

Poll: 48 percent say Clinton breaks too many promises

NEW YORK — As President Clinton nears his 100th day in office, almost half of Americans in an Associated Press poll say he already has broken promises too often.



The leadership measure could be crucial for a president trying to push an agenda of change after winning only 43 percent of the vote in November.

Clinton as a strong leader 49 percent to 37 percent, with the rest unsure.

More Americans than not say Clinton has set the right tone for his administration, by 44 percent to 40 percent.

But 48 percent say he already has broken his promises too often, compared with 34 percent who say he has kept his promises up to this point.

Clinton complained Sunday that it was "just not realistic" to expect that he could have moved on all his cam-

paign commitments in his first 100 days. "That's why you get a four-year term, not a three-month term," he said.

The poll indicates a quarter of those critical of broken promises still respect Clinton's leadership. People who voted for him are much less likely than others to fault him for breaking promises, but nearly a fourth are withholding judgment or have a mixed assessment, the poll found.

The national telephone poll of 1,014 adults was taken April 16-20 by ICR Survey Research Group of Media, Pa., part of AUS Consultants. Results have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Clinton was under harsh media scrutiny while the poll was taken, with Republicans in Congress having scuttled his \$16.3 billion economic stimulus and the standoff with armed cultists in Texas ending in a fiery tragedy. But the poll asked respondents to take a broad view of Clinton's "opening months in office," 100 days as of Thursday.

Most, 68 percent, say Clinton has accomplished about what they expected, 6 percent say more than they

expected, 22 percent say less. Among the disappointed are 18 percent of Democrats and 18 percent of Clinton voters.

Clinton gets higher marks for leadership among women in the poll than among men, possibly because of his push for spending on social programs that traditionally are more popular with women than men. Also, the president has taken favorable stands on controversial issues, such as abortion rights and homosexuals in the military, in which polls show more male than female opposition.

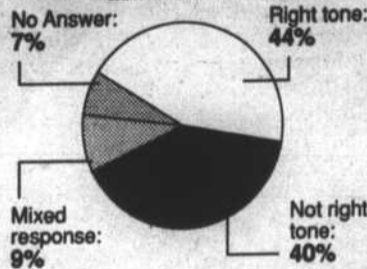
Two-thirds of those who said they voted for President Bush for re-election give thumbs down to Clinton's leadership. Ross Perot voters split about evenly in assessing Clinton.

While 6 percent of voters refused to say how they cast ballots in November, those who did say seemed reluctant to acknowledge voting for the loser. Only 29 percent said they voted for Bush, who won 38 percent of the vote, and 17 percent said they backed Perot, who actually got 19 percent. Clinton got a four-point bonus in the poll.

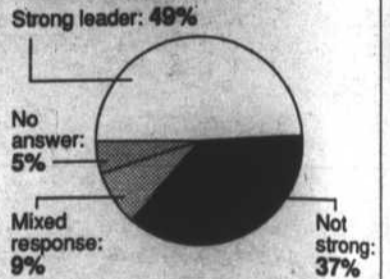
Associated Press Poll

Clinton's first 100 days

Q: In these opening months in office, do you think President Clinton has set the right tone for his administration or not?

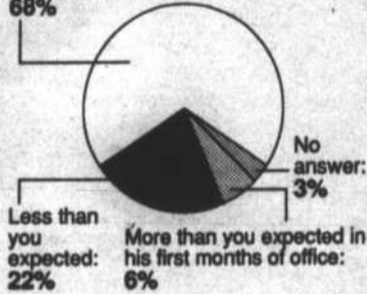


Q: From what you have seen thus far, do you think Bill Clinton has shown he is a strong leader, or not?



Q: Do you think President Clinton has accomplished:

Just about what you expected him to accomplish: 68%



Q: Which do you agree with more:

President Clinton has kept his promises up to this point: 34%

President Clinton has already broken his promises too often: 48%

Source: AP National phone polls of 1,014 adults taken April 16-20 by ICR Survey Research Group of Media Pa., part of AUS Consultants. Margin of error 3 percentage points, plus or minus. Because of rounding, sums may not total 100%.

Arson investigators say cultists purposely started fire

WACO, Texas (AP) — Branch Davidians started the quickly spreading fire that consumed their prairie fortress a week ago, killing an estimated 86 people, independent arson investigators said Monday.

"We believe it was intentionally set by persons inside the compound," said Paul Gray, who headed the investigation team. "At least two locations were significantly distant enough from each other that they couldn't have been set by the same source at the same time."

The findings supported FBI claims that the fire was set by cult members. Some of the nine survivors have claimed the fire began when a tank knocked over a lantern.

Earlier today, a fugitive Davidian accused

of plotting to illegally make machine guns emerged from hiding and surrendered in Houston.

Paul Fatta, 35, had been sought since the Feb. 28 raid outside Waco that left four federal agents dead and triggered the 51-day siege that ended with last week's deadly inferno.

Fatta was not at the compound during the standoff. On Sunday, the cult leader's lawyer said a TV photographer's warning to a mailman gave David Koresh advance notice that federal agents were coming for him the day the standoff began.

The attorney, Dick DeGuerin, also said Sunday that Koresh asked him to draw up a will and legal documents protecting the cult's property

rights and providing for his children. But Koresh never got a chance to sign the documents before a deadly fire swept through the compound last Monday.

Authorities say the fire, which broke out as federal agents were ramming the compound's buildings with armored vehicles and pumping in tear gas, was started by cult members. Several of the nine cultists who survived say it started when the armored vehicles knocked over lanterns and smashed a propane tank.

The fire ended a 51-day standoff that began after agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms who came to arrest Koresh shot it out with cult members. Four agents were killed.

DeGuerin said when he visited the com-

pound during the standoff, he spoke several times with David Michael Jones, whose body was the first of the cult members' identified by authorities.

DeGuerin said Jones, who was a mail carrier, told him he'd been driving his car, with U.S. Postal Service tags on it, when he saw a television photographer who appeared lost.

He said the photographer warned him, "There's going to be a big gunfight with these religious nuts over here. You better get out of here."

Jones, who was also Koresh's brother-in-law, told the cult leader, DeGuerin said, and the group was ready when the ATF agents arrived Feb. 28.

19 Costa Rican court justices taken hostage by four gunmen

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica — Four gunmen barged into the Costa Rican Supreme Court on Monday and took 19 of the 22 justices hostage, officials said.

The gunmen, who called themselves members of "The Commando of Death," entered the four-story building through a basement entrance, said Jose Gerardo Gonzalez, an Interior Ministry spokesman.

Rafael Brenes, deputy director of the judicial police, told reporters there were four gunmen, and he didn't know their nationality. He said one of the judges held hostage was a woman.

He didn't say how the government knew the attackers called

themselves "The Commando of Death," nor if officials had had any contact with them.

"The situation is very critical. We believe it involved kidnapping," Gonzalez said.

He said he had no immediate details concerning the group or its demands. The number of gunmen involved was not known.

President Rafael Angel Calderon called an emergency meeting of his Cabinet to determine what to do.

Dozens of police armed with assault rifles surrounded the building, while people caught inside were seen leaving the building. Gonzalez said the judges were being held on the second floor.

Serbs split on U.N. peace plan

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia — The first cracks appeared Monday between Bosnian Serbs and their patrons in Belgrade when the Serbian leadership in Bosnia ignored a sharply worded appeal from Serbia's president.

With tougher sanctions set to begin Tuesday that would basically impound any Yugoslav planes, trains and ships that operate abroad, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic urged the ad hoc assembly to accept an international peace plan to end more than a year of fighting in Bosnia.

The assembly, meeting in the northeastern Bosnia town of Bijeljina, had met in hurried session Sunday night but in the end, its 77 representatives voted unanimously against accepting a U.N.-sponsored plan to end fighting in Bosnia.

Bosnia's Serbs are dependent on

66 Your other option is an unnecessary war which... cannot bring anything but evil, suffering and violence for your side and others.

Milosevic Serb president

Yugoslavia for supplies and moral support, so without Yugoslav backing, they face the prospect of being totally cut off.

The assembly's rejection of the peace plan sets the stage for tough, new international sanctions to go into effect against Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

It also may bolster the arguments of those in the West and the Islamic world who say only force will make Bosnian Serbs end the fighting.

Milosevic's bid to unite Serbs throughout the former Yugoslav federation in a "Greater Serbia" is widely seen among his foes as the chief reason for the bloodshed.

The international plan is "a just peace," Milosevic said in a letter signed by others the the Belgrade leadership.

"Your other option is an unnecessary war which... cannot bring anything but evil, suffering and violence for your side and others."

'Late Night' successor set to be named

NEW YORK — NBC said it would announce David Letterman's successor on the "Tonight" show Monday night, and all signs pointed to Conan O'Brien, a little-known writer-comedian, as heir to the "Late Night" throne.

The announcement would be made by "Tonight" host Jay Leno, and the host-designate would appear with him, the network said.

O'Brien, 28, is a 1985 graduate of Harvard University, where he was twice president of the Harvard Lampoon magazine, the nation's leading undergraduate comedy school.

His graduate course was the San Francisco-based Groundlings comedy troupe, training in sketch comedy and

improvisation.

O'Brien was a writer for HBO's "Not Necessarily the News" before his five-year stint at "Saturday Night Live," where he shared a writing Emmy and occasionally appeared as a sketch player.

For the past two years, he has been a writer-producer at Fox's hit animated sitcom "The Simpsons."

O'Brien was a leading contender among the young comedians vying for the "Late Night" job and had a run-through audition on the set of "Tonight" in the Burbank studios two weeks ago.

The announcement ended a week of speculation that longtime standup

Garry Shandling, star of HBO's talk-show spoof "The Larry Sanders Show," would get the nod.

Sources close to the negotiations said Shandling turned down NBC's offer on Monday morning, triggering the O'Brien deal.

Shandling reportedly got the offer two weeks ago, when his own name entered the mix in mid-April.

According to one source, Shandling was the first approached for the job, but turned down a multimillion-dollar deal because it required him to have his program ready for air by August.

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