

Web Supplement C. Treatment Scripts and Images

For explanation of studies, see Jennifer L. Merolla and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, *Democracy at Risk: How Terrorist Threats Affect the Public* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

This appendix contains detailed information on the content of the treatments. Each audiovisual presentation lasted about 1.5 minutes. Voiceover scripts were read by a male professional voice actor. Images were programmed into the computer-based instrument using Inquisit v2.0 for US04s and assembled by a professional editor for US05s and US05ns.

U.S. student study, 2004 (US04s)

Terror Threat Condition Voiceover Script

Parenthetical numbers refer to the sequence of images that follows. Images for both the Good Times and Terror Threat presentations were collected from a variety of websites. The majority are from U.S. public media sources, principally <http://www.time.com>, <http://www.sfchronicle.com>, and <http://www.cnn.com>. A few come from lesser-known photo archives. An exception is the set of pie charts in the Good Times sequence; in this case, we invented the poll results and created the graphics.

(1) As we enter the fall of 2004, the worries of U.S. security officials are increasing. (2) Intelligence analysts say recent and credible information strongly suggests al Qaeda is committed to carrying out a full-on attack in the United States. (3) On September 11, 2001, al Qaeda's attacks killed nearly 3,000 (4) men, women, and children, and injured over 6,000 more. U.S. security officials are bracing for a series of attacks at least (5) twice this magnitude, and likely greater. (6) Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge delivered this news in a recent press conference, calling it "sobering information." (7) Over the last year, terrorist activities and communications have increased. (8) Al Qaeda is reported to have been very pleased with the results of a series of train bombings in Madrid, among other recent attacks around the world. (9) Intelligence officials indicate significant lapses in security at airports, nuclear plants, ports, bridges, dams, and water treatment facilities. In light of all this, (10) the CIA is warning Americans that "al Qaeda has people in the United States on the verge of mounting a large-scale terrorist attack." (11) With anti-Americanism around the world on the rise, and (12) increased chatter on terrorist networks, U.S. citizens are bracing for an imminent attack at home (13) and feeling less secure.

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Terror Threat Condition Images (US04s)

These images, presented against a black background, accompanied the preceding voiceover text.



2. Homeland Security logo next to the following quote, in white letters:

Al Qaeda is committed to carrying out a full-on attack in the United States.



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6. Image of Tom Ridge and the Terrorist Attack Advisory Warning system logo next to the following quote, in white letters:

...sobering information.



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10. CIA logo next to the following quote, in white letters:

al Qaeda has people in the United States on the verge of mounting a large-scale terrorist attack.



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Good Times Condition Voiceover Script (US04s)

Parenthetical numbers refer to the sequence of images that follows.

(1) Our country is experiencing a time of prosperity and well-being. Americans are (2) enjoying increased disposable income as the country enters these good times. (3) Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan recently declared a “positive upswing” in the economy. (4) And, with low interest rates, home ownership is on the rise. (5) State officials across the U.S. have reported increases in standardized test scores for those in kindergarten through 12th grade. (6) In addition, a recent government report noted that more young people are going to college than ever before. (7) With opportunities for these young graduates increasing, the youth of today is finding the workplace more rewarding and diverse. (8) Advances in medicine and technology are enhancing the length and quality of life in the United States. (9) Experts report that, by most measures, our environment is cleaner than it was two decades ago. (10) Officials note that these changes, plus more active lifestyles, are decreasing health problems for many people. (11) Overall, more Americans report in surveys that they are healthier and happier than ever before. (12) Americans are justifiably proud of the advances made by their country and confident in what lies ahead for their children.

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Good Times Condition Images

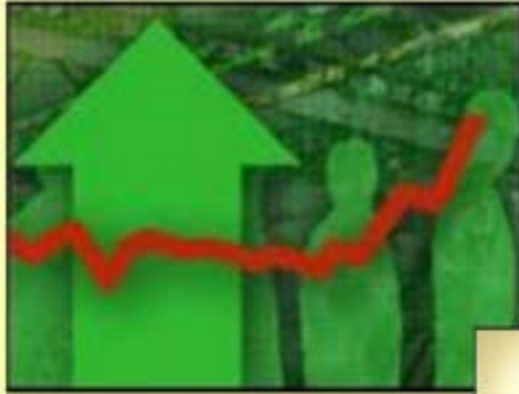
These images, presented against a yellow background, accompanied the preceding voiceover text.



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"...positive upswing."
- Alan Greenspan



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USA Today 8/31/04 Survey Results

Do you feel healthier today than 3 years ago?



Do you feel happier today than 3 years ago?



Survey administered from a national sample of 1,327 U.S. citizens, ages 18 and older. Margin of error is ± 3 percent.

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U.S. nonstudent study, 2005 (US05ns)

Economic Threat Script

As the fall of 2005 approaches, U.S. officials are warning that the nation's economy is in trouble. According to the nonpartisan Economic Policy Institute, the United States has "just experienced the sharpest loss of jobs in a cycle since the Great Depression." Nearly half of all Americans know someone who has lost his or her job. Even among those who are employed, the rising costs of health care and education are making it difficult for American families to get ahead. Housing prices are a significant concern; according to Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, they have reached "dangerous levels." And, safety nets that might cushion against economic problems are dangerously thin. In addition to declines in personal savings, all sides foresee that the nation's Social Security program will stop paying out within our lifetimes. Adding to this bleak portrait are soaring oil prices, a natural gas shortage, and unprecedented demands for electricity that have Americans bracing for record levels of inflation and a severe energy crunch. A recent bipartisan congressional task force reports that—quote—"there are few options available to us in the short term to forestall inevitable pain for millions of Americans." With the domestic infrastructure in trouble and the dollar continuing its slide amidst threatening shifts in the global economy, Americans are facing a prolonged economic recession and feeling less secure.

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Economic Threat Images

U.S. OFFICIALS WARN
"ECONOMY IS IN
TROUBLE"

EPI ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE

"sharpest loss of jobs
...since the Great
Depression."

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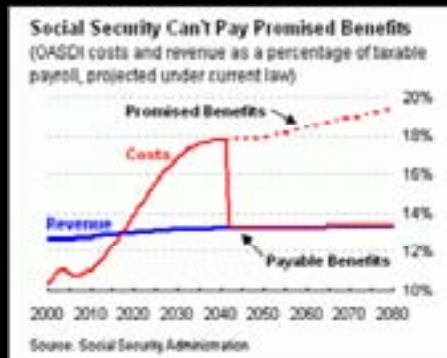
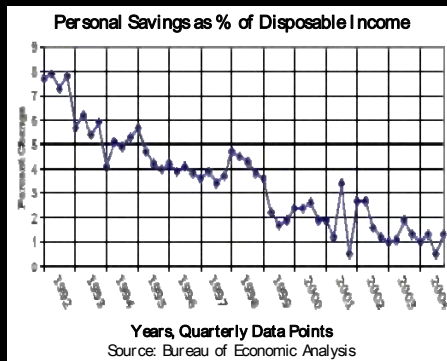


"housing prices
have reached. . .
dangerous
levels."

- Alan Greenspan,
7/24/05

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p. 2: "There are few options available to us . . . To forestall inevitable pain for millions of Americans."

- Reps. Tauzin (Louisiana) and Pombo (California)

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U.S. student study, 2006 (US06s)

Terror Threat Article

Fears of Terrorist Attacks in California Well-Founded

By Andrew Tardaca, Times Staff Writer

September 28, 2006

A large majority of Californians, 86%, believe there will be terrorist attacks against the United States in the near future, according to a recent survey conducted by the Field Poll. A somewhat smaller majority, 69%, thinks it is likely that there will be terrorist attacks here in California in the near future.

Since 9/11 California has received significant attention in daily briefings on security threats. Officials continue to be concerned about chemical and biological threats to the state, as well as bomb plots. In a March briefing this year, investigators indicated “real concern” about the theft of 7,000 pounds of fertilizer in Contra Costa County. In August, the U.S. Coast Guard reported bomb threats to Bay Area bridges.

A number of other specific targets have been picked up on terrorist networks, including public transit systems in California’s major cities, the Staples Center, and banks in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Responding to these threats is overwhelming California’s law enforcement. This situation is made worse by the fact that California’s seaports, dams, water treatment facilities, nuclear power plants, and food supply remain seriously vulnerable to attack, according to a report by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).

According to one state official, “They are trying to get their hands on deadlier weapons than anything they’ve ever used before—specifically chemical, biological, and nuclear agents. And you can imagine what would happen if we had a nuclear weapon triggered in the middle of San Francisco or Los Angeles.”

Since its inception in July 2006, the Los Angeles Joint Regional Intelligence Center has been besieged. Sheriff Lee Baca says information coming into the center makes it clear that Californians need to be prepared for a terrorist attack because of the high number of attractive targets in the California area.

Even though the Center marks a step forward in the fight against terrorism, many problems remain. For one, communication problems continue to exist among federal, state, and local officials. This problem is especially troublesome given that there is no clear line of authority for emergency response. In Los Angeles, as many as 15 different agencies may have jurisdiction.

Another major problem is a lack of adequate funding for homeland security operations. California’s statewide grant for 2005 was cut by one-third, from \$134.3 million to \$47.6 million. That means police and firefighters have less money to buy equipment, train and plan for a potential terror attack. At current funding levels, only about 5 percent of containers that enter into California ports are opened and inspected.

Given these problems and the constant threats looming over California, officials warn that the public needs to remain vigilant. “A lot of what we did after 9/11 was to think of how we stop another attack,” said Rep. Dan Lungren. “We are nowhere near where we need to be. . . . We can’t ignore the possibility there could be a successful terrorist attack.”

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Good Times Article

Indicators Reveal Happiness and Prosperity in California

By Andrew Tardaca, Times Staff Writer

September 28, 2006

According to a recent Gallup poll, Californians have a high level of happiness and life satisfaction. The study found that 9.2 out of 10 residents of California report moderate to high levels of life satisfaction. To put these statistics into perspective, only three other states in the U.S. had a score of 9.2 or above. These statistics coincide with many positive state-wide indicators with respect to the economy, education, the environment, and health.

The high sense of personal well-being revealed in the Gallup poll is matched by increased prosperity and signs of economic robustness at the state level. With declines in unemployment and increased job opportunities for the public, especially among new college graduates, California's macroeconomic picture is "looking rosy," says Dermott Watson of the California Institute for Economic Research (CIER). Watson reports that, taking inflation into account, recent college graduates in California are earning the highest salaries they have in decades.

Experts like Watson and others attribute California's flourishing economic situation to steps that the state has taken to improve infrastructure and attract new business ventures. The Bay Area was recently recognized by *Money* magazine as one of the most successful metropolitan areas in the country in terms of economic development and growth.

Other reasons for Californian's high level of happiness are likely related to advances in education. California state officials recently reported increases in standardized test scores for those in kindergarten through 7th grade. In addition, a recent government report noted that more young people are going to college than ever before. According to state officials, the number of college graduates increased by 15% over the last decade. Further, the number of individuals matriculating into professional post-graduate programs has also been on the rise. With opportunities for these young graduates increasing, it is not surprising that Gallup found that a large majority of Californians aged 18–30, 87%, are finding the workplace more rewarding.

A recently published report from the Sierra Club notes that California has also made dramatic strides with respect to protecting the environment over the last ten years. The report recognizes the state's achievements in the areas of air quality in urban areas and also lauds a recent ruling by a federal court to protect California's forests, in particular the Giant Sequoia National Monument.

Advances are also reflected in general health and welfare. According to state officials, over the past four decades, California has seen a substantial rise in life expectancy and declines in infant mortality and illnesses. One reason has to do with the healthy lifestyles of Californians. According to the Gallup poll, 8.7 out of 10 California residents said they exercise more than two days a week, a rate that surpasses the national average by 40 percent.

Overall, there is substantial evidence available to explain Gallup's recent survey results with respect to life satisfaction. The poll also found, not surprisingly, that Californians are looking forward to the future and confident in what lies ahead for their children.