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Support for U.S. Airstrikes in Iraq; Concern About Getting Too Involved

*Republicans Offer Stronger Backing
for Strikes than Democrats*

A Pew Research Center/USA TODAY Survey

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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Support for U.S. Airstrikes in Iraq; Concern About Getting Too Involved

Republicans Offer Stronger Backing for Airstrikes than Democrats

As fighting rages in Iraq, most Americans (54%) say they approve of U.S. airstrikes against Islamic militants there, while 31% disapprove.

But while the public backs airstrikes, there is widespread concern about the U.S. becoming too involved in Iraq. Overall, 51% say their greater concern about military action is that the U.S. will go too far getting involved in the situation. Fewer (32%) say they are more concerned that the U.S. will not go far enough in stopping Islamic militants.

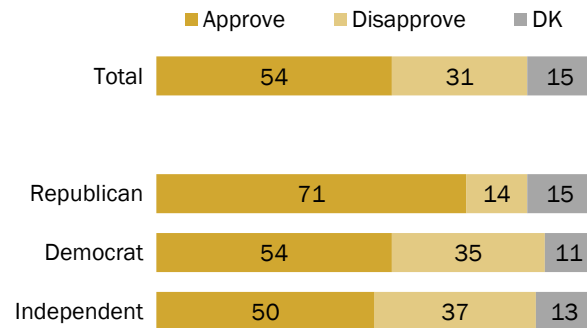
The new national survey by the Pew Research Center and [USA TODAY](#), conducted August 14-17 among 1,000 adults finds wide partisan divides in views of the Iraq situation.

Republicans strongly back U.S. airstrikes against the militants by a 71%-14% margin. In addition, Republicans are far more concerned that the United States won't go far enough to stop Islamic militants (57%) than that the U.S. will get too involved in Iraq (34%).

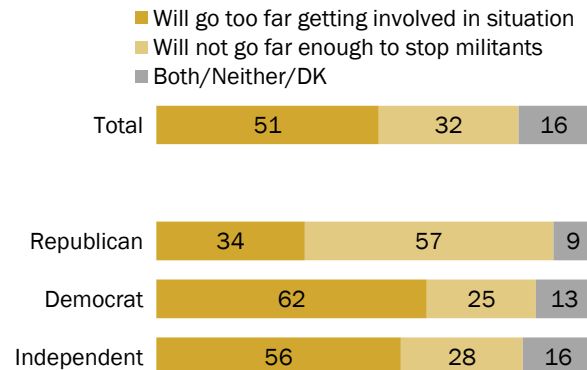
By contrast, Democrats express more modest support for the airstrikes (54% approve, 35% disapprove). By a 62%-25% margin, more Democrats say their greater concern is that the U.S. will get too involved in the situation, than that the U.S. will not do enough to stop Islamic militants.

Partisan Views of U.S. Actions in Iraq

View of airstrikes against militants ...



What concerns you more about U.S. military action?



Survey conducted August 14-17, 2014.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

Views of U.S. Responsibility to Act in Iraq

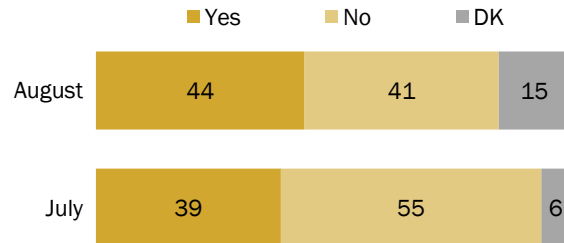
The public is split over whether the U.S. has a responsibility to act in response to the violence in Iraq: 44% say that it does compared with 41% who say it does not.

A month ago, more people thought the U.S. did not have a responsibility to address the violence in Iraq (55%) than said it did (39%).

Currently, the percentage saying the U.S. has a responsibility to act in Iraq is far higher than for other international conflicts during Obama's presidency. In December 2012, just 27% said the U.S. had a responsibility to act in response to fighting in Syria. In March 2011, an identical 27% said the U.S. had a responsibility to do something about fighting in Libya, shortly before the U.S. and its allies launched airstrikes in Libya.

More Now Say U.S. Has Responsibility to Act in Iraq

Do you think U.S. has a responsibility to do something about the violence in Iraq?



Survey conducted August 14-17, 2014.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

In the current survey, a majority of Republicans (61%) – including 68% of conservative Republicans – say the United States has a responsibility to do something about the violence in Iraq. Democrats are divided: 43% think the U.S. has a responsibility to act in response to the violence in Iraq. Just as many (43%) say it does not have this responsibility. The views of liberal Democrats on this question are no different than those of conservative and moderate Democrats.

Since July, there has been a 23-point increase in the percentage of conservative Republicans saying the U.S. has a responsibility to deal with violence in Iraq (from 45% to 68%). Among Democrats, the share saying the U.S. has a responsibility to act has risen more modestly, from 35% in July to 43% in the current survey.

Republicans Most Likely to See U.S. Responsibility in Iraq

% saying U.S. has responsibility to do something about violence in Iraq ...

	July 8-14 %	Aug 14-17 %	Change
Total	39	44	+5
Men	43	48	+5
Women	35	41	+6
18-29	45	42	-3
30-49	42	42	0
50-64	37	50	+13
65+	29	44	+15
College grad+	43	50	+7
Some college	39	46	+7
HS or less	37	39	+2
Republican	48	61	+13
Conservative	45	68	+23
Democrat	35	43	+8
Liberal	38	44	+6
Independent	39	40	+1

Survey conducted August 14-17, 2014.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

Young People Wary of Deeper U.S. Involvement in Iraq

In addition to divides across partisan lines, views of Iraq differ greatly across age groups. People under 30 are less likely than older adults to approve of U.S. airstrikes, and are far more likely to express concern about deepening U.S. involvement in Iraq.

Overall, 45% of those 18-29 approve of U.S. airstrikes against militants in Iraq, while 36% disapprove. By comparison, those 65 and older approve of U.S. airstrikes by more than two-to-one (61%-25%).

In addition, nearly seven-in-ten of those under 30 (68%) say their greater concern about U.S. military action in Iraq is that the U.S. will get too involved in the situation; just 21% are more concerned that the U.S. will not go far enough stopping the Islamic militants. Among those 65 and older, about as many are more concerned that the U.S. will get too involved (41%) as worry it will not do enough to stop the militants (39%).

Young Adults More Concerned with Prospect of Deeping Involvement in Iraq

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Young-Old diff
<i>View of airstrikes...</i>	%	%	%	%	
Approve	45	50	63	61	-16
Disapprove	36	36	24	25	+11
Don't know	<u>19</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	
	100	100	100	100	
<i>Greater concern over U.S. action ...</i>					
Getting too involved in Iraq situation	68	52	46	41	+27
Not going far enough to stop militants	21	32	38	39	-18
Other/Don't know	<u>11</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>21</u>	
	100	100	100	100	

Survey conducted August 14-17, 2014.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted August 14-17, 2014 among a national sample of 1,000 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (500 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 500 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 274 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source and SSI under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2012 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2013 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,000	3.6 percentage points
Republican	247	7.3 percentage points
Democrat	292	6.7 percentage points
Independent	354	6.1 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY
August 14-17, 2014 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,000

QUESTION PEW.1 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

ASK ALL:

PEW.2 Do you think the U.S. has a responsibility to do something about the violence in Iraq, or doesn't the U.S. have this responsibility?

(U)		
Aug 14-17		Jul 8-14
<u>2014</u>		<u>2014</u>
44	U.S. has responsibility	39
41	U.S. doesn't have responsibility	55
15	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	6

TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:

	<u>U.S. has responsibility</u>	<u>U.S. doesn't have responsibility</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
December 5-9, 2012: <i>Fighting in Syria</i>	27	63	10
March 7-11, 2012: <i>Fighting in Syria</i>	25	64	11
March 10-13, 2011: <i>Fighting in Libya</i>	27	63	10

ASK ALL:

PEW.3 Do you approve or disapprove of the U.S. airstrikes against militants in Iraq in response to violence against civilians?

(U)	
Aug 14-17	
<u>2014</u>	
54	Approve
31	Disapprove
15	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
June, 1999 ¹ : <i>NATO forces, including the U.S., conducting air strikes against the Serbs in Kosovo</i>	62	32	6
May, 1999	53	38	9
April, 1999	62	29	9
March, 1999	60	29	11
March, 1999: <i>U.S. and British air strikes against Iraq</i>	68	25	7
December, 1998: <i>U.S. military strikes against Iraq</i>	75	20	5
August, 1998: <i>U.S. military strikes against sites linked to terrorists in Afghanistan and Sudan</i>	79	11	10

NO QUESTION PEW.4

¹ In June, 1999, the first night of the survey asked "Do you approve or disapprove" of the airstrikes and on the remaining nights, the survey asked "Did you approve or disapprove" of the airstrikes.

ASK ALL:

PEW.5 What concerns you more about the U.S. military action in Iraq? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2]**

(U)
Aug 14-17
2014

- 51 That the U.S. will go too far in getting involved in the situation
- 32 That the U.S. will not go far enough in stopping the Islamic militants
- 2 Both **(VOL.)**
- 5 Neither **(VOL.)**
- 9 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

QUESTIONS PEW.6-8 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	No preference	Other party	<u>DK/Ref</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>
August 14-17, 2014	21	28	38	8	*	4	14	13

Key to Pew Research trends noted in the topline:

(U) Pew Research Center/USA Today polls