

## **Americans Have Very Different Attitudes to Different Countries in, or Near the Middle East**

*Israel, Egypt, Turkey and Kuwait viewed most positively; Iran seen as by far the most hostile*

**New York, N.Y. — November 20, 2009** — Americans may not be known for being good at geography or history, but they do have very different opinions of different countries, including countries in or near to the Middle East. A large majority (74%) sees Israel as a close ally or friend, and a small majority (52%) feels this way about Egypt. More than two in five adults see Turkey (50%), Kuwait (49%), Jordan (45%), and Saudi Arabia (43%) as allies or friends. Only one country in the region is seen as unfriendly or as enemy by a majority; fully 70% of adults see Iran this way.

Most of the 13 countries that were included in the questions in this Harris Poll are not viewed by majorities as being allies and friendly or as being enemies and unfriendly.

These are some of the results of *The Harris Poll* of 2,303 adults surveyed online between November 2 and 11, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

Iran is the only one of these countries that most people (70%) see as unfriendly or an enemy. No other country comes close. The one other country viewed by more than 40% as unfriendly or an enemy is Afghanistan (44%), even though the government there is an ally, supported by the U.S. and NATO troops. Three other countries are viewed as unfriendly or enemies by more than 30% of adults – Iraq (39%), Libya (38%) and Syria (36%).

Relatively popular countries, in addition to Israel, which more people view as allies or friendly than as enemies or unfriendly, are Egypt (by 52% to 8%), Turkey (by 50% to 8%), Kuwait (by 49% to 18%), Jordan (by 45% to 13%), and Saudi Arabia (by 43% to 18%).

Relatively unpopular countries, which more people see as unfriendly or as enemies than as friends or allies, are Iran (by 70% to 9%), Libya (by 38% to 14%), Syria (by 36% to 15%), Afghanistan (by 44% to 21%), Lebanon (by 25% to 22%), and Iraq (by 39% to 23%).

Attitudes to Pakistan are almost evenly split with 27% of adults believing it is an ally or is friendly and 28% believing it is unfriendly or an enemy.

### **Trends over time**

This is the third time the Harris Poll has asked this question about these countries. While the numbers have changed, none of the changes show a fundamental shift in American attitudes to the 13 countries.

### **So what?**

The most disturbing finding in this Harris Poll may be the generally more negative than positive attitudes to countries whose governments are supposedly our allies in the region – Afghanistan and Iraq – and the ambivalence about Pakistan. However, it is not clear whether the hostility to these three countries reflects

attitudes to their governments, which we are trying to help, or to the insurgents who are fighting and killing U.S. soldiers and our allies there.

**TABLE 1**  
**ATTITUDES OF U.S. ADULTS TOWARD THIRTEEN COUNTRIES**

“Thinking of the governments of these countries – do you believe each government is a close ally of the United States, a friend but not a close ally, is not friendly but not an enemy, or is unfriendly and an enemy of the United States?”

Base: U.S. Adults

		<b>A Close Ally/ A Friend But Not a Close Ally (NET)</b>	<b>A Close Ally</b>	<b>A Friend But Not a Close Ally</b>	<b>Not Friendly / Not an Enemy</b>	<b>Unfriendly and an Enemy</b>
Israel	%	<b>74</b>	46	28	20	6
Egypt	%	<b>52</b>	8	44	39	8
Turkey	%	<b>50</b>	10	40	42	8
Kuwait	%	<b>49</b>	14	35	33	18
Jordan	%	<b>45</b>	8	37	42	13
Saudi Arabia	%	<b>43</b>	8	35	39	18
Pakistan	%	<b>27</b>	2	25	45	28
Iraq	%	<b>23</b>	2	21	38	39
Lebanon	%	<b>22</b>	1	21	53	25
Afghanistan	%	<b>21</b>	3	19	35	44
Syria	%	<b>15</b>	1	14	49	36
Libya	%	<b>14</b>	1	13	48	38
Iran	%	<b>9</b>	1	8	21	70

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.

**TABLE 2**  
**COUNTRIES THAT ARE CLOSE ALLIES OR FRIENDS OF U.S. – TREND**

“Thinking of the governments of these countries – do you believe each government is a close ally of the United States, a friend but not a close ally, is not friendly but not an enemy, or is unfriendly and an enemy of the United States?”

Base: U.S. Adults

<b>A Close Ally/ A Friend but Not a Close Ally</b>	<b>August 2006</b>	<b>December 2007</b>	<b>November 2009</b>
	%	%	%
Israel	75	67	74
Egypt	45	46	52
Turkey	45	47	50
Kuwait	51	48	49
Jordan	43	42	45
Saudi Arabia	44	42	43
Pakistan	n/a	26	27
Iraq	18	19	23
Lebanon	15	18	22
Afghanistan	23	23	21
Syria	8	14	15
Libya	12	15	14
Iran	4	4	9

n/a = Not asked

## Methodology

This Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States November 2 and 11, 2009 among 2,303 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

***These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.***

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