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Six-in-Ten Say Opposition May Be No Better than
Current Government

Public Remains Opposed to Arming Syrian Rebels

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Six-in-Ten Say Opposition May Be No Better than Current Government

Public Remains Opposed to Arming Syrian Rebels

Broad majorities continue to oppose the U.S. and its allies sending arms and military supplies to anti-government groups in Syria. Last Thursday's announcement that the U.S. would aid the rebels has not increased public support for action, and majorities of all partisan groups are opposed.

Overall, 70% oppose the U.S. and its allies sending arms and military supplies to anti-government groups in Syria; just 20% favor this. Opinion is little changed from December of last year (24% favor) and support is down slightly from March, 2012 (29% favor).

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted June 12-16 among 1,512 adults, finds a major factor in overall attitudes about Syria is the impression that the U.S. military is already stretched thin. About two-thirds (68%) say the U.S. is too overcommitted to get involved in another conflict, and just 27% disagree. The public also has questions about the opposition groups in Syria: 60% say that they may be no better than the current government.

At the same time, the public does not reject a key argument for involvement in Syria: by a 53%-36% margin, most agree that it is important for the U.S. to support people who oppose authoritarian regimes.

The public is divided over whether the U.S. has a moral obligation to do what it can to stop the violence in Syria: 49% agree, 46% disagree.

Most Still Oppose Arming Anti-Government Groups in Syria

<i>U.S. and its allies sending arms to anti-govt groups in Syria</i>	Mar 2012	Dec 2012	June 2013
	%	%	%
Favor	29	24	20
Oppose	63	65	70
Don't know	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>
	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 12-16, 2013.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

In Syrian Conflict, Most See U.S. Military as Too Overcommitted to Get Involved

<i>Statements about conflict in Syria ...</i>	Agree	Disagree	DK
	%	%	%
U.S. military already too overcommitted	68	27	4=100
Syrian opposition groups may be no better than current govt	60	25	15=100
Important U.S. support people opposing authoritarian regimes	53	36	11=100
U.S. has moral obligation to do what it can to stop violence	49	46	4=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 12-16, 2013.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Most Republicans and Democrats Oppose Arming Rebels

There is very little partisan divide in attitudes about the conflict in Syria. Majorities of independents (74%), Republicans (71%) and Democrats (66%) oppose the U.S. and its allies sending arms and military supplies to anti-government groups in Syria.

Nearly identical majorities of Democrats (69%), independents (69%) and Republicans (68%) also believe that U.S. military forces are too overcommitted to get involved in another conflict.

Independents (66%) and Republicans (64%) are most concerned that the opposition groups in Syria may be no better than the current government, but 52% of Democrats also agree with this statement.

By a 58%-38% margin, more Democrats agree than disagree that the U.S. has a moral obligation to do what it can to stop the violence in Syria. Republicans are split with 49% saying the U.S. has a moral obligation to do what it can to stop the violence, and 48% saying it does not have this responsibility. Most independents (53%) disagree that the U.S. has a moral obligation to stop the violence in Syria.

The survey, conducted from Wednesday, June 12 through Sunday, June 16, found no significant trend in opinion about Syria over the course of the five nights of fieldwork. In the first two nights of interviewing 69% opposed arming Syrian rebels, in the final three nights of fieldwork 71% were opposed.

Partisans Oppose Arming Rebels; Concerned About Overcommitted U.S. Military

<i>U.S. and its allies sending arms to anti-govt groups in Syria</i>	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %
Favor	20	20	25	18
Oppose	70	71	66	74
Don't know	9	10	9	8
	100	100	100	100

% agree

U.S. military already too overcommitted	68	68	69	69
Syrian opposition groups may be no better than current govt	60	64	52	66
Important U.S. support people opposing authoritarian regimes	53	55	56	51
U.S. has moral obligation to do what it can to stop violence	49	49	58	42

PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 12-16, 2013.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Low Public Interest in Syria News

Even amidst developments on the ground in Syria and the announcement of U.S. plans to aid anti-government groups there, the public continues to pay very little attention to news about Syria. In a separate survey conducted Thursday through Sunday, just 15% say they are following news about charges that Syria has used chemical weapons against anti-government groups very closely, far fewer than are following other stories such as the government's collection of communication information (35%) and news about the national economy (30%). In fact, 33% say they are following news about Syria not at all closely.

Partisans express similarly low levels of interest in the conflict in Syria. Just 12% of Democrats, 14% of Republicans and 17% of independents say they are following charges that Syria used chemical weapons very closely.

Limited Interest in Syria News

% following news about Syria very closely



PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 13-16, 2013 Omnibus.

Those Who Favor Arming Rebels Also Have Concerns

The 20% of the public that favors arming anti-government groups in Syria also expresses concerns about the U.S. getting involved. More than half (56%) of those who favor arming rebels agree with the statement that U.S. military forces are too overcommitted to get involved in another conflict, and 55% agree that the opposition groups in Syria may be no better than the current government. However, far larger majorities agree that it is important for the U.S. to support people who oppose authoritarian regimes (76%) and that the U.S. has a moral obligation to do what it can to stop the violence in Syria (75%).

To a lesser extent, those who oppose arming the rebels are sympathetic to some arguments for greater U.S. involvement in Syria. About half of those who oppose arming rebels (48%) agree that it is important for the U.S. to support people who oppose authoritarian regimes; 41% say the U.S. has a moral obligation to do what it can to stop the violence in Syria.

Those Who Favor Arming Rebels Also Say Military Overcommitted

	<i>Among those who ...</i>	
	Favor arming rebels	Oppose arming rebels
<i>% agree</i>	%	%
U.S. military already too overcommitted	56	75
Syrian opposition groups may be no better than current govt	55	65
Important U.S. support people opposing authoritarian regimes	76	48
U.S. has moral obligation to do what it can to stop violence	75	41
N=	334	1,032

PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 12-16, 2013.

About the Surveys

Most of the analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted June 12-16, 2013 among a national sample of 1,512 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (758 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 754 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 394 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 2011 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 and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2012 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	1,512	2.9 percentage points
Republicans	388	5.8 percentage points
Democrats	487	5.2 percentage points
Independents	575	4.8 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

Some of the analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted June 13-16, 2013 among a national sample of 1,004 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (501 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 503 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 256 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Braun Research 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. 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 2011 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 2012 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	1,004	3.7 percentage points
Republicans	238	7.6 percentage points
Democrats	297	6.8 percentage points
Independents	357	6.2 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
JUNE 2013 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
June 12-16, 2013
N=1,512

QUESTIONS 1-5, 8, 14 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 6-7, 9-13

ASK ALL:

On a different subject,

Q.15 Would you favor or oppose the U.S. and its allies sending arms and military supplies to anti-government groups in Syria?

Jun 12-16 <u>2013</u>		Dec 5-9 <u>2012</u>	Mar 7-11 <u>2012</u>
20	Favor	24	29
70	Oppose	65	63
9	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	11	9

ASK ALL:

Q.16 I'm going to read you some statements about the conflict in Syria. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each. First, **[INSERT ITEM, RANDOMIZE]**: do you agree or disagree? How about **[NEXT ITEM]**? **[REPEAT AS NECESSARY: Do you agree or disagree?]**

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a. The U.S. has a moral obligation to do what it can to stop the violence in Syria Jun 12-16, 2013	49	46	4
b. It is important for the U.S. to support people who oppose authoritarian regimes Jun 12-16, 2013	53	36	11
c. U.S. military forces are too overcommitted to get involved in another conflict Jun 12-16, 2013	68	27	4
d. The opposition groups in Syria may be no better than the current government Jun 12-16, 2013	60	25	15

NO QUESTIONS 17-19, 21-23, 28-31, 33-35, 38, 50, 53-54

QUESTIONS 20, 24-27, 32, 36-37, 39-49, 51-52, 55-58 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

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
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
Jun 12-16, 2013	23	33	39	3	*	2	17	15
May 1-5, 2013	25	32	37	2	1	3	14	16
Mar 13-17, 2013	26	33	34	3	1	3	14	15
Feb 13-18, 2013	22	32	41	2	*	2	15	19
Jan 9-13, 2013	25	32	38	2	*	2	15	16
Dec 17-19, 2012	21	32	38	4	*	4	15	14
Dec 5-9, 2012	23	33	38	3	1	2	14	19
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012	26	34	34	3	1	3	13	16
Oct 24-28, 2012	28	33	33	4	*	2	12	16
Oct 4-7, 2012	27	31	36	3	1	3	15	15
Sep 12-16, 2012	24	35	36	2	*	2	14	16
Jul 16-26, 2012	22	33	38	4	*	3	14	15
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	24	33	37	3	*	3	15	17
Yearly Totals								
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

ASK ALL:

TEAPARTY2 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion either way</u>	(VOL.) <u>Haven't heard of</u>	(VOL.) <u>Refused</u>	<i>Not heard of/ DK</i>
Jun 12-16, 2013	22	29	46	2	2	--
May 23-26, 2013	17	20	56	3	4	--
Feb 14-17, 2013	19	26	52	2	1	--
Dec 5-9, 2012	18	29	50	2	1	--
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 (RVs)	19	29	47	1	3	--
Oct 4-7, 2012	19	25	52	2	2	--
Sep 12-16, 2012	18	26	53	2	2	--
Jul 16-26, 2012	16	27	54	2	1	--
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	19	27	49	3	2	--
Jun 7-17, 2012	21	25	52	2	1	--
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	16	25	54	2	3	--
Apr 4-15, 2012	20	26	50	3	2	--
Mar 7-11, 2012	19	29	48	2	2	--
Feb 8-12, 2012	18	25	53	2	2	--
Jan 11-16, 2012	20	24	52	2	2	--
Jan 4-8, 2012	18	25	52	2	3	--
Dec 7-11, 2011	19	27	50	2	2	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	20	27	51	1	1	--
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	19	27	51	2	1	--
Aug 17-21, 2011	20	27	50	1	1	--
Jul 20-24, 2011	20	24	53	1	1	--
Jun 15-19, 2011	20	26	50	3	2	--
May 25-30, 2011	18	23	54	2	2	--
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	22	29	47	1	1	--
Mar 8-14, 2011	19	25	54	1	1	--
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	20	25	52	2	2	--
Feb 2-7, 2011 ¹	22	22	53	2	2	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	24	22	50	2	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	22	26	49	2	2	--
Nov 4-7, 2010	27	22	49	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	29	25	32	--	1	13
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	28	24	30	--	1	16
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	29	26	32	--	1	13
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	22	18	37	--	1	21
Jun 16-20, 2010	24	18	30	--	*	27
May 20-23, 2010	25	18	31	--	1	25
Mar 11-21, 2010	24	14	29	--	1	31

¹ In the February 2-7, 2011 survey and before, question read "...do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement..." In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May 2010 through October 2010, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March 2010 it was described as "the Tea Party protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
June 13-16, 2013 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,004

QUESTIONS PEW.1a-f HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

PEW.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
ASKED JUNE 14-16, 2013 ONLY [N=733]:					
g. Charges that Syria has used chemical weapons against anti-government groups					
June 14-16, 2013	15	30	20	33	2
April 25-28, 2013	18	25	24	33	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
June 6-9, 2013: <i>Political violence in Syria</i>	13	23	22	42	*
May 9-12, 2013	17	24	25	33	1
March 28-31, 2013	13	22	25	40	1
December 13-16, 2012	14	26	26	33	1
December 6-9, 2012	19	28	23	29	1
November 29-December 2, 2012	15	23	23	39	1
August 16-19, 2012	12	24	26	37	2
July 19-22, 2012	17	24	23	36	1
June 28-July 1, 2012	13	19	26	42	*
June 14-17, 2012	15	24	21	40	1
May 31-June 3, 2012	12	25	25	37	1
April 12-15, 2012: <i>International efforts to stop political violence in Syria</i>	14	23	25	37	1
April 5-8, 2012	15	21	27	37	1
March 15-18, 2012: <i>Political violence in Syria</i>	16	26	27	30	1
March 8-11, 2012	17	23	23	37	1
February 23-26, 2012	18	24	21	35	1
February 9-12, 2012	17	23	23	36	*
January 12-15, 2012	12	17	26	45	1
August 4-7, 2011: <i>Political violence following uprisings in Syria</i>	10	19	26	44	1
June 2-5, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests and violence in some Middle Eastern countries</i>	18	25	25	32	*
May 5-8, 2011: <i>Political violence following uprisings in Syria</i>	14	27	30	28	1
April 28-May 1, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests and violence in some Middle Eastern countries</i>	18	29	25	27	1
February 3-6, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries</i>	32	35	16	18	*
January 27-30, 2011	17	26	21	35	*