

Study Finds Bipartisan Public Consensus on Wide Range of Foreign Policy Issues

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Majorities of Both Parties Agree on How to Deal with Iraq, Iran, Nuclear Proliferation, Climate Change and Other Issues

[Full Report](#)



President Bush and Democratic leaders in the newly-elected U.S. Congress have promised to try to work together in a bipartisan manner. But most observers are bracing for battles between Democratic and Republican lawmakers over contentious questions such as the conduct of the war in Iraq, the best way to contain Iran's nuclear ambitions and how to deal with the North Korean nuclear threat.

US House of Representatives

Among members of the U.S. public, however, there is broad bipartisan consensus about how U.S. foreign policy should be conducted. A wide ranging analysis by WorldPublicOpinion.org of polls from numerous organizations reveals substantial agreement across party lines on many of the most contentious issues facing policymakers today. Not only do overwhelming majorities of Democrats and Republicans favor a bipartisan approach to foreign affairs in general, they also agree on specific policies to address problems ranging from the turmoil in the Middle East to nuclear proliferation to global warming.

And Americans support the key recommendations of the Iraq Study Group regarding the withdrawal of U.S. troops and talking with Iran and Syria.

This study includes a [newly-released poll](#) (conducted Dec. 6-11) and other recent surveys by WorldPublicOpinion.org/Knowledge Networks. In addition, it analyzes polls by the [Chicago Council on Global Affairs](#) and other organizations.

Steven Kull, editor of WorldPublicOpinion.org, said the study showed “sometimes it is easier for the public to find common ground than it is for politicians.”

Withdrawal of US-Led Forces from Iraq by 2008

As you may know, the Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan commission created by Congress, recently released a report proposing a series of steps to address the situation in Iraq. Please indicate whether you favor or oppose:

Withdrawing almost all US combat troops by early 2008



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Dealing with Iran

Do you think the US should deal with the government of Iran primarily by:

Trying to build better relations



Pressuring it with implied threats that the US may use military force against it



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“Should Democrats and Republicans in government aspire to find

common ground on foreign policy the American public can provide them with guidance on a wide range of international issues,” Kull said.

The following are some examples of areas where there is bipartisan consensus:

The War in Iraq

- WPO’s new December poll finds that majorities favor withdrawing almost all U.S. combat troops from Iraq by 2008 (Republicans 62%, Democrats 88%) and that they believe the U.S. government should clearly state it does not want permanent bases there (Republicans 65%, Democrats 81%).
- Americans support talking with Iran about the problems in Iraq (Republicans 72%, Democrats 81%) and also talking with Syria (Republicans 72%, Democrats 82%).
- Large majorities are in favor of holding an international conference to discuss how to stabilize Iraq (Republicans 79%, Democrats 80%).

Iran’s Nuclear Ambitions

- Americans from both parties think the U.S. government should build better relations with the Iranian government rather than try to change its behavior through implied military threats (Republicans 56%, Democrats 88%).
- Majorities also would support a deal allowing Iran to enrich uranium at the very low levels needed for nuclear energy production provided that U.N. inspectors were given full access to nuclear energy facilities (Republicans 53%, Democrats 62%).

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

- WPO’s December poll shows that Americans believe the United States should “not take either side” in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian territories. (Republicans 58%, Democrats 80%)

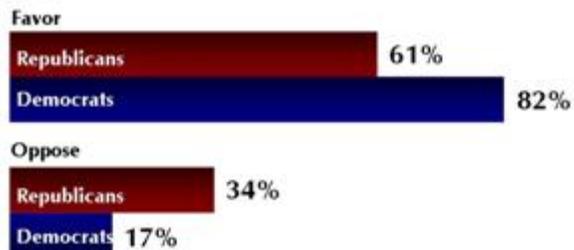
North Korean Nuclear Threat

- Majorities in both parties think the United States should offer to give North Korea security guarantees (Republicans 61%, Democrats 82%) if the government in Pyongyang is willing to eliminate its nuclear weapons

Protecting the Global Environment

Legislation Limiting Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Do you favor or oppose legislation limiting US emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming or climate change?



- Republicans and Democrats favor legislation limiting U.S. emissions of the greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming (Republicans 61%, Democrats 82%).
- Majorities in both parties favor requiring car makers to increase fuel efficiency even if it increases the cost of owning a car (Republicans 71%, Democrats, 86%).

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Defense Spending

- Bipartisan majorities believe government spending on defense should either be kept at present levels or scaled back (Republicans 61%, Democrats 83%)
- Given the opportunity to balance the foreign affairs budget, members of both parties favor non-military over military programs. On average, Republicans cut defense spending \$110 billion and Democrats slash it by \$264 billion.