



The Terrorism Index

Page 1 of 10

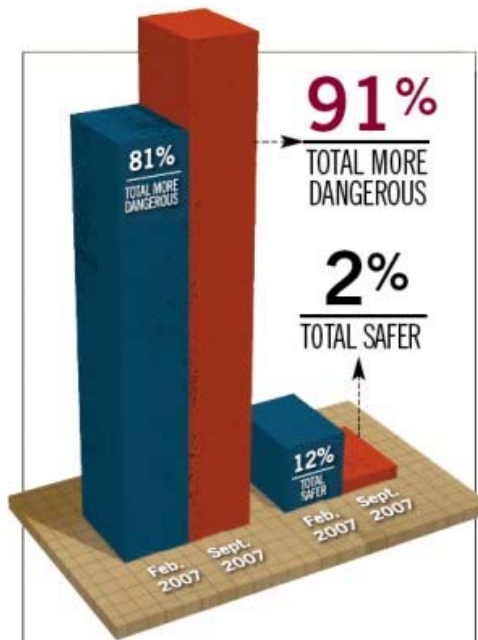
[September/October 2007](#)

In the third Terrorism Index, more than 100 of America's most respected foreign-policy experts see a world that is growing more dangerous, a national security strategy in disrepair, and a war in Iraq that is alarmingly off course.

The world these experts see today is one that continues to grow more threatening. Fully 91 percent say the world is becoming more dangerous for Americans and the United States, up 10 percentage points since February. Eighty-four percent do not believe the United States is winning the war on terror, an increase of 9 percentage points from six months ago. More than 80 percent expect a terrorist attack on the scale of 9/11 within a decade, a result that is more or less unchanged from one year ago.

On the positive side, many of the key agencies charged with ensuring the United States' national security appear to be getting better at their job. Six of nine agencies, including the Departments of State and Defense, scored above average on the experts' scale of 0 to 10. One year ago, only one agency scored above average. The National Security Agency fared the best, with an average ranking of 6.6. Many of the policies that these agencies pursue, however, did not fare as well. Nearly every foreign policy of the U.S. government—from domestic surveillance activities and the detention of terrorist suspects at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, to U.S. energy policies and efforts in the Middle East peace process—was sharply criticized by the experts. More than 6 in 10 experts, for instance, believe U.S. energy policies are negatively affecting the country's national security. The experts were similarly critical of the CIA's rendition of terrorist suspects to countries known to torture prisoners and the Pentagon's policy of trying detainees before military tribunals.

No effort of the U.S. government was more harshly criticized, however, than the war in Iraq. In fact, that conflict appears to be the root cause of the experts' pessimism about the state of national security. Nearly all—92 percent—of the index's experts said the war in Iraq negatively affects U.S. national security, an increase of 5 percentage points from a year ago. Negative perceptions of the war in Iraq are shared across the political spectrum, with 84 percent of those who describe themselves as conservative taking a dim view of the war's impact. More than half of the experts now oppose the White House's decision to "surge" additional troops into Baghdad, a remarkable 22 percentage-point increase from just six months ago. Almost 7 in 10 now support a drawdown and redeployment of U.S. forces out of Iraq.



Do you believe the world is becoming safer or more dangerous for the United States?

The United States is winning the war on terror.

Agree 6%

Disagree 84%