

# Among Assad's Opponents, Moderation Reigns

by [David Pollock \(/experts/david-pollock\)](/experts/david-pollock)

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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David Pollock is the Bernstein Fellow at The Washington Institute, focusing on regional political dynamics and related issues.



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Reporting about violence in the Middle East often focuses on Islamic extremists, and this is increasingly true for much of the coverage of Syria's uprising. But in the Syrian political opposition, Islamic extremism is truly the exception that proves the rule. The vast majority of Syrian opposition activists, according to a new, systematic survey of more than 1,000 of them, express relatively moderate views about Islamic issues. They also voice support for many key democratic values -- and most look to the West and other democracies for inspiration and protection. These findings offer support for the view that mainstream Syrian opposition fighters merit the increased aid that would enable them to defend themselves, defeat Bashar al-Assad's dictatorship and restrain any extremists infiltrating their movement.

The survey, completed in July, was commissioned by the nonprofit International Republican Institute, a nongovernmental organization, and conducted by Pechter Polls of Princeton, N.J., in consultation with Conrad Winn of Compass Research and Carleton University. Native Syrian interviewers conducted the poll, using secure Skype and...

Read the full article on the *Washington Post* website. ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/among-assads-opponents-moderation-reigns/2012/09/21/b5a6b8a4-03e1-11e2-91e7-2962c74e7738\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/among-assads-opponents-moderation-reigns/2012/09/21/b5a6b8a4-03e1-11e2-91e7-2962c74e7738_story.html)) ❖

*Washington Post*

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