



The Role of the United States in the Middle East

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, May 17, 2016

Nearly half of Americans think the United States' involvement in the Middle East is doing more harm than good in the region, according to an [Exclusive Point Taken-Marist Poll](#), commissioned by WGBH Boston for its new late-night, multi-platform PBS debate series *Point Taken*. Despite the proportion of Americans who perceive a harmful effect of U.S. presence in the region, there is little consensus about the appropriate level of American military intervention in the Middle East. However, regardless of where residents stand on the question of U.S. military involvement in the Middle East, nearly two-thirds of Americans say the best reason for staying in the region is the need to defeat ISIS.

The national survey was conducted by The Marist Poll in advance of this week's *Point Taken* episode, airing Tuesday, May 17th at 11pmET (check local listings) and streaming on pbs.org/pointtaken. The series is hosted by Carlos Watson, Emmy Award winning journalist and OZY Media co-founder and CEO.

49% of Americans report the United States' role in the Middle East is doing more harm than good while 27% believe the opposite is true. A notable 25% of U.S. residents are unsure. Attitudes differ based on generation and political party. Millennials, 56%, are the most likely of all the generations to have this view. A notable 33% of Gen X are unsure. Looking at party, Republicans, 57%, are more likely than Democrats, 42%, to think U.S. involvement in the Middle East does more harm than good. 52% of independents share this opinion.

When it comes to the extent of the United States' role in the Middle East, 46% of Americans report the United States should either increase its military presence, 23%, or keep it at its current levels, 23%. In contrast, 39% of U.S. residents believe the nation should either decrease its military involvement, 24%, or completely withdraw from the region, 15%. 14% are unsure.

Here, too, partisan and generational differences exist. Republicans, 40%, are more likely than Democrats, 16%, and independents, 21%, to think the United States should increase its military presence in the Middle East. Generationally, Millennials, 33%, are more likely than other generations to think the United States should *decrease* its military presence in the region.

*All references to the survey must be sourced as "Exclusive *Point Taken*-Marist Poll"



“With the rise of ISIS and related global events, the Middle East is widely covered in the news. *Point Taken* delves behind the headlines,” says Denise Dilanni, series creator and Senior-Executive-in-Charge. “In tonight’s episode we ask whether the U.S. is doing more harm or good in the region.”

Regardless of whether or not Americans think the United States should have a military role in the Middle East, 64% of residents believe the best reason for remaining in the region is to defeat ISIS.

A majority of Americans, 53%, also assert they prefer the United States to focus its diplomatic and military resources on the Middle East rather than Asia.

This survey of 507 adults was conducted May 12th through May 14th, 2016 by The Marist Poll sponsored and funded in partnership with WGBH’s *Point Taken*. Adults 18 years of age and older residing in the contiguous United States were contacted on landline or mobile numbers and interviewed in English by telephone using live interviewers. Results are statistically significant within ± 4.4 percentage points. The error margin was not adjusted for sample weights and increases for cross-tabulations.

For more on *Point Taken*:

pbs.org/pointtaken

#pointtakenPBS

For more on The Marist Poll:

Maristpoll.marist.edu

#MaristPoll

About The Marist Poll

Founded in 1978, The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion (MIPO) is a survey research center at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. The Marist Poll has conducted independent research on public priorities, elections, and a wide variety of social issues. Through the regular public release of surveys, MIPO has built a legacy of independence, reliability, and accuracy. Its results are featured in print and electronic media throughout the world.

*All references to the survey must be sourced as “Exclusive *Point Taken*-Marist Poll”



About WGBH Boston

WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcaster and the largest producer of PBS content for TV and the Web, including Frontline, Nova, American Experience, Masterpiece, Antiques Roadshow, Arthur, Curious George and more than a dozen other primetime, lifestyle, and children's series. WGBH also is a major supplier of programming for public radio, and oversees Public Radio International (PRI). As a leader in educational multimedia for the classroom, WGBH supplies content to PBS LearningMedia, a national broadband service for teachers and students. WGBH also is a pioneer in technologies and services that make media accessible to those with hearing or visual impairments. WGBH has been recognized with hundreds of honors. More info at www.wgbh.org.

contacts:

for The Marist Poll

Lee M. Miringoff
Barbara L. Carvalho
Mary E. Griffith
Marist College
845.575.5050

for *Point Taken*/WGBH

Eileen Campion
Roslan & Campion PR
212-966-4600
eileen@rc-pr.com

*All references to the survey must be sourced as "Exclusive *Point Taken*-Marist Poll"