

War Propaganda's Triumph: U.S. Public Opinion on Iran

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Global Research, February 16, 2012

16 February 2012

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [US NATO](#)

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A recent series of polls gauging U.S. public opinion on Iran and its nuclear program shed light on the enduring strength of the American propaganda machine.

According to a recent [YouGov survey](#), an astounding 64% of Americans currently believe Iran is most likely enriching uranium "to build a nuclear weapon." Of course, despite the media distortions and deceptions to the contrary, no evidence exists that they are. In fact, intelligence estimates from both the [U.S.](#) and [Israel](#) conclude Iran has not yet decided on whether to pursue a nuclear weapons program.

Yet, when YouGov speculated, "Suppose a number of countries decided to take action against Iran in order to stop Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon," 44% of Americans stated they would support bombing Iran's nuclear installations. A total of 70% also supported increasing economic sanctions.

It is hard to imagine, though, just how much harsher economic sanctions could really get. For instance, according to [Gallup](#), a staggering 48% of Iranians reported that there "were times in the past year when they did not have enough money to buy food for their families."

But then again, starving an entire nation for geopolitical aims rarely registers much concern within the U.S. In fact, when recently asked about the plight of ordinary Iranians under economic sanctions, hawkish Illinois Senator Mark Kirk [replied](#), "It's okay to take food out of the mouth of the citizens from a government that's plotting an attack directly on American soil."

The comment, reminiscent of when Secretary of State Madeleine Albright deemed 500,000 Iraqis dead from U.S. imposed sanctions "worth the cost," went unreported in the corporate press. For as Orwell would have it, Iranians are simply "unpeople."

In a [CNN/ORC International poll](#), meanwhile, 17% of Americans were found in support of military action and 60% in support of economic sanctions when asked: "What do you think the United States should do to get Iran to shut down its nuclear program?"

Now, given that Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, it is entitled "to peacefully use nuclear technology." And thus quite unsurprisingly, a clear majority of Iranians are found to support the development of a [peaceful nuclear program](#). (A smaller, although still sizable, number also supports the development of nuclear weapons. Although, in the event of a Western military attack, this latter number is sure to rise.)

Needless to say, all this is omitted from the CNN survey question. After all, it has merely come to be assumed that Iran's nuclear program is for nefarious purposes.

Returning to U.S. public opinion, a recent [Pew Research Center survey](#) found 58% of Americans believe it is important to "prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if it means taking military action." A rather ominous sign, given, as we have seen, a near equal percentage believes Iran is already developing nuclear weapons.

The Pew survey also found a strong majority of Americans believe economic sanctions alone will not be enough to deter Iran from pursuing nuclear weapons. And since the debate in the U.S. is limited to imposing draconian economic sanctions, or unleashing the dogs of war, the chorus cries of bomb-bomb-bomb, bomb-bomb-Iran are poised to grow louder.

In the end, such starkly ill-informed and rather paranoid opinions from the U.S. public are indicative of the great triumph of American propaganda. For as the American people grow increasingly prepared for a military confrontation with Iran, truth and rationality continue their hastened retreat.

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