

## **Russians and Americans Agree Iran is Trying to Develop Nuclear Weapons, But Disagree on Economic Sanctions**

May 30, 2006

### **Both Reject Bombing Iran's Nuclear Facilities**

[Questionnaire](#)

[Transcript of Panel Discussion](#)

Large majorities of both Americans and Russians think that Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons and are concerned about it. But while two in three Americans would support imposing economic sanctions on Iran, less than a quarter of Russians would. Large majorities in both countries agree that the United States should pursue diplomatic options and oppose the bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities.

These are some of the findings of new nationwide polls conducted in both Russia and the United States. The U.S. poll was carried out by WorldPublicOpinion.org and fielded by Knowledge Networks; the Russian poll was conducted and fielded by the Levada Center.

When asked, "Do you think Iran is or is not trying to develop nuclear weapons?" 68 percent of Russians and 84 percent of Americans respond that they believe Iran is. Only 12 percent of Russians and 9 percent of Americans think Iran is not trying to develop such weapons.

Majorities in both countries say they would be concerned if Iran developed nuclear weapons, but the concern felt by Americans is more widespread and intense. Eighty-five percent of Americans say they would be at least somewhat concerned if Iran developed nuclear weapons, while 63 percent of Russians say they would be at least somewhat concerned. However, far more Americans (64%) than Russians (29%) say they would be "very much" concerned if Iran had nuclear arms.

Less than a quarter of Russians would support imposing economic sanctions on Iran if it continues to produce nuclear fuel that could be used for weapons, while a majority of Americans would. Only 23 percent of Russians, but 68 percent of Americans, thought the Security Council should vote for sanctions. Sixty-two percent of Russians thought the Security Council should continue negotiating, while just 26 percent of Americans favored more talks.

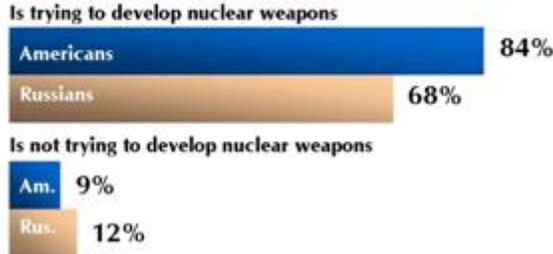
While Americans and Russians hold differing opinions on sanctions, they strongly reject U.S. military action against Iran. When asked, "If Iran continues to produce nuclear fuel that could be developed for use in nuclear weapons, do you think the United States should bomb Iran's nuclear facilities or pursue a diplomatic approach?" 70 percent of Americans and 79 percent of Russians said the United States should pursue a diplomatic approach. Only 24 percent of Americans and 7 percent of Russians thought the United States should bomb Iran's nuclear facilities.

On the broader question of whether the U.N. should work against nuclear proliferation, overwhelming majorities in both countries agreed that the United Nations "should actively work

to discourage countries from acquiring nuclear weapons."

### Is Iran Trying to Develop Nuclear Weapons?

*Do you think Iran is or is not trying to develop nuclear weapons?*



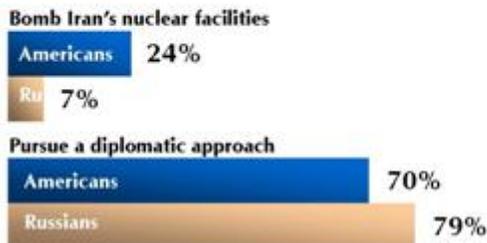
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Very large majorities in both countries (79% of Russians, 87% of Americans) said the UN should discourage proliferation. Only about one in ten (10% of Russians, 8% of Americans) believe the U.N. should not actively work toward such a goal.

Russians are lukewarm about President Putin's offer to guarantee Iran a supply of nuclear fuel if it stops enriching uranium, while American opinion is divided. Pollsters told both Russians and Americans, "Russia's President Putin has been trying to negotiate a deal whereby Russia would provide fuel for Iran's nuclear energy program if Iran would agree not to produce nuclear fuel that could be developed for use in nuclear weapons," and then asked whether they approved or disapproved of "Russia trying to negotiate this deal." Among Russians, 46 percent approve while 30 percent disapprove--only a mild endorsement of Putin's initiative, despite his popularity in Russia. Among Americans, 49 percent disapprove of the idea while 44 percent approve.

### How Should the US Respond if Iran Continues to Produce Nuclear Fuel?

*If Iran continues to produce nuclear fuel that could be developed for use in nuclear weapons, do you think that the US should:*



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In Russia, Levada Center polled 1,000 respondents (margin of error +/-3.1%) over April 14-24. In the United States, Knowledge Networks polled 1,023 respondents (margin of error +/- 3.1-3.6% dependent on whether it was a three-quarters or full sample) from April 18-24, using its nationwide panel, which is randomly selected from the entire adult population and subsequently provided internet access. For more information about this methodology, go to <http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp>.