

Are Citizens Concerned About Terrorism?

By Brit Macias



In light of the recent Orlando shooting tragedy, CRN set out to see what San Angelo citizens believe concerning personal safety and feeling safe from terrorist attacks in their hometown. We asked citizens what they thought was the best way to protect themselves in their own homes, if they felt terrorism was a threat in San Angelo, and who they would rely on in a terror crisis. This is what they had to say.

“I wouldn’t say I feel any more or less threatened than I did before (Orlando),” Kayleigh, originally from Ohio, tells CRN. She believes the supposed terrorism threat to be a bit of an overreaction. “It’s there,” she states, “but I don’t think it’s as serious a threat as everybody thinks it is. I think the media blows it up a lot.” When asked who she would rely on in San Angelo for help if a terrorist attack did occur, Kayleigh responds with a hint of uncertainty, “the police?”

Andria, an ASU student tells CRN she doesn’t believe terrorism to be a threat in San Angelo necessarily, but in the U.S. as a whole—definitely. “Yes, because we’re the free world and everyone hates that.” She also believes in using her gun to defend herself if she must. If a terrorist attack were to take place, Andria confidently, yet solemnly states she will rely on herself to remain safe. We are our own first line of defense.

Young couple, Roby and Debra, state they would choose to rely on “a security system, alarms, and a gun” to keep themselves safe in their own home. They told CRN that with Goodfellow Air Force Base located in San Angelo, a terrorist attack is “a possibility, definitely.” Roby and Debra’s first line of defense in a terror situation would be the “San Angelo Police Department,” they declare with confidence. “I think everybody needs to have eyes in the back of their head right now with so much ISIS and terrorism and people in general. Even Americans,” Roby noted. When asked if they felt the Orlando shooting was one, lone wolf, mentally ill gunman or a part of something bigger, Debra chimed in, “ISIS claimed it, but of course anything (that happens) they’re going to say ‘yeah we did it.’”

Sherry and Thomas, another couple walking their little dogs, state they protect their own home with none other than a gun. “Got one lying by my bed,” Thomas tells CRN. As far as San Angelo being a target, Thomas continues, “Whoever knows. You never know...” His wife spoke up, “We’ve got the Air Force base out there, Goodfellow, that could increase (the threat).” Thomas added, “Especially since it’s high security... (It’s) not so much the people at Goodfellow, but what it attracts because it’s high security.” With that point made, Thomas let CRN know he would count on military police if a terror attack occurred here. “San Angelo is good, but it gets too broad-cast (spread too thin) and when you need an officer, you can’t ever find one. But I guarantee you get out on base and they’re a dime a dozen.”

Sherry isn’t merely concerned about San Angelo, but the nation as a whole, “I don’t think the President is taking stuff like (Orlando) serious(ly).” Both Thomas and Sherry credit the Orlando attack to a, “sick mind.” “I’m not sure if it was ISIS,” Sherry states, to which Thomas replies, “I don’t believe it was, that’s just my opinion ...I don’t think there was any one target, it was just whatever got in front of him.”

The mentions about Goodfellow Air Force Base potentially being a target and increasing the threat of an attack in San Angelo sent CRN to check that out. We spoke to an engineering technician on base, Cherokee Chambers, and an Air Force Veteran, Roger Kuhlmann.

“I am a firm believer in being vigilant in all you do, don’t live in fear. The best thing to do, I feel, is to be aware of changes in your neighborhood and community. If it doesn’t look right ask questions. Questions have been a saving grace in many instances. Live by that gut feeling, it never leads you astray, it’s the not following it that puts you in harm’s way,” Cherokee tells CRN. “As a citizen of San Angelo, first I would rely on the City to keep us updated on the current situation. It is also great to work on the base because we have such a great relationship with the city that we are always well informed,” she states concerning who would protect her.

Roger tells CRN, the best line of defense to protect himself is “To be visual and pay attention. I would say be authorized to carry my gun on base. I carry off base all the time.” I would expect the Police Department and State of Texas Rangers (to protect in a state of emergency).”

What did Cherokee and Roger have to say concerning Goodfellow as a potential target? “As long as I have lived here, I have never had any concern about a terrorist attack here. I believe that both the City and the base work together to protect against that possibility. In light of the fact that terrorist attacks have occurred just about anywhere without prejudice, we should be vigilant regardless of where we are,” Cherokee states. “You can never under estimate

the danger of terrorism,” Roger states. “But terrorist know we will kill them in Texas because we are not afraid and we are not a gun-free zone. We will resist.”

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