



SUBSTACK LIVE
EPISODE 01 · 6 MAY 2026

THE BIG MIDDLE · SUBSTACK LIVE

Iran. Where do Americans actually *agree?*

One live Substack session.
Real common ground.

Boomers, millennials, Gen X. Strongly liberal, lean liberal, independent, conservative. Everyone answered at the same time. Anonymously. And watched the consensus form.

POWERED BY



9 SLIDES
SWIPE →

THE PREMISE

The edges are **loud**. The middle is **bigger** than you'd think.

The Big Middle's bet: most Americans agree on more than they disagree on. The loudest voices on either edge get the airtime. So we picked the issue everyone says is impossible to discuss — US military involvement in Iran — and went looking for the room's actual middle.

75+

live Substack audience watching

22

came into Converge to respond anonymously

25min

live, voice-moderated session

62.5%

follow the conflict daily

• A LIBERAL-LEANING ROOM. PLOT TWIST.

75% leaned liberal. Average support: 3.81/10.

But the room **wasn't unified**.
It was **split**.

• THE VARIANCE •

Standard deviation: **3.21**. Range: **1 to 10**. Even with three-quarters of the room leaning liberal, support ratings spanned the whole scale. A 3.81 average doesn't mean "the country is mildly opposed." It means **the country is divided**.

• THE UNEXPECTED NUMBER •

Asked whether "no legitimate justification exists" for engagement, the room rated it just **2.50 / 5** — the lowest score on either side. Translation: even people who personally oppose the war see *some* legitimate basis. They just don't think this was it.

WHAT EVERYONE IN THE ROOM WAS WORRIED ABOUT

87% fear an extended war. The middle is structural.

Potential for ground troops or extended war



Rising gas and energy prices



Humanitarian impact



Regional destabilization in Gulf states



Stock market volatility



National security threats



Cost to US taxpayers



• EVEN OPPONENTS CREDIT SUPPORT REASONS. EVEN SUPPORTERS CREDIT OPPOSITION REASONS.

Both sides see **red** and **blue**.

• REASONS TO SUPPORT — EVEN OPPONENTS CREDIT THESE •

Iran's support of terrorism & destabilizing activities	4.19
Iran directly attacked the US or allies first	4.19
Nuclear proliferation and disarmament concerns	3.94
National security and imminent threat response	3.88

• REASONS TO OPPOSE — EVEN SUPPORTERS CREDIT THESE •

Cost to the US in lives and financial resources	4.63
Political motivations and domestic distractions	4.50
Risk of another destabilizing Middle East conflict	4.38
Civilian and human casualties are unacceptable	4.31

Scale: 1 = strongly disagree most Americans would credit this; 5 = strongly agree. n = 16.

● WHERE EVERYONE IN THE ROOM ACTUALLY AGREED

Americans don't disagree about the end state.

They disagree about whether **this** was the **right way** to get there.

No nukes.

"We do not want Iran to have nuclear weapons."

The single most repeated phrase across open-text. Supporters and opponents both said this — in nearly identical language.

No more.

"We're done with it. Want it to be over."

Minimum casualties. No extended ground war. No second Iraq. The 87.5% who fear an extended war showed up here too. Fatigue is bipartisan.

Not like this.

"This was a war of choice we shouldn't be in."

The dominant note, even among those crediting some justification: the timing felt political, the rationale thin, the cost steep. Process matters as much as outcome.



Both can be **true**:
a nuclear Iran is **dangerous** for the region,
and the people are **tired** of war being prioritized
over their needs.

— SYNTHESIS OF TWO ANONYMOUS VOICES • ONE BIG MIDDLE

• FOR LEADERS, AGENCIES, ANYONE SPEAKING TO THE COUNTRY

Speak **to** the country. Not **past** it.

• SAY •

What lands with both sides

- A nuclear Iran is unacceptable
- Cost in lives and dollars matters (4.63)
- Civilian casualties are not a footnote (4.31)
- "Last resort" is the test voters apply (4.13)
- Iran's terrorism is real *and* ME-war fatigue is real

• DON'T •

What loses the room — fast

- "There's no legitimate justification" (rated lowest, 2.50)
- Single-cause explanations — "this is just political" alone
- "Trust us, the threat is real" without showing the work
- Asking the country to pick a team



One session. Every voice. Real common ground.

The whole carousel came from a single live Substack session. 22 Americans answered at the same time, anonymously. AI synthesized themes as the session ran. No one waited a turn. No one stayed quiet. That's how The Big Middle works — by giving the actual middle the airtime the edges usually get.

• UP NEXT •

More Big Middle conversations ahead.

Subscribe on Substack so you don't miss the next live session with Allan & Michallie.

• WANT TO RUN A SESSION LIKE THIS? •

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20 to 1,000 live participants. Voice-moderated. SOC 2 Type II. The same platform that ran this session — used by KPMG, Ipsos, Discount Tire and others. startconverge.com