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# Defense Report

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## **The Annual Harris Poll of Public Confidence—Respect for the Military Remains High**

Each year since 1966 the Harris Poll has surveyed adult Americans to determine how much confidence they place in an assortment of U.S. institutions, both public and private. Among the government institutions covered by the survey were the White House, Congress, the Supreme Court and the military. Private institutions included medicine, banking, television news, newspapers, organized religion and higher education. The people surveyed were asked in which of these institutions they had a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, some confidence or little confidence.

As has been consistently true for the past ten years, the military this year ranked close to the top of the government institutions among those in which the public has a great deal of confidence. The military was just one percentage point behind the Supreme Court (29 percent) and tied with the White House at 28 percent. As has also been consistently true in these surveys, Congress was the government institution in which the public placed the least confidence.

Medicine, with 37 percent expressing a great deal of confidence, and higher education with 34 percent, led the private institutions in degrees of confidence. Television news and the printed news media both dropped substantially in their support since last year, to 24 and 16 percent respectively. The major oil companies, included in the survey for the first time this year, were chosen least often (11 percent) as an institution in which the public has high confidence.

The U.S. military establishment received the highest percentage of all government institutions in the overall confidence rating (84 percent) surpassing the Supreme Court with 82 percent. Confidence in the printed media was expressed by 75 percent of those surveyed, while just 66 percent had some confidence in television news.

Like two other institutions that are viewed with less confidence—Congress and the media—our military forces spring from and serve the people. The high level of support reflected in this survey is heartening to those who make a career of military service to the nation. It is from that support that they draw their strength.