



# CRITICAL ISSUES POLL

*With Nielsen Scarborough*

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**Shibley Telhami, Director**  
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## **Study of American Attitudes toward Iran, Syria, and Afghanistan**

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### **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 national poll was conducted among 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.

## Iran

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

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



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## **Study of American Attitudes toward Iran, Syria, and Afghanistan**

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### **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 national poll was conducted among 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

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?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
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

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

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
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

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?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
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?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
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?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
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

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]

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
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

## Iran

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?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
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?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
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

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
(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

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
(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)

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
(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

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
(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**]

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
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:

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
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