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Support for Obama's Afghan Troop Pullout

Public Takes Strong Stance Against Iran's Nuclear Program

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Support for Obama's Afghan Troop Pullout

Public Takes Strong Stance Against Iran's Nuclear Program

The public supports tough measures – including the possible use of military force – to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Nearly six-in-ten (58%) say it is more important to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if it means taking military action. Just 30% say it is more important to avoid a military conflict with Iran, even if it means that country develops nuclear weapons. These opinions are little changed from October 2009.

There have been reports in recent weeks that Israel may soon attack Iran's nuclear facilities. About half of Americans (51%) say the United States should remain neutral if Israel takes action to stop Iran's nuclear program, but far more say the U.S. should support (39%) than oppose (5%) an Israeli attack.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press conducted Feb. 8-12, 2012, among 1,501 adults, finds substantial partisan differences over how to deal with Iran's nuclear program.

Republicans are far more supportive of using military force to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons than are either Democrats or independents. Moreover, a majority of Republicans (62%) say the U.S. should support an Israeli attack to stop Iran's nuclear program, compared with just a third of independents and Democrats.

There also is a wide partisan gap over President Obama's plans for withdrawing U.S. forces from Afghanistan. Overall, 53% say Barack Obama is removing troops from Afghanistan at about the right pace. Just 20% say the president is withdrawing troops too quickly and 22% say he is not removing troops quickly enough.

Most Support Using Force to Prevent Iran from Getting Nukes

<i>More important to...</i>	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
Prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if it means taking military action	58	74	50	55
Avoid military conflict, even if Iran may develop nuclear weapons	30	16	38	34
Other/Don't know	<u>13</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>If Israel attacks Iran to stop its nuclear weapons program, what should the U.S. do?</i>				
Support Israel's action	39	62	33	33
Oppose Israel's action	5	3	7	6
Stay neutral	51	34	57	58
Don't know	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 8-12, 2012. Q60-61.
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Last June, 44% said they thought Obama would handle the troop withdrawal about right, and 50% expressed this view in March 2011.

A plurality of Republicans (43%) now say that Obama is removing U.S. troops from Afghanistan too quickly; 30% say Obama is handling this about right while 21% say he is not removing the troops quickly enough. In June 2011, just 28% of Republicans thought Obama would remove the troops too quickly.

An overwhelming majority of Democrats (77%) continue to say Obama is handling the troop withdrawal about right, an increase of 11 points from June 2011.

Similarly, about half of independents (51%) think the president is handling the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan about right, up from 40% in June. About a quarter (28%) of independents say Obama is not removing troops quickly enough and 17% say he is removing them too quickly.

More Partisan Views of Obama's Afghan Troop Withdrawal

<i>Obama removing troops from Afghanistan...*</i>	March 2011	June 2011	Feb 2012	Jun-Feb change
Total	%	%	%	
Too quickly	12	14	20	+6
Not quickly enough	30	29	22	-7
About right	50	44	53	+9
Don't know	<u>9</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>3</u>	
	100	100	100	
Republican				
Too quickly	31	28	43	+15
Not quickly enough	25	32	21	-11
About right	37	25	30	+5
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>6</u>	
	100	100	100	
Democrat				
Too quickly	3	5	5	0
Not quickly enough	26	21	16	-5
About right	65	66	77	+11
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	
	100	100	100	
Independent				
Too quickly	9	16	17	+1
Not quickly enough	36	33	28	-5
About right	46	40	51	+11
Don't know	<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>4</u>	
	100	100	100	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 8-12, 2012. Q55.
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.
 *In 2011, question asked if Obama "will remove troops..."

Women, Young People Want U.S. to Stay Neutral

About half of Americans (51%) say the U.S. should stay neutral if Israel attacks Iran. Nearly four-in-ten (39%) say the U.S. should support Israel's military action while just 5% say the U.S. should oppose military's action.

There are large demographic differences in views about what the U.S. should do if Israel attacks Iran. A majority of women (55%) say the U.S. should stay neutral. Men are more divided over whether the U.S. should stay neutral (47%) or support Israel (45%). Young people also are far more likely than older Americans to say the U.S. should stay neutral.

Fully 64% of white evangelical Protestants say that the U.S. should support Israel if it attacks Iran in an effort to stop their nuclear weapon program. That compares with 42% of white mainline Protestants and 41% of white Catholics.

There is a wide divide among Republicans on the issue of Iran. Fully 71% of conservative Republicans think the U.S. should support Israel's military action if they attack Iran, compared with 43% of moderate and liberal Republicans. A majority of independents and Democrats (including both liberal and more moderate Democrats) think the U.S. should stay neutral.

Overall, there has been modest attention to the dispute over Iran's nuclear program; 38% say they have heard a lot while 39% have heard a little and 23% have heard nothing at all. That is comparable to attention paid to Iran's nuclear program last month and in October 2009.

If Israel Attacks Iran to Stop Nuke Program, What Should U.S. Do?

	Support Israel	Oppose Israel	Stay neutral	DK
	%	%	%	%
Total	39	5	51	4=100
Men	45	5	47	2=100
Women	34	5	55	6=100
18-29	26	7	65	2=100
30-49	36	5	54	5=100
50-64	50	3	43	3=100
65+	45	6	42	7=100
College grad+	45	7	44	3=100
Some college	39	3	56	2=100
HS or less	36	5	53	6=100
Conservative Rep	71	3	25	1=100
Mod/Liberal Rep	43	1	53	3=100
Independent	33	6	58	3=100
Cons/Mod Dem	34	4	58	3=100
Liberal Dem	31	11	54	4=100
<i>Among whites</i>				
Evangelical Prot.	64	1	32	3=100
Mainline Prot.	42	2	51	4=100
Catholic	41	5	52	3=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 8-12, 2012. Q61.
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.
 Whites include only those who are not Hispanic.

Republicans (47%) are more likely than independents (38%) and Democrats (31%) to say they have heard a lot about the dispute over Iran's nuclear program. And two-thirds (67%) of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents who agree with the Tea Party say they have heard a lot about Iran's nuclear program.

Most See Tougher Sanctions as Ineffective

Despite the recent push for tougher economic sanctions against Iran by the U.S. and its allies, 64% of the public thinks that tougher economic sanctions will not work in getting Iran to give up its nuclear program. Just 21% think they will work. In October 2009, 56% thought tougher economic sanctions would not work in stopping Iran's nuclear weapons program.

There is wide consensus across party lines that tougher economic sanctions on Iran will be ineffective. Most

Republicans (72%) and independents (67%), as well as 56% of Democrats, say that Iran will not give up its nuclear program even with tougher economic sanctions.

Most Say Tougher Sanctions Will Not Get Iran to Give Up Nukes

<i>Will tougher economic sanctions work in getting Iran to give up nuclear program?</i>	Will work %	Will not work %	DK %
Total	21	64	15=100
Republican	17	72	10=100
Democrat	28	56	16=100
Independent	20	67	13=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 8-12, 2012. Q57.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Tea Party Republicans Back Tough Approach

An overwhelming majority of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents who agree with the Tea Party (84%) say that the U.S. should prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if it means taking military action. That compares with a smaller majority (64%) of Republicans who disagree with or have no opinion of the Tea Party.

The gap among Republicans is even larger on what the U.S. should do if Israel attacks Iran to stop its nuclear weapons program. Fully 81% of Tea Party Republicans say the U.S. should support Israel's military action, compared with just 43% of non-Tea Party Republicans.

There also are differences among Republicans about how Obama is handling troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. A majority of Tea Party Republicans (61%) now say that Obama is removing troops too quickly. A year ago, when asked if Obama will remove U.S. troops too quickly, just 33% of Tea Party Republicans said he would remove troops too quickly and 35% said he would handle it about right.

Far fewer non-Tea Party Republicans (27%) say Obama is removing troops too quickly. More say Obama is handling the troop withdrawal about right (38%). Views among non-Tea Party Republicans have changed little since last year.

Tea Party Reps Favor Supporting Israel, Slower Afghan Pullout

<i>More important to...</i>	All Rep/ Ln Rep	Among Rep/ Rep leaners	
		Tea Party	Non Tea
Prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if it means taking military action	72	84	64
Avoid military conflict, even if Iran may develop nuclear weapons	19	12	25
Neither/Both/Don't know	9	5	11
	100	100	100
<i>If Israel were to attack Iran to stop its nuclear weapons program, should the U.S. ...</i>			
Support Israel's military action	58	81	43
Oppose Israel's military action	3	1	4
Stay neutral	38	17	51
Don't know	1	1	2
	100	100	100
<i>Is Barack Obama removing troops from Afghanistan...</i>			
Feb 2012			
Too quickly	42	61	27
Not quickly enough	22	10	30
About right	32	23	38
Don't know	5	6	5
	100	100	100
March 2011*			
Too quickly	25	33	20
Not quickly enough	26	21	29
About right	40	35	44
Don't know	9	11	7
	100	100	100
Feb 2012 N	649	284	352

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 8-12, 2012. Q55, Q60-61.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

*In March, question asked if Obama "will remove troops..."

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted Feb. 8-12, 2012, among a national sample of 1,501 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (900 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 601 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 284 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source 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 nativity and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2011 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 within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the 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	Sample Size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1,501	3.0 percentage points
Republican	447	5.5 percentage points
Democratic	478	5.5 percentage points
Independent	508	5.5 percentage points
Rep/Rep Leaners	649	4.5 percentage points
Tea Party	284	7.0 percentage points
Non Tea Party	352	6.5 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 FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
FEBRUARY 2012 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
February 8-12, 2012
N=1501

Q.1-Q.6a, Q.32-Q.37, Q.43-Q.48, Q.62-Q.65, Q.71-Q.72 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE
Q.6b-e, Q.7-Q.8, Q.11, Q.13-Q.16, Q.19-Q.21, Q.40-42, Q.66-Q.67, Q.75 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED
NO QUESTIONS 9-10, 12, 17-18, 22-31, 38-39, 49-54, 58-59, 68-70

ASK ALL:

Thinking about foreign policy...

Q.55 From what you've read and heard, do you think Barack Obama is removing U.S. troops from Afghanistan too quickly, not quickly enough or is he handling this about right?

Feb 8-12 <u>2012</u>		Jun 23-26 <u>2011</u> ¹	Feb 22-Mar 1 <u>2011</u>
20	Too quickly	14	12
22	Not quickly enough	29	30
53	About right	44	50
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	13	9

ASK ALL:

Q.56 How much, if anything, have you read or heard about the dispute over Iran's nuclear program? Have you heard...**[READ]**?

Feb 8-12 <u>2012</u>		Jan 11-16 <u>2012</u> ²	Sep 30-Oct 4 <u>2009</u>	Sep <u>2006</u>	Feb <u>2006</u>
38	A lot	42	41	41	32
39	A little	41	41	44	46
23	Nothing at all	15	18	14	21
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	2	*	1	1

ASK ALL:

Q.57 Do you think tougher international economic sanctions on Iran will or will not work in getting Iran to give up its nuclear program?

Feb 8-12 <u>2012</u>		Sep 30-Oct 4 <u>2009</u> ³
21	Will work	32
64	Will not work	56
15	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	11

¹ For June 23-26, 2011 and earlier the question asked "...do you think Barack Obama will remove U.S. combat troops..."

² In June 11-16, 2012, the question read: "...recent tensions between the U.S. and Iran over Iran's nuclear program and disputes in the Persian Gulf." In February 2006, question read: "The Iranian government recently said it will resume research on nuclear technology, despite opposition from other countries. How much, if anything, have you read or heard about this?"

³ In October 2009, the question read: "Do you think tougher international economic sanctions on Iran would or would not work in getting Iran to give up its nuclear program?"

ASK ALL:

Q.60 In your opinion, which is more important **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**?

Feb 8-12 <u>2012</u>		Sep 30- Oct 4 <u>2009</u>
58	To prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if it means taking military action [OR]	61
30	To avoid a military conflict with Iran, even if it means they may develop nuclear weapons	24
2	Neither (VOL.)	4
1	Both (VOL.)	1
10	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	10

ASK ALL:

Q.61 If Israel were to attack Iran to stop its nuclear weapons program, what position should the U.S. take? Should it support Israel's military action, oppose Israel's military action, or should the U.S. stay neutral?

Feb 8-12 <u>2012</u>	
39	Support Israel's military action
5	Oppose Israel's military action
51	Stay neutral
4	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)