

Let's Make a Deal: Public Backs Iran Talks

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As talks over the future of Iran's nuclear program enter a critical stage, the 2014 Chicago Council Survey reveals that the American negotiators come to the table backed by the US public: majorities of Americans favor the interim agreement and support a diplomatic approach, but they are prepared to use military force if necessary to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

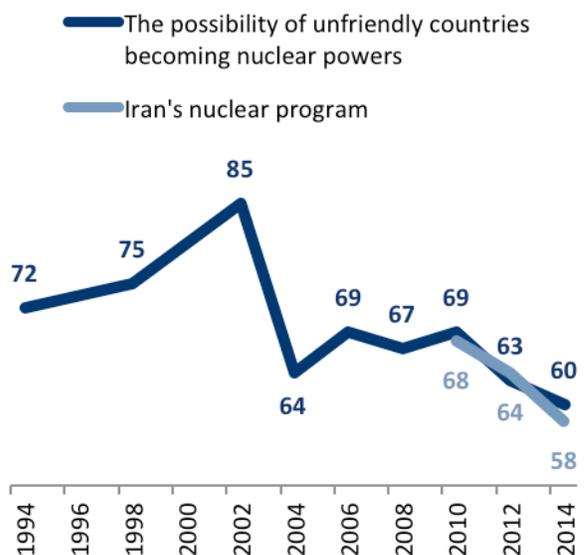
Key Findings:

- Six in ten Americans (62%) favor the interim agreement with Iran.
- Seven in ten Americans (69%) support using US troops to stop Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.
- Two in three Americans (67%) say US leaders should be ready to meet and talk with Iranian leaders.

Americans consider the possibility of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon to be one of the most critical threats facing the United States today. Nearly six in ten Americans (58%) see this as a critical threat; another 38 percent believe it is an important threat to the United States. Consequently, Iran's nuclear program is also one of the few specific situations where the American public is willing to send US troops to intervene abroad: seven in ten (69%) support using U.S. troops to stop Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

Despite the public's support for military action, Americans prefer a diplomatic outcome to the crisis over Iran's nuclear program. Since 2008, seven in ten have said that US leaders should be ready to meet and talk with leaders of Iran (67% in 2014). And a majority of the American public (62%) supports the interim agreement concluded last July in which the United States "eases some of the international economic sanctions against Iran" in exchange for Iran restricting its nuclear program in part, but not completely, and "submits to greater international inspection of its nuclear facilities."

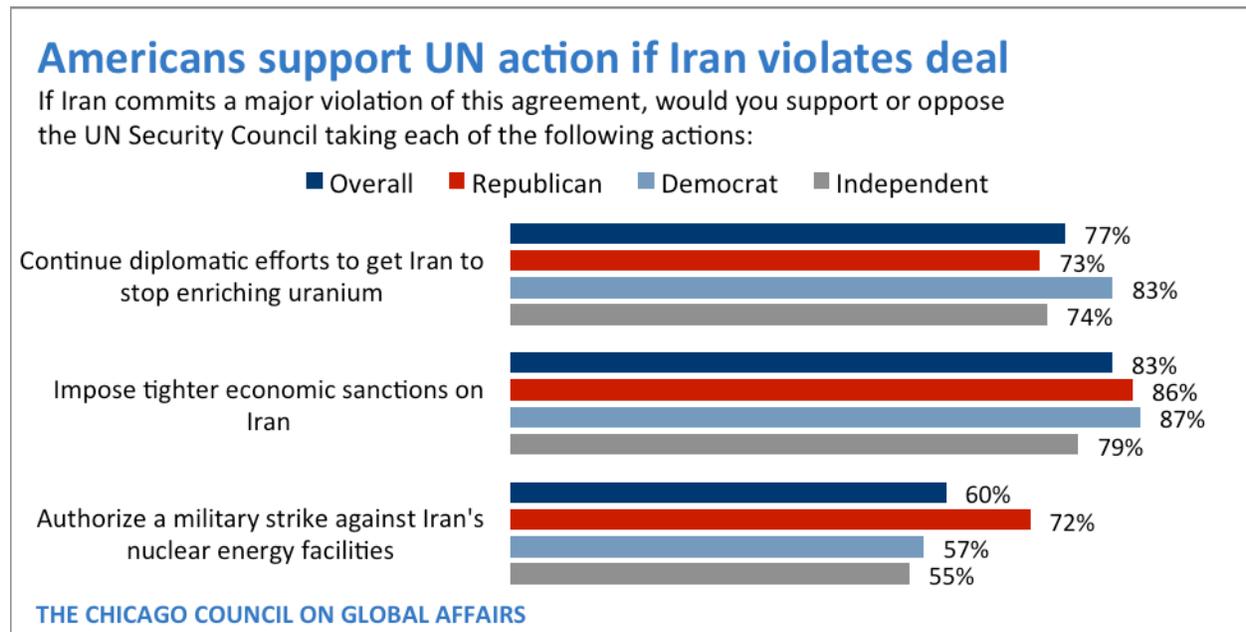
Nuclear weapons; Iranian program seen by public as critical threats



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But should Iran commit “a major violation” of the agreement, a majority of Americans (60%) support the United Nations Security Council authorizing a military strike against Iran’s nuclear energy facilities. An additional eight in ten Americans (83%) support the UN Security Council imposing tighter economic sanctions against Iran should Iran violate the agreement, and nearly as many (77%) support continuing diplomatic efforts to end Iranian uranium enrichment.

Support for this diplomacy-first approach to Iran crosses party lines. Majorities of Republicans (54%), Democrats (72%), and Independents (59%) favor the interim deal with Iran. Similarly, majorities of Republicans (72%), Democrats (57%), and Independents (55%) support the UN Security Council authorizing strikes against Iran’s nuclear energy facilities should Iran violate the agreement.



About the Chicago Council Survey

The analysis in this report is based on data from the 2014 Chicago Council Survey and previous Chicago Council Surveys of the American public on foreign policy. The 2014 Survey was conducted by GfK Custom Research using their large-scale, nationwide research panel between May 6 to May 29, 2014 among a national sample of 2,108 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 US states and the District of Columbia. The margin of error ranges from ± 2.1 to ± 4.1 percentage points depending on the specific question. For more results from the 2014 Chicago Council Survey, please see *Foreign Policy in the Age of Retrenchment*, which can be found at www.thechicagocouncil.org.

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