



PRESS RELEASE

Reuters/Ipsos Poll: Iran

Americans increasingly see war with Iran as a likelihood; a plurality does not support a preemptive attack

Washington, DC, January 8, 2020 — New polling from Reuters/Ipsos conducted after the Soleimani killing and before the Iranian missile strikes finds that 41% of Americans believe Iran to be an “imminent threat”. This represents a 16 point increase since the question was last posed in May of 2019 (24%). Furthermore, a majority of Americans think that it is very or somewhat likely America will be at war with Iran in the next few years (71%) – a nearly 20 point increase since May (52%).

With regards to specific policy responses, a plurality (41%) say that the US should not conduct a preemptive attack on Iranian military interests. However, if Iran were to attack US forces first, Americans are split on if the American response should be a limited to airstrikes on Iran military targets (34%) or should be a full response with airstrikes and a ground troop invasion (37%). Only 8% support a purely diplomatic response, and 21% say they don't know.

For full results, please refer to the following annotated questionnaire.



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		January 2020				May 2019
		All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	All Respondents
TM512Y15_1 On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being no threat and 5 being an imminent threat, how much of a threat do the following countries or organizations pose to the United States?...Iran	No threat -1	4%	3%	4%	3%	5%
	2	6%	7%	3%	6%	11%
	3	16%	17%	14%	17%	23%
	4	25%	25%	28%	21%	29%
	Imminent threat - 5	41%	41%	45%	39%	24%
	Not sure	9%	6%	7%	14%	9%
	Total	1005	427	393	101	1007
TM512Y15_2 On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being no threat and 5 being an imminent threat, how much of a threat do the following countries or organizations pose to the United States?...China	No threat -1	8%	9%	5%	8%	7%
	2	13%	14%	13%	12%	15%
	3	34%	36%	35%	28%	30%
	4	23%	23%	27%	24%	23%
	Imminent threat - 5	11%	8%	14%	13%	15%
	Not sure	11%	9%	6%	16%	10%
	Total	1005	427	393	101	1007
TM512Y15_3 On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being no threat and 5 being an imminent threat, how much of a threat do the following countries or organizations pose to the United States?...North Korea	No threat -1	4%	3%	4%	1%	4%
	2	8%	7%	11%	5%	9%
	3	22%	20%	24%	22%	22%
	4	33%	38%	32%	30%	28%
	Imminent threat - 5	25%	26%	24%	30%	30%
	Not sure	8%	6%	5%	12%	8%
	Total	1005	427	393	101	1007



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		January 2020				May 2019
		All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	All Respondents
TM512Y15_4 On a scale of 1 to 5, with one being no threat and 5 being an imminent threat, how much of a threat do the following countries or organizations pose to the United States?...Russia	No threat -1	6%	4%	7%	4%	4%
	2	13%	11%	16%	11%	12%
	3	28%	26%	33%	25%	25%
	4	27%	29%	27%	24%	26%
	Imminent threat - 5	17%	23%	12%	20%	25%
	Not sure	10%	7%	5%	16%	9%
	Total	1005	427	393	101	1007
TM1456Y18_1 How likely, if at all, do you believe it is that United States will go to war with the following countries within the next few years?...Russia	Very likely	7%	11%	4%	8%	6%
	Somewhat likely	18%	19%	17%	19%	17%
	Not very likely	41%	41%	47%	33%	43%
	Not at all likely	20%	18%	24%	14%	20%
	Don't know	14%	11%	8%	26%	14%
	Total	1005	427	393	101	1007
TM1456Y18_2 How likely, if at all, do you believe it is that United States will go to war with the following countries within the next few years?...North Korea	Very likely	12%	14%	8%	12%	11%
	Somewhat likely	33%	38%	29%	28%	32%
	Not very likely	33%	29%	42%	31%	31%
	Not at all likely	9%	8%	11%	5%	11%
	Don't know	14%	11%	9%	23%	15%
	Total	1005	427	393	101	1007



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		January 2020				May 2019
		All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	All Respondents
TM1456Y18_3 How likely, if at all, do you believe it is that United States will go to war with the following countries within the next few years?...Iran	Very likely	31%	39%	26%	28%	15%
	Somewhat likely	40%	38%	44%	37%	36%
	Not very likely	12%	10%	16%	11%	26%
	Not at all likely	5%	6%	3%	1%	7%
	Don't know	13%	7%	10%	22%	15%
	Total	1005	427	393	101	1007
TM1456Y18_4 How likely, if at all, do you believe it is that United States will go to war with the following countries within the next few years?...China	Very likely	5%	5%	4%	3%	6%
	Somewhat likely	15%	18%	12%	19%	14%
	Not very likely	46%	46%	52%	38%	41%
	Not at all likely	20%	20%	23%	16%	24%
	Don't know	14%	12%	8%	23%	15%
	Total	1005	427	393	101	1007
TM1658Y19 In your opinion, should the U.S. conduct a preemptive attack on Iranian military interests?	Yes	27%	17%	43%	17%	12%
	No	41%	56%	26%	41%	60%
	Don't know	33%	27%	31%	43%	27%
	Total	1005	427	393	101	1007



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		January 2020				May 2019
		All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	All Respondents
TM1659Y19 If Iran attacked U.S. military forces first, how should the U.S. respond?	Diplomacy only	8%	13%	3%	6%	6%
	Limited military response with airstrikes on Iranian military targets	34%	35%	38%	29%	40%
	Full military response with airstrikes on Iranian military targets and ground troops to invade Iran	37%	31%	46%	39%	39%
	Don't know	21%	21%	12%	26%	15%
	Total	1005	427	393	101	1007



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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between January 3-6, 2020 on behalf of Thomson Reuters. For this survey, a sample of 1,005 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii were interviewed online in English. The sample includes 427 Democrats, 393 Republicans, and 101 independents. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Americans been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error. The poll also has a credibility interval ± 5.4 percentage points for Democrats, ± 5.6 percentage points for Republicans, and ± 11.1 percentage points for independents.

Also present in the topline are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted May 17-20, 2019 on behalf of Thomson Reuters. For the survey, a sample of roughly 1,007 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Americans been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP

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