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Just 26% Think Syria Will Give up Chemical Arms

Public Backs Diplomatic Approach in Syria, But Distrusts Syria and Russia

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Public Backs Diplomatic Approach in Syria, But Distrusts Syria and Russia

As U.S. and Russian diplomats reached an agreement over the weekend to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles, the public expresses support for a diplomatic approach to the crisis but is skeptical about its effectiveness.

By a 67% to 23% margin, the public approves of Barack Obama's decision to delay military airstrikes and pursue a diplomatic effort to convince Syria to give up its chemical weapons. However, just 26% think Syria will give up control of its chemical weapons, while 57% think it will not.

More generally, the public has little trust in Syria. Just 8% say the United States can trust Syria a great deal or a fair amount, while 63% say Syria cannot be trusted at all and another 22% say it can't be trusted much. The public is skeptical of Russia as well: just 24% say the United States can trust Russia even a fair amount, down from 33% last year.

The latest Pew Research Center survey was conducted Sept. 12-15 among 1,002 adults, as the United States and Russia concluded an agreement providing for inspection of Syria's chemical weapons this fall, with destruction of the arms slated to begin next year. Because of the timing of the poll, it did not specifically ask about the U.S.-Russia agreement.

Diplomacy Endorsed, Skepticism Abounds

<i>Obama's delay of airstrike decision for diplomatic efforts ...</i>	Sept 12-15 %
Approve	67
Disapprove	23
Don't know	<u>10</u>
	100
<i>Will Syria give up chemical weapons in response to diplomacy?</i>	
Yes, will	26
No, will not	57
Don't know	<u>17</u>
	100
<i>If Syria doesn't give up chemical weapons ...</i>	
Favor U.S. airstrikes	37
Oppose U.S. airstrikes	49
Don't know	<u>14</u>
	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 12-15, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Little Trust in Syria, Declining Trust in Russia

<i>How much can the U.S. trust ...</i>	Great deal/ Fair amount %	Not too much/at all %	DK %
Syria	8	85	6=100
Russia	24	68	8=100
<i>May 2012</i>	33	60	7=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 12-15, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

The Obama administration has reiterated that military airstrikes are still possible if Syria does not cooperate fully with the disarmament process, but the public remains, on balance, opposed to the use of force even under these circumstances.

Roughly half of Americans (49%)

oppose the United States conducting military airstrikes against Syria if it does not give up its chemical weapons, while 37% favor airstrikes if Syria does not cede its chemical weapons.

A week ago, before President Obama's Sept. 10 address to the nation in which he asked Congress to postpone a vote authorizing the use of force against Syria, there was more opposition to U.S. airstrikes in Syria (63% opposed, 28% favored).

Public Remains Opposed to Airstrikes Even if Syria Does Not Cede Control of Chemical Arms

Would you favor or oppose the U.S. conducting military airstrikes against Syria in response to reports that the Syrian government used chemical weapons?

If Syria does not give up control of its chemical weapons, would you favor/oppose military airstrikes ...

	Aug 29- Sept 1	Sept 4-8	Sept 12-15
	%	%	%
Favor	29	28	37
Oppose	48	63	49
Don't know	<u>23</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>14</u>
	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 12-15, 2013.

Overall, more Americans (49%) say that in handling the situation in Syria, Obama has shown leadership and a willingness to adapt to changing circumstances. Fewer (35%) say he's shown weakness and inconsistency. Far more Democrats (72%) than Republicans (26%) or independents (46%) say Obama has shown leadership in dealing with Syria.

Democrats also are more likely than Republican or independents to approve of Obama's decision to delay military airstrikes to pursue diplomatic efforts to persuade Syria to get rid of its chemical weapons. Still, majorities in all three groups – 80% of Democrats, 56% of Republicans and 65% of independents – approve of this approach.

There is bipartisan skepticism that Syria will give up its chemical weapons in response to diplomatic efforts. About six-in-ten Republicans (63%) and independents (59%) express this view, as do 53% of Democrats.

Democrats are divided over taking military action against Syria if it does not give up control of chemical weapons (43% favor/43% oppose). About half of Republicans and independents (51% each) oppose the use of airstrikes if Syria fails to relinquish control of its chemical weapons; smaller percentages (34% of Republicans, 37% of independents) favor the use of airstrikes under this circumstance. There is somewhat more support for military airstrikes among all three groups if Syria does not give up control of chemical weapons than there was a week ago, when the prospect of a failed diplomatic solution was not raised.

Broad Approval of Obama's Delay of Syrian Airstrikes

<i>Obama's delay of airstrike decision for diplomatic efforts</i>	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	R-D gap %
Approve	56	80	65	-24
Disapprove	29	13	27	+16
Don't know	<u>15</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	
	100	100	100	
<i>Will Syria give up chemical weapons in response to diplomacy?</i>				
Yes	21	29	27	-8
No	63	53	59	+10
Don't know	<u>15</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>15</u>	
	100	100	100	
<i>If Syria doesn't give up chemical weapons ...</i>				
Favor U.S. airstrikes	34	43	37	-9
Oppose U.S. airstrikes	51	43	51	+8
Don't know	<u>15</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>11</u>	
	100	100	100	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 12-15, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted September 12-15, 2013, among a national sample of 1,002 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (501 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 501 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 262 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at MKTG 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	1,002	3.7 percentage points
Republicans	236	7.7 percentage points
Democrats	297	6.8 percentage points
Independents	355	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.

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER
September 12-15, 2013 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,002

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
a. Possible U.S. airstrikes in Syria and diplomatic efforts to have Syria give up control of its chemical weapons September 12-15, 2013	45	31	12	11	*
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
August 29-September 1, 2013: <i>Possible U.S. airstrikes in Syria in response to reports that the Syrian government used chemical weapons</i>	39	29	15	16	*
June 14-16, 2013: <i>Charges that Syria has used chemical weapons against anti-government groups</i>	15	30	20	33	2
June 6-9, 2013: <i>Political violence in Syria</i>	13	23	22	42	*
May 9-12, 2013	17	24	25	33	1
April 25-28, 2013: <i>Charges that Syria has used chemical weapons against anti-government groups</i>	18	25	24	33	1
March 28-31, 2013: <i>Political violence in Syria</i>	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

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
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	*
b. The government collecting information about telephone calls, e-mails and other online communications as part of efforts to monitor terrorist activity					
September 12-15, 2013	23	32	18	27	*
July 18-21, 2013: <i>Debate over government phone and internet surveillance programs</i>	19	26	21	34	1
July 11-14, 2013: <i>Efforts by Edward Snowden, who leaked information about government surveillance secrets, to gain asylum in another country</i>	16	27	25	30	1
June 27-30, 2013: <i>U.S. efforts to apprehend Edward Snowden, who leaked government surveillance secrets</i>	20	30	20	30	1
June 20-23, 2013: <i>Debate over government phone and internet surveillance programs</i>	23	30	17	29	1
June 13-16, 2013: <i>The government collecting information about telephone calls, e-mails and other online communications as part of efforts to monitor terrorist activity</i>	35	27	15	21	1
June 7-9, 2013: <i>The government collecting emails and other online activities directly from large internet companies to track foreign suspects in terror investigations</i>	26	24	17	33	1
June 6-9, 2013: <i>The government collecting records about Verizon phone calls for national security purposes</i>	27	21	17	35	*
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
December 2-5, 2010: <i>The release of classified documents about U.S. diplomatic relations by the Wikileaks website</i>	30	23	20	25	2
May 12-22, 2006: <i>Reports that the National Security Agency has been collecting telephone records of millions of American citizens</i>	33	28	22	16	1
c. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy					
September 12-15, 2013	28	34	17	20	*
August 1-4, 2013	28	35	19	17	1
July 18-21, 2013	28	29	20	23	1
June 20-23, 2013	28	30	19	22	1
June 13-16, 2013	30	32	15	22	*
June 6-9, 2013	33	31	15	21	*
May 16-19, 2013	30	31	20	19	*
May 9-12, 2013	28	30	21	20	1
March 28-31, 2013	30	30	17	22	1
March 7-10, 2013	35	30	16	19	*
January 31-February 3, 2013	33	33	16	16	1
January 17-20, 2013	36	32	15	16	*
January 3-6, 2013	34	32	18	16	1
December 6-9, 2012	38	30	16	14	1
November 8-11, 2012	41	31	15	12	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
November 1-4, 2012	38	30	16	14	1
October 25-28, 2012	44	30	14	11	1
October 18-21, 2012	39	36	12	12	1
October 12-14, 2012	42	28	14	15	1
October 4-7, 2012	40	29	13	17	*
September 27-30, 2012	34	37	13	15	1
September 20-23, 2012	36	32	17	15	*
September 13-16, 2012	38	32	17	12	1
September 7-9, 2012	36	31	17	15	2
August 31-September 3, 2012	33	31	20	16	1
August 23-26, 2012	38	30	15	16	1
August 16-19, 2012	33	32	16	19	*
August 9-12, 2012	30	31	20	18	1
August 2-5, 2012	33	29	20	17	1
July 26-29, 2012	32	30	20	19	*
July 19-22, 2012	39	29	16	16	*
July 12-15, 2012	32	33	18	17	1
July 5-8, 2012	34	28	18	19	1
June 28-July 1, 2012	38	28	15	18	1
June 21-24, 2012	33	32	17	17	*
June 14-17, 2012	39	28	15	17	*
June 7-10, 2012	35	32	15	18	*
May 31-June 3, 2012	37	34	13	14	1
May 24-27, 2012	33	31	19	16	1
May 17-20, 2012	35	30	16	19	*
May 10-13, 2012	40	26	16	17	*
May 3-6, 2012	38	29	13	20	*
April 26-29, 2012	34	32	17	16	1
April 19-22, 2012	35	35	13	14	2
April 12-15, 2012	39	28	16	17	1
April 5-8, 2012	37	31	16	16	1
March 29-April 1, 2012	34	33	15	18	1
March 22-25, 2012	36	29	16	18	1
March 15-18, 2012	40	35	11	14	1
March 8-11, 2012	37	32	14	17	*
March 1-4, 2012	41	27	15	17	1
February 23-26, 2012	37	33	14	15	1
February 16-20, 2012	33	32	16	17	1
February 9-12, 2012	42	30	14	13	1
February 2-5, 2012	38	32	16	13	1
January 26-29, 2012	35	31	16	19	*
January 19-22, 2012	35	30	16	19	1
January 12-15, 2012	33	32	14	20	1
January 5-8, 2012	39	31	15	15	*

SEE TREND FOR PREVIOUS YEARS: <http://www.people-press.org/files/2013/01/NII-Economy-trend.pdf>

- d. Apple's announcement of two new models of the iPhone

September 12-15, 2013	10	16	23	50	*
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ASK ALL:

PEW.2 Generally speaking, how much do you think the United States can trust **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]** – a great deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all? What about **[NEXT ITEM]**? Would you say that the United States can trust **[ITEM]** a great deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all? And how about **[NEXT ITEM]**? **[REPEAT INTRODUCTION AS NECESSARY]**

		<u>A great deal</u>	<u>A fair amount</u>	<u>Not too much</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
a.	China					
	September 12-15, 2013	4	24	30	34	8
	April 30-May 13, 2012 (GAP)	5	21	39	29	5
b.	France					
	September 12-15, 2013	14	45	20	12	10
	April 30-May 13, 2012 (GAP)	17	42	22	10	9
c.	Britain					
	September 12-15, 2013	36	39	9	8	8
	April 30-May 13, 2012 (GAP)	39	39	10	5	7
d.	Russia					
	September 12-15, 2013	4	20	33	35	8
	April 30-May 13, 2012 (GAP)	4	29	37	23	7
e.	Saudi Arabia					
	September 12-15, 2013	4	19	32	35	9
	April 30-May 13, 2012 (GAP)	4	21	41	27	8
f.	Syria					
	September 12-15, 2013	2	6	22	63	6

ASK ALL:

Thinking about Syria...

PEW.3 As you may know, Barack Obama has said he will delay a decision on military airstrikes to see if Syria can be convinced to give up control of its chemical weapons through diplomatic efforts. Do you approve or disapprove of this new approach?

Sep 12-15

2013

67	Approve
23	Disapprove
10	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

PEW.4 If Syria does not give up control of its chemical weapons, would you favor or oppose the U.S. conducting military airstrikes against Syria in response to reports that the Syrian government used chemical weapons?

Sep 12-15

2013

37	Favor
49	Oppose
14	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

PEW.4 TREND FOR COMPARISON CONTINUED...

Would you favor or oppose the U.S. conducting military airstrikes against Syria in response to reports that the Syrian government used chemical weapons? [If favor or oppose] Do you [favor/oppose] very strongly, or not so strongly?

(U)			
Sep 4-8			Aug 29-Sep 1
<u>2013</u>			<u>2013</u>
28	Favor		29
16	Very strongly		--
12	Not so strongly		--
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)		--
63	Oppose		48
45	Very strongly		--
18	Not so strongly		--
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)		--
9	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)		23

ASK ALL:

PEW.5 From what you've seen and heard so far, do you think Syria will or will not give up control of its chemical weapons in response to diplomatic efforts?

Sep 12-15

2013

26	Will
57	Will not
17	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

PEW.6 All in all, which comes closer to your view of how Barack Obama has handled the situation with Syria? [READ AND RANDOMIZE]

Sep 12-15

2013

49	He's shown leadership and a willingness to adapt to changing circumstances [OR]
35	He's shown weakness and inconsistency in his approach to the situation
8	Mixed/Other (VOL.)
8	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Key to Pew Research trends noted in the topline:

(GAP)	Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project polls
(U)	Pew Research Center/USA Today polls