



EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE:
Thursday, September 4, 2003 4:00 pm

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
Andrew Kohut, Director
Carroll Doherty, Editor

75% Say It's a More Dangerous World
TWO YEARS LATER, THE FEAR LINGERS

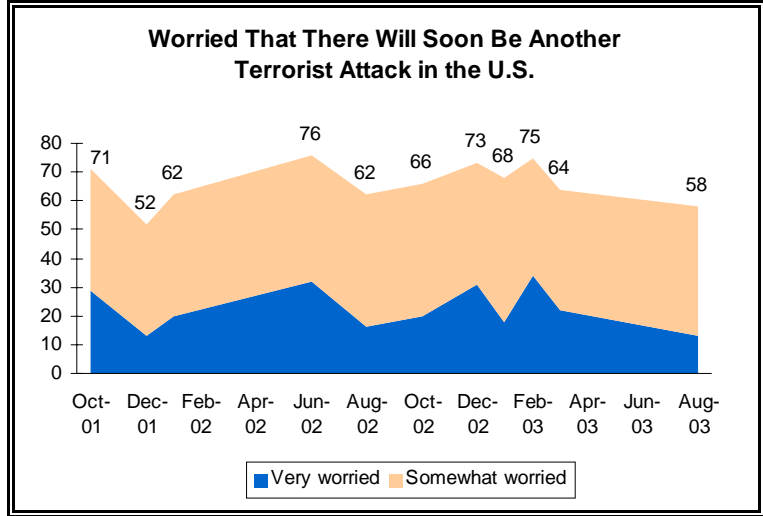
As the second anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks approaches, heightened public concern about international threats persists. Fully three-quarters of Americans see the world as a more dangerous place than a decade ago, up from 53% in a Pew survey conducted in early September 2001, just prior to the terrorist strikes on New York and Washington. Similarly, the percentage who think the United States faces greater danger of a biological, nuclear or chemical attack rose from 51% two years ago to 64% today.

The current Pew survey also finds a majority of Americans (53%) saying they often worry about the prospects of nuclear war. Moreover, four-in-ten say they often worry about the chances that terrorists may attack the U.S. with nuclear weapons.

The threat of terrorism is now part of the fabric of American life. Fully 74% of Americans believe that occasional acts of terrorism will be part of life in the future, compared with 22% who disagree. Since Sept. 11, worries over renewed terrorism have fluctuated, but majorities have consistently expressed at least some concern over the possibility of another attack. These fears tend to increase when the government warns of a heightened risk of terrorism.

A More Dangerous World		
	Early Sept <u>2001*</u>	Aug <u>2003</u>
	%	%
<i>How dangerous is the world compared to ten years ago?</i>		
More dangerous	53	75
Less dangerous	14	5
About the same	30	20
Don't Know	<u>3</u>	<u>*</u>
	100	100
<i>Is the danger of an attack on the U.S. greater now than ten years ago?</i>		
Greater	51	64
Less	12	5
Same	34	29
Don't Know	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100
* In early September 2001 the question was preceded by: "It has been ten years since the end of the Cold War."		

This year, terrorism concerns reached a peak in February, shortly after the Department of Homeland Security raised the nation’s terrorist alert status to Code Orange. At the time, three-quarters of Americans said they were worried there would be soon be another attack in the U.S. (34% very worried/41% somewhat worried). Concerns have subsided somewhat since then; roughly six-in-ten (58%) now say they are very (13%) or somewhat worried (45%) about the possibility of a new attack.



The public’s ratings of the government’s antiterrorism efforts have remained fairly stable over the past year, but are well below levels recorded shortly after the attacks. About one-in-five Americans (19%) say the government is doing very well reducing the threat of terrorism and 56% say it is doing fairly well. Those numbers are largely unchanged from November 2002 (15% very well/54% fairly well). In October 2001, nearly half of Americans (48%) said the government was doing very well in the terrorism fight while 40% said it was doing fairly well.

Nuclear War Fears Persist

A significant minority of Americans express anxiety about the possibility of terrorists using a nuclear weapon against the U.S. Overall, 40% agree with a statement that “I often worry about the chances of a nuclear attack by terrorists”; 16% completely agree, and 24% mostly agree. Women, African-Americans, and parents are significantly more worried about the chances of a nuclear terrorist attack than are men, whites, and non-parents.

Still, the public is less worried about terrorists using nuclear weapons than about the prospects of nuclear war in general. Over half (53%) agree that “I often worry about the chances of nuclear war,” which

Often worry about the chances of nuclear war...	Agree	Disagree	DK/Ref
	%	%	%
Aug 2003	53	45	2=100
Aug 2002	56	42	2=100
Sept 1999	52	46	2=100
Nov 1997	48	50	2=100
July 1994	48	51	1=100
May 1990	52	45	3=100
May 1988	61	37	2=100
May 1987	62	27	2=100
<i>Often worry about the chances of a nuclear attack by terrorists...</i>			
Aug 2003	40	59	1=100

is down slightly from last year (56%). Concerns over the prospect of nuclear war are in line with the 1990s. In 1987 and 1988, when Cold War tensions were still present, roughly six-in-ten said they often worried about a nuclear conflict (62% in 1987, 61% in 1988).

These results are based on a national telephone survey of 2,528 adults conducted July 14-August 5, 2003.

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Results for the *2003 Values Update* survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 2,528 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period July 14 - August 5, 2003. Based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 2 percentage points. For results based on the half samples of either Form 1 (N=1,284) or Form 2 (N=1,244) the sampling error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. For results based on the quarter samples of either Form 1A (N=650) or Form 1B (N=634) the sampling error is plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

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 FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
2003 VALUES UPDATE SURVEY
— FINAL TOPLINE —
July 14 - August 5, 2003
N=2,528

Now I am going to read you a series of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. For each statement, please tell me if you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly DISagree with it or completely disagree with it. The first one is... **(READ ITEMS, IN ORDER. DO NOT ROTATE. OBSERVE FORM SPLITS WHERE NOTED)**

		-----AGREE-----			----DISAGREE----			Don't
		Net	Comp- letely	Mostly	Net	Comp- letely	Mostly	Know
ASK ALL:								
Q11hh.	Occasional acts of terrorism in the U.S. will be part of life in the future	74	25	49	22	7	15	4=100
ASK FORM 1A ONLY [N=650]:								
Q28sA	I often worry about the chances of nuclear war	53	25	28	45	16	29	2=100
	August, 2002	56	27	29	42	15	27	2=100
	Late September, 1999	52	22	30	46	18	28	2=100
	November, 1997	48	21	27	50	19	31	2=100
	July, 1994	48	24	24	51	19	32	1=100
	May, 1990	52	21	31	45	16	29	3=100
	May, 1988	61	28	33	37	12	25	2=100
	May, 1987	62	23	39	27	0	27	2=100
ASK FORM 1B ONLY [N=634]:								
Q28sB	I often worry about the chances of a nuclear attack by terrorists	40	16	24	59	23	36	1=100
ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=1284]:								
Q.31	In your opinion, is the world now more dangerous, less dangerous, or about the same compared to ten years ago?							
					Early Sept 2001 ¹			
75	More dangerous				53			
5	Less dangerous				14			
20	About the same				30			
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL)				3			
100					100			

¹ In Early September 2001 the question was preceded by: "It has been ten years since the end of the Cold War."

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=1244]:

Q.32 Do you think the danger of attack on the United States with a nuclear, biological, or chemical weapon is greater now than it was 10 years ago, less now than it was 10 years ago, or is it about the same?

		Early	
		Sept	Sept
		<u>2001</u>	<u>1997</u>
64	Greater	51	36
5	Less	12	30
29	Same	34	32
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL)	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
100		100	100

ASK ALL:

Just a few questions about the war on terrorism...

Q.33 In general, how well do you think the U.S. government is doing in reducing the threat of terrorism? [READ]

		RVs				
		Early		Early	Oct	Oct
		Nov	June	Nov	15-21	10-14
		<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u>
19	Very well	15	16	35	38	48
56	Fairly well	54	60	46	46	40
16	Not too well, OR	19	16	9	9	6
7	Not at all well	8	4	5	4	2
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL)	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100

Q.36 How worried are you that there will soon be another terrorist attack in the United States? [READ]

		March	Feb	Jan	Dec	Early	Late	June	Jan	Dec	Oct	Oct	Early
		<u>2003</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	15-21	10-14	Oct
											<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2001</u>
13	Very worried	22	34	18	31	20	16	32	20	13	29	27	28
45	Somewhat worried	42	41	50	42	46	46	44	42	39	42	40	45
29	Not too worried	20	17	23	18	22	25	17	28	27	18	19	15
12	Not at all worried	14	7	8	8	11	12	7	9	19	10	12	11
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	*	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100