

# Does the American Public Want More War?

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If you've been tuning in to TV news lately, there's been a lot of chatter about what sort of military action the United States should take against the Islamic State forces in Iraq and Syria. While the public isn't eager for any new wars, the front page of **USA Today** was trying to change that narrative.

The paper's August 29 edition boasted the front-page headline "More Want US to Flex Muscle." As if that militaristic tone wasn't obvious enough, right next to it is a graphic labeled "Is Obama Tough Enough?"

The evidence comes from a new Pew [poll](#), so it's worth noting how that data is transformed into a desire for US "muscle-flexing." Reporter [Susan Page](#) ([8/29/14](#)) explains in her lead:

After years of retrenchment in the wake of two costly wars, a new **USA Today**/Pew Research Center Poll finds that Americans increasingly are open to a larger US role in trying to solve problems around the world.

Wait a second. People who want the US to "solve problems" are asking the US to "flex muscle"? That's what **USA Today** sees. Page notes that the "initial shifts in public opinion could make it easier for President Obama to order more muscular options in striking Islamic State terrorists in Syria and Iraq."

The poll asks whether the Americans think the government is doing enough about "solving world problems." If one sees the "too little" answer as being equivalent to an eagerness to launch military attacks, it's worth noting that the majority, 63 percent, say the government does "too much" or the "right amount."

A side note: For anyone with a progressive critique of US foreign policy, what would be the correct answer to this question?

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