PRESS RELEASE

A Majority of Americans Believe the Killing of Iranian General Soleimani Has Made the United States Less Safe

Nearly two in three Americans see the killing as a rise in conflict with Iran

Washington, DC, January 9, 2020 — New Ipsos polling for USA Today finds that while Americans are generally split on the killing of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, few believe the attack and its aftermath have made America, or the world, a safer place.

In a survey conducted January 7-8 (the rocket attack on U.S. bases in Iraq took place within the end of the field period), we find Americans split on the killing of Soleimani with 42% supporting, 33% opposing, and 25% saying they don't know. However, when asked if the killing has made the U.S. more or less safe, a clear majority (55%) say it has made us less safe. Furthermore, a majority of Americans believe the killing makes a variety of security threats more likely to happen, including: Iranian attacks on American interests in the Middle East (69% more likely); terrorist attacks on the United States (63%); the U.S. and Iran going to war (62%); or Iran developing nuclear weapons (52%).

Looking forward, a little more than a third of Americans (39%) support airstrikes on Iranian targets at this time. That support drops to 22% when cultural and world heritage sites are specifically included as targets, as President Trump threatened in a recent tweet. However, support for airstrikes climbs to 55% of Americans if Iran were to assassinate a major U.S. military officer in the Middle East in retaliation for the Soleimani killing.

Closer to home, about half of Americans (52%) agree that "President Trump's behavior with Iran is reckless" and a third (36%) support the President's current strategy on Iran. A large majority (64%) believe the Soleimani killing was an escalation of the conflict between Iran and the U.S., and 53% support "Congress limiting President Trump's ability to order military strikes or declare war without legislative approval."

In the political arena, a plurality (47%) of Americans agree that "President Trump ordered the killing of Soleimani in an attempt to divert focus from impeachment" and most Americans (55%) oppose delaying the impeachment hearings because of the crisis with Iran.

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

2020 K Street, NW, Suite 410
Washington DC 20006
+1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, US, Public Affairs, Ipsos
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025

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Full Annotated Questionnaire:

1. How familiar are you, if at all, with the recent killing of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani by a U.S. drone strike in Iraq?

	Total (N=1,005)	Democrat (N=429)	Republican (N=387)	Independent (N=115)
Very familiar	36%	37%	41%	36%
Somewhat familiar	31%	32%	32%	26%
Heard of it, but know little	23%	20%	21%	30%
Have not heard of it	5%	6%	4%	5%
Don't know	4%	5%	2%	3%
Total familiar (Net)	*90%*	*89%*	*94%*	*93%*

2. **[Only asked if heard of killing]** Where are you getting most of your news about the killing of Soleimani and its aftermath?

	Total (N=911)	Democrat (N=389)	Republican (N=358)	Independent (N=104)
Broadcast TV news	32%	34%	32%	28%
Online news sites	18%	18%	18%	23%
Cable news	17%	17%	19%	12%
Social media	14%	14%	12%	19%
Online or print newspapers	8%	7%	9%	11%
Radio	4%	4%	5%	4%
Friends, family or colleagues	3%	3%	4%	2%
None of these	2%	2%	1%	2%

3. Do you support or oppose the U.S. killing Iranian General Qasem Soleimani?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly support	24%	8%	50%	15%
Somewhat support	18%	14%	23%	19%
Somewhat oppose	17%	27%	6%	20%
Strongly oppose	16%	25%	6%	14%
Don't know	25%	26%	15%	33%
Support (Net)	*42%*	*22%*	*72%*	*34%*
Oppose (Net)	*33%*	*52%*	*12%*	*33%*

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4. Has the killing of Soleimani and its immediate aftermath made the United States more safe or less safe?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Much more safe	9%	3%	19%	4%
Somewhat more safe	15%	7%	28%	10%
Somewhat less safe	27%	29%	24%	36%
Much less safe	28%	48%	7%	27%
Don't know	21%	14%	22%	24%
More safe (Net)	*24%*	*10%*	*47%*	*14%*
Less safe (Net)	*55%*	*76%*	*31%*	*63%*

5. Based on what you know of the killing of Soleimani and its aftermath, do these events make the following more or less likely to happen?

Total More Likely Summary

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Iranian-linked attacks on American interests in the Middle East	69%	78%	63%	76%
Terrorist attacks on the United States	63%	77%	48%	68%
The United States and Iran going to war with each other	62%	75%	47%	65%
Iran developing nuclear weapons	52%	68%	35%	56%
Re-establishment of U.S. dominance in the Middle East	29%	28%	37%	19%

a. Iran developing nuclear weapons

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Much more likely	23%	33%	12%	28%
Somewhat more likely	28%	34%	24%	28%
No difference	28%	15%	44%	25%
Somewhat less likely	5%	2%	9%	7%
Much less likely	3%	3%	4%	4%
Don't know	12%	13%	8%	8%
More likely (Net)	*52%*	*68%*	*35%*	*56%*
Less likely (Net)	*8%*	*5%*	*12%*	*11%*

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b. The United States and Iran going to war with each other

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Much more likely	23%	33%	10%	23%
Somewhat more likely	39%	42%	37%	42%
No difference	19%	10%	31%	19%
Somewhat less likely	7%	3%	12%	8%
Much less likely	3%	2%	4%	1%
Don't know	10%	10%	6%	6%
More likely (Net)	*62%*	*75%*	*47%*	*65%*
Less likely (Net)	*10%*	*5%*	*15%*	*9%*

c. Iranian-linked attacks on American interests in the Middle East

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Much more likely	34%	47%	20%	39%
Somewhat more likely	35%	31%	43%	37%
No difference	11%	5%	19%	8%
Somewhat less likely	6%	4%	8%	8%
Much less likely	2%	2%	3%	2%
Don't know	11%	11%	7%	7%
More likely (Net)	*69%*	*78%*	*63%*	*76%*
Less likely (Net)	*8%*	*6%*	*11%*	*10%*

d. Terrorist attacks on the United States

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Much more likely	25%	37%	11%	27%
Somewhat more likely	38%	40%	37%	42%
No difference	19%	8%	33%	17%
Somewhat less likely	5%	2%	9%	3%
Much less likely	2%	2%	3%	1%
Don't know	11%	11%	6%	11%
More likely (Net)	*63%*	*77%*	*48%*	*68%*
Less likely (Net)	*7%*	*4%*	*12%*	*4%*

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e.   Re-establishment of U.S. dominance in the Middle East

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Much more likely	8%	7%	10%	4%
Somewhat more likely	22%	21%	27%	15%
No difference	26%	15%	37%	28%
Somewhat less likely	18%	23%	11%	24%
Much less likely	13%	20%	5%	15%
Don't know	15%	14%	10%	15%
More likely (Net)	*29%*	*28%*	*37%*	*19%*
Less likely (Net)	*30%*	*43%*	*16%*	*38%*

6.   Do you approve or disapprove of the following?

Total Approve Summary

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
The Unites States killing leaders of terrorist organizations	64%	54%	80%	58%
The United States killing foreign military officers of opposing governments who have ties to known terrorist organizations	50%	35%	72%	49%
The United States killing military officers of opposing governments	27%	16%	46%	20%
The United States killing elected officials of opposing governments	18%	11%	31%	14%

a.   The United States killing military officers of opposing governments

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly approve	9%	3%	19%	5%
Somewhat approve	18%	13%	27%	15%
Neither approve nor disapprove	28%	22%	33%	35%
Somewhat disapprove	17%	24%	10%	18%
Strongly disapprove	15%	27%	3%	13%
Don't know	12%	12%	8%	14%
Approve (Net)	*27%*	*16%*	*46%*	*20%*
Disapprove (Net)	*33%*	*50%*	*13%*	*31%*

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b. The United States killing foreign military officers of opposing governments who have ties to known terrorist organizations

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly approve	22%	9%	41%	19%
Somewhat approve	28%	26%	31%	30%
Neither approve nor disapprove	20%	24%	16%	20%
Somewhat disapprove	12%	17%	6%	13%
Strongly disapprove	8%	13%	*	6%
Don't know	10%	10%	6%	12%
Approve (Net)	*50%*	*35%*	*72%*	*49%*
Disapprove (Net)	*20%*	*30%*	*7%*	*19%*

c. The United States killing elected officials of opposing governments

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly approve	6%	3%	14%	1%
Somewhat approve	12%	8%	17%	12%
Neither approve nor disapprove	26%	19%	34%	29%
Somewhat disapprove	20%	25%	16%	21%
Strongly disapprove	23%	35%	10%	22%
Don't know	12%	11%	9%	14%
Approve (Net)	*18%*	*11%*	*31%*	*14%*
Disapprove (Net)	*43%*	*59%*	*26%*	*43%*

d. The Unites States killing leaders of terrorist organizations

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly approve	34%	21%	53%	32%
Somewhat approve	30%	33%	27%	26%
Neither approve nor disapprove	17%	20%	13%	18%
Somewhat disapprove	7%	10%	2%	9%
Strongly disapprove	4%	7%	*	4%
Don't know	8%	10%	4%	10%
Approve (Net)	*64%*	*54%*	*80%*	*58%*
Disapprove (Net)	*11%*	*17%*	*3%*	*14%*

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7. At this moment, would you support or oppose U.S. airstrikes on Iranian military targets in Iran and across the Middle East?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly support	17%	6%	34%	12%
Somewhat support	22%	15%	33%	18%
Somewhat oppose	18%	24%	12%	21%
Strongly oppose	20%	32%	6%	18%
Don't know	23%	22%	16%	31%
Support (Net)	*39%*	*21%*	*66%*	*30%*
Oppose (Net)	*38%*	*56%*	*17%*	*39%*

8. At this moment, would you support or oppose U.S. airstrikes on targets in Iran including cultural and world heritage sites?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly support	10%	5%	18%	5%
Somewhat support	12%	7%	20%	7%
Somewhat oppose	20%	18%	26%	18%
Strongly oppose	37%	54%	16%	43%
Don't know	21%	16%	19%	27%
Support (Net)	*22%*	*13%*	*39%*	*12%*
Oppose (Net)	*57%*	*71%*	*42%*	*61%*

9. If Iran were to kill a major U.S. officer in Middle East, would you support or oppose U.S. airstrikes on Iranian military targets in Iran and across the Middle East?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly support	28%	13%	52%	23%
Somewhat support	27%	28%	25%	31%
Somewhat oppose	12%	18%	5%	15%
Strongly oppose	10%	15%	4%	9%
Don't know	24%	26%	14%	22%
Support (Net)	*55%*	*41%*	*77%*	*54%*
Oppose (Net)	*21%*	*33%*	*9%*	*24%*

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10. Do you agree or disagree with the following?

Total Approve Summary

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
The killing of Soleimani was an escalation of the conflict between the U.S. and Iran	64%	72%	57%	64%
Killing Soleimani shows Iran that the U.S. won't be pushed around	53%	35%	84%	46%
President Trump's behavior with Iran is reckless	52%	79%	22%	48%
President Trump ordering the killing of Soleimani is an attempt to divert focus from impeachment	47%	75%	17%	44%
President Trump is delivering on his promise to end "endless wars"	34%	15%	62%	25%
I feel safer now that Soleimani has been killed	30%	12%	60%	19%

a. President Trump is delivering on his promise to end "endless wars"

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	14%	4%	30%	6%
Somewhat agree	20%	11%	31%	19%
Somewhat disagree	15%	14%	17%	20%
Strongly disagree	35%	58%	8%	32%
Don't know	17%	14%	13%	24%
Agree (Net)	*34%*	*15%*	*62%*	*25%*
Disagree (Net)	*50%*	*71%*	*25%*	*51%*

b. Killing Soleimani shows Iran that the U.S. won't be pushed around

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	26%	12%	51%	10%
Somewhat agree	27%	23%	33%	36%
Somewhat disagree	16%	24%	6%	16%
Strongly disagree	16%	27%	2%	18%
Don't know	15%	15%	8%	19%
Agree (Net)	*53%*	*35%*	*84%*	*46%*
Disagree (Net)	*31%*	*50%*	*8%*	*35%*

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c. I feel safer now that Soleimani has been killed

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	10%	3%	23%	2%
Somewhat agree	21%	9%	38%	17%
Somewhat disagree	21%	24%	19%	26%
Strongly disagree	30%	49%	5%	33%
Don't know	19%	15%	16%	22%
Agree (Net)	*30%*	*12%*	*60%*	*19%*
Disagree (Net)	*51%*	*73%*	*24%*	*59%*

d. The killing of Soleimani was an escalation of the conflict between the U.S. and Iran

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	32%	46%	18%	32%
Somewhat agree	31%	26%	39%	31%
Somewhat disagree	12%	8%	20%	13%
Strongly disagree	8%	3%	14%	6%
Don't know	17%	17%	10%	18%
Agree (Net)	*64%*	*72%*	*57%*	*64%*
Disagree (Net)	*20%*	*11%*	*34%*	*19%*

e. President Trump's behavior with Iran is reckless

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	37%	61%	10%	30%
Somewhat agree	15%	18%	12%	18%
Somewhat disagree	13%	5%	20%	20%
Strongly disagree	21%	4%	47%	12%
Don't know	15%	12%	11%	20%
Agree (Net)	*52%*	*79%*	*22%*	*48%*
Disagree (Net)	*34%*	*9%*	*67%*	*32%*

f.   President Trump ordering the killing of Soleimani is an attempt to divert focus from impeachment

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	28%	48%	5%	27%
Somewhat agree	19%	27%	12%	16%
Somewhat disagree	13%	8%	16%	17%
Strongly disagree	26%	5%	58%	19%
Don't know	14%	12%	9%	21%
Agree (Net)	*47%*	*75%*	*17%*	*44%*
Disagree (Net)	*39%*	*13%*	*74%*	*36%*

11.   Do you support or oppose the following?

Total Support Summary

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Congress limiting President Trump's ability to order military strikes or declare war without legislative approval	53%	78%	26%	54%
President Trump's current strategy on Iran	36%	13%	71%	25%
The Senate delaying impeachment hearings until the crisis with Iran is resolved	26%	19%	36%	30%

a.   President Trump's current strategy on Iran

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly support	18%	4%	41%	9%
Somewhat support	18%	9%	31%	16%
Somewhat oppose	15%	20%	9%	18%
Strongly oppose	30%	52%	5%	26%
Don't know	20%	15%	15%	31%
Support (Net)	*36%*	*13%*	*71%*	*25%*
Oppose (Net)	*45%*	*72%*	*14%*	*44%*

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b. Congress limiting President Trump's ability to order military strikes or declare war without legislative approval

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly support	35%	58%	9%	38%
Somewhat support	18%	19%	17%	17%
Somewhat oppose	13%	6%	22%	15%
Strongly oppose	20%	6%	44%	8%
Don't know	14%	10%	9%	22%
Support (Net)	*53%*	*78%*	*26%*	*54%*
Oppose (Net)	*33%*	*12%*	*65%*	*23%*

c. The Senate delaying impeachment hearings until the crisis with Iran is resolved

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly support	11%	5%	19%	5%
Somewhat support	15%	13%	17%	25%
Somewhat oppose	22%	24%	20%	25%
Strongly oppose	33%	42%	26%	24%
Don't know	19%	15%	18%	21%
Support (Net)	*26%*	*19%*	*36%*	*30%*
Oppose (Net)	*55%*	*66%*	*46%*	*49%*

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Tel: +1 202 420-2025

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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between January 7-8, 2020 on behalf of USA Today. For this survey, a sample of roughly 1,005 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S. Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. The sample includes 429 Democrats, 387 Republicans, and 115 Independents.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos' 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 a 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 2016 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 non-probability 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 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). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=1,005, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/-5.0 percentage points).

The poll also has a credibility interval plus or minus 5.4 percentage points for Democrats, plus or minus 5.7 percentage points for Republicans, and plus or minus 10.4 percentage points for Independents.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Chris Jackson
Vice President, US
Public Affairs
+1 202 420-2025
chris.jackson@ipsos.com

Kate Silverstein
Media Relations, US
Public Affairs
+1 718 755-8829
kate.silverstein@ipsos.com

2020 K Street, NW, Suite 410
Washington DC 20006
+1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**
Vice President, US, Public Affairs, Ipsos
Email: chris.jackson@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 202 420-2025

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www.ipsos.com

2020 K Street, NW, Suite 410
Washington DC 20006
+1 202 463-7300

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Vice President, US, Public Affairs, Ipsos
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