



# CRITICAL ISSUES POLL

*With Nielsen Scarborough*

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## **American Public Attitudes toward North Korea's Nuclear and Missile Programs**

**Presented at a panel on “Confronting North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs: American and Japanese views of threats and options compared” at the Brookings Institution on January 8, 2018**

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### **Survey Methodology**

The survey was carried out November 1-6, 2017 online from a nationally representative sample of Nielsen Scarborough’s probability-based panel, originally recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of adults provided by Survey Sampling International. The national sample was 2,000, including a down-weighted oversample of 1,042 among 18-34 year olds. Responses were weighted by age, gender, income, education, race, and geographic region using benchmarks from the US Census. The survey was also weighted by partisan identification. The margin of error is 2.19%

For more information on Nielsen Scarborough’s panel polling, please visit:

[https://criticalissues.umd.edu/sites/criticalissues.umd.edu/files/nielsen\\_scarborough\\_methodology.pdf](https://criticalissues.umd.edu/sites/criticalissues.umd.edu/files/nielsen_scarborough_methodology.pdf)

Valuable assistance was provided by Neil Schwartz, Scott Willoth, and Shalayne Cooke from Nielsen Scarborough. Brittany Kyser, Jared McDonald, and Sean Rao were particularly helpful.

Note: Percentages may not always add to one-hundred due to rounding.

\*The November 2017 data is from a larger University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with Shibley Telhami and Stella Rouse as principal investigators that will be analyzed and released in the coming weeks.

To view the results of these questions from The Genron NPO, please visit: <http://www.genron-npo.net/world/archives/6858.html> (in Japanese)

Q7. Please name TWO countries that you believe pose the greatest threat to world peace and security [**Open-ended with text box with 2 entries**]

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. North Korea	84%	75%	57%	77%
2. Russia	24	50	31	36
3. Iran	40	11	18	24
4. USA/American Leaders	3	22	15	13
5. China	14	7	17	11
6. Iraq	7	6	6	6
7. Syria	5	4	5	4
8. Afghanistan	4	2	2	3
9. Pakistan	2	2	1	2
10. Saudi Arabia	1	2	3	2
11. Middle East	2	1	2	2
12. Israel	1	2	3	2
13. Japan	1	1	2	1
14. South Korea	1	1	1	1
15. ISIS/ISIL	1	<1	1	1
16. Other	4	3	5	3
17. Refused/Don't Know	6	8	20	8

Q8. Please name TWO national or world leaders you think pose the greatest threat to world peace and security [**Open-ended with text box with 2 entries**]

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Kim Jong-un	70%	59%	44%	62%
2. Vladimir Putin	26	39	27	33
3. Donald Trump	10	53	28	31
4. Iranian Leaders	20	2	7	10
5. North Korea	3	4	2	3
6. ISIS/al-Baghdadi	3	1	3	2
7. Bashar al-Assad	3	1	1	2
8. Russia	1	3	<1	2
9. Hillary Clinton	3	<1	2	1
10. Xi Jinping	2	1	3	1
11. Barack Obama	2	0	0	1
12. Iran	2	1	1	1
13. China	1	1	1	1
14. Benjamin Netanyahu	<1	2	<1	1
15. Angela Merkel	1	<1	1	1
16. Mike Pence	<1	1	1	1
17. USA	<1	<1	<1	<1

18. Don't dislike anyone	0	<1	<1	<1
19. All	<1	<1	0	<1
20. Other	10	5	11	8
21. Refused/Don't Know	25	16	36	22

## North Korea

Q37. Which of the following do you believe is the most effective way to stop North Korea's nuclear program?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Direct talks between North Korea and the United States	7%	11%	10%	9%
2. Multi-party negotiations such as ongoing diplomatic efforts amongst the 6 countries, North Korea, the United States, Russia, China, South Korea and Japan	19	51	30	35
3. Stricter sanctions against North Korea	10	5	5	7
4. Military action by the United States and its allies	17	5	9	11
5. China taking a stronger stance against North Korea	32	12	22	22
6. I don't believe North Korea's nuclear program can be stopped	13	16	22	15
Refused	1	1	3	1

Q38. Do you support or oppose the United States initiating military action against North Korea in attempt to stop its nuclear program?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Support	53%	15%	27%	33%
2. Oppose	22	65	42	44
3. Don't Know	25	19	29	23
Refused	<1	1	2	1

Q39. Do you think the problem relating to North Korea's nuclear program will be resolved and, if so, when?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. It will be resolved by the end of the year	3%	1%	1%	2%
2. It will be resolved by next year	14	4	5	8
3. It will be resolved in 5 years	16	17	12	16
4. It won't be resolved	29	37	29	33
5. Don't know	39	42	52	42
Refused	<1	1	2	1

Q40. North Korea has already acquired nuclear weapons and it is anticipated that North Korea will become capable of launching missiles with nuclear warheads very soon, if it isn't already. Do you support or oppose recognizing North Korea as a nuclear-weapon state?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Support	36%	41%	29%	38%
2. Oppose	44	29	38	37
3. Don't Know	20	29	31	25
Refused	0	1	2	1

Q41. In response to North Korea's nuclear development, many in Northeast Asia have become increasingly supportive of previously non-nuclear Asian nations, such as South Korea and Japan, acquiring nuclear weapons. Do you support or oppose South Korea and/or Japan acquiring nuclear weapons if North Korea doesn't give up its own?

Q41a. Nuclear weapons in Japan

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Oppose	34%	46%	39%	40%
2. Support	42	26	25	33
3. Don't know	23	27	34	26
Refused	1	<1	2	1

Q41b. Nuclear weapons in South Korea

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Oppose	35%	46%	40%	41%
2. Support	42	27	22	33

3. Don't know	23	26	36	26
Refused	1	1	3	1

Q42. If North Korea doesn't give up its nuclear weapons, do you support the placement of American nuclear warheads in South Korea and/or Japan?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Support	71%	37%	40%	52%
2. Oppose	12	29	24	21
3. Don't Know	17	33	34	27
Refused	0	1	2	<1

Q43. How do you foresee the likely outcome of the situation on the Korean Peninsula in next 10 years?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. The instability will remain the same	27%	37%	31%	32%
2. North Korea and South Korea will have reduced their tension and improved their relations	11	12	10	11
3. South and North will be unified	6	4	7	5
4. More instability and violence will continue following military intervention and/or North Korea's collapse	50	41	42	45
5. Others	6	5	7	5
Refused	1	2	4	2

Q44. How do you think the North Korea crisis has affected Japan's relations with the United States:

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Strengthened them	58%	29%	29%	41%
2. Weakened them	12	29	18	20
3. Had no impact	9	13	15	11
4. Don't know	22	29	36	27
Refused	<1	<1	2	1

Q45. What level of military power should the United States maintain in Asia?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. U.S. should maintain its current level of military power	43%	56%	39%	49%
2. U.S. should increase its level of military power	43	17	25	29
3. U.S. should decrease its level of military power	4	12	11	9
4. Don't know	9	15	24	13
Refused	<1	<1	2	<1

Q46. How do you view the way President Trump has handled the North Korean nuclear issue?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Very unfavorably	9%	72%	36%	41%
2. Somewhat unfavorably	14	20	25	18
3. Somewhat favorably	45	6	26	25
4. Very favorably	31	2	9	15
Refused	1	1	4	1

Q47. Which of the following is closer to your view:

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. North Korea's nuclear arms buildup is mostly driven by insecurity and need to deter the United States and its allies	12%	15%	21%	15%
2. North Korea's nuclear program is mostly driven by ambition/aggression	30	22	22	25
3. North Korea's nuclear program is mostly driven by the desire to be fully recognized as a legitimate country and as a member of the international community	7	17	15	12
4. North Korea's nuclear program is mostly driven by the need to maintain the current regime and its power	50	44	38	46
Refused	1	3	4	2

Q48. As a multilateral security framework for Northeast Asian security, which of the following alliances would be the most effective?

	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. China-Japan-South Korea	9%	8%	8%	8%
2. U.S.-China-Japan	4	6	5	5
3. U.S.-China-Russia	7	5	5	6
4. U.S.-China-Japan-South Korea	26	28	14	26
5. U.S.-China-Japan-South Korea-Russia	37	34	36	35
6. Other (please specify)	3	1	4	2
7. Don't know	14	18	27	17
Refused	1	1	1	1