



# CRITICAL ISSUES POLL

*With Nielsen Scarborough*

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## The Middle East and Russia: American attitudes on Trump's foreign policy

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Some Key Findings from November 2017 UMD Critical Issues Poll

### ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

**Moving US Embassy:** A strong majority of Americans (63%), including 44% of Republicans oppose moving the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. (This question followed presentations of arguments for and against moving the embassy).

**Trump Family/Lawyer as ME Envoys:** An overwhelming majority of Americans, 81%, including 71% of Republicans, favor President Trump relying on experts for Middle East diplomacy instead of his son in law and former lawyer. (This question followed presentations of arguments for and against such appointments).

**Withdrawal from UNESCO:** A majority of Americans (55%) do not support US withdrawal from the UNESCO over its stance on Israel, while 40% support this stance. While 82% of democrats oppose the move, 68% of Republicans support it. (This question followed presentations for and against US withdrawal from UNESCO).

**ME Diplomacy:** On the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a majority of Americans, 59% want the Trump administration to lean toward neither side, but a majority, 57% says that Trump policy is in fact leaning toward Israel.

**Partisan Divide on ME:** The American partisan divide on the Palestinian-Israeli issue continues to grow. Among Democrats, those who want the US to take neither side of the conflict has grown to 77% from 69% last year, while the number of those who want to take Israel's side out right has dropped to only 13%, from 17%. In contrast, a majority of Republicans, 58% want the US to take Israel's side.

**Dealing with Settlements:** A majority of Democrats, 57% want to see sanctions or “more serious action” over Israeli settlement construction, continuing a trend we have seen in recent years. Overall, 43% of Americans support imposing sanctions or more serious actions.

## IRAN

**Evaluating Nuclear Deal:** A majority of Americans, 55% say that, assuming both the US and Iran adhere to its terms, the Iran Nuclear Deal reduces the chance of Iran developing nuclear weapons, and 70% say it serves the US national security interests.

**Trump De-certification:** Americans are sharply divided along partisan lines on the president’s decision not to certify Iran’s compliance with the nuclear deal, with 68% of Republicans approving of the decision, and 65% of Democrats disapproving of it. Overall, 35% approved and 37% disapproved, with 27% having no opinion.

**Imposing New Sanctions:** As Congress decides whether or not to impose nuclear-related sanctions on Iran, Americans believe evidence/analysis by American national security agencies should be most important followed by the degree to which other signatories to the deal support such sanctions. The extent to which such sanctions make Iran’s Arab neighbors or Israel more secure is ranked much lower.

## ROLE OF RUSSIA

**Is Russia a Foe?** A plurality of Americans, 47% say Russia is neither an ally nor a foe, while 42% (55% of Democrats) say it’s a foe – even though only 12% (23% of Republicans) say Russia did not interfere in 2016 elections.

**Should US work with Russia on ME?** Strong majorities of Americans (ranging from 77-87%), say that, despite tension, cooperation with Russia is at least somewhat desirable on Middle East issues, such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, achieving stability in Syria and Libya, dealing with Iran, and fighting ISIS and Al Qaeda.

## **Survey Methodology**

The survey was carried out November 1-6, 2017 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 sample was 2,000, including a down-weighted oversample of 1,042 among 18-34 year olds. Responses were weighted by age, gender, income, education, race, and geographic region using benchmarks from the US Census. The survey was also weighted by partisan identification. The margin of error is 2.19%

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.