



CRITICAL ISSUES POLL

With Nielsen Scarborough

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American Attitudes toward the Middle East

Survey Methodology **(September 2019)**

The survey was carried out September 3-20, 2019 online from a nationally representative sample of Nielsen Scarborough's probability-based panel, originally recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of adults. The poll was conducted among a national poll of 3,016 respondents, with a margin of error of +/- 1.78%. Overall, the sample was adjusted to reflect population estimates (Scarborough USA+/Gallup) for Americans. The survey variables balanced through weighting were: age, gender, race/ethnicity, household income, level of education, census regional division, and political party affiliation.

Note: These questions were fielded as part of a larger poll on foreign and domestic issues. Participants in this study were provided by Nielsen from Nielsen's sample of respondents.

Middle East Policy

Now we would like to ask you specifically about American foreign policy toward the Middle East.

Q25a. In general, what role do you want the Trump administration to play in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Should the Trump administration [RANDOMIZE]:

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Lean toward Israel	64%	10%	18%	34%
2. Lean toward the Palestinians	1	8	4	5
3. Lean toward neither side [FIXED]	34	80	74	60
Refused	1	2	4	2

Q38. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. government is handling Iran? [RANDOMIZE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Approve	76%	13%	33%	42%
2. Disapprove	21	82	58	53
Refused	3	5	9	5

Q39. In comparison to three years ago, do you think the odds of the U.S. going to war with Iran are higher, lower, or the same? [RANDOMLY REVERSE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Higher	27%	65%	32%	45%
2. Lower	16	3	5	9
3. The same	39	14	30	26
4. Unsure/Don't know [FIXED]	18	18	30	19
Refused	1	1	3	1

Q40. What do you believe the Trump administration's most important goal in its policy toward Iran is currently? [RANDOMIZE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons	53%	13%	18%	30%
2. Change Iranian behavior in the region	13	2	6	7
3. Change the regime	3	2	3	3
4. Undo Barack Obama's policy	13	45	16	28

5. Look tough at home	2	14	12	9
6. Please key Middle Eastern allies such as Israel and Saudi Arabia	4	10	8	7
7. Other/Don't know [FIXED]	11	14	35	15
Refused	1	1	4	1

Q40b. Which one of the following is closest to your view? **[RANDOMIZE]**

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. To achieve its current goal vis-à-vis Iran, the U.S. should be prepared to go to war.	34%	9%	21%	21%
2. The current goals of U.S. policy do not warrant waging war. The U.S. must rely on other means short of war.	63	89	70	76
Refused	4	2	9	4



CRITICAL ISSUES POLL

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American Attitudes toward the Middle East

Survey Methodology **(October 2019)**

The survey was carried out October 4-10, 2019 online from a nationally representative sample of Nielsen Scarborough's probability-based panel, originally recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of adults. The poll was conducted among a national poll of 1,260 respondents (958 for the Syria question), with a margin of error of +/- 2.76%. Overall, the sample was adjusted to reflect population estimates (Scarborough USA+/Gallup) for Americans. The survey variables balanced through weighting were: age, gender, race/ethnicity, household income, level of education, census regional division, and political party affiliation.

Note: These questions were fielded as part of a larger poll on foreign and domestic issues. Participants in this study were provided by Nielsen from Nielsen's sample of respondents.

Afghanistan – ALL RESPONDENTS

55. If you had to guess, which would you say is the longest war in American history? [Open-ended text box]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Afghanistan/Taliban	39%	44%	35%	41%
2. Vietnam	11	11	8	11
3. Civil War/ War Between the States	5	7	4	6
4. World War II	4	5	7	5
5. War on Terror, Terrorism (unless specified other country)	6	3	4	4
6. Iraq	3	4	0	3
7. Middle East	4	3	2	3
8. Cold War	<1	2	2	1
9. Current War, one we're in now (only if they give no other specification)	1	<1	2	1
10. Iran/Persian (War)	1	2	1	1
11. Revolutionary War	1	<1	0	1
12. Korean War	2	2	1	2
13. World War I	2	1	4	2
14. War on Drugs	2	1	4	2
15. Gulf War, Desert Shield, Desert Storm	2	1	0	1
16. Iraq and Afghanistan	1	3	2	2
17. Wars following 9/11 (including "9/11")	1	0	0	<1
18. Iran/Iraq	<1	1	0	<1
19. Native American (including "War with a Native American Tribe," "fighting the Apache Indians," "Indian Wars")	1	0	0	1
20. Other	6	5	10	6
21. None	<1	0	0	<1
Refused	8	6	15	8

Q56. As far as you know, which of the following best describes the role of the Taliban in Afghanistan currently? [RANDOMIZE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. They control the Afghan government.	11%	9%	11%	10%
2. They are part of the Afghan government.	10	7	6	8
3. They are rebels fighting the Afghan government.	55	57	51	55
4. They are just a key party in Afghanistan which is not part of the government.	22	25	26	24
Refused	1	2	6	2

Q57. Do you think the U.S. should increase troops, maintain current troop levels, decrease troops, or remove all troops from Afghanistan in the next year?

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Increase troops.	2%	5%	1%	3%
2. Maintain current troop levels.	34	38	22	34
3. Decrease troops.	23	21	26	23
4. Remove all troops by the end of the year.	23	19	28	22
5. Don't know.	18	18	23	18
Refused	<1	1	0	1

Q58. As you may know, the U.S. has started the reduction of military presence in Afghanistan, with about half of the approximately 14,000 U.S. troops there set to begin returning home in the near future. Based on what you know, do you support or oppose this action?

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Strongly support	40%	23%	37%	32%
2. Somewhat support	31	31	21	30
3. Somewhat oppose	16	25	13	20
4. Strongly oppose	6	8	6	7
5. Don't know/No opinion	8	14	23	12
Refused	0	<1	1	<1

Q59. Looking back, do you think it was a mistake or the correct choice to send U.S. troops to Afghanistan in 2001?

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Mistake	27%	47%	29%	36%
2. Correct choice	49	29	31	38
3. Not sure	24	24	40	26
Refused	<1	<1	0	<1

Q60. Do you think America's military involvement in Afghanistan has been successful or unsuccessful in obtaining America's strategic objectives?

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Very successful	4%	3%	4%	3%
2. Successful	24	11	7	16
3. Neither successful nor unsuccessful.	38	38	41	38
4. Unsuccessful	19	28	18	23
5. Very unsuccessful	6	13	13	10
6. Don't know	9	6	17	9
Refused	<1	1	0	1

Q61. [IF Q60= 4 OR 5, ASK Q61] Which of the following factors do you think is MOST important in explaining the reason for failure in Afghanistan? [RANDOMIZE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. It was futile to send troops to fight the war on terrorism under any circumstances.	8%	16%	14%	14%
2. The threat of terrorism from al-Qaeda requires principally non-military means.	2	5	9	4
3. The threat posed by al-Qaeda did not require an all-out war on Afghanistan.	13	8	16	11
4. The intervention in Iraq, which reduced the American ability to fight in Afghanistan effectively.	15	19	16	17
5. Our inability to build effective alternative structures to the existing political and social order in Afghanistan.	34	39	28	36
6. The U.S. should have never stayed this long and should have left immediately after the collapse of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.	25	11	16	16

Refused	3	2	0	2
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Q62A. Regardless of whether our intervention in Afghanistan was justified or not, do you believe that the U.S. has an obligation towards the Afghan government and the many segments of society who were impacted by that intervention?

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Yes	30%	60%	36%	44%
2. No	42	18	36	30
3. Not sure	27	23	28	25
Refused	<1	<1	0	<1

[IF Q62A=1, THEN ASK Q62B] Q62B. What form should our responsibility take?
[RANDOMIZE CODES 1-4]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. A limited military role	38%	28%	27%	30%
2. Using our leverage in the negotiations to protect the interests of affected parties in Afghanistan	46	43	45	44
3. Continued financial support	6	13	6	10
4. Other/don't know [FIXED]	11	15	22	15
Refused	1	2	0	1

Q63. Do you think the U.S. military should be responsible for ensuring that Afghanistan has a liberal democratic government, one that protects things like fair and open elections for all citizens, equal rights for women, and equal access to education for all?

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Yes	22%	33%	14%	26%
2. No	63	40	49	51
3. Not sure	14	26	35	22
Refused	1	1	1	1

Q64. If the central government of Afghanistan in Kabul, the capital, does not have control over all of the territory of Afghanistan, does that pose a threat to the safety of the United States?

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Yes, it does pose a threat.	46%	41%	28%	42%
2. No, it does not pose a threat.	24	28	23	26
3. Not sure.	29	29	49	31
Refused	1	2	0	1

Q65. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the opinion that the U.S. should negotiate with the Taliban to end the war in Afghanistan?

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Strongly agree.	12%	12%	15%	12%
2. Somewhat agree.	28	35	19	30
3. Somewhat disagree.	22	18	16	19
4. Strongly disagree.	28	17	22	22
5. Not sure.	11	18	27	16
Refused	<1	<1	0	<1

Q66. [IF Q65= 1 OR 2, ASK Q66] On a scale of 1-5, do you support the following forms of relations with the Taliban? Indicate your support below, with 1 indicating “strongly oppose” and 5 indicating “strongly support.”

Q66A (1). A full peace agreement and normal relations.

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
(1) Strongly oppose	2%	10%	2%	6%
2	8	7	10	8
3	32	23	20	27
4	31	27	25	28
(5) Strongly support	27	32	43	31
Refused	0	2	0	1

Q66B (2). Inviting the Taliban to the United States.

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
(1) Strongly oppose	56%	48%	45%	51%
2	20	23	16	21
3	14	21	25	19
4	9	5	10	7
(5) Strongly support	1	1	0	1
Refused	0	3	4	2

Q66C (3). Being prepared to provide financial assistance to Afghanistan even with the Taliban being part of the government.

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
(1) Strongly oppose	46%	16%	40%	30%
2	24	19	6	19
3	21	35	36	30
4	8	25	13	17
(5) Strongly support	1	3	0	2
Refused	2	3	4	2

Q67. It was recently revealed that a meeting had been planned at Camp David between senior Taliban representatives, Afghan government officials, and the U.S. President and his staff, to occur on September 8, 2019 (later canceled). Which of the following comes closest to your initial reaction: [RANDOMIZE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. I support an agreement with the Taliban if possible but do not support the Taliban being honored on American soil given their role in hosting al-Qaeda.	40%	42%	36%	41%
2. I am opposed to an agreement with the Taliban whether or not they come to the U.S.	32	29	35	31
3. I am open to the Taliban coming to the U.S. if that's what it takes to reach an agreement but object to the timing so close to the anniversary of 9/11.	7	12	9	10
4. I am open to the Taliban coming to the U.S. if that's what it takes to reach an agreement, and have no problem with the timing.	18	15	12	16
Refused	2	2	9	3

Q69. Assume that a peace agreement between the U.S. and the Taliban is reached, and the U.S. withdraws all troops from Afghanistan. If the Taliban continues their war with the Afghan government and emerge victorious, capturing Kabul and other major cities, how much do you support the following actions? Indicate your support below, with 1 indicating “strongly disapprove” and 5 indicating “strongly approve.”

Q69A (1). Military action.

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
(1) Strongly disapprove	20%	24%	22%	22%
2	13	16	14	14
3	25	31	38	29
4	18	14	10	16
(5) Strongly approve	21	11	9	15
Refused	3	5	7	4

Q69B (2). Impose economic sanctions on the Taliban.

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
(1) Strongly disapprove	6%	5%	7%	5%
2	2	7	3	4
3	15	24	34	21
4	15	18	9	16
(5) Strongly approve	59	43	42	50
Refused	3	4	6	4

Q69C (3). Engage in international diplomatic efforts

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
(1) Strongly disapprove	13%	6%	6%	9%
2	5	3	5	4
3	24	16	26	20
4	24	21	22	22
(5) Strongly approve	32	50	35	40
Refused	3	5	7	4

Q69D (4). Do nothing.

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
(1) Strongly disapprove	38%	37%	31%	37%
2	19	18	12	17
3	23	26	34	26
4	7	8	9	8
(5) Strongly approve	9	7	9	8
Refused	4	5	4	5

Middle East Policy

Now we would like to ask you specifically about American foreign policy toward the Middle East.

ALL RESPONDENTS

Q71. One of the issues of tension between the United States and Israel has been its construction of Israeli settlements in the territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war. These settlements are considered illegal by most of the international community and have been opposed by every U.S. administration, both Republican and Democratic. The Israeli government has continued to build settlements arguing that they have the right to do so, or that these are not obstacles to peace. How do you believe the U.S. should react to new settlements? **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Do nothing	42%	8%	26%	25%
2. Limit U.S. opposition to words, but take no other action	34	23	25	28
3. Impose some economic sanctions, either through the United Nations or unilaterally	20	47	36	34
4. Take more serious action	3	19	9	11
Refused	2	3	5	3

Q75. How much have you heard about BDS, or the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement aimed at Israel? **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. A great deal	8%	4%	6%	6%
2. A good amount	17	12	11	14
3. A little	33	28	17	29
4. I have not heard about it	42	55	64	51
Refused	1	1	1	1

[Ask only if Q75 = 1, 2, or 3]

Q76. Based on what you have heard, do you support or oppose BDS, or the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement? [RANDOMLY REVERSE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Support strongly	2%	14%	10%	8%
2. Support somewhat	6	34	15	18
3. Neither support nor oppose [FIXED]	15	37	40	26
4. Oppose somewhat	9	11	4	9
5. Oppose strongly	67	4	31	38
Refused	2	0	0	1

[Ask Q77A, Q77B, and Q78 if Q75 = 1, 2, or 3]

Q77a. Tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statement:

BDS is a legitimate, peaceful way of opposing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, BDS urges action to pressure Israel to comply with international law. Opposing Israeli policy does not equal anti-Semitism.

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Strongly disagree	55%	6%	22%	32%
2. Somewhat disagree	14	8	10	11
3. Neither agree nor disagree	17	22	27	20
4. Somewhat agree	9	24	10	15
5. Strongly agree	4	38	31	21
Refused	1	1	0	1

Q77b. Tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Regardless of how BDS defines itself, it is an anti-Israel organization attempting to weaken Israel and to undermine its legitimacy. Some of its supporters are opponents of Israel's very existence and may even be anti-Semitic.

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Strongly disagree	3%	30%	21%	16%
2. Somewhat disagree	4	19	4	10

3. Neither agree nor disagree	16	29	36	23
4. Somewhat agree	13	17	19	15
5. Strongly agree	63	3	19	34
Refused	2	2	0	2

Q78. Now tell me, which of the following is closer to your view? [RANDOMIZE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. BDS is a legitimate, peaceful way of opposing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, BDS urges action to pressure Israel to comply with international law. Opposing Israeli policy does not equal anti-Semitism.	13%	77%	48%	42%
2. Regardless of how BDS defines itself, it is an anti-Israel organization attempting to weaken Israel and to undermine its legitimacy. Some of its supporters are opponents of Israel's very existence and may even be anti-Semitic.	85	19	42	54
Refused	2	4	10	4

ALL RESPONDENTS

Q79. Which of the following is closer to your view? [RANDOMIZE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. We should SUPPORT laws that penalize people who boycott Israel because these laws help protect Israel.	31%	14%	16%	22%
2. We should OPPOSE laws that penalize people who boycott Israel because these laws infringe on the Constitutional right to free speech and peaceful protest.	62	80	76	72
Refused	7	6	8	7

Iran – ALL RESPONDENTS

Q80. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. government is handling Iran?
[RANDOMIZE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Approve	71%	13%	32%	40%
2. Disapprove	24	86	59	56
Refused	5	1	9	4

Q81. In comparison to three years ago, do you think the odds of the U.S. going to war with Iran are higher, lower, or the same? [RANDOMLY REVERSE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Higher	30%	63%	33%	45%
2. Lower	16	7	5	10
3. The same	39	16	26	27
4. Unsure/Don't know [FIXED]	16	14	36	17
Refused	0	<1	0	<1

Q82A. What do you believe the Trump administration's most important goal in its policy toward Iran is currently? [RANDOMIZE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons	45%	8%	20%	25%
2. Change Iranian behavior in the region	17	4	11	11
3. Change the regime	2	1	4	2
4. Undo Barack Obama's policy	16	53	18	33
5. Look tough at home	2	13	10	8
6. Please key Middle Eastern allies such as Israel and Saudi Arabia	5	9	9	7
7. Other/Don't know [FIXED]	12	11	28	13
Refused	<1	1	1	1

Q82B. Which of the following is closer to your view? [RANDOMIZE]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. To achieve its current goal vis-à-vis Iran, the	32%	10%	17%	20%

U.S. should be prepared to go to war.

2. The current goals of U.S. policy do not warrant waging war. The U.S. must rely on other means short of war.	64	88	76	76
Refused	4	2	7	4

Q83. On September 14, an attack on Saudi Arabia’s oil fields cut Saudi oil production by half, accounting for 5% of the world’s oil supply, for several weeks. Yemen’s Houthi rebels, fighting Saudi Arabia, took responsibility for the attack, and the United States and some European countries blamed Iran. Which one of the following is closest to your view about the evidence presented to the public so far about Iran’s responsibility?

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Very convincing	35%	8%	14%	20%
2. Somewhat convincing	43	42	41	42
3. Somewhat unconvincing	13	30	17	21
4. Very unconvincing	4	17	20	12
Refused	4	3	8	4

Q84. If sufficient evidence emerges that Iran is responsible, should the U.S. consider a military action in response?

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. Yes	45%	21%	25%	32%
2. No	53	77	70	66
Refused	2	2	5	2

Q85. Tell me how important you think the following factors are in explaining the escalation in the Gulf region that has endangered the oil trade:

Q85A (1). The nature of Iran’s regime

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
(1) Not important at all	2%	3%	3%	2%
2	4	9	7	7
Neither important nor unimportant	17	34	46	28
4	37	34	26	34

(5) Strongly approve	36	15	15	24
Refused	4	6	4	5

Q85B (2). The war in Yemen

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
(1) Not important at all	6%	6%	3%	6%
2	6	7	16	8
Neither important nor unimportant	45	36	39	40
4	31	39	28	34
(5) Strongly approve	7	8	10	8
Refused	5	4	4	4

Q85C (3). The U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal (the JCPOA)

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
(1) Not important at all	14%	6%	4%	9%
2	6	5	9	6
Neither important nor unimportant	31	25	46	30
4	21	26	27	24
(5) Strongly approve	24	33	11	27
Refused	4	4	4	4

Q85D (4). U.S. imposition of new sanctions on Iran, including on its oil exports

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
(1) Not important at all	3%	2%	1%	3%
2	5	5	6	5
Neither important nor unimportant	21	25	35	25
4	34	40	36	37
(5) Strongly approve	32	23	19	27
Refused	5	5	4	4

Q86. Now tell me, which one of the above do you think is most important? [**KEEP IN SAME ORDER AS Q85**]

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. The nature of Iran's regime	31%	14%	23%	22%
2. The war in Yemen	4	5	6	5
3. The U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal (the JCPOA)	20	51	24	35
4. U.S. imposition of new sanctions on Iran, including on its oil exports	40	26	41	34
Refused	5	4	7	5

Q94. As you may know, the United States has recently announced the withdrawal of its forces from northern Syria, ahead of a Turkish military campaign there. President Trump explained the move by saying: "it is time for us to get out of these ridiculous Endless Wars, many of them tribal, and bring our soldiers home." Critics have argued that it was the wrong move because it leaves our Kurdish allies in northern Syria vulnerable and gives the upper hand to Turkey which, although a member of NATO, is considered by some as a foe whose aims have been questioned. Tell me how you feel about the move to withdraw U.S. forces from northern Syria:

	Rep	Dem	Ind	Total
1. I support it	42%	8%	22%	24%
2. I oppose it	23	66	32	44
3. I'm indifferent	24	11	13	17
4. Don't know	11	15	33	16