BACKGROUND

This project collects survey data to understand public perspectives on the threat of terrorism and the government’s role and effectiveness in responding to it. A sample of 1,576 U.S. adults 18 years of age or older completed the first online survey in Fall 2012. A second survey will be conducted in 2013.

THOUGHTS ABOUT TERRORISM

- Approximately 15% said they had thought about the possibility of terrorism in the preceding week, significantly more than the percentage who said they had thought about the possibility of hospitalization (10%) or violent crime victimization (10%). Almost a quarter of those who said they had thought about terrorism reported that it made them extremely or very worried.
- Nearly 5% said a terrorist attack was extremely or very likely to occur in the United States in the next year.
- Education and gender was largely unrelated to reports of having thought about terrorism, but age was. Older respondents were more likely to say they had thought about terrorism and to believe it was likely to occur in the next year.
- There was no evidence that those who lived in metropolitan areas were more likely to have thought about terrorism in the preceding week.
Thoughts About Efforts to Counter Terrorism

Views of government effectiveness at preventing terrorism:
- A large majority of respondents said the U.S. government has been very effective (33%) or somewhat effective (54%) at preventing terrorism.
- Despite this, 69% endorsed the view that “terrorists will always find a way to carry out major attacks no matter what the U.S. government does.”

Willingness to meet with officials to discuss terrorism:
- Clear majorities of respondents said that would be willing to meet with DHS (57%) or local police (58%) to talk about terrorism.
- Not surprisingly, individuals who said the government had been somewhat effective or very effective at preventing terrorism were more willing to meet with DHS or local police than those who said the government had not.

Recommended Likelihood of Calling the Police in Response to Various Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Person</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
<th>Somewhat Likely</th>
<th>Not Too Likely</th>
<th>Not at All Likely</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...talking about joining a terrorist group</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...talking about planting explosives in public place</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...reading material from terrorist group</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...traveling overseas to join terrorist group</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...distributing handouts in support of terrorism</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING” Campaign

- More than 56% of respondents said they had not heard anything about the “If You See Something Say Something” campaign, and an additional 20% were not sure whether they had heard anything about it.
- Of those who had heard something about the campaign, most thought it would be very (18%) or somewhat (67%) effective.

Recommendations

- Increased marketing for the “If You See Something, Say Something” campaign, which is positively perceived by those aware of it, would likely benefit DHS.
- This survey offers support for increased levels of community engagement between DHS, local law enforcement, and local communities, as the results suggest considerable willingness for such engagement exists among the U.S. public.

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