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Civilian Casualties a Concern, Even Among Supporters

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## Continued Support for U.S. Drone Strikes

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## Civilian Casualties a Concern, Even Among Supporters Continued Support for U.S. Drone Strikes

While U.S. drone strikes have faced new scrutiny in recent weeks, a majority of the public continues to support the program. Overall, 56% approve of the U.S. conducting missile strikes from pilotless aircraft to target extremists in countries such as Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia; just 26% say they disapprove.

Opinion is largely unchanged from last July, when 55% approved of the program. Support for drone attacks crosses party lines: 68% of Republicans and 58% of Democrats say they approve of U.S. drone strikes.

There also are stark gender differences in opinions about the use of drones: Men approve of drone strikes by more than three-to-one (68% to 21%). Among women, 44% approve, while 31% disapprove.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted Feb. 7-10 among 1,004 adults, finds that while drone strikes draw continued support, there is widespread concern that the attacks endanger innocent civilians.

Overall, 53% say they are very concerned about whether drone strikes put the lives of civilians in danger. Even among those who approve of the program, 42% say they are very concerned the attacks risk lives of innocent civilians.

Other possible consequences from drone attacks spur less public concern: 32% are very concerned they could lead to retaliation from extremist groups, 31% are very concerned

### Bipartisan Support for U.S. Drone Attacks

<i>U.S. conducting drone strikes ...</i>	<b>Approve</b> %	<b>Disapprove</b> %	<b>DK</b> %
Total			
Feb 2013	56	26	18=100
July 2012	55	34	11=100
Republican	68	17	15=100
Democrat	58	26	16=100
Independent	50	31	19=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 7-10, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

### Top Concern over Drones: Endangering Civilians

<i>How concerned are you about whether drones...</i>	<b>Very</b> %	<b>Somewhat</b> %	<b>Not too</b> %	<b>Not at all</b> %	<b>DK</b> %
Endanger civilian lives	53	28	8	7	4=100
Lead to retaliation from extremists	32	33	17	14	4=100
Are conducted legally	31	35	13	15	7=100
Damage America's reputation	26	31	18	20	5=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 7-10, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

the attacks are being conducted legally and 26% worry they could damage America's reputation around the world.

## Democrats, Independents More Concerned about Civilian Casualties

Democrats are much more likely than Republicans to express concern over whether drone attacks endanger civilian lives. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Democrats and 53% of independents say they are very concerned about whether U.S. drone strikes endanger the lives of innocent civilians, compared with just 37% of Republicans.

The partisan gaps are smaller in concerns over other possible consequences from drone attacks. For each, fewer than half of Democrats – and even smaller percentages of Republicans – express a great deal of concern.

Among those who approve of U.S. drone strikes, 42% say they are very concerned about whether the attacks endanger the lives of innocent civilians. No more than a quarter of drone supporters say they are very concerned about the three other possible consequences tested.

Among those who disapprove of U.S. drone attacks, nearly eight-in-ten (79%) are very concerned about possible civilians casualties; About half say they are very concerned over whether the attacks are being conducted legally (52%), whether they could lead to retaliation from extremist groups (52%), and whether they could damage America's reputation around the world (49%).

### Fewer Reps 'Very Concerned' that Drones Endanger Civilians

<i>% very concerned about whether drones...</i>	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Endanger civilian lives	53	37	65	53
Lead to retaliation from extremists	32	22	38	33
Are conducted legally	31	24	33	33
Damage America's reputation	26	16	31	29

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 7-10, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

### Supporters of Drones Register Concern over Civilian Casualties

<i>% very concerned</i>	<i>View of drone strikes</i>	
	Approve	Disapprove
	%	%
Endanger civilian lives	42	79
Are conducted legally	24	52
Lead to retaliation from extremists	24	52
Damage America's reputation	16	49

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 7-10, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

## Gender Gap over Drone Strikes

Women are much less supportive of U.S. drone strikes than are men and they express far greater concern over the possibility of civilian casualties. Overall, 44% of women approve of the U.S. conducting missile strikes from pilotless aircraft, 31% disapprove while 25% offer no opinion. By contrast, men support drone strikes by more than three-to-one (68%-21%).

Six-in-ten women (60%) say they are very concerned about whether drone strikes endanger the lives of innocent civilians compared with 46% of men. Less than half of women say they are very concerned about other possible consequences, though they offer somewhat more concern on these issues than do men.

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### Women Less Supportive of Drone Program, Concerned over Civilians

	Men	Women
<i>U.S. conducting drone strikes ...</i>	%	%
Approve	68	44
Disapprove	21	31
Don't know	<u>11</u>	<u>25</u>
	100	100
<i>% very concerned about whether drones...</i>		
Endanger civilian lives	46	60
Lead to retaliation from extremists	26	37
Are conducted legally	27	35
Damage America's reputation	20	33

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 7-10, 2013. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted February 7-10, 2013, among a national sample of 1,004 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (500 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 504 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 254 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see: <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2011 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2012 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,004	3.7 percentage points
Republicans	283	7.0 percentage points
Democrats	324	6.5 percentage points
Independents	334	6.4 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**February 7-10, 2013, OMNIBUS**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**N=1,004**

**NO QUESTIONS PEW.1-PEW.3**

**PEW.4 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**PEW.5-PEW.8 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.9 On a different subject, do you approve or disapprove of the United States conducting missile strikes from pilotless aircraft called drones to target extremists in countries such as Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia?

Feb 7-10 <u>2013</u>		Jun 28-Jul 9 <u>2012</u>	Apr <u>2012</u> <sup>1</sup>
56	Approve	55	62
26	Disapprove	34	28
18	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	11	10

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.10 How concerned are you, if at all, about whether U.S. drone strikes **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned? How about whether U.S. drone strikes **[ITEM]**? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned?

	<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not too concerned</u>	<u>Not at all concerned</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
a. Are being conducted legally February 7-10, 2013	31	35	13	15	7
b. Endanger the lives of innocent civilians February 7-10, 2013	53	28	8	7	4
c. Could lead to retaliation from extremist groups February 7-10, 2013	32	33	17	14	4
d. Could damage America's reputation around the world February 7-10, 2013	26	31	18	20	5

<sup>1</sup> Trend from the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project