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# Concerns about Russia Rise, But Just a Quarter Call Moscow an Adversary

*Public Remains Wary about U.S. Involvement in Ukraine*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT:**

Carroll Doherty, Director of Political Research

Alec Tyson, Research Associate

202.419.4372

[www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org)

# Concerns about Russia Rise, But Just a Quarter Call Moscow an Adversary

## *Public Remains Wary about U.S. Involvement in Ukraine*

In the wake of Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region, public concern about Russia has increased, according to a new Pew Research Center survey. Even so, when given the choice, more describe Russia as a serious problem but not an adversary (43%) than say it represents an adversary (26%). Just 22% say Russia is not much of a problem.

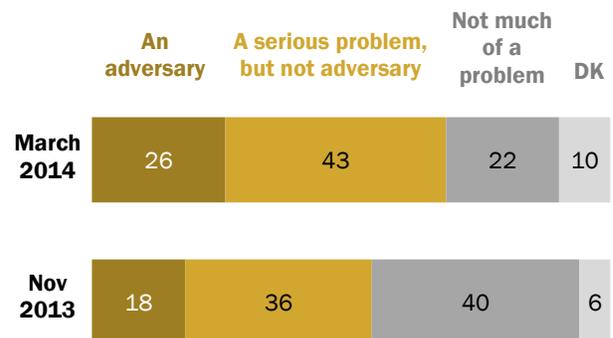
Since last November, the percentage viewing Russia as an adversary has risen eight points (from 18%) while the share saying it is a serious problem has increased seven points (from 36%). The number of Americans who do not think of Russia as much of a problem has fallen by almost half – from 40% then to 22% today.

Most of the increase in the view that Russia is an adversary has come among Republicans. Currently, 42% of Republicans describe Russia as an adversary, up from 24% four months ago. Just 23% of independents and 19% of Democrats view Russia as an adversary, little changed from November. But increasing numbers of Democrats and independents describe Russia as at least a serious problem.

The new national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted March 20-23 among 1,002 adults, finds continued public reluctance about getting too involved in Ukraine. About half (52%) say it is more important for the United States not to get too involved in the situation in Ukraine while 35% say it is more important for the U.S. to take a firm stand against Russian actions.

### More See Russia as a 'Serious Problem' than as an 'Adversary'

*% think of Russia as ...*



Survey conducted March 20-23, 2014.  
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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### Public Still Reluctant to See U.S. Get Too Involved in Ukraine

	March 6-9	March 20-23	Change
<i>More important for U.S. to ...</i>	%	%	
Not get too involved in the situation	56	52	-4
Take a firm stand against Russian actions	29	35	+6
Don't know	15	13	
	100	100	

Survey conducted March 20-23, 2014.

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[Opinions have changed only modestly since early March](#), before Russia annexed Crimea. At that time, 56% said it was more important not to get too involved and 29% favored a firm stand against Russia.

The public gives President Obama mixed ratings for his handling of the situation involving Russia and Ukraine. Overall, 43% say Barack Obama is handling the situation between Russia and Ukraine about right, while 35% say he is not being tough enough and just 5% say he is being too tough.

Views of Obama's handling of the Ukraine situation are highly partisan. Most Republicans say he is not being tough enough (58%), while just 27% say he is handling the situation about right.

Opinion is the reverse among Democrats: 65% say Obama is handling the situation involving Russia and Ukraine about right, compared with 22% who say he is not being tough enough. Among independents, 42% say he is handling things about right, while 35% say he is not being tough enough. Across all partisan groups, very few say that Obama has been too tough in handling the situation.

[In the Pew Research Center's major foreign policy study last November](#), far more Americans said Obama was not tough enough in his general handling of the nation's foreign policy and national security than say that today about his handling of Russia and Ukraine. At that time (the survey was conducted Oct. 30-Nov. 6), 51% said Obama was not tough enough "in his approach to foreign policy and national security issues." That is 16 points higher than the percentage making that judgment today about Obama's handling of the situation involving Russia and Ukraine.

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### Mixed Views of Obama's Handling of Situation Involving Russia, Ukraine

*In dealing with situation, Obama is being ...*

	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %
Too tough	5	6	4	6
Not tough enough	35	58	22	35
About right	43	27	65	42
Don't know	<u>16</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>18</u>
	100	100	100	100

Survey conducted March 20-23, 2014.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## Few Want Military Options Considered

There is no greater appetite for a military approach to address the situation between Russia and Ukraine than there was two weeks ago. Among the 35% of the public that thinks it is more important for the U.S. to take a firm stand against Russian actions, very few (just 6% of the public overall) say military options should be considered. By comparison, 26% of the public supports a firm stand against Russia and say only economic and political measures should be considered. This is little changed from two weeks ago, when 8% said that military options should be on the table.

About as many Republicans say it is more important for the U.S. to take a firm stand against Russian actions (45%) as to not get too involved in the situation (47%). Democrats and independents say it is more important for the U.S. to not get too involved in the situation than to take a firm stand against Russian actions (56%-35% among Democrats, 56%-32% among independents).

Few Republicans (11%), Democrats (6%) or independents (5%) say a military approach should be considered in addressing the situation in Ukraine.

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### Republicans Divided Between Firm Stand and Less Involvement in Ukraine

*Do you think it is more important for U.S. to ...*

	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %
Take a firm stand against Russian actions	35	45	35	32
<i>In addressing the current situation in Ukraine should the U.S.</i>				
Consider military options	6	11	6	5
Only consider economic/political options	26	28	28	25
Don't know	3	6	1	2
Not get too involved in the situation	52	47	56	56
Don't know	<u>13</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>13</u>
	100	100	100	100

Survey conducted March 20-23, 2014.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## Views of Russia and China

As tensions over Ukraine persist, the public now sees Russia as a greater concern than China – a first in Pew Research surveys dating to 2008.

Overall, 68% call Russia an adversary (26%) or a serious problem but not an adversary (43%). By comparison, 58% say that China is an adversary (22%) or a serious problem but not an adversary (35%).

This marks a shift in views from November, when 66% said China was an adversary or a serious problem but not an adversary, compared with 54% who viewed Russia this way.

Even in the fall of 2008, just weeks after fighting between Russian and Georgian forces, about as many saw China as a serious problem or adversary (68%) as felt this way about Russia (66%).

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### More Now See Russia than China as a Serious Problem or Adversary

*View of each country ...*

	<b>China</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>Diff</b>
	%	%	
An adversary	22	26	-4
A serious problem, but not an adversary	35	43	-8
Not much of a problem	32	22	+10
Don't know	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	
	100	100	
<b>NET Adversary/ Serious problem</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>-10</b>

Survey conducted March 20-23, 2014.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## More Republicans Now View Russia as an Adversary

Republicans have become much more likely to view Russia as an adversary over the past four months. In the current survey, 42% of Republicans think of Russia this way, compared with just 24% who said this in November 2013. By comparison, just 23% of independents and 19% of Democrats call Russia an adversary and these views have shown much less change than those of Republicans over recent months (+6 points among independents, +4 points among Democrats).

Those with at least some college experience also have become more likely to view Russia as an adversary. In November, 21% of college graduates and 17% of those with some college experience saw Russia as an adversary; today, 32% and 28%, respectively, say Russia is an adversary. Among those with no college experience, 20% call Russia an adversary, compared with 16% who said this in November.

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### A Wider Partisan Gap in Views of Russia as an Adversary

*% viewing Russia as an adversary...*

	<b>Nov 2013</b>	<b>March 2014</b>	<b>Change</b>
	%	%	
Total	18	26	+8
Men	19	28	+9
Women	17	24	+7
18-29	11	15	+4
30-49	17	26	+9
50-64	20	31	+11
65+	22	28	+6
College grad+	21	32	+11
Some college	17	28	+11
HS or less	16	20	+4
Republican	24	42	+18
Democrat	15	19	+4
Independent	17	23	+6

Survey conducted March 20-23, 2014.

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## Views of Russia Tied to Stance on Ukraine Situation

Among the 26% of the public that views Russia as an adversary, about half (52%) say it is more important for the U.S. to take a firm stand against Russian actions, while 42% say it is more important that the U.S. not get too involved in the situation involving Russia and Ukraine.

Among those who view Russia as a serious problem but not an adversary (43% of the public), 50% say it is more important for the U.S. not to get too involved in the situation while 39% supports taking a firm stand against Russia. Those who do not see Russia as much of a problem (22% of the public) overwhelmingly prefer that the U.S. not get too involved (75%).

### More Support for 'Firm Stand' among Those Who See Russia as Adversary

	View of Russia		
	Adversary	Problem, not adversary	Not much of a problem
<i>More important for U.S. to ...</i>	%	%	%
Take a firm stand against Russian actions	52	39	17
Not get too involved in the situation	42	50	75
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100
N	282	440	202

Survey conducted March 20-23, 2014.

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 March 20-23, 2014 among a national sample of 1,002 adults, 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (501 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 501 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 299 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 and Spanish. 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 2012 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 2013 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	1,002	3.6 percentage points
Republican	252	7.3 percentage points
Democrat	300	6.6 percentage points
Independent	364	6.0 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.

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**March 20-23, 2014 OMNIBUS**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**N=1,002**

**QUESTIONS PEW.1-PEW.2a PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****RANDOMIZE PEW.3 AND PEW.4****ASK ALL:**

PEW.3 All things considered, which of these descriptions comes closest to your view of China today... Do you think China is **[READ IN ORDER]**:

	<u>An adversary</u>	<u>A serious problem but not an adversary</u>	<u>Not much of a problem</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
March 20-23, 2014	22	35	32	10
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	23	43	28	6
Jan 5-9, 2011	22	43	27	9
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	19	41	30	9
Mid-September, 2008	19	49	26	6
October, 2005	16	45	30	9
July, 2004	14	40	36	10
February, 2002	17	39	33	11
Early September, 2001	23	48	23	6
May, 2001	19	51	22	8
March, 2000	17	44	26	13
June, 1999	18	53	22	7
March, 1999	20	48	25	7
September, 1997	14	46	32	8

**RANDOMIZE PEW.3 AND PEW.4****ASK ALL:**

PEW.4 All things considered, which of these descriptions comes closest to your view of Russia today... Do you think Russia is **[READ IN ORDER]**:

	<u>An adversary</u>	<u>A serious problem but not an adversary</u>	<u>Not much of a problem</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
March 20-23, 2014	26	43	22	10
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	18	36	40	6
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	15	32	42	11
Mid-September, 2008	18	48	28	6

**ASK ALL:**

Now, thinking about the situation involving Russia and Ukraine...

PEW.5 Do you think Barack Obama is being too tough, not tough enough or about right in dealing with the situation involving Russia and Ukraine?

Mar 20-23

2014

5	Too tough
35	Not tough enough
43	About right
16	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.6 Thinking about the situation in Ukraine, do you think it is more important for the U.S. to **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**?

**ASK IF FIRM STAND (PEW.6=1):**

PEW.7 And do you think the U.S. should consider military options to address the situation involving Russia and Ukraine, or should it only consider economic and political options?

Mar 20-23 <u>2014</u>		Mar 6-9 <u>2014</u>
35	Take a firm stand against Russian actions	29
6	Consider military options	8
26	Only consider economic and political options	19
3	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	2
52	Not get too involved in the situation	56
13	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	15