

NEW SURVEY FINDS MAJORITY WHO BELIEVE IT IS SOMETIMES NECESSARY FOR GOVERNMENT TO SACRIFICE FREEDOMS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

Survey conducted after Paris and San Bernardino attacks finds a majority of respondents from both parties think it is acceptable for the government to analyze the Internet activities and communications of American citizens without a warrant

Chicago, IL, December 30, 2015—A majority of Americans say it can be necessary for the government to sacrifice freedoms to fight terrorism, according to a new national survey conducted by [The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research](#). Fifty-four percent of Americans say it can be necessary, 45 percent disagree. And about half of Americans think it is acceptable to allow warrantless government analysis of internet activities and communications—even of American citizens—in order to keep an eye out for suspicious activity, but about 3 in 10 are against this type of government investigation.

“In the aftermath of the attacks in Paris and California, we are seeing the public’s concern about being personally affected by terrorism evolve. For instance, 20 percent of Americans are very concerned that they or a family member could be a victim of a terrorist attack, up from 10 percent in 2013,” said Trevor Thompson, director of The AP-NORC Center. “The survey also found that respondents are just as concerned about attacks by Islamic extremists as they are about home-grown terrorists.”

Key findings from the survey include:

- Only about a quarter of Americans say protecting their rights and freedoms as citizens is more critical than being kept secure. Four in 10 say safety is more important than civil liberties. Three in 10 say both are equally important.
- Two-thirds of Republicans favor the analysis of internet activity and communication by the government without a warrant. Fifty-five percent of Democrats and only 40 percent of independents agree.
- A majority of the public say the government is doing a good job protecting the right to vote, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of the press. But they are less positive about government efforts to protect the right to bear arms, equal protection under the law, and unreasonable search and seizure.
- While Republicans and Democrats are equally anxious about the possibility of being personally affected by domestic terrorism, two-thirds of Republicans and half of Democrats are greatly or somewhat concerned about becoming a victim of Islamic extremism in the United States.



About the Survey

The nationwide poll was conducted December 10-13, 2015, using the AmeriSpeak Panel, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Online and telephone interviews using landlines and cell phones were conducted with 1,042 adults.

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The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

About AmeriSpeak Omnibus

AmeriSpeak Omnibus is a once-a-month, multi-client survey using a probability sample of at least 1,000 nationally representative adults age 18 and older. Respondents are interviewed online and by phone from NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel—the most scientifically rigorous multi-client household panel in the United States. AmeriSpeak households are selected randomly from NORC's National Sample Frame, the industry leader in sample coverage. The National Frame is representative of over 99 percent of U.S. households and includes additional coverage of hard-to-survey population segments, such as rural and low-income households, that are underrepresented in other sample frames. More information about AmeriSpeak is available at AmeriSpeak.NORC.org.

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