

## RS#08: Source 7 – Polls, 1986 - 1994

The following polls were taken over a 7-year period. The first poll took place in February 1986, prior to public awareness of the Iran-Contra Affair. The second poll was done in July 1987, during Oliver North's trial and shortly after his testimony. The third poll was taken in June 1994, when Oliver North ran (unsuccessfully) for a seat in the U.S. Senate.

Examine the source and summarize the information it provides. Does it support a view of Oliver North as a patriot, a pawn, or an outlaw?

### Polls of the American Public Opinion on the Contras in Nicaragua

#### **February 1986 (*Los Angeles Times* Polls)**

Should the United States help the Contras who are fighting a civil war against Nicaragua's Marxist [communist] regime?

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| Yes       | 54% |
| No        | 31% |
| Undecided | 15% |

#### **July 1987 (*Los Angeles Times* Poll)**

Should the United States help the Contras who are fighting a civil war against Nicaragua's Marxist [communist] regime?

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| Yes       | 42% |
| No        | 42% |
| Undecided | 16% |

### Polls of the American Publics Opinion on Oliver North

#### **July 1987 (*Los Angeles Times* Poll)**

Do you believe that he was "right to follow orders without question, even though they may have been illegal or unethical"?

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| Yes       | 61% |
| No        | 30% |
| Undecided | 9%  |

Do you believe that there are times when a government official is justified in lying to the American public?

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| Yes       | 49% |
| No        | 41% |
| Undecided | 7%  |

|   |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|
| Were you impressed with North's testimony?      | Yes | 67% |
| Was North a convincing witness?                 | Yes | 74% |
| Do you believe that he acted only under orders? | Yes | 68% |

**June 1994 (*U.S. News and World Report* Poll)**

Do you have a positive opinion of Oliver North?

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| Yes       | 45% |
| No        | 37% |
| Undecided | 18% |

**Sources:**

Rosellini, Lynn. "Oliver North's New Crusade." *U.S. News and World Report*, 116 (June 5, 1994): 26-33.

Skelton, George. "The Times Poll: Support for Contra Aid Up Sharply." *Los Angeles Times* (July 15, 1987).