



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER
For The People & The Press

NEWS Release
1615 L Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel (202) 419-4350
Fax (202) 419-4399

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Support for Talks and Sanctions, Skepticism They Will Work
MOST WOULD USE FORCE TO STOP IRANIAN NUKES

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Andrew Kohut, Director
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors
Pew Research Center for the People & the Press
202-419-4350
<http://www.people-press.org>

Support for Talks and Sanctions, Skepticism They Will Work **MOST WOULD USE FORCE TO STOP IRANIAN NUKES**

The public approves of direct negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program, although most Americans are not hopeful the talks will succeed. And a strong majority – 61% – says that it is more important to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if it means taking military action. Far fewer (24%) say it is more important to avoid a military conflict with Iran, if it means that the country may develop nuclear weapons.

There is broad willingness across the political spectrum to use military force to prevent Iran from going nuclear. Seven-in-ten Republicans (71%) and two-thirds of independents (66%) say it is more important to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons even if it means taking military action. Fewer Democrats (51%) express this view; still, only about three-in-ten Democrats (31%) say it is more important to avoid a military conflict with Iran, if it means Tehran may develop nuclear weapons.

	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Rep</u> %	<u>Dem</u> %	<u>Ind</u> %
<i>More important to...</i>				
Prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if means taking military action	61	71	51	66
Avoid military conflict, even if Iran may develop nuclear weapons	24	16	31	22
Neither/both/DK	<u>15</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100	100

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted Sept. 30-Oct. 4 among 1,500 adults reached on cell phones and landlines, finds substantial public support for non-military strategies aimed at persuading Iran from going ahead with its nuclear program. Yet there is considerable skepticism that these efforts – tougher international sanctions as well as direct talks with Iran – would succeed in getting Iran to drop its nuclear program.

More than six-in-ten Americans (63%) approve of the United States negotiating directly with Iran over the issue of its nuclear program while 28% oppose such talks. In September 2006, 54% said they would favor such negotiations while 32% were opposed. At the time, the Bush administration opposed direct negotiations with Iran.

Yet while the public supports nuclear talks with Iran, a clear majority (64%) says they will *not* work in getting Iran to give up its nuclear program, compared with just 22% who say they will work.

The public also overwhelmingly approves of tougher economic sanctions against Iran; fully 78% approve while just 12% disapprove. But again, most Americans (56%) say that tougher economic sanctions would not work in getting Iran to drop its nuclear program.

The survey finds that slightly more than half of Americans (51%) say they have a great deal (17%) or a fair amount (34%) of confidence in President Obama to do the right thing in dealing with Iran; 44% say they have not too much confidence (24%) or no confidence at all (20%) in Obama on this issue.

Seven-in-ten Democrats (71%) have confidence in Obama on Iran while 19% express little or no confidence in the president. Just 30% of Republicans say they have a great deal or fair amount of confidence in Obama to do the right thing in dealing with Iran while 66% are not too confident or not at all confident. Independents are evenly split, with 49% expressing at least a fair amount of confidence in Obama on Iran and 48% expressing little or no confidence.

Bipartisan Support for Direct Talks

There are no partisan differences in opinions about whether the United States should directly negotiate with Iran over its nuclear program: 64% of Democrats approve of these negotiations, as do 64% of independents and 63% of Republicans.

However, Democrats are more likely than either independents or Republicans to say that direct talks will work in getting Iran to give up its nuclear program. About a third of Democrats (34%) say the talks will succeed in persuading

Diplomacy Favored, But Public Doubts Its Effectiveness	
Direct negotiations...	
Approve	63
Disapprove	28
Don't know	9
	100
Will they work?	
Will work	22
Will not	64
Don't know	13
	100
Tougher sanctions...	
Approve	78
Disapprove	12
Don't know	10
	100
Would they work?	
Would work	32
Would not	56
Don't know	11
	100
Q 60F1-Q63 F2. Form 1 respondents asked if they approve or disapprove, Form 2 asked if approaches will or will not work. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.	

Partisan Views of Direct Talks, Tougher Sanctions on Iran				
	Rep	Dem	Ind	R-D diff
	%	%	%	
Direct negotiations				
Approve	63	64	64	-1
Disapprove	26	25	31	+1
Will they work?				
Will work	11	34	19	-23
Will not	81	47	70	+34
Tougher sanctions...				
Approve	81	72	84	+9
Disapprove	9	13	11	-4
Will they work?				
Will work	31	35	30	-4
Will not	57	52	60	+5
Minimum number of cases	172	234	235	

Iran to drop its nuclear program, though nearly half (47%) say they will not. By comparison, just 19% of independents and 11% of Republicans say the talks will work, with large majorities of each group (70% of independents, 81% of Republicans) saying they will not.

Fully 84% of independents, 81% of Republicans and 72% of Democrats approve of tougher economic sanctions on Iran. Unlike opinions about direct talks with Iran, there are only modest partisan differences over the effectiveness of sanctions: 35% of Democrats, 31% of Republicans and 30% of independents say tougher international economic sanctions would work in getting Iran to give up its nuclear program.

Modest Attentiveness to Iran Dispute

Overall, 41% say they have heard a lot about the dispute over Iran's nuclear program, while 41% have heard a little and 18% have heard nothing at all. That is comparable to interest in the Iran nuclear issue in September 2006 (41% a lot, 44% a little, 14% nothing at all).

People who have heard a lot about the issue are more supportive of direct negotiations with Iran than are those who have heard less about the issue (71% approve vs. 58%). There is a similar gap in views of tougher international sanctions; nearly nine-in-ten (89%) of those who have heard a lot about the issue approve of tougher sanctions, compared with 72% who have heard less.

There are smaller differences between the highly attentive and less attentive over whether those approaches will succeed in getting Iran to give up its nuclear program. In addition, comparable majorities of those who have heard a lot about the dispute over Iran's nuclear program (64%), and those have heard little or nothing about this (59%), say it is more important to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if it means using military force.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Abt/SRBI Inc. among a nationwide sample of 1,500 adults, 18 years of age or older, from September 30-October 4, 2009 (1125 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 375 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 141 who had no landline telephone). Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. 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/ethnicity, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2008 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also 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 2008 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.

The following table shows 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	1500	3 percentage points
Form 1	747	4 percentage points
Form 2	753	4 percentage points
Republicans	365	6 percentage points
Democrats	473	5 percentage points
Independents	543	5 percentage points

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.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

Andrew Kohut, Director
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors
Michael Remez, Senior Writer
Robert Suls, Shawn Neidorf, Leah Christian and Jocelyn Kiley Research Associates
Alec Tyson, Research Analyst

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
OCTOBER 2009 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
 September 30-October 4, 2009
 N=1500

QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 9 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=747]:

Q.10F1 How much confidence do you have in Barack Obama to do the right thing when it comes to **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**—a great deal of confidence, a fair amount of confidence, not too much confidence, or no confidence at all?...How about when it comes to **[NEXT ITEM]**?

		A great <u>deal</u>	A fair <u>amount</u>	Not too <u>much</u>	No confidence <u>at all</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
d.F1	Dealing with Iran September 30-October 4, 2009	17	34	24	20	5

ITEMS a, b, c and e HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTION 11

QUESTIONS 12 THROUGH 58 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Thinking about Iran for a moment...

Q.59 How much, if anything, have you read or heard about the dispute about Iran's nuclear program? Have you heard...**[READ]**

<u>Sep 30-Oct 4</u> <u>2009</u>		<u>Sep</u> <u>2006</u>	<u>Feb</u> ¹ <u>2006</u>
41	A lot	41	32
41	A little	44	46
18	Nothing at all	14	21
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1	1

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=747]:

Q.60F1 From what you know, do you approve or disapprove of the United States negotiating directly with Iran over the issue of its nuclear program?

TREND FOR COMPARISON:

		<u>Sep 2006</u>
63	Approve	54 <i>Favor</i>
28	Disapprove	32 <i>Oppose</i>
9	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	14

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=753]:

Q.61F2 From what you know, do you think the United States negotiating directly with Iran will or will not work in getting Iran to give up its nuclear program?

22	Will work
64	Will not work
13	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

1 In February 2006, question was worded "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 ..."

ASK FORM 1 ONLY[N=747]:

Q.62F1 Would you approve or disapprove of tougher international economic sanctions on Iran?

- 78 Approve
- 12 Disapprove
- 10 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=753]:

Q.63F2 Do you think tougher international economic sanctions on Iran would or would not work in getting Iran to give up its nuclear program?

- 32 Would work
- 56 Would not work
- 11 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

Q.64 In your opinion, which is more important [READ AND RANDOMIZE]?

- 61 To prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if it means taking military action [OR]
- 24 To avoid a military conflict with Iran, even if it means they may develop nuclear weapons
- 4 Neither (VOL.)
- 1 Both (VOL.)
- 10 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

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

IF ANSWERED 3, 4, 5, 8 OR 9 IN PARTY [N=662], ASK:

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
Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	23	34	37	3	1	3	16	14
September 10-15, 2009	23	34	34	4	*	5	13	17
August 20-27, 2009	26	32	36	3	*	3	14	16
August 11-17, 2009	23	33	38	3	*	3	16	15
July, 2009	22	34	37	5	*	2	15	14
June, 2009	25	34	34	3	*	3	11	16
May, 2009	23	39	29	4	*	4	9	14
April, 2009	22	33	39	3	*	3	13	18
March, 2009	24	34	35	5	*	2	12	17
February, 2009	24	36	34	3	1	2	13	17
January, 2009	25	37	33	3	*	2	11	16
December, 2008	26	39	30	2	*	3	8	15
Late October, 2008	24	39	32	2	*	3	11	15
Mid-October, 2008	27	35	31	4	*	3	9	16
Early October, 2008	26	36	31	4	*	3	11	15
Yearly Totals								
2008	25.3	35.8	31.7	3.8	.3	3.1	10.5	15.4
2007	25.4	32.9	33.7	4.6	.4	3.1	10.7	16.7
2006	27.6	32.8	30.3	5.0	.4	3.9	10.2	14.5
2005	29.2	32.8	30.3	4.5	.3	2.8	10.2	14.9
2004	29.7	33.4	29.8	3.9	.4	2.9	11.7	13.4
2003	29.8	31.4	31.2	4.7	.5	2.5	12.1	13.0
2002	30.3	31.2	30.1	5.1	.7	2.7	12.6	11.6

PARTY CONTINUED...

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)		
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	No	Other	DK/	<i>Lean</i>	<i>Lean</i>
				<u>preference</u>	<u>party</u>	<u>Ref</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>
2001	29.2	33.6	28.9	5.1	.5	2.7	11.7	11.4
2001 <i>Post-Sept 11</i>	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 <i>Pre-Sept 11</i>	28.2	34.6	29.5	5.0	.5	2.1	11.7	12.5
2000	27.5	32.5	29.5	5.9	.5	4.0	11.6	11.6
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.5	33.2	31.9	4.6	.4	2.4	11.8	13.5
1997	28.2	33.3	31.9	4.0	.4	2.3	12.3	13.8
1996	29.2	32.7	33.0	5.2	--	--	12.7	15.6
1995	31.4	29.7	33.4	5.4	--	--	14.4	12.9
1994	29.8	31.8	33.8	4.6	--	--	14.3	12.6
1993	27.4	33.8	34.0	4.8	--	--	11.8	14.7
1992	27.7	32.7	35.7	3.9	--	--	13.8	15.8
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	4.5	--	--	14.6	10.8
1990	31.0	33.1	29.1	6.8	--	--	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--