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Publics around the World Favor International Agreement To Eliminate All Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear as Well Non-Nuclear Countries Support Plan For Abolishing Nuclear Weapons

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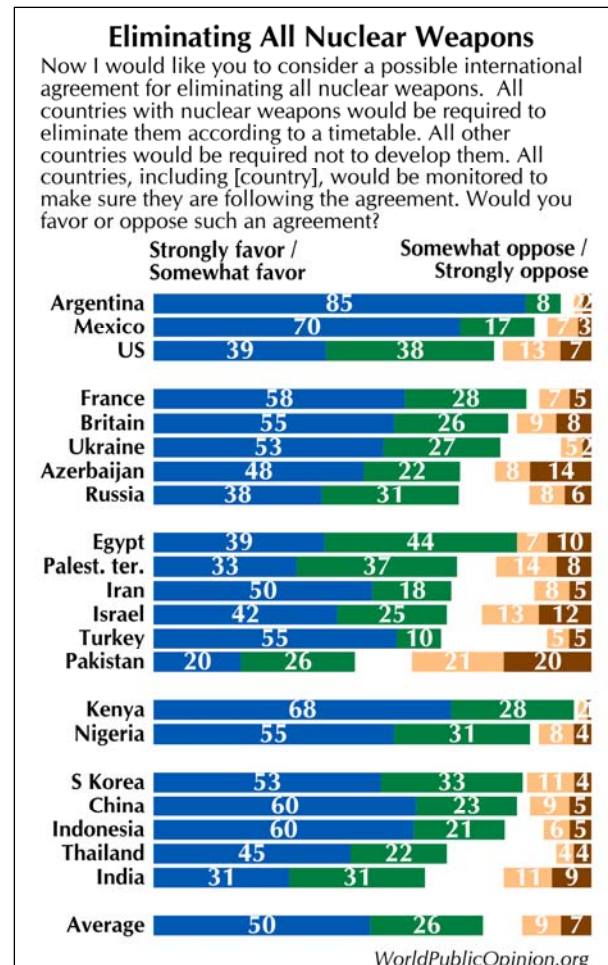
College Park, MD—A WorldPublicOpinion.org poll of 21 nations from around the world finds that people in every country favor an international agreement for eliminating all nuclear weapons.

Respondents were asked to consider an agreement that specified that “all countries with nuclear weapons would be required to eliminate them according to a timetable” while “all other countries would be required not to develop them.” Respondents were also told that all countries, including their own, “would be monitored to make sure they are following the agreement.”

In 20 of the 21 nations large majorities, ranging from 62 to 93 percent, favor such an agreement. The only exception is Pakistan, where a plurality of 46 percent favors the plan while 41 percent are opposed. All nations known to have nuclear weapons were included in the poll, except North Korea where public polling is not available.

On average across all countries 76 percent favor such an agreement, with 50 percent favoring it strongly. Sixteen percent are opposed, with just 7 percent opposing strongly.

The idea of pursuing the elimination of nuclear weapons has gained increased visibility lately since a bipartisan group of four former US senior officials, George Schultz, Henry Kissinger, William Perry, and Sam Nunn published an influential article in 2007 titled "A World Free of Nuclear Weapons"



endorsing the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

“Publics around the world show a remarkably high level of consensus in favor of pursuing a step-by-step plan for reducing and ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons,” comments Steven Kull, director of WorldPublicOpinion.org.

The poll of 19,142 respondents across 21 nations was conducted between January 10 and August 29, 2008 by WorldPublicOpinion.org, a collaborative research project involving research centers from around the world and managed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland. Margins of error range from +/- 2 to 4 percentage points. The study included all nations with nuclear weapons (except North Korea) and the following non-nuclear nations: Argentina, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, the Palestinian Territories, South Korea, Thailand, Turkey, and Ukraine.

In the five nations with large nuclear arsenals and advanced delivery systems, large majorities favor the plan for totally eliminating nuclear weapons according to a timeline - the United States (77%), Russia (69%), China (83%), France (86%), and Great Britain (81%). Only 20 percent oppose this idea in the United States; 14 percent in Russia and China; 12 percent in France; and 17 percent in Britain.

Two countries that have relatively recently acquired nuclear weapons show more tepid support. In India 62 percent favor the idea with 20 percent opposed, as does a plurality of 46 percent in Pakistan (41% opposed).

Israel is widely believed to have nuclear weapons, though it has not officially confirmed or denied its nuclear status. Two-thirds (67%) of Israelis embrace the plan for elimination, even though it calls for intrusive monitoring, which would presumably reveal Israel's nuclear program. Twenty-five percent of Israelis disagree.

In nations that do not have nuclear weapons, similar large majorities favor an international agreement to eliminate all nuclear weapons. In the 13 non-nuclear nations polled, 65 to 93 percent favor an agreement.

Support for such a plan is remarkably consistent on a global basis across all demographic groups. There is very little variation according to gender, age, or education.

The intensity of support for elimination varies between nations. On average 50 percent say they strongly favor it while 26 percent say they somewhat favor it. In 11 of the 21 nations a majority favors elimination strongly, including three of the nuclear-weapon states: China (60%), France (58%) and Great Britain (55%). However, less than half say they favor it strongly in five nuclear-armed states: the United States (39%), Russia (38%), Israel (42%), India (31%), and Pakistan (20%).

The nations with the largest numbers opposing the plan for the elimination of nuclear weapons are Pakistan (41%), Israel (25%), Azerbaijan (22%), and the Palestinian

Territories (22%). Even in these countries, far fewer say they oppose the plan strongly. Strong opposition is only 7 percent on average, and in single digits in 17 of the 21 countries. The largest numbers strongly opposing elimination of nuclear weapons are in Pakistan (20%), Azerbaijan (14%), and Israel (12%).

Another idea that has been proposed is to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons. Six of the actors needed for such a zone were polled (Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Egypt, Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan) and the results bode well for this idea. Strong majority support in all six Middle Eastern nations for an agreement to eliminate all nuclear weapons ranges from a high of 83 percent in Egypt to a low of 65 percent in Turkey.

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