

YouGov-Arab News Poll: Only 27% of Americans View Qatar as 'US friend or ally'

By Dr. Majid Rafizadeh



YouGov has recently [conducted](#) informative and intriguing public opinion poll among American citizens. The research was conducted in partnership with Arab News.

The objectives of the poll were to [explore](#) American citizens' perception of the Arab states, and their knowledge, familiarity and understanding of the current Gulf crisis between Qatar and four major Arab states, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain. In addition, the goal of the research was to examine Americans' perception of Qatar, specifically [aftermath](#) the accusations regarding its support for terrorism.

2,263 Americans [participated](#) in the poll during the period of 3 days between July 19-21, 2017. In order to obtain a comprehensive

representation of the US population, gender (49 percent males and 51 percent females), age (48 percent fell between the ages of 31 and 60), education, political education and ethnicity were taken into consideration.



The poll was [conducted](#) through 19 closed-ended questions, with an overall low margin error of approximately 2.2 percent. The average margin error in polls is approximately 3 percent.

Intriguingly, only 27 percent of Americans [viewed](#) Qatar as an ally or partner of the US. The poll found that “71 percent of Americans are aware, to various extents, of the diplomatic row. It also found that those who are aware have a good understanding of the reasons behind the crisis, with 67 percent correctly identifying that Qatar had been accused of supporting terror groups and meddling with the internal affairs of regional countries.”

69 percent were not sure that the US should [maintain](#) its military base in Qatar. [44 percent](#) of the participants who were aware of the Qatar-funded network, Al Jazeera, associated the network with providing a platform for terror groups.

[According](#) to the poll “The survey of 2,263 US citizens, conducted in July, also found that 31 percent of Americans consider Qatar to be unfriendly toward or an enemy of their country, while 43 percent either do not know or are unsure about how to classify the relationship with Doha”. Faisal J. Abbas, editor in chief of Arab News [said](#) “Two months into the crisis, and given the US government’s keenness to mediate, it was important to gauge the sentiment of the American people with regard to this issue.”

In addition, majority of the [respondents](#) were aware of the Qatar-funded media network, Al Jazeera, but most of them held negative view of it. [According](#) to the Arab News/YouGov poll, “more than six in 10 Americans are aware of Al Jazeera — but many of those have negative perceptions of it. Half believe that Al Jazeera has a negative influence on the US image abroad. A majority of those with an opinion on the matter also believe the network gives a platform to terror groups linked to Osama bin Laden — with 44 percent agreeing with that statement, and only 18 percent saying the opposite. The rest of the US respondents — 38 percent — were unsure.” They believe that the network provides a platform for terrorism.

Finally, around 50 percent of the participants did not have adequate information about Qatar, in general. Nevertheless, “of [those](#) who did, the greatest proportion of US citizens — 34 percent — associate Qatar with accusations of terror financing, compared to just 16 percent who cited the Gulf state’s controversial hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup.”

The [poll](#) is considered the first of its kind. The overall result of the poll, which reveals a predominantly negative perception of Qatar among those who have knowledge about the issue, can be utilized in a number of ways including raising public awareness, further studies, as well as for political candidates, parties, and policy recommendations concerning Washington’s Qatar policy.

