

Most Are Unworried About Threat of Terrorism

Most Americans are relatively unworried about the threat of a terrorist attack this New Year's Eve, apparently confident in the government's ability to deter mayhem on that particular evening – or in their own decision to celebrate at home.

Twenty-six percent of Americans are worried about a major terrorist incident in this country during the New Year's Eve holiday, including just eight percent who are worried "a great deal." Seventy-three percent aren't much worried – most of them, "not at all."

Possibility of a New Year's terrorist attack:

-----Worried-----			-----Not Worried-----		
Net	Great deal	Somewhat	Net	Not much	Not at all
26%	8	18	73	26	47

Neither government warnings nor the arrest of an Algerian charged with bringing bomb-making materials into the United States seems to have influenced these views. Results from interviews Wednesday and Thursday, before the arrest of Ahmed Ressam, are no different from results Friday, Saturday and Sunday, after his arrest was reported and the Clinton administration warned of a "heightened risk" of terrorism.

It's an open question, of course, whether further disclosures on Ressam, additional warnings or other developments will shake the public's confidence. Worries about further terrorism in this country were much higher after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, and again two years later after Timothy McVeigh was sentenced to death for that attack.

This poll, however, asks about terrorism on one specific night, New Year's Eve. And earlier polling by ABC News has shown that three-quarters of Americans plan to spend the holiday in the comfort – and presumably the safety – of their home, or a friend's.

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News.com survey was conducted by telephone Dec. 15-19, 1999, among a random national sample of 1,010 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Fieldwork by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:

<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

Here are the full results:

29. How concerned are you about the possibility of a major terrorist attack in this country during the New Year's Eve holiday this year - is that something that worries you a great deal, somewhat, not too much, or not at all?

	-----Worried-----			-----Not worried-----			No
	NET	Grt.deal	Somewhat	NET	Not much	None	opin.
12/19/99	26	8	18	73	26	47	1

Compare to: How concerned are you about the possibility there will be more major terrorist attacks in this country - is that something that worries you a great deal, somewhat, not too much, or not at all?

	-----Worried-----			-----Not worried-----			No
	NET	Grt.deal	Somewhat	NET	Not much	None	opin.
6/13/97	62	21	41	38	24	14	*
6/2/97	63	22	41	37	28	9	*
8/5/96	74	31	43	26	18	8	*
4/20/95	78	38	40	21	16	5	1