

October 2017



American Attitudes on Middle East Policies

MEI/Ipsos Poll



ABOUT THE STUDY

The Middle East Institute is pleased to announce the results of a nationwide public opinion survey conducted in collaboration with Ipsos. Among the main findings of the poll are the following:

- 75 percent of Americans believe that the United States should remain engaged in the Middle East:
 - Half (50 percent) believe the United States should stay engaged in the Middle East, but let them resolve their own conflicts
 - Another quarter (25 percent) support not only staying engaged in the region, but taking a more active role to limit or end conflicts
- 82 percent of Americans support U.S. engagement in the fight to defeat ISIS, but 73 percent believe the United States is not winning that fight
- 75 percent of Americans support the nuclear deal with Iran
- 73 percent favor support America's military backing of Israel, and 54 percent favor pressing Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians for peace
- 68 percent believe that respecting the Muslim-American community is key to stemming domestic risks, and 58 percent believe that countries of the Muslim world are allies in the fight against terrorism
- Only 43 percent favor accepting more refugees from the Middle East

Please find the complete findings and details of the survey in this paper.



METHODOLOGY

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of the Middle East Institute. For the U.S. survey, a sample of roughly 1,006 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online in English on June 21-22, 2017.

The sample for the U.S. study was randomly drawn from Ipsos's online panel (see link below for more info on "Access Panels and Recruitment"), partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos "Ampario Overview" sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2013 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the U.S. poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). The U.S. study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following ($n=1,006$, $DEFF=1.5$, adjusted Confidence Interval=5).

For more information about conducting research intended for public release or Ipsos' online polling methodology, please visit our [Public Opinion Polling and Communication](#) page where you can download our brochure, see our public release protocol, or contact us.



FINDINGS

Question 1—How familiar are you, if at all, with the following?

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SUNNI AND SHIA MUSLIMS

VERY FAMILIAR	11%
SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR	35%
NOT VERY FAMILIAR	24%
HEARD OF, BUT KNOW LITTLE	18%
NEVER HEARD OF BEFORE	13%
FAMILIAR (NET)	46%
UNFAMILIAR (NET)	30%

THE ISRAELI – PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

VERY FAMILIAR	19%
SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR	41%
NOT VERY FAMILIAR	18%
HEARD OF, BUT KNOW LITTLE	15%
NEVER HEARD OF BEFORE	6%
FAMILIAR (NET)	60%
UNFAMILIAR (NET)	22%



THE FIGHT WITH ISIS IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

VERY FAMILIAR	25%
SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR	47%
NOT VERY FAMILIAR	13%
HEARD OF, BUT KNOW LITTLE	14%
NEVER HEARD OF BEFORE	2%
FAMILIAR (NET)	72%
UNFAMILIAR (NET)	15%

THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

VERY FAMILIAR	14%
SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR	40%
NOT VERY FAMILIAR	20%
HEARD OF, BUT KNOW LITTLE	20%
NEVER HEARD OF BEFORE	6%
FAMILIAR (NET)	54%
UNFAMILIAR (NET)	26%



Question 2—Do you support or oppose the following?

DONALD TRUMP'S POSITION TOWARDS THE MUSLIM WORLD	
STRONGLY SUPPORT	18%
SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	27%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	22%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	33%
SUPPORT (NET)	45%
OPPOSE (NET)	55%

AMERICA'S MILITARY BACKING OF ISRAEL	
STRONGLY SUPPORT	27%
SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	46%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	21%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	6%
SUPPORT (NET)	73%
OPPOSE (NET)	27%



THE DEAL WITH IRAN TO LIMIT THEIR DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

STRONGLY SUPPORT	30%
SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	45%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	14%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	11%
SUPPORT (NET)	75%
OPPOSE (NET)	25%

BREAKDOWN: THE DEAL WITH IRAN TO LIMIT THEIR DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

	MALE	FEMALE	18-34	35-54	55+	UNDER \$50K	\$50K+
STRONGLY SUPPORT	34%	25%	24%	31%	33%	28%	31%
SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	37%	53%	50%	47%	40%	45%	46%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	13%	15%	20%	9%	14%	16%	13%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	15%	6%	6%	13%	13%	11%	11%
SUPPORT (NET)	71%	79%	74%	78%	73%	73%	76%
OPPOSE (NET)	29%	21%	26%	22%	27%	27%	24%



BREAKDOWN: THE DEAL WITH IRAN TO LIMIT THEIR DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	No COLLEGE DEGREE	COLLEGE DEGREE
STRONGLY SUPPORT	28%	30%	29%	30%	32%	27%
SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	45%	45%	44%	49%	41%	50%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	17%	14%	15%	12%	17%	12%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	10%	10%	12%	9%	11%	11%
SUPPORT (NET)	73%	76%	73%	79%	72%	78%
OPPOSE (NET)	27%	24%	27%	21%	28%	22%

THE U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE FIGHT TO DEFEAT ISIS

STRONGLY SUPPORT	39%
SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	44%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	14%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	4%
SUPPORT (NET)	82%
OPPOSE (NET)	18%



Question 3a—Based on everything you know, which of the following is closer to your opinion?

THE U.S. AND ALLIES ARE WINNING THE WAR WITH ISIS	26%
THE WAR WITH ISIS IS BASICALLY A DRAW	47%
THE U.S. AND ALLIES ARE LOSING THE WAR WITH ISIS	26%

Question 3b—Based on everything you know, which of the following is closer to your opinion?

THE U.S. HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO TRY TO LIMIT OR END THE CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST	25%
THE U.S. SHOULD STAY ENGAGED IN THE MIDDLE EAST, BUT LET THEM RESOLVE THEIR OWN CONFLICTS	50%
THE U.S. SHOULD GET OUT OF THE MIDDLE EAST	25%

Question 4—Do you agree or disagree with the following?

RESPECTING THE MUSLIM-AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN THE U.S. IS VITAL TO PREVENT FUTURE TERROR ATTACKS	
STRONGLY AGREE	31%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	37%
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	14%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	9%
DON'T KNOW	8%
AGREE (NET)	68%
DISAGREE (NET)	24%



COUNTRIES OF THE MUSLIM WORLD ARE ALLIES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

STRONGLY AGREE	17%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	42%
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	20%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	12%
DON'T KNOW	10%
AGREE (NET)	58%
DISAGREE (NET)	32%

THE UNITED STATES SHOULD OPEN DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS WITH IRAN

STRONGLY AGREE	15%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	39%
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	22%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	10%
DON'T KNOW	14%
AGREE (NET)	54%
DISAGREE (NET)	32%



BREAKDOWN: THE UNITED STATES SHOULD OPEN DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS WITH IRAN

	MALE	FEMALE	18-34	35-54	55+	UNDER \$50K	\$50K+
STRONGLY AGREE	22%	9%	18%	16%	11%	10%	18%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	38%	40%	41%	36%	41%	40%	39%
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	21%	23%	19%	22%	24%	22%	22%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	12%	9%	7%	11%	13%	10%	10%
DON'T KNOW	7%	20%	16%	15%	11%	18%	11%
AGREE (NET)	60%	48%	59%	52%	52%	50%	56%
DISAGREE (NET)	33%	32%	25%	33%	37%	32%	32%

BREAKDOWN: THE UNITED STATES SHOULD OPEN DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS WITH IRAN

	NORTHEAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	NO COLLEGE DEGREE	COLLEGE DEGREE
STRONGLY AGREE	12%	9%	16%	20%	11%	19%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	38%	40%	34%	47%	38%	40%
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	23%	23%	25%	15%	24%	20%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	13%	10%	9%	11%	12%	9%
DON'T KNOW	14%	17%	16%	7%	16%	12%
AGREE (NET)	50%	49%	50%	67%	49%	59%
DISAGREE (NET)	35%	33%	34%	26%	36%	29%



THE UNITED STATES SHOULD ACCEPT MORE REFUGEES FROM CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

STRONGLY AGREE	14%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	30%
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	21%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	28%
DON'T KNOW	8%
AGREE (NET)	43%
DISAGREE (NET)	48%

THE UNITED STATES SHOULD PUSH ISRAEL TO MAKE CONCESSIONS TO THE PALESTINIANS FOR PEACE

STRONGLY AGREE	17%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	38%
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	18%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	14%
DON'T KNOW	14%
AGREE (NET)	54%
DISAGREE (NET)	32%





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ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE

Founded in 1946, the Middle East Institute is the oldest Washington-based institution dedicated solely to the study of the Middle East. Its founders, scholar George Camp Keiser and former U.S. Secretary of State Christian Herter, laid out a simple mandate: “to increase knowledge of the Middle East among the citizens of the United States and to promote a better understanding between the people of these two areas.”

MEI’s work is driven by its roster of scholars, comprised of former U.S. ambassadors, government officials, and top analysts who write and appear regularly in the U.S. and international media. MEI reaches a global audience through its website via event videos and podcasts, social media outlets including Twitter and Facebook, and *The Middle East Journal*, the longest running peer reviewed journal in the United States devoted to the study of the region.

MEI has earned a reputation as an unbiased source of information and analysis on this critical region of the world, a reputation it has meticulously safeguarded since its creation. Today, MEI remains a respected, non-partisan voice in the field of Middle East studies.



ABOUT IPSOS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Ipsos Public Affairs is a non-partisan, objective, survey-based research practice made up of seasoned professionals. We conduct strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of American and international organizations, based not only on public opinion research, but elite stakeholder, corporate, and media opinion research.

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ABOUT IPSOS

Ipsos is an independent market research company controlled and managed by research professionals. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has grown into a worldwide research group with a strong presence in all key markets. Ipsos ranks fourth in the global research industry.

With offices in 88 countries, Ipsos delivers insightful expertise across five research specializations: brand, advertising and media; customer loyalty; marketing; public affairs research; and survey management.

Ipsos researchers assess market potential and interpret market trends. They develop and build brands. They help clients build long-term relationships with their customers. They test advertising and study audience responses to various media and they measure public opinion around the globe.

Ipsos has been listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999 and generated global revenues of €1,782.7 million in 2016.

