



AP Poll: Americans pessimistic on security

WASHINGTON, DC (AP) -- Half of Americans have concerns that terrorists might be winning the war on terrorism, and one in five feels strongly that way, according to an Associated Press poll that found many people pessimistic about their security.

The Associated Press Poll is conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs. Between April 5-7, 2004, the AP/Ipsos poll interviewed a representative sample of 1,001 adults nationwide, including 758 registered voters. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 for all adults, +/- 3.5 for registered voters. Margin of error for subgroups may be higher. The Iraq questions were asked again April 16-18.

Public Release Date: Posted on Friday April 23, 2004

Contact: Thomas Riehle
 202-463-7300
 thomas.riehle@ipsos-na.com

By WILL LESTER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON, DC (AP) -- Half of Americans have concerns that terrorists might be winning the war on terrorism, and one in five feels strongly that way, according to an Associated Press poll that found many people pessimistic about their security.

Fears about an attack against this country are high. Two-thirds in the poll said it was likely terrorists would strike before the November elections. And a third said it was likely there would be an attack at one of the political conventions this summer.

More than 30 months after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, two-thirds of Americans acknowledge some concern that terrorists may be recruiting faster than the United States can keep up. A third of those polled feel strongly this is the case, and another third say they have at least some worries.

"Terrorists are winning the war for the hearts and minds of the people in the Mideast," said Christine Wyatt, a 52-year-old church deacon in Clarkston, Mich.

Fears about the war on terrorism may be fueled by growing worries about the conflict in Iraq, which has been described by the Bush administration as a front line of the war on terror.

Those who think the military action in Iraq has increased the long-term risk of terrorism in the United States have increased from 40 percent in December to 54 percent now, according to the poll, conducted for the AP by Ipsos-Public Affairs.

The people who say the Bush administration made the right decision to go to war in Iraq, 48 percent, are now about even with those who think the administration made a mistake, 49 percent. In December, two-thirds said the administration made the right decision.

Doubts about the war on terrorism are higher among women, older Americans, people who make lower incomes and people with less than a high school education, according to the poll.

Others say the terror threat is receding after two and a half years without another attack.

"I don't think they're winning the war, but they're sure putting the fear of God in some countries," said Robert Slivinski, a 33-year-old paramedic and firefighter from Woodbury, Conn. "The threat has decreased since 9/11. We're keeping them at bay."

The AP-Ipsos poll, released Wednesday at The Associated Press annual meeting, found:

- Half feel that, in some measure, the terrorists might be winning the war on terrorism. One in five in the poll feels strongly the terrorists are winning, while an additional 30 percent say there is at least "a little truth" to that statement.

- More than a third say they have less faith in government's ability to protect them, and an additional fourth say there's at least some truth to that idea.

- Nearly half feel strongly they are more pessimistic about the possibility of there ever being peace in the world, while an additional fourth say there may be some truth to that.

"I think we're twitching on the edge of Armageddon; a lot of people I work with feel the same way," said Michael Miller, a 49-year-old software tester from Las Cruces, N.M. He rejected the idea that terrorists are winning the fight, but he added, "They're not losing it, either."

As for the election campaign, President Bush has the advantage over Democrat John Kerry on people's trust to do a better job of protecting the country, 53 percent to 37 percent.

Some people say they've taken steps to safeguard themselves and their families in response to the terrorist attacks.

- Three in 10 say they've assembled a kit with emergency supplies like food, water and batteries.

- Two in 10 say they avoid crowded public spaces like shopping malls and amusement parks.

"I know so many people who are afraid to do things, who have changed their lifestyles," said Norma McElhaney, a 58-year-old school employee from Mineral Ridge, Ohio. "The last two years, our eighth grade class didn't go to Washington, D.C., something they had done for years."

Despite the widespread anxiety, many reject the notion of terrorists winning as unthinkable.

"I believe their cause is evil," said Cheryl Taylor, a 56-year-old teacher from Waterloo, Iowa. "I don't believe evil will win, I know it won't. I cling to the other hope."

The AP-Ipsos poll of 1,001 adults was taken April 5-7 and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. The Iraq questions were asked again April 16-18.

For more information, please contact:

Thomas Riehle
President, Ipsos Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.
202.463.7300
thomas.riehle@ipsos-na.com

Ipsos Public Affairs

Ipsos Public Affairs, headquartered in Washington D.C., is a non-partisan, objective, survey-based research company made up of campaign and political polling veterans as well as seasoned research professionals. The company conducts strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of American and international organizations, based not only on public opinion research but often elite stakeholder, corporate, and media opinion research. It has offices in New York City, Chicago, San Ramon (CA), and Washington, with affiliates around the world. Ipsos Public Affairs conducts national and international public opinion polling on behalf of The Associated Press, the world's oldest and largest news organization, and conducts the young voters poll for Newsweek.com. Ipsos Public Affairs is an Ipsos company, a leading global survey-based market research group.

To learn more, visit www.ipsos-pa.com.

Ipsos

Ipsos is a leading global survey-based market research company, owned and managed by research professionals. Ipsos helps interpret, simulate, and anticipate the needs and reactions of consumers, customers, and citizens around the world.

Member companies assess market potential and interpret market trends. They develop and build brands. They help clients build long-term relationships with their customers. They test advertising and study audience responses to various media. They measure public opinion around the globe.

Ipsos member companies offer expertise in advertising, customer loyalty, marketing, media, and public affairs research, as well as forecasting and modeling and consulting. Ipsos has a full line of custom, syndicated, omnibus, panel, and online research products and services, guided by industry experts and bolstered by advanced analytics and methodologies. The company was founded in 1975 and has been publicly traded since 1999. In 2003, Ipsos generated global revenues of \$644.2 million U.S.

Visit www.ipsos.com to learn more about Ipsos offerings and capabilities.