

Press contacts: William Morgan, wrmorgan@uchicago.edu, (708) 256-5743 (cell) and Eric Young, young-eric@norc.org, (301) 634-9536 or (703) 217-6814 (cell)

Most Americans are very concerned about cyber-attacks on U.S institutions.

Pearson Institute/AP-NORC Poll find nearly 3 in 4 Americans view China and Russia as big threats to U.S. cybersecurity.

CHICAGO, October 11, 2021 – There is widespread worry among the American public about cyber-attacks, and majorities view the governments of China (73%) and Russia (72%) as major threats to cybersecurity.

These are among the results of a new study from the [Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts at the University of Chicago](#) and [The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research](#) that is being released in conjunction with the [2021 Pearson Global Forum](#). The virtual event will bring together researchers and policymakers to address these issues and develop strategies to prevent and resolve international conflicts.

Ninety-one percent of Americans are at least some concerned about attacks on financial institutions, including 68% who are very concerned. The public has similar worry about cyber-attacks on national security and defense systems, energy infrastructure, health care systems, governments services, and their own personal information.

Americans view the Chinese and Russian governments as the largest threats to the U.S. cybersecurity. However, most are also worried about attacks from the Iranian government (55%) or unaffiliated groups (53%).

“The public is clearly worried about cyber-attacks, and many Americans see such attacks as a potential result of international conflict,” said Sheila Kohanteb, the Executive Director of External Relations at the Pearson Institute. “The survey results show Americans are far more concerned about cyber-attacks from China and Russia than those from other governments, groups, or individuals.”

Older Americans are more concerned about cybersecurity than younger adults, with more than 75% of adults age 60 and older saying they are very concerned about attacks on national security, government services, and health care systems compared to less than 50% of those age 18-29.

Similarly, while more than 85% of adults age 60 and older say Chinese and Russian cyber-attacks are serious threats, only slightly more than half of adults age 18-29 say the same.

“The study highlights significant and important generational differences in attitudes toward cybersecurity and foreign governments,” said Trevor Tompson, director of the AP-NORC Center. “These findings also provide evidence of broad potential support for policies designed to increase protection against cyber-attacks on U.S. institutions.”

About the Study

This survey was conducted by the Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts at the University of Chicago and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research with funding from NORC at the University of Chicago. Staff from the Pearson Institute, at Harris Public Policy, and The AP-NORC Center collaborated on all aspects of the study.

Data were collected using the AmeriSpeak Omnibus[®], a monthly multi-client survey using NORC’s probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report.

Interviews for this survey were conducted between September 9 and September 13, 2021, with adults age 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 1,071 completed the survey — 986 via the web and 85 via telephone. Interviews were conducted in English. The final stage completion rate is 19.3 percent, the weighted household panel recruitment rate is 19.0 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 75.1 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 2.8 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.9 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under- and oversampling resulting from the study specific sample design. Poststratification variables included age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity, and education. Weighting variables were obtained from the 2021 Current Population Survey. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of adults age 18 and over.

About the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

- The Associated Press (AP) is an independent global news organization dedicated to factual reporting. Founded in 1846, AP today remains the most trusted source of fast, accurate, unbiased news in all formats and the essential provider of the technology and services vital to the news business. More than half the world's population sees AP journalism every day. www.ap.org
- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest objective and nonpartisan research institutions in the world. www.norc.org

The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals. In its 10 years, The AP-NORC Center has conducted more than 250 studies exploring the critical issues facing the public, covering topics like health care, the economy, COVID-19, trust in media, and more.

Learn more at www.apnorc.org.

About the Pearson Institute

The Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts at the University of Chicago promotes the ongoing discussion, understanding and resolution of global conflicts, and contributes to the advancement of a global society more at peace. Established through a grant from The Thomas L. Pearson and The Pearson Family Members Foundation, and led by Institute Director James Robinson, co-author of *Why Nations Fail* and *The Narrow Corridor*, the Institute achieves this by employing an analytically rigorous, data-driven approach and global perspective to understanding violent conflict. It is global in its scope, activities and footprint. Attracting students and scholars from around the world, its faculty is in the field studying conflicts – and approaches to conflict resolution – in Nigeria, Colombia and Afghanistan, to name just a few.

###

Contacts: For more information, contact either William Morgan for Harris at wrmorgan@uchicago.edu, (708) 256-5743 (cell); or Eric Young for NORC at young-eric@norc.org, (301) 634-9536 or (703) 217-6814 (cell); or Patrick Maks for AP at pmaks@ap.org, (212-621-7536).