Americans on Israel and the Iranian Nuclear Program

Dates of Survey: March 3-7, 2012
Sample Size: 727

Margin of Error: +/- 4.5 percentage points
MoE includes design effect of 1.5191

[DISPLAY]
In this survey, we'd like your opinions about some current issues. There is no right or wrong answer, so please answer the questions based on your knowledge or impressions. If you do not know the answer to a question, you can simply skip it and go on to the next question.

[SP]
Q1. As you may know, some people are calling for Israel to conduct a military strike against Iran's nuclear program before it makes further progress. Others are arguing that it is better to wait for the newly-increased sanctions against Iran to take effect and that the US and other major powers should continue pursuing negotiations with Iran. Do you favor:

    Israel conducting a military strike against
    Iran's nuclear program 24%
            Republicans 38
            Democrats 17
            Independents 17

    The US and other major powers continuing
    to pursue negotiations with Iran 69
            Republicans 58
            Democrats 79
            Independents 67

    Don't know/Refused 7

Q2. Do you think that Iran is:

Producing nuclear fuel strictly for its
energy needs.. 6%
     Republicans...2
     Democrats 6
     Independents 10

Has decided to produce nuclear weapons and is
actively working to do so.....................................58
     Republicans...73
     Democrats 56
     Independents 44

Is developing some of the technical ability
necessary to produce nuclear weapons, but has
not decided whether to produce them 30
     Republicans...24
     Democrats 35
     Independents 32

Don't know/Refused 6

Q3. How likely do you think it is that Iran will eventually develop nuclear weapons?

Very likely 49%
     Republicans...63
     Democrats 44
     Independents 39

Somewhat likely...40
     Republicans...33
     Democrats 49
     Independents 37

Not very likely 4
     Republicans...2
     Democrats 4
     Independents 5

Not likely at all..3

      Republicans..0

      Democrats 2

      Independents 8

Don't know/Refused 3

[SP]

Q4. Suppose Iran develops nuclear weapons. Do you think that:

A. Iran would be likely to use them against
Israel because it is so hostile toward Israel........... 62%

      Republicans..80

      Democrats 56

      Independents 50

Iran would be deterred from striking Israel for
fear of being destroyed in a nuclear retaliatory
strike..32

      Republicans..17

      Democrats 41

      Independents 36

Don't know/Refused 6

[SP]

Q5. If Iran develops nuclear weapons, which of the following concerns you the most:

Iran would actually use nuclear weapons
against the US or its allies.................................... 44%

      Republicans..57

      Democrats 39

      Independents 35

This would lead other countries in the region
to develop nuclear arms, leading to an
arms race 19

      Republicans..11

      Democrats 26

      Independents 18

Iran would feel emboldened to pursue aggressive
policies toward the US and its allies......................24
        Republicans...26
        Democrats 23
        Independents 23

None of these 9
        Republicans...4
        Democrats 9
        Independents 15

Don't know/Refused 4

[MP, DO NOT ALLOW THE RESPONDENT TO SELECT MORE THAN 2]
[PLEASE DO NOT SHOW THE STANDARD MP TEXT ("SELECT ALL THAT APPLY") OR MODIFY TO SAY SELECT TWO.]
Q6. If Iran were to develop nuclear weapons, which TWO of the following do you think is most likely to occur:

Iran would actually use nuclear weapons
against the US or its allies.....................................47%
        Republicans...61
        Democrats 40
        Independents 38

This would lead other countries in the region to
develop nuclear arms, leading to an arms race 44
        Republicans...45
        Democrats 50
        Independents 33

Iran would feel emboldened to pursue aggressive
policies toward the US and its allies......................52
        Republicans...60
        Democrats 54
        Independents 39

Stability would increase, since both Iran and
Israel would be deterred by the other's ability
to destroy them...8
        Republicans...5
        Democrats 10
        Independents 10

Not much will change in the region......................15
        Republicans..8
        Democrats 16
        Independents 23

[DISPLAY]
Currently there is some debate about what stance the US should take in relation to the possibility that Israel might attack Iran's nuclear program. You will see three arguments on this issue. Please select how convincing you find each of them.

Here is the first argument:

[SHOW ON THE SAME SCREEN AS THE DISPLAY]
[SP]
Q7. The US should discourage Israel from attacking Iran's nuclear program. There are huge risks to US national interests, since Iran may attack US assets in retaliation, pulling the US into a war. Oil prices would skyrocket. Furthermore, US military leaders say the most that could be achieved would be to slow down Iran's nuclear program a bit and probably just lead them to rebuild it underground.

Very convincing.. 17%
        Republicans..12
        Democrats 26
        Independents 12

Somewhat convincing...54
        Republicans..55
        Democrats 58
        Independents 46

Somewhat unconvincing.......................................17
        Republicans..22
        Democrats 10
        Independents 20

Very unconvincing...7
        Republicans..10
        Democrats 5
        Independents 7

Don't know/Refused 5

Q8. The US should take a neutral stance. Israel has a right to take actions it sees as necessary for its own defense. Meanwhile, the US should think about its own interests and make a clear statement distancing itself from whatever Israel may choose to do, to reduce the chance that Iran will retaliate against US targets

Very convincing	11%
Republicans	10
Democrats	14
Independents	8
Somewhat convincing	41
Republicans	39
Democrats	46
Independents	37
Somewhat unconvincing	30
Republicans	32
Democrats	30
Independents	27
Very unconvincing	15
Republicans	18
Democrats	11
Independents	16
Don't know/Refused	4

Q9. The US should encourage Israel to attack Iran's nuclear program. Clearly Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons, and if Israel will take the heat for stopping or at least slowing down the program, all the better for the US. The risk of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons is of greater concern than the fallout from an Israeli strike.

Very convincing	8%
Republicans	11
Democrats	7
Independents	5
Somewhat convincing	30
Republicans	31
Democrats	24
Independents	35

Somewhat unconvincing.......................................33
     Republicans..34
     Democrats 39
     Independents 23

Very unconvincing...24
     Republicans..22
     Democrats 28
     Independents 21

Don't know/Refused 5

[SP]
Q10. So now, do you think the US should:

Discourage Israel from attacking Iran's
nuclear program 34%
     Republicans..30
     Democrats 44
     Independents 24

Take a neutral stance...46
     Republicans..43
     Democrats 47
     Independents 50

Encourage Israel to attack Iran's nuclear
program 14
     Republicans..23
     Democrats 7
     Independents 13

Don't know/Refused 6

[SP]
Q11. In dealing with the problem of Iran's nuclear program, do you think that the US should:

Primarily act by itself..20%
     Republicans..28
     Democrats 11
     Independents 20

Try to primarily act through the UN
Security Council..74
      Republicans...69
      Democrats 86
      Independents 64

Don't know/Refused 6

[SP]
Q12. Suppose Israel strikes and Iran retaliates by striking back at Israel, but Iran does not attack any US targets.   What do you think the US should do?

Provide whatever help Israel requests, including
military forces 25%
      Republicans...41
      Democrats 16
      Independents 16

Publicly support Israel's actions, but not provide
military support...14
      Republicans...18
      Democrats 15
      Independents 7

Stay neutral and do not get involved.....................22
      Republicans...14
      Democrats 25
      Independents 29

Stay neutral and actively work to get both sides
to stop the fighting 27
      Republicans...21
      Democrats 34
      Independents 25

Publicly oppose Israel's actions.............................2
      Republicans...1
      Democrats 3
      Independents 1

Actively distance the US from Israel by stopping
military aid..4
      Republicans...2
      Democrats 6
      Independents 6

Don't know/Refused 6

Q13. As you may know, the US government has recommended that Israel not strike Iran. If Israel strikes anyway, what do you believe the U.S. government's reaction WOULD be?

	Americans 3/12	Sadat Chair Israelis[*] 2/12
It would support Israel diplomatically, but not provide military assistance	32%	27%
Republicans	35	
Democrats	43	
Independents	15	
It would join the war on Israel's behalf	22	39
Republicans	29	
Democrats	18	
Independents	20	
It would stay neutral	30	14
Republicans	24	
Democrats	30	
Independents	37	
It would punish Israel by reducing its current support to Israel	10	15
Republicans	10	
Democrats	9	
Independents	12	
Don't know/Refused	5	5

Q14. If Israel were to strike Iran's nuclear facilities, in your estimation, how long would an armed conflict between Iran and Israel last?

	Americans 3/12	Sadat Chair Israelis 2/12
Days	9%	18%
Republicans	14	
Democrats	8	
Independents	6	

---

[*] Israelis were asked "Given America's recommendation that Israel not strike Iran, what do you believe the U.S. government's reaction would be if Israel strikes anyway?"

Weeks 12   19
    Republicans 15
    Democrats 11
    Independents 10
Months 26   29
    Republicans 24
    Democrats 30
    Independents 22

Years 48   22
    Republicans 44
    Democrats 51
    Independents 47

Don't know/Refused 6   12

[SP]

Q15. If Israel were to strike Iran's nuclear facilities, in your view, how would this affect the Iranian government?

	Americans 3/12	Sadat Chair Israelis 2/12
It would be weakened	42%	45%
Republicans	48	
Democrats	41	
Independents	35	
It would be strengthened	30	44
Republicans	27	
Democrats	35	
Independents	24	
It would have no effect	21	4
Republicans	22	
Democrats	21	
Independents	23	
Don't know/Refused	7	8

[SP]
Q16. What do you believe the likely outcome would be if Israel were to strike Iran:

	Americans 3/12	Sadat Chair Israelis 2/12
It would delay Iran's capabilities to develop nuclear weapons by 1-2 years	20%	9%
Republicans	21	
Democrats	22	
Independents	18	
It would delay Iran's capabilities by 3-5 years	22	22
Republicans	33	
Democrats	21	
Independents	11	
It would delay Iran's capabilities by more than 5 years	18	22
Republicans	19	
Democrats	18	
Independents	18	
It would accelerate Iran's nuclear program	22	11
Republicans	15	
Democrats	28	
Independents	22	
It would have no effect on Iran's nuclear program	9	19
Republicans	7	
Democrats	9	
Independents	11	
Don't know/Refused	8	9

DEMOGRAPHICS

[SP]
D1. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a:

    Republican 25%
    Independent...18
    Democrat...30
    Other 3
    No preference...20

    Don't know/Refused 4

[SP]
[ASK IF D1 =2 OR 4 OR 5 OR REFUSED]
D1a. Do you think of yourself as closer to the:

    Republican Party...10%[*]
    Democratic Party 8
    Neither..24

    Don't know/Refused 4

D1-D1a. Overall party identification combined

    Republican Party/Lean Republican... 35%
    Democratic Party/Lean Democrat..38
    Independent...28

[SP]
[D2 AND D3 PRESENTED ON SAME SCREEN]
D2. Did you vote for a candidate for Congress in the last election in 2010?

    Yes 59%
    No...36

    Don't know/Refused 5

---

[*] Percent of total

D3. Do you typically vote in the PRIMARY elections for a political party?

      Yes 53%
      No...43

      Don't know/Refused 4

[SP]
D4. Of the candidates for President currently running, which do you prefer?

      Barack Obama... 35%
      Newt Gingrich...7
      Rick Santorum 12
      Mitt Romney 17
      Ron Paul...7
      Other 15

      Don't know/Refused 6

Age

      18-29 .... 22%
      30-44 25
      45-59 28
      60+ 25

Education

      Less than high school... 13%
      High school 30
      Some college...28
      Bachelor's degree or higher 28

Race / Ethnicity

      White, Non-Hispanic 67%
      Black, Non-Hispanic...11
      Other, Non-Hispanic 6
      Hispanic 15
      2+ Races, Non-Hispanic 1

Gender

      Male 48%
      Female..52

Race / Ethnicity

Northeast 18%
Midwest 22
South 37
West 23