Clinton testified. Last October, 61% said they were following the early stages of the investigation at least fairly closely.

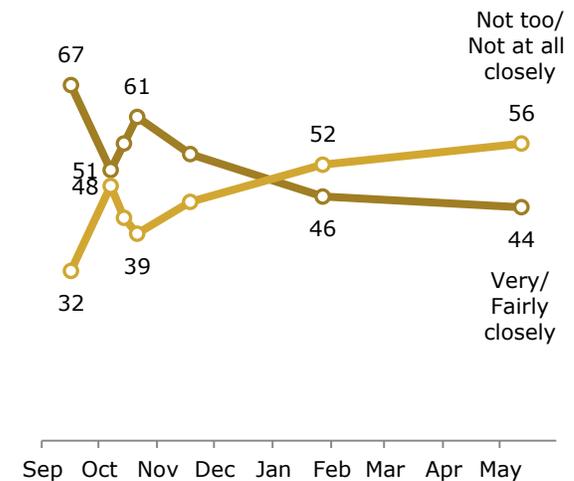
The national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted May 9-12 among 1,000 adults, finds that Americans are deeply split over how both the administration and congressional Republicans are handling the situation. Four-in-ten (40%) say the Obama administration has generally been *dishonest* when it comes to providing information about the Benghazi attack, but 37% say they have been generally honest. And when it comes to the GOP-led investigation, 36% say Republicans have *gone too far* in the hearings, while 34% say they have handled them appropriately.

Not surprisingly, these reactions divide cleanly along partisan lines. Among Republicans, 70% say the Obama administration has been dishonest and 65% say the hearings have been handled appropriately. Among Democrats, 60% say the hearings have gone too far, and 62% say the administration has been honest.

The judgment of independents leans against

## Interest in Benghazi Investigation Remains Limited

Following news about Benghazi and investigation



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## Partisan Reactions to Benghazi Investigation

	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %
<i>On Benghazi, Obama admin has been ...</i>				
Honest	37	15	62	30
Dishonest	40	70	16	48
Don't know	<u>23</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>22</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>In hearings, Republicans have</i>				
Gone too far	36	8	60	34
Handled appropriately	34	65	15	35
Don't know	<u>30</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>31</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER May 9-12, 2013.  
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

the administration at this point: By a 48% to 30% margin independents say the administration has been generally dishonest. But independents are split when it comes to Republican handling of the hearings.

Republicans are twice as likely as Democrats (36% vs. 18%) to be following news about the Benghazi hearings very closely. This mirrors earlier measures of interest in the Benghazi situation dating back to [last year](#). Republicans also are critical of what they see as insufficient press attention to the issue: 51% of Republicans say that news organizations have been giving *too little coverage* to the Benghazi hearings, compared with 26% of Democrats and 33% of independents.

About half (56%) of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say they regularly watch the Fox News Channel, and this group is particularly frustrated over the Benghazi situation. Fully 79% of Republicans who regularly watch Fox News say the Obama administration has been dishonest, compared with 60% of Republicans who don't watch Fox regularly. Nearly half (46%) of Republicans who regularly watch Fox News say they are following the story very closely – compared with 23% among other Republicans. Those who regularly watch Fox News are also far more critical of the news media: 59% say the hearings have not received sufficient coverage by the news media.

## Half of Republicans Say 'Too Little' Benghazi Coverage

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
Following Benghazi news very closely	23	36	18	21
<i>Coverage of Benghazi hearings</i>				
Too much	17	8	22	18
Too little	34	51	26	33
Right amount	33	26	39	32
Don't know	<u>17</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>17</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER May 9-12, 2013.  
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

## Fox News Republicans Highly Critical of Obama, Coverage

	Regularly watch Fox News		Among Rep/Rep lean, regularly watch Fox News	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
<i>On Benghazi, Obama admin ...</i>	%	%	%	%
Honest	29	45	9	17
Dishonest	55	28	79	60
Don't know	<u>16</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>23</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>In hearings, Republicans have</i>				
Gone too far	27	44	7	12
Handled appropriately	45	25	73	56
Don't know	<u>28</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>32</u>
	100	100	100	100
Following Benghazi news very closely	32	15	46	23
<i>Coverage of Benghazi hearings</i>				
Too much	9	23	5	15
Too little	43	26	59	39
Right amount	32	33	26	27
Don't know	<u>15</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>19</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER May 9-12, 2013.  
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

## Broad Public Interest in Rescue of Cleveland Women

News about the rescue of three women who had been held captive in a Cleveland home was far and away the public's top story last week. Four-in-ten (40%) say they followed the story very closely, more than followed reports about the condition of the U.S. economy (28% very closely) or news about the Benghazi hearings (23% very closely).

Interest in the rescue of the Cleveland women is higher than for the discovery of Jaycee

Dugard, in August of 2009; at that time, 27% said they were very closely following news about Dugard, following her reappearance more than 18 years after having gone missing. Women (45%) are more likely than men (35%) to say they are very closely following news about the rescue of the women in Cleveland.

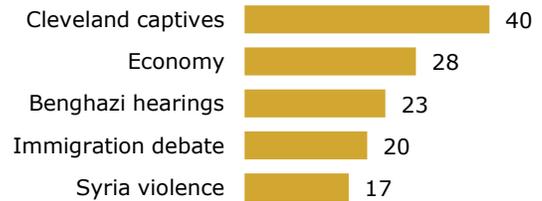
Amidst high public interest in the story, 61% say news organizations have given the right amount of coverage to the Cleveland rescue; fewer than a quarter (21%) say there has been too much new coverage and 10% say there has been too little.

News about the immigration debate in Washington (20% very closely) and political violence in Syria (17%) garnered modest levels of public attention. In 2013, Pew Research surveys have measured interest in the debate over immigration five times, with very close interest climbing no higher than 23% in early April.

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### Cleveland Rescue Public's Top Story

*% following very closely*



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### Right Amount of Cleveland Coverage

<i>Coverage of story ...</i>	<b>May 9-12 2013</b>
	<b>%</b>
Too much	21
Too little	10
Right amount	61
Don't know	8
	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER May 9-12, 2013.

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## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted May 9-12, 2013 among a national sample of 1,000 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (500 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 500 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 273 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Universal Survey under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2011 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2012 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,000	3.7 percentage points
Republicans	210	8.1 percentage points
Democrats	321	6.6 percentage points
Independents	375	6.1 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**May 9-12, 2013, OMNIBUS**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**N=1,000**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy					
May 9-12, 2013	28	30	21	20	1
March 28-31, 2013	30	30	17	22	1
March 7-10, 2013	35	30	16	19	*
January 31-February 3, 2013	33	33	16	16	1
January 17-20, 2013	36	32	15	16	*
January 3-6, 2013	34	32	18	16	1
December 6-9, 2012	38	30	16	14	1
November 8-11, 2012	41	31	15	12	1
November 1-4, 2012	38	30	16	14	1
October 25-28, 2012	44	30	14	11	1
October 18-21, 2012	39	36	12	12	1
October 12-14, 2012	42	28	14	15	1
October 4-7, 2012	40	29	13	17	*
September 27-30, 2012	34	37	13	15	1
September 20-23, 2012	36	32	17	15	*
September 13-16, 2012	38	32	17	12	1
September 7-9, 2012	36	31	17	15	2
August 31-September 3, 2012	33	31	20	16	1
August 23-26, 2012	38	30	15	16	1
August 16-19, 2012	33	32	16	19	*
August 9-12, 2012	30	31	20	18	1
August 2-5, 2012	33	29	20	17	1
July 26-29, 2012	32	30	20	19	*
July 19-22, 2012	39	29	16	16	*
July 12-15, 2012	32	33	18	17	1
July 5-8, 2012	34	28	18	19	1
June 28-July 1, 2012	38	28	15	18	1
June 21-24, 2012	33	32	17	17	*
June 14-17, 2012	39	28	15	17	*
June 7-10, 2012	35	32	15	18	*
May 31-June 3, 2012	37	34	13	14	1
May 24-27, 2012	33	31	19	16	1
May 17-20, 2012	35	30	16	19	*
May 10-13, 2012	40	26	16	17	*
May 3-6, 2012	38	29	13	20	*
April 26-29, 2012	34	32	17	16	1
April 19-22, 2012	35	35	13	14	2
April 12-15, 2012	39	28	16	17	1
April 5-8, 2012	37	31	16	16	1
March 29-April 1, 2012	34	33	15	18	1
March 22-25, 2012	36	29	16	18	1
March 15-18, 2012	40	35	11	14	1
March 8-11, 2012	37	32	14	17	*
March 1-4, 2012	41	27	15	17	1
February 23-26, 2012	37	33	14	15	1
February 16-20, 2012	33	32	16	17	1
February 9-12, 2012	42	30	14	13	1

**PEW.1 CONTINUED...**

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
February 2-5, 2012	38	32	16	13	1
January 26-29, 2012	35	31	16	19	*
January 19-22, 2012	35	30	16	19	1
January 12-15, 2012	33	32	14	20	1
January 5-8, 2012	39	31	15	15	*
<a href="http://www.people-press.org/files/2013/01/NII-Economy-trend.pdf">SEE TREND FOR PREVIOUS YEARS: http://www.people-press.org/files/2013/01/NII-Economy-trend.pdf</a>					
b. The rescue of three women in Cleveland who had been held captive for nearly a decade					
May 9-12, 2013	40	30	17	12	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON</b>					
September 3-6, 2009: <i>The discovery of 29-year-old Jaycee Dugard who had been kidnapped and held captive since she was 11</i>	26	31	23	19	*
August 28-31, 2009: <i>The discovery of a 29-year-old woman in California who had been kidnapped and held captive since she was 11</i>	27	34	21	17	1
January 26-29, 2007: <i>News about two kidnapped boys who were found in Missouri</i>	23	31	21	24	1
January 19-22, 2007: <i>Two kidnapped boys found in Missouri</i>	27	35	20	17	1
March, 2003: <i>The Utah girl found alive nine months after being kidnapped from her home</i>	34	36	20	10	*
September, 2002: <i>News stories about kidnapped children</i>	49	30	14	6	1
c. Debate over immigration policy in the U.S.					
May 9-12, 2013	20	24	25	30	1
April 25-28, 2013	19	25	24	32	*
April 18-21, 2013	21	22	25	31	1
April 4-7, 2013	23	22	22	32	*
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
January 31-February 3, 2013: <i>Debate in Washington over immigration policy</i>	23	25	22	29	1
June 28-July 1, 2012: <i>The Supreme Court decision on Arizona's immigration law</i>	29	21	19	30	1
April 26-29, 2012: <i>The issue of immigration</i>	21	24	26	27	1
May 12-15, 2011	18	22	27	32	1
September 2-6, 2010	30	31	19	20	1
August 12-15, 2010	27	31	19	21	1
July 29-August 1, 2010: <i>A court ruling that stops most of Arizona's immigration law from going into effect</i>	40	32	17	10	1
July 8-11, 2010: <i>The U.S. Justice Department challenging the legality of Arizona's recent immigration law</i>	30	27	19	23	1
July 1-5, 2010: <i>The issue of immigration</i>	34	30	20	14	1
May 7-10, 2010: <i>A new Arizona law that gives police more authority to question people they suspect might be illegal immigrants</i>	38	27	13	21	1
April 30-May 3, 2010	36	31	13	20	*
October 12-15, 2007: <i>The issue of immigration</i>	23	29	19	29	*

## PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very closely	Fairly closely	Not too closely	Not at all closely	(VOL.) DK/Ref
June 29-July 2, 2007: <i>The debate in Congress over new immigration policy</i>	26	30	21	23	*
June 22-25, 2007	24	28	22	26	*
June 15-18, 2007	22	32	21	25	*
June 8-11, 2007	24	29	20	26	1
May 24-27, 2007	27	31	22	19	1
April 12-16, 2007: <i>The issue of immigration</i>	21	29	24	26	*
August, 2006	34	40	16	9	1
June, 2006	36	41	15	7	1
May, 2006	44	33	13	9	1
April, 2006	39	34	16	10	1
December, 1994: <i>Passage of Proposition 187, the California law that bars education, health and welfare benefits from illegal immigrants and their children</i>	26	32	22	20	*
d. Congressional hearings about the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya					
May 9-12, 2013	23	21	24	32	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
January 24-27, 2013: <i>Hillary Clinton testifying about the attack on the U.S. embassy in Benghazi, Libya</i>	21	25	21	31	1
November 15-18, 2012: <i>Investigations into the September attack on the U.S. embassy in Benghazi, Libya</i>	28	26	21	24	2
October 18-21, 2012: <i>Investigations into last month's attack on the U.S. embassy in Libya</i>	31	30	19	20	1
October 12-14, 2012	28	28	19	23	1
October 4-7, 2012: <i>Investigations into the attack on the U.S. embassy in Libya earlier this month</i>	27	24	20	28	1
September 13-16, 2012: <i>Attacks on American embassies and consulates in the Middle East and the killing of the U.S. ambassador in Libya</i>	43	24	15	17	1
e. Political violence in Syria					
May 9-12, 2013	17	24	25	33	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
April 25-28, 2013: <i>Charges that Syria has used chemical weapons against anti-government groups</i>	18	25	24	33	1
March 28-31, 2013: <i>Political violence in Syria</i>	13	22	25	40	1
December 13-16, 2012	14	26	26	33	1
December 6-9, 2012	19	28	23	29	1
November 29-December 2, 2012	15	23	23	39	1
August 16-19, 2012	12	24	26	37	2
July 19-22, 2012	17	24	23	36	1
June 28-July 1, 2012	13	19	26	42	*
June 14-17, 2012	15	24	21	40	1
May 31-June 3, 2012	12	25	25	37	1
April 12-15, 2012: <i>International efforts to stop political violence in Syria</i>	14	23	25	37	1
April 5-8, 2012	15	21	27	37	1

**PEW.1 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
March 15-18, 2012: <i>Political violence in Syria</i>	16	26	27	30	1
March 8-11, 2012	17	23	23	37	1
February 23-26, 2012	18	24	21	35	1
February 9-12, 2012	17	23	23	36	*
January 12-15, 2012	12	17	26	45	1
August 4-7, 2011: <i>Political violence following uprisings in Syria</i>	10	19	26	44	1
June 2-5, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests and violence in some Middle Eastern countries</i>	18	25	25	32	*
May 5-8, 2011: <i>Political violence following uprisings in Syria</i>	14	27	30	28	1
April 28-May 1, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests and violence in some Middle Eastern countries</i>	18	29	25	27	1
February 3-6, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries</i>	32	35	16	18	*
January 27-30, 2011	17	26	21	35	*

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.2 Do you think news organizations are giving too much coverage, too little coverage or the right amount of coverage to each of the following? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

	<u>Too much coverage</u>	<u>Too little coverage</u>	<u>Right amount of coverage</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
a. The rescue of three women in Cleveland who had been held captive for nearly a decade May 9-12, 2013	21	10	61	8
b. Congressional hearings about the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya May 9-12, 2013	17	34	33	17
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>				
April 21-25, 2011: <i>The current situation and events in Libya</i>	12	24	55	9
February 10-13, 2011: <i>Political unrest in Egypt</i>	30	9	55	5

**NO QUESTION PEW.3****ASK ALL:**

Thinking about the Benghazi attack and the Congressional hearings on this subject ...

**RANDOMIZE PEW.4 AND PEW.5****ASK ALL:**

PEW.4 When it comes to providing information about the Benghazi attack, do you think the Obama administration has generally been **[READ; RANDOMIZE]**

May 9-12

2013

37	Honest
40	Dishonest
23	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**RANDOMIZE PEW.4 AND PEW.5****ASK ALL:**

PEW.5 When it comes to the Congressional hearings on the Benghazi attack, do you think Republicans **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]** or do you think Republicans **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**?

May 9-12

2013

36	Have gone too far
34	Have handled the hearings appropriately
30	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.6 Now I'd like to know how often you get news from a few different sources. For each item that I read, please tell me if it is something you do regularly, or not. (First,) **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**  
**[IF NECESSARY: Do you [ITEM] regularly, or not?]**

		Yes, <u>regularly</u>	No, <u>not regularly</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	Watch the Fox News channel May 9-12, 2013	44	55	1
b.	Watch MSNBC May 9-12, 2013	26	73	1
c.	Watch CNN May 9-12, 2013	35	64	1