

# Public Opinion on Global Issues

Chapter 12b: U.S. Opinion on Transnational Threats: Weapons of  
Mass Destruction

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## **CHAPTER 12B: U.S. OPINION ON COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL THREATS: PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**

### ***Concerns about Nuclear Proliferation***

**A large majority of Americans are concerned about the possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers and believe that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is an important foreign policy goal for the United States.**

Overwhelmingly, Americans perceive nuclear proliferation as a critical threat. According to a 2006 Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) poll, more than two-thirds of U.S. respondents (69 percent) believe that the possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers is a critical threat, compared to 27 percent who believe it is important but not critical, and only 3 percent who believe it is not important. This is a higher level of concern than expressed in the nine other nations polled by WorldPublicOpinion.org (WPO) and CCGA in 2006: on average, 58 percent of respondents in these countries regard the possible acquisition of nuclear weapons by unfriendly countries as a critical threat, 28 percent as important but not critical, and 8 percent as unimportant (WPO/CCGA 2006).<sup>1</sup> When CCGA asked this question again in 2008, U.S. responses were similar (67 percent critical, 30 percent important, and 3 percent not important).<sup>2</sup>

A large majority of U.S. respondents (74 percent) said that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is a very important foreign policy goal, with another 22 percent saying that it is an important goal, and just 2 percent saying it is not an important goal (CCGA 2006). This level of concern is a bit higher than the average across all eight countries polled, in which 63 percent of international respondents indicated that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is a very important goal, 25 percent that it is an important goal, and 7 percent that it is unimportant.<sup>3</sup> In 2008, CCGA and Public Agenda both asked the same question of Americans and got similar results.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Goal of Abolition of Nuclear Weapons***

**A large majority of Americans favor an international agreement to eliminate all nuclear weapons, even when this would include an intrusive international inspection regime.**

In a 2008 WPO poll, respondents in twenty-one nations were asked about the possibility of an agreement for eliminating nuclear weapons, in which all nuclear-armed countries would be required to disarm according to a timetable and all other states would be prohibited from developing nuclear weapons. The question specified that all countries, including the country of the respondent, would be monitored. A majority of Americans (77 percent) favored the idea of such an agreement (39 percent strongly), while only 20 percent were opposed (7 percent strongly). On average across all twenty-one nations polled, 76 percent favored the idea of an agreement to eliminate nuclear weapons (50 percent strongly) while 16 percent were opposed (7 percent strongly).<sup>5</sup>

In 2005, Pew also found that 70 percent of Americans favor the United States “signing a treaty with other nations to reduce and eventually eliminate all nuclear weapons, including our own.”<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, support was a little lower than in the 2008 WPO poll discussed above, which mentioned an international inspections regime.

### ***Use of Force by the United Nations to Prevent Nuclear Proliferation***

**Americans favor the UN Security Council having the power to authorize the use of military force to prevent a country from acquiring nuclear weapons.**

Though the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) is something that states enter into voluntarily and from which they have the right to withdraw, Americans favor the UN Security Council having the power to authorize the use of military force to prevent a country from acquiring nuclear weapons. A large majority of Americans (62 percent) favored giving the UN Security Council this authority in a 2006 CCGA poll (33 percent were opposed). This was slightly higher than the average of the seventeen nations polled, where 59 percent of respondents favored the Security Council having such a right and 31 percent were opposed (WPO/CCGA 2006-08).<sup>7</sup>

### *Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty*

**An overwhelming majority of Americans support U.S. participation in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.**

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) seeks to reduce the danger of nuclear proliferation by preventing nonnuclear nations from developing nuclear weapons and hindering nuclear nations from improving them. The idea of such a treaty, which the United States has not ratified, enjoys strong U.S. public support. When asked in a 2006 CCGA poll, 86 percent of Americans said the United States should participate in a treaty that would prohibit nuclear weapon test explosions worldwide. Among all of the four countries asked, the average was a bit lower, with 76 percent saying their country should participate in such a treaty and 18 percent saying their country should not participate. In 2008, CCGA asked the same question and 88 percent of Americans favored U.S. participation in the CTBT.<sup>8</sup>

### *Multilateral Control of Nuclear Fuel Production*

**There is substantial U.S. public support for prohibiting some countries from developing nuclear fuel out of concern that they will use it to develop nuclear weapons. Americans would also favor an international regime under the United Nations that would stop new countries from beginning production of nuclear fuel and instead supply them with the fuel they need for energy production. Americans even favor giving the UN Security Council the right to authorize military force to prevent a country from developing nuclear fuel that could be used to develop nuclear weapons.**

The NPT puts limits on the development of nuclear weapons, but does not limit the production of nuclear fuel—provided that nations only do so to produce nuclear energy and submit to monitoring from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). To prevent diversion into weapons programs, there have been calls for greater international regulation of nuclear fuel production. Several polls show strong U.S. support for greater control over the production of nuclear fuel. CCGA asked the following question in 2006: “In the past, the international community has agreed that all countries have the right to produce nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes. Now it has been proposed that certain countries not be allowed to develop nuclear fuel out of concern they will use it to develop nuclear weapons. Do you think this proposal is a good idea or a bad idea?”

A large majority of U.S. respondents (66 percent) said the proposal is a good idea, while 31 percent said it is a bad idea. This was somewhat higher than the average of the thirteen countries that participated in the poll: 56 percent of respondents in these nations said the proposal is a good idea and 29 percent said it is a bad idea (WPO/CCGA 2006-07).<sup>9</sup>

A British Broadcasting Company (BBC)/GlobeScan/Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) poll in 2006 asked respondents to choose between two arguments about new countries developing nuclear fuel: “All countries

should be free to produce nuclear fuel under United Nations oversight, because they have the right to have nuclear energy and should not have to depend on other countries” OR “Because nuclear fuel can be developed for use in nuclear weapons, the United Nations should try to stop new countries from producing nuclear fuel, but should provide them with the fuel they need.”

A majority of Americans (56 percent) endorsed the statement that the United Nations should try to stop countries from producing nuclear fuel, while 29 percent said that all countries should have a right to produce fuel. U.S. support for UN action to prevent new countries from developing nuclear fuel was slightly higher than the average (52 percent) of twenty-five countries polled. Thirty-three percent of respondents in these nations said that all countries should have a right to produce fuel.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the strongest U.S. public support for multilateral control of the production of nuclear fuel emerged in a 2006 CCGA poll that asked whether the UN Security Council should have the right to authorize the use of force to stop a country that did not have nuclear weapons from producing nuclear fuel that could be used to produce such weapons. Fifty-seven percent of Americans supported granting the UN Security Council such authority, with 39 percent opposed. This is almost exactly the same as the average of sixteen countries polled (56 percent to 32 percent) (WPO/CCGA 2006-08).<sup>11</sup>

In 2008, CCGA also asked about an idea, similar to one proposed by then-IAEA Director Mohamed ElBaradei, that called for “having a UN agency control access to all nuclear fuel in the world to ensure that none is used for weapons production.” Sixty-three percent of Americans favored the idea.<sup>12</sup>

### *Dealing with Iran’s Nuclear Program*

**A large majority of Americans perceive Iran as pursuing nuclear weapons, rather than limiting itself to energy production, and there is substantial concern over this. Most want to put international pressure on Iran to stop it from producing nuclear fuel, but to date they have rejected the option of military force. Americans support the idea of allowing Iran to produce nuclear fuel if it accepts intrusive UN inspections. Asked which institution would best handle the issue of Iranian nuclear weapons, Americans are divided, though a plurality chooses the United Nations.**

International polling conducted in 2006 found a widespread perception in the United States that Iran is seeking to develop nuclear weapons. BBC/GlobeScan/PIPA surveyed twenty-five countries, including the United States, on whether “Iran is producing nuclear fuel strictly for its energy needs or ... is also trying to develop nuclear weapons.” An overwhelming majority of U.S. respondents (83 percent) believed Iran was pursuing nuclear weapons, while only 5 percent believed that it was producing nuclear fuel solely for its energy needs. Globally, a much lower 60 percent of respondents believed Iran was pursuing nuclear weapons and 17 percent that it was producing nuclear fuel strictly for its energy needs.<sup>13</sup>

In December 2007, however, CNN found that a somewhat smaller majority of Americans (61 percent) said that Iran was trying to develop nuclear weapons. This was on the heels of the National Intelligence Estimate report saying that Iran had abandoned its nuclear weapons program.<sup>14</sup>

The 2006 BBC/GlobeScan/PIPA poll also found that almost all U.S. respondents would be concerned “if Iran were to develop nuclear weapons.” An overwhelming 92 percent of U.S. respondents said they would be concerned (72 percent very concerned) if Iran were to develop nuclear weapons, while just 7 percent said they would not be concerned. Comparable global averages were 72 percent and 20 percent, respectively.<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, a 2006 German Marshall Fund (GMF) poll found that the prospect of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons was considered an extremely important threat by three-quarters of Americans. Nineteen percent called it an important threat, and 5 percent said it was not an important threat at all. This indicates a greater level of concern than the average of respondents polled in Europe, where 53 percent called it an extremely important threat, 27 percent called it an important threat, and 10 percent said it was not a threat.<sup>16</sup>

In 2009, a Pew poll found that a large majority (69 percent) of Americans believe that Iran's nuclear program poses "a major threat," and Gallup found a modest majority (54 percent) saying they are very concerned about it (moderately concerned 29 percent).<sup>17</sup>

Many more Americans than Europeans also believe that very serious consequences are likely to arise if Iran acquires nuclear weapons. In 2008, GMF polled people in Europe and the United States about the likelihood of five hypothetical scenarios if Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons. In the United States, 83 percent of respondents believed that with a nuclear-armed Iran, other Middle Eastern countries would likely decide to pursue nuclear weapons (a view held by 68 percent of Europeans); 83 percent believed Iran would supply nuclear weapons to terrorists (compared to 66 percent of Europeans); 75 percent believed Iran would attack other countries in the region (58 percent in Europe); and 66 percent believed Iran would threaten Europe with nuclear weapons (a view held by 54 percent of Europeans).

At the same time, 43 percent of Americans thought that it was "likely" or "somewhat" likely that Iran would only use nuclear weapons for defensive purposes, whereas more Europeans (50 percent) believed that this outcome was likely.<sup>18</sup>

### **What Action to Take**

Americans have favored talking with Iranian leaders and establishing diplomatic relations. Sixty-two percent said in November 2008 that President-elect Obama should "personally negotiate with the leaders of Iran to limit their nuclear program" (Quinnipiac University 2008).<sup>19</sup> In a different poll in 2008, a more modest majority (53 percent) said that the United States should "establish diplomatic relations with Iran while Iran has a nuclear program" (CBS/*New York Times* 2009).<sup>20</sup>

If Iran persists in developing nuclear weapons, polls suggest, most Americans do not favor military action against Iran, but they do favor a more assertive approach than publics in most other countries.

A December 2007 BBC/GlobeScan/PIPA poll asked about actions the UN Security Council should take if Iran continues to develop nuclear fuel. Among Americans, only 15 percent favored authorizing military strikes, while the largest number favored economic sanctions (45 percent) and 35 percent favored softer approaches (31 percent diplomacy, 4 percent no pressure). In contrast, on average among the twenty-six countries polled, 56 percent favored softer approaches (42 percent use only diplomatic efforts, 14 percent not pressure Iran) and just 33 percent supported "tougher measures" (26 percent impose economic sanctions, 8 percent authorize military strikes).<sup>21</sup>

A 2008 CCGA poll showed similar views. When asked what the UN Security Council should do if Iran continues to enrich uranium, only 20 percent of Americans chose the approach of authorizing "a military strike against Iran's nuclear energy facilities." The most popular approach (endorsed by 48 percent) was to impose economic sanctions, followed by simply continuing diplomatic efforts (27 percent). Just 3 percent favored applying no pressure.<sup>22</sup>

A 2008 GMF poll presented a different set of policy options for dealing with Iran. Americans were divided between those in favor of increasing pressure while maintaining the option of using military force (49 percent), and those in support of taking a range of milder approaches, including: accepting that Iran may develop nuclear weapons (6 percent); maintaining the level of diplomatic pressure on Iran (13 percent); and increasing diplomatic pressure while ruling out use of military force (27 percent). On average among Europeans, only 21 percent supported increasing pressure while keeping force as an option, whereas 47 percent supported increasing diplomatic pressure but ruling out military force. Sixteen percent of European supported maintaining the present level of diplomatic pressure and 6 percent supported accepting that Iran may develop nuclear weapons.<sup>23</sup>

When Americans are given only the two options of taking military action or not taking military action, their responses vary from a slight plurality opposing military action to a slight plurality favoring it.<sup>24</sup> (It should also be noted that the question did not specify whether the military action would be unilateral or multilateral).

Even when nonmilitary options are not successful, a majority of Americans tend to reject military options. In 2007, Gallup initially asked what the United States “should do to get Iran to shut down its nuclear program,” providing two options: “Take military action” and “Rely on economic/diplomatic efforts.” Only 18 percent of respondents opted for military action, while 73 percent favored relying on economic and diplomatic efforts. Of these 73 percent, 55 percent still rejected the idea of military action when asked the question, “Suppose U.S. economic and diplomatic efforts do not work ... [should the United States] take military action?” Thirty-four percent said that the United States should take military action if economic and diplomatic efforts do not work.<sup>25</sup>

### **Making a Deal**

A December 2007 BBC/GlobeScan/PIPA poll asked, “If Iran were to allow UN inspectors permanent and full access throughout Iran to make sure it is not developing nuclear weapons, do you think Iran should or should not be allowed to produce nuclear fuel for producing electricity?” A majority of respondents in the United States (55 percent) favored granting Iran permission to produce nuclear fuel for energy (while 38 percent were opposed). Interestingly, this was somewhat higher than the average of 47 percent across all twenty-six countries polled who favored the idea (36 percent were opposed).<sup>26</sup>

CCGA asked this same question in 2008 and 56 percent of U.S. respondents favored the idea, while 41 percent were opposed.<sup>27</sup>

### **Who Best to Handle Iran?**

In polls, a plurality of Americans as well as Europeans favor having the United Nations take the lead in dealing with Iran. In 2006, GMF asked who could best handle the issue of Iranian nuclear weapons. A plurality of Americans (36 percent) said the United Nations was the best to handle the issue, 22 percent said the United States, 18 percent said the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and 13 percent said the European Union. Comparatively, in Europe, an average of 43 percent supported the United Nations handling the issue, 19 percent supported the European Union, 15 percent supported NATO, and 8 percent favored the United States.<sup>28</sup>

When Americans are not offered the option of the United Nations, a slight majority prefers the European Union taking the lead on Iran rather than the United States. In 2006, Pew asked “Who should take the lead in dealing with Iran’s nuclear program—the United States or countries in the European Union?” Fifty-one percent said the European Union, while 30 percent said the United States.<sup>29</sup>



<sup>1</sup> WorldPublicOpinion.org/Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2006

Below is a list of possible threats to the vital interest of [survey country] in the next 10 years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all.

The possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers

	<b>Critical</b>	<b>Important but not critical</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Not sure/ Decline</b>
<b>United States</b>	69	27	3	1
<b>Armenia</b>	62	21	7	10
<b>Australia</b>	68	25	6	1
<b>China</b>	27	43	17	12
<b>India</b>	54	27	12	7
<b>Israel</b>	72	17	7	4
<b>Mexico</b>	75	17	4	3
<b>South Korea</b>	50	40	9	0
<b>Ukraine</b>	45	31	7	17

<sup>2</sup> Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2008

Below is a list of possible threats to the vital interest of the United States in the next 10 years. For each one, please select whether you see this as a critical threat, an important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all.

The possibility of unfriendly countries becoming nuclear powers

	<b>Critical</b>	<b>Important but not critical</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Not sure/ Decline</b>
<b>1994</b>	72	21	3	4
<b>1998</b>	75	18	3	4
<b>2002 (telephone)</b>	85	12	2	1
<b>2004 (telephone)</b>	66	26	5	3
<b>2004 (internet)</b>	64	31	3	2
<b>2006 (internet)</b>	69	27	3	1
<b>2008 (internet)</b>	67	30	3	0

<sup>3</sup> WorldPublicOpinion.org/Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2006

Below is a list of possible foreign policy goals that [survey country] might have. For each one please select whether you think that it should be a very important foreign policy goal of [survey country], a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all?

Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons

	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Not sure/ Decline</b>
<b>United States</b>	74	22	2	2
<b>Armenia</b>	58	24	12	6
<b>Australia</b>	82	14	4	0
<b>China</b>	52	33	7	8



<b>India</b>	56	25	9	10
<b>Mexico</b>	65	23	8	3
<b>South Korea</b>	56	38	6	1
<b>Thailand</b>	57	20	7	17

#### <sup>44</sup> Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2008

Below is a list of possible foreign policy goals that the United States might have. For each one please select whether you think that it should be a very important foreign policy goal of the United States, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important goal at all?

Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons

	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Not sure/ Decline</b>
<b>1990</b>	84	12	2	2
<b>1994</b>	82	14	2	2
<b>1998</b>	82	14	1	3
<b>2002 (telephone)</b>	90	8	1	1
<b>2002 (internet)</b>	86	12	2	1
<b>2004 (internet)</b>	73	23	2	2
<b>2006 (internet)</b>	74	22	2	2
<b>2008 (internet)</b>	73	25	2	1

#### Public Agenda Confidence in U.S. Foreign Policy Index Poll March 2008

(How important to our foreign policy should each of the following be? Should this be very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?)...Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons

75%	Very important
21	Somewhat important
2	Not very important
1	Not at all important
1	Don't know

#### <sup>5</sup> WorldPublicOpinion.org 2008

I would like you to consider a possible international agreement for eliminating all nuclear weapons. All countries with nuclear weapons would be required to eliminate them according to a timetable. All other countries would be required not to develop them. All countries, including [country], would be monitored to make sure they are following the agreement. Would you favor or oppose such an agreement?

	<b>Strongly favor</b>	<b>Somewhat favor</b>	<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	<b>Strongly oppose</b>	<b>DK / NS</b>
<b>Argentina</b>	85	8	2	2	3
<b>Mexico</b>	70	17	7	3	3
<b>United States</b>	39	38	13	7	2
<b>France</b>	58	28	7	5	3
<b>Britain</b>	55	26	9	8	2
<b>Russia</b>	38	31	8	6	16

<b>Ukraine</b>	53	27	5	2	14
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	48	22	8	14	8
<b>Egypt</b>	39	44	7	10	0
<b>Iran</b>	50	18	8	5	19
<b>Israel</b>	42	25	13	12	8
<b>Pakistan</b>	20	26	21	20	13
<b>Palestinian Territories</b>	33	37	14	8	9
<b>Turkey</b>	55	10	5	5	24
<b>Kenya</b>	68	28	2	1	1
<b>Nigeria</b>	55	31	8	4	2
<b>China</b>	60	23	9	5	3
<b>India</b>	31	31	11	9	18
<b>Indonesia</b>	60	21	6	5	9
<b>South Korea</b>	53	33	11	4	1
<b>Thailand</b>	45	22	4	4	25
<b>Average</b>	50	26	9	7	9

<sup>6</sup> **Pew Research Center for the People & the Press/CFR America's Place In The World Survey October 2005**

Would you favor or oppose the U.S. (United States) signing a treaty with other nations to reduce and eventually eliminate all nuclear weapons, including our own?

70% Favor  
 24 Oppose  
 6 Don't know/Refused

<sup>7</sup> **WorldPublicOpinion.org 2006-2008**

Do you think that the UN Security Council should or should not have the right to authorize the use of military force for each of the following purposes:

To prevent a country that does not have nuclear weapons from acquiring them.

	<b>Should</b>	<b>Should not</b>	<b>Not sure/ Decline</b>
<b>Mexico</b>	70	21	10
<b>United States</b>	62	33	5
<b>France</b>	50	48	2
<b>Russia</b>	55	27	19
<b>Ukraine</b>	51	22	26
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	59	26	16
<b>Egypt</b>	74	26	0
<b>Israel</b>	62	33	5
<b>Palestinian Territories</b>	38	59	3
<b>Turkey</b>	58	23	19
<b>Kenya</b>	84	15	1
<b>Nigeria</b>	81	17	2
<b>China</b>	47	40	14

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<b>India</b>	53	34	13
<b>Indonesia</b>	68	19	14
<b>South Korea</b>	43	55	1
<b>Thailand</b>	52	31	18
<b>Average</b>	59	31	10

### <sup>8</sup> Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2008

Based on what you know, do you think the U.S. should or should not participate in the following treaties and agreements?  
The treaty that would prohibit nuclear weapon test explosions worldwide

	<b>Should participate</b>	<b>Should not participate</b>	<b>Not sure/ Decline</b>
<b>2002 (telephone)</b>	81	14	5
<b>2002 (internet)</b>	84	13	3
<b>2004 (internet)</b>	87	9	3
<b>2006 (internet)</b>	86	10	4
<b>2008 (internet)</b>	88	11	1

### <sup>9</sup> WorldPublicOpinion.org/Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2006

In the past, the international community has agreed that all countries have the right to produce nuclear fuel for peaceful purposes. Now it has been proposed that certain countries not be allowed to develop nuclear fuel out of concern they will use it to develop nuclear weapons. Do you think this proposal is a good idea or a bad idea?

	<b>Good Idea</b>	<b>Bad Idea</b>	<b>Not sure/ Decline</b>
<b>United States</b>	66	31	3
<b>Argentina</b>	48	29	23
<b>Armenia</b>	61	22	18
<b>China</b>	57	23	20
<b>France</b>	56	40	4
<b>India</b>	49	36	15
<b>Israel</b>	69	27	3
<b>Palestinian Territories</b>	40	57	3
<b>Peru</b>	56	42	2
<b>Poland</b>	61	19	20
<b>Russia</b>	59	23	19
<b>Thailand</b>	41	33	26
<b>Ukraine</b>	60	17	24

### <sup>10</sup> BBC July 2006

Which of the following positions about new countries developing nuclear fuel is closer to your own?

	<b>All countries should be free to produce nuclear fuel under United Nations oversight, because they have the right to have nuclear energy and should not have to depend on other countries</b>	<b>Because nuclear fuel can be developed for use in nuclear weapons, the United Nations should try to stop new countries from producing nuclear fuel but should provide them with the fuel they need</b>	<b>Neither / Depends</b>	<b>DK / NA</b>
Australia	32	60	6	2
Brazil	28	60	8	5
Canada	31	59	6	3
Chile	26	55	9	11
China	44	42	8	5
Egypt	49	39	6	5
France	44	46	6	4
Germany	28	63	6	2
India	25	29	22	24
Indonesia	46	45	3	5
Iraq	42	51	-	3
Israel	30	59	3	8
Italy	29	57	12	2
Kenya	35	51	5	9
Mexico	33	60	8	-
Nigeria	38	48	4	10
Philippines	32	56	8	4
Poland	32	49	6	14
South Korea	22	76	1	1
Russia	26	46	14	13
Spain	14	61	13	12
Turkey	51	29	8	12
Ukraine	26	50	11	13
Great Britain	36	55	6	3
United States	29	56	7	7
<b>Average</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>

<sup>11</sup> WorldPublicOpinion.org/Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2006-2008

Do you think that the UN Security Council should or should not have the right to authorize the use of military force for each of the following purposes:

To prevent a country that does not have nuclear weapons from producing nuclear fuel that could be used to produce nuclear weapons

	<b>Should</b>	<b>Should not</b>	<b>Not sure/ Decline</b>
United States	57	39	5
France	50	48	2
Russia	53	22	25
Ukraine	52	20	27
Azerbaijan	59	20	21

<b>Egypt</b>	51	49	0
<b>Israel</b>	54	39	7
<b>Palestinian Territories</b>	39	57	4
<b>Turkey</b>	58	20	23
<b>Kenya</b>	84	15	2
<b>Nigeria</b>	75	21	4
<b>China</b>	47	34	19
<b>India</b>	50	32	18
<b>Indonesia</b>	62	25	14
<b>South Korea</b>	42	56	2
<b>Thailand</b>	59	21	20
<b>Average</b>	56	32	12

### <sup>12</sup> Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2008

Thinking about specific steps that could be taken to strengthen the UN (United Nations), here are some options that have been proposed. For each one, select if you would favor or oppose this step.

Having a UN agency control access to all nuclear fuel in the world to ensure that none is used for weapons production

63% Favor  
35 Oppose  
2 Not sure/Decline

### <sup>13</sup> BBC July 2006

Do you think that Iran is producing nuclear fuel strictly for its energy needs or do you think it is also trying to develop nuclear weapons?

	<b>Iran is producing nuclear strictly for energy needs</b>	<b>Iran is also trying to develop nuclear weapons</b>	<b>Neither / Depends</b>	<b>DK / NA</b>
<b>Australia</b>	21	65	5	10
<b>Brazil</b>	10	72	6	13
<b>Canada</b>	10	68	5	16
<b>Chile</b>	13	58	4	25
<b>China</b>	18	58	11	13
<b>Egypt</b>	38	54	4	4
<b>France</b>	10	66	7	16
<b>Germany</b>	15	65	10	9
<b>India</b>	18	32	19	31
<b>Indonesia</b>	35	47	6	11
<b>Iraq</b>	38	60	-	1
<b>Israel</b>	9	83	1	7
<b>Italy</b>	10	74	4	13
<b>Kenya</b>	13	63	5	20
<b>Mexico</b>	20	41	4	35
<b>Nigeria</b>	26	46	4	23
<b>Philippines</b>	26	59	6	8
<b>Poland</b>	7	67	3	23

<b>South Korea</b>	11	76	2	11
<b>Russia</b>	12	48	13	27
<b>Spain</b>	11	58	8	23
<b>Turkey</b>	15	59	10	17
<b>Ukraine</b>	17	39	11	33
<b>Great Britain</b>	19	57	6	19
<b>United States</b>	5	83	3	9
<b>Average</b>	17	60	6	17

<sup>14</sup> CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll December 2007

Based on what you have heard or read, do you think that the government of Iran is or is not attempting to develop its own nuclear weapons?

61%	Yes, is
33	No, is not
7	Don't know/Undecided/Refused

<sup>15</sup> BBC July 2006

How concerned would you be if Iran were to develop nuclear weapons? Would you be...?

	<b>Very concerned</b>	<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	<b>Not very concerned</b>	<b>Not at all concerned</b>	<b>Depends</b>	<b>DK / NA</b>
<b>Australia</b>	67	24	4	4	0	1
<b>Brazil</b>	57	17	10	12	0	4
<b>Canada</b>	63	24	6	5	1	1
<b>Chile</b>	49	25	12	6	1	7
<b>China</b>	23	45	22	7	1	1
<b>Egypt</b>	37	37	17	7	1	1
<b>France</b>	46	39	11	3	1	1
<b>Germany</b>	57	27	11	2	2	0
<b>India</b>	29	28	9	11	8	16
<b>Indonesia</b>	16	37	31	9	3	4
<b>Iraq</b>	25	40	20	14		0
<b>Israel</b>	64	18	7	9	0	3
<b>Italy</b>	65	25	6	3	0	0
<b>Kenya</b>	48	21	11	12	1	6
<b>Mexico</b>	34	21	15	8	5	17
<b>Nigeria</b>	31	24	16	16	2	11
<b>Philippines</b>	36	30	18	10	2	4
<b>Poland</b>	53	27	10	3	2	7
<b>South Korea</b>	30	52	14	2	0	0
<b>Russia</b>	25	33	21	7	4	10
<b>Spain</b>	42	33	9	7	2	6
<b>Turkey</b>	28	29	24	7	8	4
<b>Ukraine</b>	21	36	16	7	8	12
<b>Great Britain</b>	67	23	5	4	0	0

<b>United States</b>	72	20	5	2	0	0
<b>Average</b>	43	29	13	7	2	5

### <sup>16</sup> German Marshall Fund Transatlantic Trends 2006

I am going to read you a list of possible international threats to [Europe/the United States] in the next 10 years. Please tell me if you think each one on the list is an extremely important threat, an important threat, or not an important threat at all.

Iran acquiring nuclear weapons

	<b>Extremely important threat</b>	<b>Important threat</b>	<b>Not an important threat at all</b>	<b>DK/ Refused</b>
<b>United States</b>	75	19	5	1
<b>France</b>	53	37	9	1
<b>Germany</b>	67	26	7	1
<b>United Kingdom</b>	56	30	10	4
<b>Italy</b>	62	29	7	1
<b>Netherlands</b>	62	27	9	1
<b>Poland</b>	64	31	3	3
<b>Portugal</b>	69	17	10	4
<b>Spain</b>	68	25	7	-
<b>Slovakia</b>	5	11	24	60
<b>Turkey</b>	35	30	21	13
<b>Bulgaria</b>	43	36	9	12
<b>Romania</b>	57	28	8	8
<b>European Average</b>	53	27	10	10

### <sup>17</sup> Pew Research Center for the People & the Press Political Survey June 2009

(I'd like your opinion about some possible international concerns for the United States.) Do you think that...Iran's nuclear program...is a major threat, a minor threat or not a threat to the well being of the United States?

69%	Major threat
20	Minor threat
5	Not a threat
5	Don't know/Refused

### Gallup Poll April 2009

(Next, please tell me how concerned you are about each of the following international matters--are you very concerned, moderately concerned, not too concerned, or not concerned at all?) How about...Iran's nuclear capabilities?

54%	Very concerned
29	Moderately concerned
9	Not too concerned
6	Not at all concerned

3 No opinion

**18 German Marshall Fund Transatlantic Trends 2008**

If Iran obtains nuclear weapons, how likely or not do you think it is that the following will happen? Just give us your best guess.

Iran will attack other countries in the region

	<b>Very likely</b>	<b>Somewhat likely</b>	<b>Not very likely</b>	<b>Not likely at all</b>	<b>DK/Refused</b>	<b>Likely</b>	<b>Not Likely</b>
<b>United States</b>	44	31	16	7	3	75	22
<b>France</b>	20	35	31	10	4	55	41
<b>Germany</b>	33	35	23	7	3	68	29
<b>United Kingdom</b>	28	34	23	9	5	62	33
<b>Italy</b>	10	46	26	6	3	65	32
<b>Netherlands</b>	20	34	32	12	3	53	44
<b>Poland</b>	16	47	19	3	14	64	22
<b>Portugal</b>	39	36	17	7	11	65	24
<b>Spain</b>	30	38	21	9	3	68	30
<b>Slovakia</b>	10	35	31	7	18	44	38
<b>Turkey</b>	17	32	18	15	18	49	33
<b>Bulgaria</b>	16	34	20	9	21	50	29
<b>Romania</b>	23	29	21	9	18	52	30
<b>European Average</b>	24	37	23	9	7	61	32

Other countries in the Middle East will decide that, like Iran, they should have nuclear weapons as well

	<b>Very likely</b>	<b>Somewhat likely</b>	<b>Not very likely</b>	<b>Not likely at all</b>	<b>DK/Refused</b>	<b>Likely</b>	<b>Not Likely</b>
<b>United States</b>	50	33	8	6	3	83	13
<b>France</b>	28	39	20	10	3	67	30
<b>Germany</b>	37	34	16	10	3	71	20
<b>United Kingdom</b>	37	41	13	7	3	77	20
<b>Italy</b>	21	50	21	5	3	71	27
<b>Netherlands</b>	32	39	19	9	1	71	28
<b>Poland</b>	20	47	15	4	15	67	18
<b>Portugal</b>	35	36	13	7	9	71	20
<b>Spain</b>	32	40	15	11	2	72	26
<b>Slovakia</b>	15	43	20	6	16	58	26
<b>Turkey</b>	18	40	12	7	23	58	19
<b>Bulgaria</b>	20	44	11	4	21	64	16
<b>Romania</b>	25	33	16	6	21	58	22
<b>European Average</b>	28	40	16	8	8	68	24

Iran will supply nuclear weapons to terrorists

	<b>Very likely</b>	<b>Somewhat likely</b>	<b>Not very likely</b>	<b>Not likely at all</b>	<b>DK/Refused</b>	<b>Likely</b>	<b>Not Likely</b>
<b>United States</b>	56	27	10	5	3	82	15
<b>France</b>	26	39	23	7	5	65	30
<b>Germany</b>	40	34	17	6	2	75	23
<b>United Kingdom</b>	34	34	17	8	6	69	25



<b>Italy</b>	30	47	16	4	3	77	20
<b>Netherlands</b>	30	36	23	8	4	65	31
<b>Poland</b>	25	49	12	3	13	73	14
<b>Portugal</b>	34	38	18	8	3	72	26
<b>Spain</b>	33	38	20	6	18	56	26
<b>Slovakia</b>	18	38	20	6	18	56	26
<b>Turkey</b>	21	27	13	16	23	47	30
<b>Bulgaria</b>	22	33	15	7	23	55	22
<b>Romania</b>	29	28	16	7	19	57	24
<b>European Average</b>	30	37	17	8	8	68	24

Iran will threaten Europe with nuclear weapons

	<b>Very likely</b>	<b>Somewhat likely</b>	<b>Not very likely</b>	<b>Not likely at all</b>	<b>DK/Refused</b>	<b>Likely</b>	<b>Not Likely</b>
<b>United States</b>	36	30	20	9	5	67	29
<b>France</b>	16	26	41	14	3	42	55
<b>Germany</b>	23	32	31	12	2	56	43
<b>United Kingdom</b>	23	30	29	14	4	54	42
<b>Italy</b>	17	37	33	10	2	55	43
<b>Netherlands</b>	14	27	40	18	2	40	58
<b>Poland</b>	22	48	17	4	10	70	20
<b>Portugal</b>	22	33	23	13	10	54	36
<b>Spain</b>	24	31	29	15	2	54	44
<b>Slovakia</b>	13	30	31	10	16	43	41
<b>Turkey</b>	25	34	11	9	21	59	20
<b>Bulgaria</b>	18	34	10	9	20	52	27
<b>Romania</b>	22	28	21	10	10	50	31
<b>European Average</b>	21	33	28	11	7	54	39

Iran will only use nuclear weapons for defensive purposes (if attacked themselves)

	<b>Very likely</b>	<b>Somewhat likely</b>	<b>Not very likely</b>	<b>Not likely at all</b>	<b>DK/Refused</b>	<b>Likely</b>	<b>Not Likely</b>
<b>United States</b>	19	24	25	27	5	43	52
<b>France</b>	23	35	28	11	4	58	38
<b>Germany</b>	29	22	27	20	2	52	47
<b>United Kingdom</b>	24	33	25	12	6	57	37
<b>Italy</b>	10	36	36	15	3	45	52
<b>Netherlands</b>	22	30	29	16	3	52	45
<b>Poland</b>	13	37	26	7	18	50	32
<b>Portugal</b>	21	27	27	16	10	47	43
<b>Spain</b>	21	34	25	17	3	55	42
<b>Slovakia</b>	10	27	29	13	22	37	42
<b>Turkey</b>	30	26	12	11	21	56	22
<b>Bulgaria</b>	13	29	21	11	27	42	32
<b>Romania</b>	18	27	20	14	22	45	33
<b>European Average</b>	22	31	26	14	8	52	39

<sup>19</sup> **Quinnipiac University Poll November 2008**

Should President (Barack) Obama personally negotiate with the leaders of Iran to limit their nuclear program?

62% Yes  
28 No  
10 Don't know/No answer

<sup>20</sup> **CBS News/New York Times Poll April 2009**

Do you think the United States should or should not establish diplomatic relations with Iran while Iran has a nuclear program?

53% Should  
37 Should not  
10 Don't know/No answer

<sup>21</sup> **BBC December 2007**

What action should the UN Security Council take if Iran continues to produce nuclear fuel?

	<b>Not pressure Iran</b>	<b>Use only diplomatic efforts</b>	<b>Impose economic sanctions</b>	<b>Authorize military strike</b>
<b>Canada</b>	6	42	35	10
<b>United States</b>	4	31	45	15
<b>Central America</b>	26	30	17	3
<b>Argentina</b>	16	31	12	1
<b>Mexico</b>	15	65	10	6
<b>Chile</b>	13	39	23	4
<b>Germany</b>	17	44	34	3
<b>Russia</b>	12	38	24	3
<b>Portugal</b>	10	46	32	4
<b>Spain</b>	9	45	28	8
<b>France</b>	8	46	24	7
<b>Great Britain</b>	7	50	29	5
<b>Italy</b>	4	52	29	7
<b>Egypt</b>	56	29	13	3
<b>Turkey</b>	21	33	28	5
<b>Israel</b>	6	15	37	34
<b>Nigeria</b>	25	41	17	12
<b>Ghana</b>	18	43	17	8
<b>Kenya</b>	16	56	16	9
<b>Indonesia</b>	19	53	16	2

<b>India</b>	17	26	20	6
<b>Philippines</b>	13	63	16	3
<b>China</b>	13	42	27	13
<b>Australia</b>	7	47	35	7
<b>South Korea</b>	7	37	48	5
<b>Japan</b>	4	53	37	2

## <sup>22</sup> Chicago Council on Global Affairs

The UN Security Council has asked Iran to stop enriching uranium. If Iran continues to enrich uranium do you think the UN Security Council should:

	<b>Not pressure Iran to stop enriching uranium</b>	<b>Continue diplomatic efforts to get Iran to stop enriching uranium</b>	<b>Impose economic sanctions on Iran</b>	<b>Authorize a military strike against Iran's nuclear energy facilities</b>	<b>Not sure/ Decline</b>
<b>2006 (internet)</b>	3	35	41	18	3
<b>2008 (internet)</b>	3	27	48	20	2

## <sup>23</sup> German Marshall Fund Transatlantic Trends 2008

Diplomatic efforts are underway to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Should these efforts fail, which of the following strategies would you most favor?

	<b>Accept that Iran may develop nuclear weapons</b>	<b>Maintain the present level of diplomatic pressure on Iran</b>	<b>Increase diplomatic pressure on Iran but rule out the use of military force</b>	<b>Increase diplomatic pressure on Iran and maintain the option of using military force</b>	<b>DK/ Refused</b>
<b>United States</b>	6	13	27	49	6
<b>France</b>	2	19	54	22	2
<b>Germany</b>	4	11	56	27	2
<b>United Kingdom</b>	8	20	38	28	5
<b>Italy</b>	3	14	59	23	2
<b>Netherlands</b>	7	14	45	31	4
<b>Poland</b>	5	19	47	14	15
<b>Portugal</b>	3	13	62	15	8
<b>Spain</b>	4	18	53	20	5
<b>Slovakia</b>	4	18	56	8	14
<b>Turkey</b>	23	17	12	12	35
<b>Bulgaria</b>	4	20	47	12	17
<b>Romania</b>	3	17	46	8	26
<b>European Average</b>	6	16	47	21	9

## <sup>24</sup> NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll July 2008

And now, thinking about Iran, if Iran continues with its nuclear research and is close to developing a nuclear weapon, do you believe that the United States should or should not initiate military action to destroy Iran's ability to make nuclear weapons? (If Should/Should not, ask:) And do you feel strongly about that, or not?

31%	Should initiate military action-feel strongly
10	Should initiate military action-do not feel strongly
13	Should not initiate military action-do not feel strongly
33	Should not initiate military action-feel strongly
13	Not sure

#### **Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg Poll November 2007**

If Iran continues to produce material that can be used to develop nuclear weapons, would you support or suppose the United States taking military action against Iran. (If Support/Oppose, ask:) Would you support/oppose that strongly or only somewhat?

29%	Support strongly
17	Support somewhat
14	Oppose somewhat
26	Oppose strongly
14	Don't know

#### <sup>25</sup> **Gallup/USA Today Poll November 2007**

What do you think the United States should do to get Iran to shut down its nuclear program--take military action against Iran, or rely mainly on economic and diplomatic efforts?

18%	Take military action
73	Rely on economic/diplomatic efforts
8	No opinion

#### **Gallup/USA Today Poll November 2007**

Suppose U.S. (United States) economic and diplomatic efforts do not work (to get Iran to shut down its nuclear program). If that happens, do you think the United States should--or should not--take military action against Iran?

Subpopulation/Note: Asked of those who said the United States should rely mainly on diplomatic and economic efforts to get Iran to shut down its nuclear program (73 percent)

34%	Yes, should
55	No, should not
11	No opinion

#### <sup>26</sup> **BBC December 2007**

If UN inspectors are given access, should Iran be allowed to produce nuclear fuel for electricity?

	Should be allowed	Should not be allowed
Canada	58	36
United States	55	38
Mexico	79	6
Chile	36	36
Central America	30	38
Argentina	26	24
Great Britain	71	22
Portugal	59	26
Italy	58	30
France	56	24
Spain	49	36
Germany	38	50
Russia	33	24
Egypt	86	14
Turkey	30	54
Israel	28	62
Kenya	56	39
Nigeria	46	40
Ghana	45	39
Australia	64	31
Indonesia	56	31
China	51	40
South Korea	38	51
Philippines	27	60
India	24	25
Japan	23	54

### 27 Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2008

If Iran were to allow UN inspectors permanent and full access throughout Iran, to make sure it is not developing nuclear weapons, do you think Iran should or should not be allowed to produce nuclear fuel for producing electricity?

56% Should be allowed

41 Should not be allowed

3 Not sure/Decline

### 28 German Marshall Fund Transatlantic Trends 2006

And who do you think can best handle the issue of Iranian nuclear weapons?

	The United Nations	The NATO alliance	The United States	The European Union	DK/Refused
United States	36	18	22	13	10

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<b>France</b>	49	22	8	17	5
<b>Germany</b>	47	12	8	25	9
<b>United Kingdom</b>	56	17	6	13	8
<b>Italy</b>	52	13	9	17	9
<b>Netherlands</b>	55	21	9	9	6
<b>Poland</b>	28	13	18	15	26
<b>Portugal</b>	45	14	10	18	13
<b>Spain</b>	44	14	8	25	9
<b>Slovakia</b>	50	20	6	8	16
<b>Turkey</b>	21	14	5	25	34
<b>Bulgaria</b>	34	15	10	10	30
<b>Romania</b>	36	21	8	10	26
<b>European Average</b>	43	15	8	19	14

<sup>29</sup> **Pew News Interest Index Poll February 2006**

Who should take the lead in dealing with Iran's nuclear program--the United States or countries in the European Union?

30%	The United States
51	Countries in the European Union
11	Other (Vol.)
8	Don't know/Refused

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