



Prepared by Erik Nisbet, Survey Research Institute

Introduction

This report summarizes New York State residents' attitudes and preferences regarding terrorism, security, and privacy rights. Geri Gay, Kenneth J. Bissett Professor and Chair of the Department of Communication, in conjunction with the Survey Research Institute (SRI) at Cornell University, sponsored the survey questions featured in this report.

Methodology

- In total, 800 telephone interviews were conducted between February 2, 2006 and March 19, 2006, equally divided by upstate/downstate, and then weighted to reflect actual population distribution within the state.
- The ESP utilizes a random digit dial (RDD) sample of NYS households. Eligible respondents must be a resident of NYS and at least 18 years old to participate.
- The cooperation rate was 25.2% according to AAPOR standards.
- The margin of error for reported statewide results is 3.5% and is 4.9% for upstate/downstate comparisons.
- For regional comparisons, "Downstate" is defined as New York, Rockland, Kings, Richmond, Westchester, Suffolk, Queens, Nassau, and Bronx counties, with the remaining counties of the state defined as "upstate."

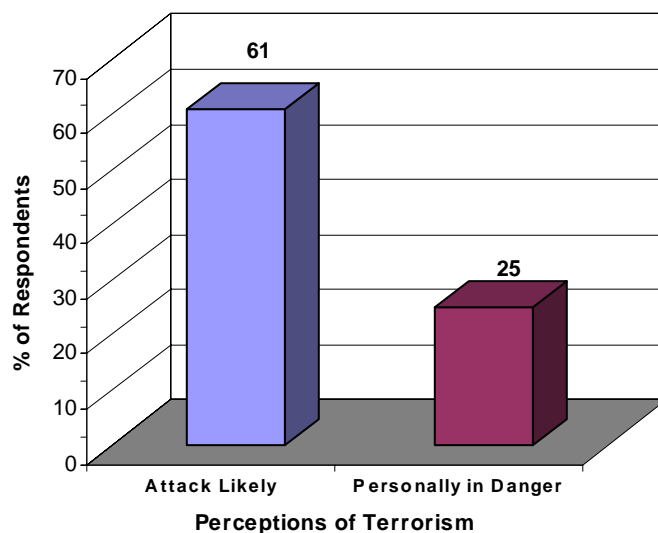
See Report 1: Introduction & Methodology for full description

Likelihood and Danger of Terrorist Attack

The ESP annually asks New York residents to assess their perceived likelihood of terrorist attack within the United States in the next 12 months and whether they are personally in danger from a terrorist attack.

- Approximately six out of ten NYS residents believe that a terrorist attack in the U.S. was likely within the next 12 months. One-quarter of respondents believe they are personally in danger from a terrorist attack.
- One-quarter of respondents believed they were personally in danger from a terrorist attack, again unchanged from 2005

Figure 1 Perceptions of Terrorism



- Perceptions varied by region with more upstate residents believing a terrorist attack was likely in the next 12 months than downstate residents (66% vs. 58%).
- Twice as many downstate residents as upstate residents believe they are personally in danger from a terrorist attack (30% vs. 15%).

Balancing Security vs. Privacy

Tradeoffs between security and individual privacy have been a public concern since the September 11th attacks. The ESP 2006 asked New York residents whether national security priorities were the most important to them, individual privacy rights were the most important, or if they were equally important.

- Statewide, fifteen percent of New York residents believe that national security priorities are the most important; twenty percent believe individual privacy is the most important, and sixty-three percent of respondents believe that both are equally important.

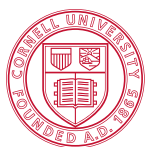
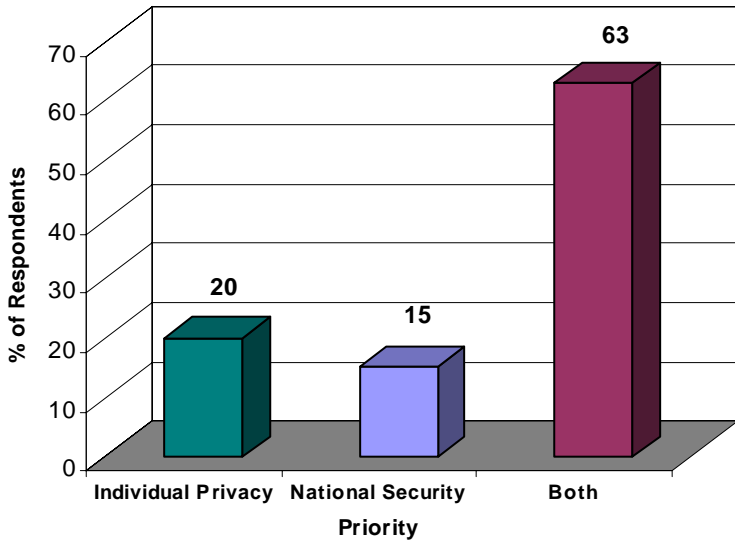


Figure 2 Importance of Individual Privacy vs. Security



There were not significant regional differences, but priorities varied significantly by party affiliation.

- One-quarter of Republicans believe national security is the most important consideration, compared to only one in ten Democrats and fifteen percent of Independents.
- Conversely, one-quarter of Democrats cite individual rights as the most important consideration compared to approximately one in ten Republicans and eighteen percent of Independents.

In addition to priorities, the ESP also asked New York state residents whether they believed that the U.S. government has gone too far, is about right, or has not gone far enough in restricting people's privacy and civil liberties in order to provide safety and security.

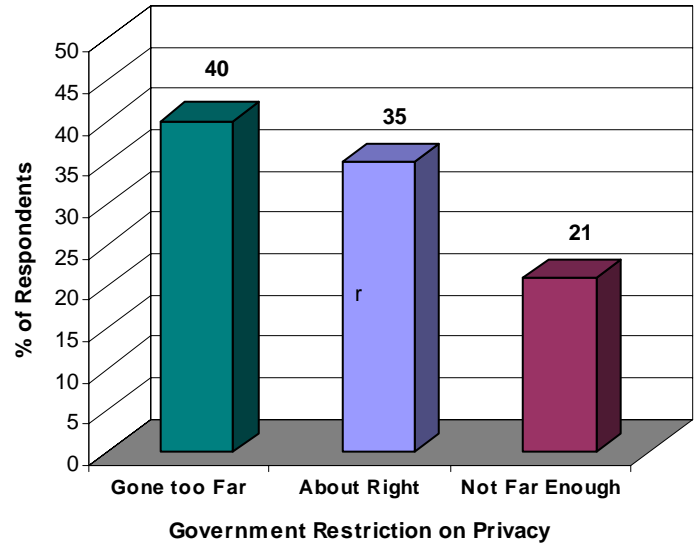
- A plurality of New York State residents (40%) believe that the government has gone too far in restricting people's privacy and civil liberties, while approximately a third (35%) believe government policy has been about right.
- One in five respondents (21%) expressed that the government has not gone far enough in restricting privacy and civil liberties.

Evaluations of governmental policy also varied by party affiliation.

- A majority of Democrats (54%) and almost half of Independents (47%) believe that the government has gone too far in restricting privacy and civil liberties, compared to only one in ten Republicans that feel the same.

- Approximately one-third (32%) of Republicans believe that the government has not gone far enough, compared to only fifteen percent of Democrats and roughly one out of five (22%) Independents.

Figure 3 Importance of Individual Privacy vs. Security



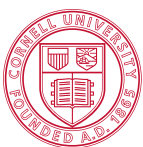
Support for Wiretapping in NYS

The ESP asked New York State residents whether they believed that the Bush Administration's wiretapping of telephone conversations between U.S. citizens living in the United States and suspected terrorists living in other countries, without getting a court order allowing it to do so, was "right" or "wrong".

- Statewide, a majority of respondents (54%) believe that government wiretapping without a court order was wrong, while forty-one percent believed it was right.
- Compared to national poll results, New York State residents are somewhat less likely to support wiretapping without a court order.

Evaluations of government wiretapping varied substantially both by region and several key demographics.

- Regionally, more upstate residents (51%) believed the wiretapping was right, compared to downstate residents (35%).
- Turning to party affiliation, three out of four Republicans (74%) support the government wiretapping, compared to approximately one out four Democrats (27%). Forty percent of independents believed that government wiretapping without a court order was right.
- Support for government wiretapping decreased substantially as educational attainment increased, with only roughly a third (36%) of respondents with some form of graduate degree citing government wiretapping as right.



- Men were more likely to cite government wiretapping without a court order as right than women (45% vs. 37%).
- White respondents were split evenly (48% vs. 48%) on whether government wiretapping without a court order was right or wrong.
- However, almost two-thirds of non-white respondents believed that government wiretapping was wrong, and only one-quarter believed it was right.
- Respondents who believed they were in personal danger from an attack were more likely (47% vs. 39%) to support government wiretapping without a court order than those who did not believe they were in danger.

Table 1 Evaluations of Government Wiretapping

Demographic Category	% of all respondents	
	Right	Wrong
Statewide	41	54
Nationwide (2/06)*	47	50
Upstate	51	44
Downstate	35	60
Democrat	27	68
Independent	39	56
Republican	74	22
High School or less	45	50
College/Some College	44	52
Graduate degree	36	60
Men	45	50
Women	37	58
White	48	48
Non-white	26	65
In Personal Danger	47	47
Not in Personal Danger	39	57

*CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll. Feb. 9-12, 2006. +/- 5pts MOE

Internet and Computer Security

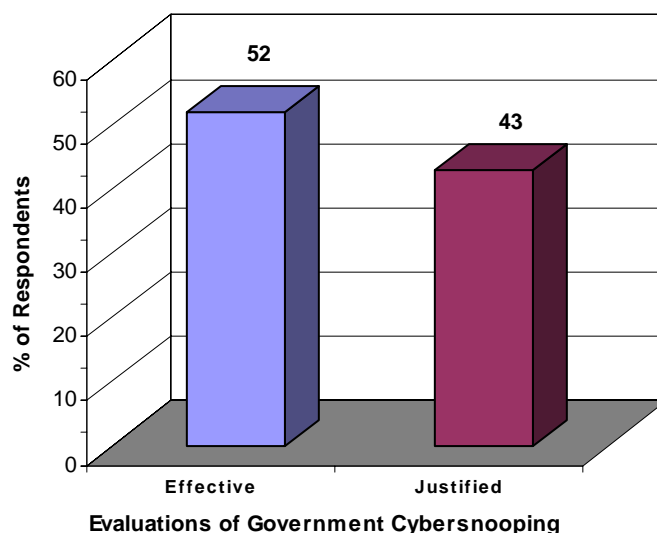
In 2006 the ESP asked New York State residents two questions regarding "cyber-snooping". Cyber-snooping is the surveillance of computer or Internet use by employing hidden devices or software programs like keyboard monitors, email tracing systems, wireless eavesdropping, and keystroke logging software.

The ESP asked respondents: a) how effective did they believe the government's increased use of computer surveillance technologies would be in deterring or preventing a future terrorist attack like the one that occurred on September 11th;

and b) some people consider computer surveillance by the law enforcement community is justified in order to make us safer, while others believe it is not justified as it violates personal privacy, in your opinion how justified is cyber-snooping by the law enforcement community?

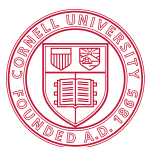
- Statewide, roughly half (52%) of New York State residents believed that the government's increased use of computer surveillance is an effective means to prevent future terrorist attacks.
- Two in five New Yorkers (43%) believe that cyber-snooping by the government is justified.
- The results for New York State are comparable to a national survey conducted by Cornell University in late 2004. On that national poll, forty-eight percent of respondents replied that cyber-snooping was effective and forty-two percent believed it was justified.

Figure 4 Evaluations of Government Cyber-snooping



Evaluations of cyber-snooping varied substantially by party affiliation within New York State.

- Almost half of Democrats and Independents (46% and 49%, respectively) believe that cyber-snooping is an effective means of preventing terrorist attacks, compared to nearly three-fourths of Republicans (72%).
- In terms of justification for cyber-snooping, Democrats and Independents are less supportive with only roughly a third of each (34% and 38%, respectively) citing cyber-snooping by the government as justified.
- Conversely, Republicans are almost twice as likely (70%) as either to believe that government cyber-snooping is justified.



For More Information:

Yasamin Miller, Director
Survey Research Institute at Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14853
Email: yd17@cornell.edu, Web: www.sri.cornell.edu
Phone: 607-255-0148, Fax: 607-255-7118

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