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# ARAB ATTITUDES TOWARD IRAN, 2011

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- Deep concern with Iran's regional role
- Iran viewed very unfavorably in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Morocco, Jordan, and Egypt
  - Scant support for Iran's nuclear program
- GCC's assertive role in Yemen and Bahrain supported in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Morocco

Analysis by James Zogby



## Executive Summary:

This is an Arab American Institute poll with analysis by James Zogby. It was conducted during the first three weeks of June by Zogby International. Over 4,000 Arabs were surveyed, with a margin of error of +/- 3.5% in Morocco, Egypt, KSA; and +/- 4.5% in Lebanon, Jordan, UAE.

### **Findings:**

- Most Arabs look askance at Iran's role across their region, with substantial majorities seeing Iran playing a negative role especially in Iraq, Bahrain and the Arab Gulf.
- Iran's favorable ratings have dropped significantly in recent years. It is seen as not contributing to "peace and stability in the Arab World" and there is scant support for Iran's nuclear program.
- Significant majorities desire that the Middle East become a "nuclear free zone". When asked if they "had to choose one nation other than Israel to be a nuclear power in the Middle East" - for most Arabs, Egypt is the preferred choice, followed by Turkey.
- There is regional support for the GCC's new and more assertive role in Bahrain, Yemen, and in their concern with Iran's nuclear program.
- Lebanon's attitudes toward Iran differ from the rest of the region, revealing a troubling sectarian divide.
- Overall, Turkey receives the highest favorable ratings in most Arab countries, with the U.S. Receiving the lowest rating in every country but Saudi Arabia, where Iran is lowest.

Note: In previous polls, when Arabs were asked questions about Iran or its nuclear program, and the U.S. and its threats of sanctions or military action were a part of the question, Arabs would indicate strong support for Iran and its defiance on nuclear issues. The more negative attitudes toward Iran reflected here may be accounted for by the fact that in this survey Arabs are being asked to state their attitudes toward Iran without reference to the U.S. and/or that Iran's regional behavior has succeeded in alienating Arab opinion.

## Methodology:

	Morocco		Egypt		Lebanon		Jordan		KSA		UAE	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
Total	819	100	817	100	515	100	514	100	815	100	525	100
Under 36	451	55	472	58	257	50	321	63	494	61	322	61
36+	368	45	345	42	258	50	193	38	321	39	203	39
Live in city	697	85	794	97	513	100	417	81	768	94	237	45
Live outside city	122	15	23	3	2	<1	97	19	47	6	288	55
Less than university	685	84	670	82	398	77	434	84	660	81	250	48
University+	134	16	147	18	117	23	80	16	155	19	275	52
Married	349	43	446	55	268	52	222	43	395	49	360	69
Single, never married	416	51	342	42	247	48	282	55	407	51	159	30
Divorce/widowed/separated	52	6	29	4	--	--	10	2	13	2	6	1
Own	389	48	317	39	162	32	386	75	387	48	221	42
Rent	423	52	500	61	353	69	128	25	421	52	304	58
Employed	486	59	486	60	117	34	225	44	379	47	419	80
Not employed	333	41	331	41	338	66	289	56	436	54	106	20
Muslim	--	--	776	95	--	--	504	98	--	--	--	--
Muslim Shi'a	--	--	--	--	191	37	--	--	--	--	--	--
Muslim Sunni	--	--	--	--	134	26	--	--	--	--	--	--
Christian	--	--	41	5	191	37	10	2	--	--	--	--
Male	390	48	409	50	257	50	261	51	408	50	376	72
Female	429	52	408	50	258	50	253	49	407	50	149	28

\*Total may not equal 100% due to rounding

## I. Attitudes toward Iran:

1. For each of the following questions, please indicate if you think Iran plays a positive or a negative role or has no impact.

A.	Morocco	Egypt	Lebanon	Jordan	KSA	UAE**
Iraq	14/72/14	13/61/21	38/35/13	20/56/8	14/81/4	--/89/3
Lebanon	21/48/28	17/51/27	70/15/5	50/40/4	3/71/22	31/47/10
Bahrain	17/44/37	13/47/34	17/26/29	3/46/30	--/100/--	1/82/10
Arab Gulf region	15/53/29	17/50/29	28/32/23	2/33/38	1/84/10	<1/83/10

\*Positive/Negative/No Impact

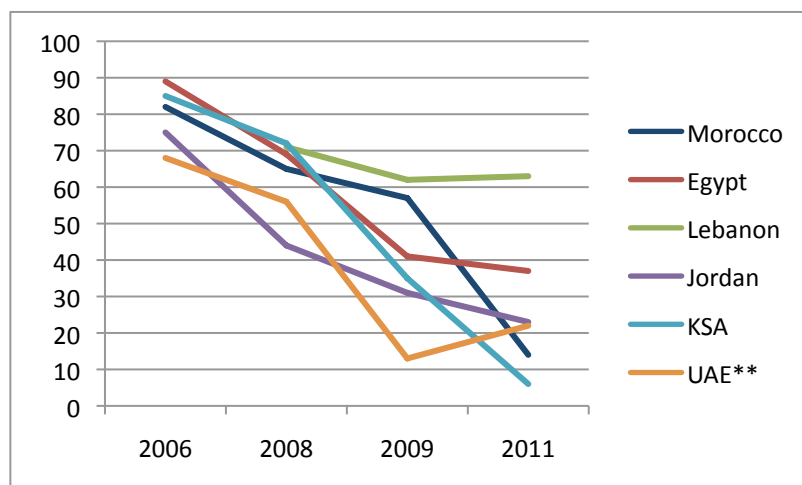
### Lebanon only

	Shi'a	Sunni	Christian
Iraq	55/26/11	25/43/17	31/38/14
Lebanon	89/5/1	53/23/10	64/19/5
Bahrain	32/10/31	6/40/25	10/32/29
Arab Gulf region	40/28/19	17/35/27	23/33/24

\*Positive/Negative/No Impact

A. Most Arabs look askance at Iran's role in their region with majorities in five of six countries concerned with Iran's role in Iraq and pluralities troubled by Iran's role in Bahrain and the Gulf region in general. Views are most negative in Saudi Arabia and UAE, followed by Morocco and Egypt. In Jordan and Lebanon perceptions of Iran's role are mixed with Jordanians and Lebanese seeing Iran play a positive role in Lebanon but are less supportive of Iran's role in the broader region.

A1.	Morocco	Egypt	Lebanon	Jordan	KSA	UAE**
2006	82/16	89/9	--	75/15	85/14	68/31
2008	65/26	69/14	71/28	44/55	72/25	56/41
2009	57/33	41/44	62/31	31/68	35/58	13/87
2011	14/85	37/63	63/37	23/77	6/80	22/70



A1. There has been a dramatic decrease in Iran's favorable ratings since 2006.

\*\* Survey includes **all** Arabs in UAE, not just nationals.

2. Please tell us if your opinion of each of the following is very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable?

<b>B.</b>	<b>Morocco</b>	<b>Egypt</b>	<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>Jordan</b>	<b>KSA</b>	<b>UAE**</b>
Turkey	80/20	64/35	93/7	45/55	98/2	62/27
China	59/40	56/43	63/29	55/44	26/66	62/28
Iran	14/85	37/63	63/37	23/77	6/80	22/70
France	62/38	44/56	41/45	21/79	95/4	60/26
United States	12/88	5/95	23/77	10/88	30/68	12/77
United Nations	15/84	7/93	39/61	9/91	52/43	27/67

\*Favorable/Unfavorable

#### Lebanon only

	<b>Shi'a</b>	<b>Sunni</b>	<b>Christian</b>
Turkey	93/7	96/4	90/10
China	32/61	36/56	38/51
Iran	84/16	55/45	48/52
France	42/53	37/58	44/54
United States	26/74	22/78	22/78
United Nations	44/56	39/61	33/67

\*Favorable/Unfavorable

B. In every country but Lebanon, Iran has a net unfavorable rating - with highest negatives in Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and UAE. Iran's favorable rating in Lebanon is driven by strong support from that country's Shia community, with mixed Sunni and Christian attitudes towards Iran.

Overall, Turkey has the highest favorable rating among Arabs, with the U.S. receiving the lowest rating in every country but Saudi Arabia.

\*\* Survey includes **all** Arabs in UAE, not just nationals.

3. Please tell us if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements.

<b>C.</b>	<b>Morocco</b>	<b>Egypt</b>	<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>Jordan</b>	<b>KSA</b>	<b>UAE**</b>
Iran contributes to peace and stability in the Arab world	<b>16/83</b>	<b>32/68</b>	<b>57/42</b>	<b>22/72</b>	<b>4/95</b>	<b>12/80</b>
Turkey contributes to peace and stability in the Arab world	<b>82/14</b>	<b>65/35</b>	<b>85/15</b>	<b>58/35</b>	<b>76/21</b>	<b>61/28</b>
United States contributes to peace and stability in the Arab world	<b>11/87</b>	<b>10/89</b>	<b>16/84</b>	<b>5/95</b>	<b>24/71</b>	<b>8/87</b>
Saudi Arabia contributes to peace and stability in the Arab world	<b>69/27</b>	<b>82/17</b>	<b>61/39</b>	<b>57/42</b>	<b>99/1</b>	<b>66/25</b>

\*Agree/Disagree

#### **Lebanon only**

	<b>Shi'a</b>	<b>Sunni</b>	<b>Christian</b>
Iran contributes to peace and stability in the Arab world	<b>79/20</b>	<b>42/58</b>	<b>46/54</b>
Turkey contributes to peace and stability in the Arab world	<b>90/10</b>	<b>87/13</b>	<b>79/21</b>
United States contributes to peace and stability in the Arab world	<b>17/83</b>	<b>14/86</b>	<b>15/85</b>
Saudi Arabia contributes to peace and stability in the Arab world	<b>44/55</b>	<b>74/27</b>	<b>70/30</b>

\*Agree/Disagree

C. In every county but Lebanon, significant majorities say that Iran does not “contribute to peace and stability in the Arab World”. Once again, Lebanon's views are mixed, with Sunni and Christian attitudes being more negative towards Iran and only the Shi'a community being positive.

Overall, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are viewed as making the most positive contribution to “peace and stability”.

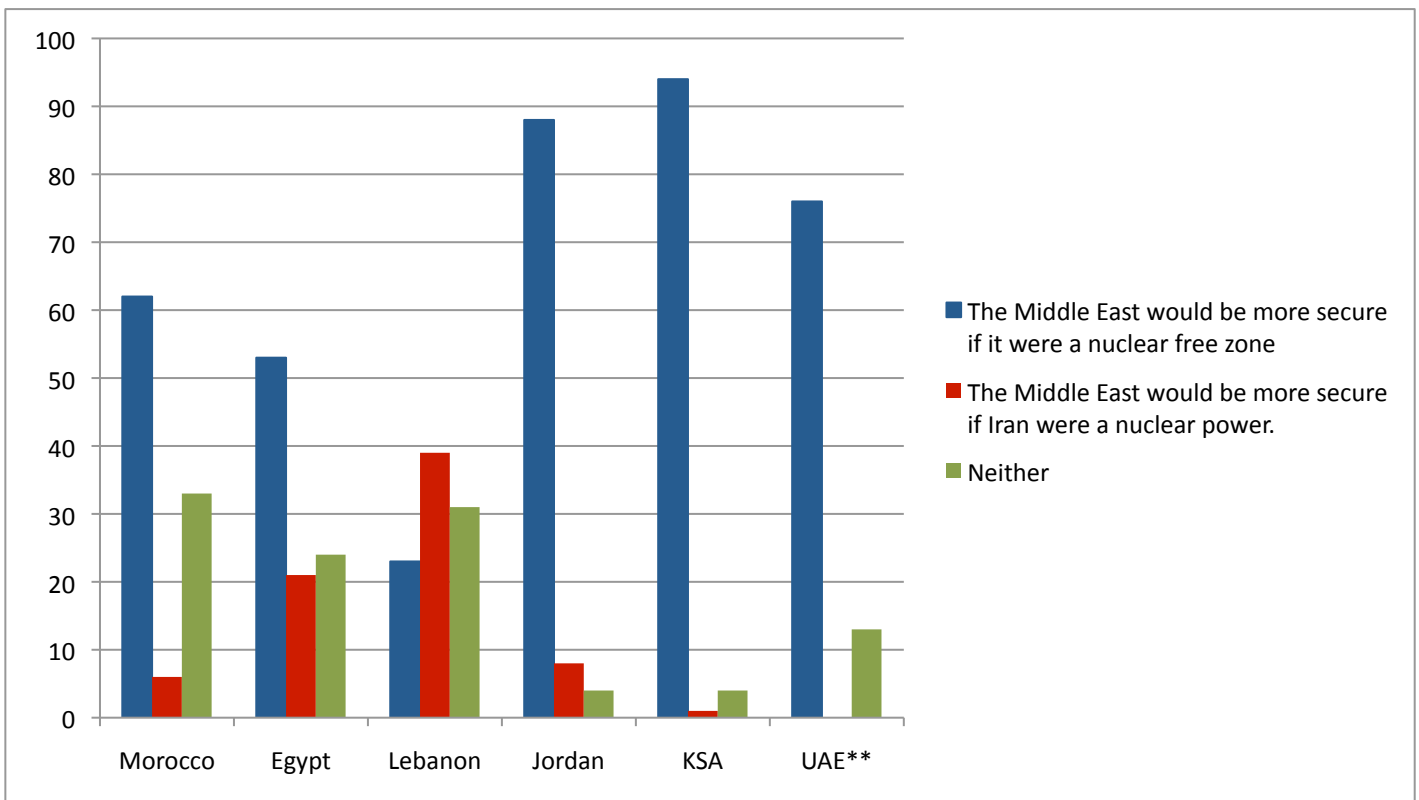
\*\* Survey includes **all** Arabs in UAE, not just nationals.

4. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view – Statement A or Statement B?

**Statement A:** “The Middle East would be more secure if it were a nuclear free zone.”

**Statement B:** “The Middle East would be more secure if Iran were a nuclear power.”

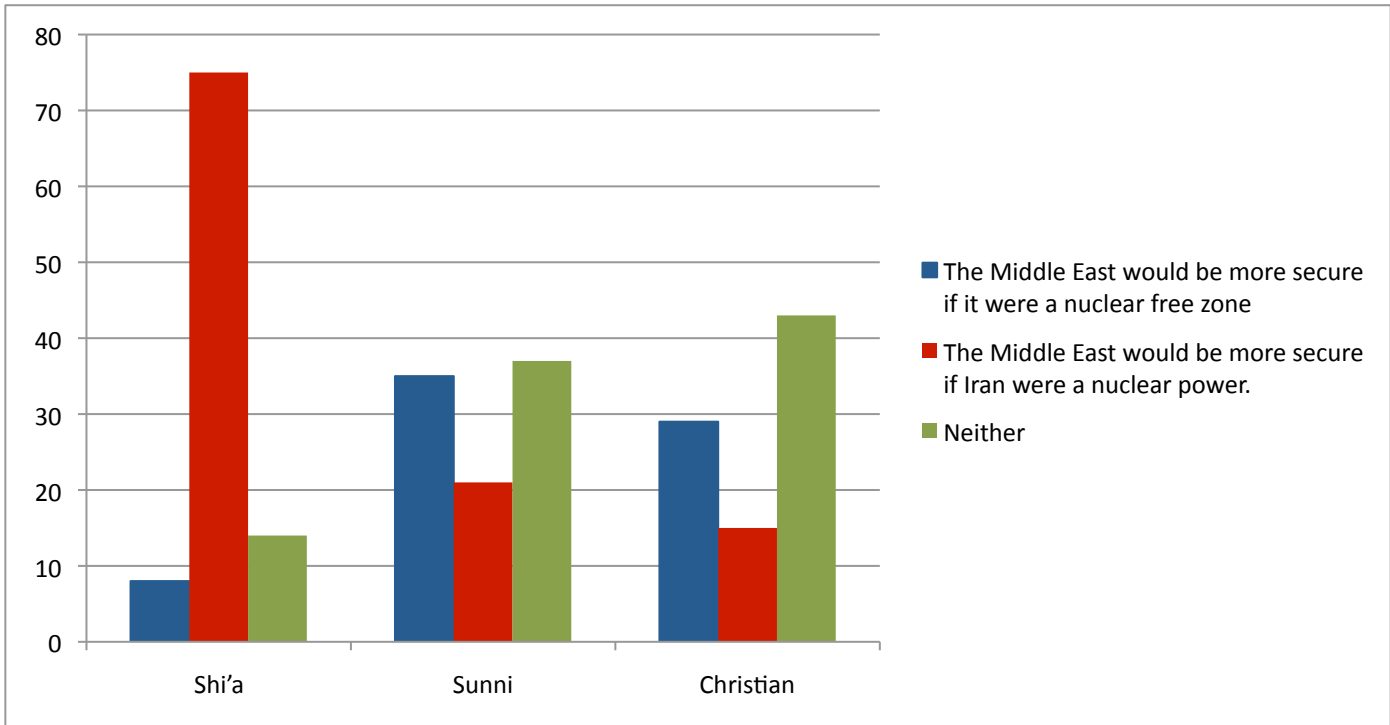
D.	Morocco	Egypt	Lebanon	Jordan	KSA	UAE**
A: The Middle East would be more secure if it were a nuclear free zone	62	53	23	88	94	76
B: The Middle East would be more secure if Iran were a nuclear power.	6	21	39	8	1	--
Neither	33	24	31	4	4	13



**Lebanon only**

	Shi'a	Sunni	Christian
A: The Middle East would be more secure if it were a nuclear free zone	8	35	29
B: The Middle East would be more secure if Iran were a nuclear power.	75	21	15
Neither	14	37	43

\*Improve/Worsen/No Impact



D. Majorities in five of six countries agree that “the Middle East would be more secure if it were a nuclear free zone”. In Jordan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Morocco there is scant support for Iran becoming a nuclear power.

\*\* Survey includes **all** Arabs in UAE, not just nationals.

5. If you had to choose one nation, other than Israel, to be a nuclear power in the Middle East, which country would you prefer?

E.	Morocco	Egypt	Lebanon	Jordan	KSA	UAE**
Iran	5	<1	33	6	2	--
Egypt	61	89	29	52	13	52
Saudi Arabia	9	6	8	12	65	8
UAE	5	<1	4	13	5	13
Turkey	13	3	26	16	7	20
Other	6	1	--	1	3	2

**Lebanon only**

	Shi'a	Sunni	Christian
Iran	69	9	15
Egypt	15	40	36
Saudi Arabia	3	12	9
UAE	2	2	7
Turkey	12	38	33
Other	--	--	--

\*Improve/Worsen/No Impact

E. Most Arabs do not support Iran becoming a nuclear power. If they "had to choose one nation, other than Israel, to be a nuclear power in the Middle East" the favored option appears to be Egypt.

\*\* Survey includes **all** Arabs in UAE, not just nationals.

6. Please tell us if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements?

<b>F.</b>	<b>Morocco</b>	<b>Egypt</b>	<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>Jordan</b>	<b>KSA</b>	<b>UAE**</b>
The Arab Gulf states are right to be concerned with Iran's nuclear program because this program only makes the region less secure	88/12	83/16	33/43	57/42	97/3	89/--
I would be comfortable with Iran as the dominant power in the Gulf region	16/84	29/71	48/35	19/78	14/81	--/89

\*Agree/Disagree

**Lebanon only**

	<b>Shi'a</b>	<b>Sunni</b>	<b>Christian</b>
The Arab Gulf states are right to be concerned with Iran's nuclear program because this program only makes the region less secure	20/60	39/35	41/30
I would be comfortable with Iran as the dominant power in the Gulf region	75/18	28/47	36/42

\*Agree/Disagree

F. In Saudi Arabia, UAE, Morocco, and Egypt there is overwhelmingly strong support for the proposition that "Arab Gulf states" are right to be concerned with Iran's nuclear program. Only among Lebanon's Shi'a community is there support for Iran becoming the dominant power in the Gulf.

\*\* Survey includes **all** Arabs in UAE, not just nationals.

7. What should the GCC response be toward Iran's role in the region?

G.	Welcome/Reject/Do Nothing
Morocco	6/50/44
Egypt	26/34/38
Lebanon	49/33/8
Jordan	9/50/30
KSA	9/70/20
UAE**	--/59/24

**Lebanon only**

	Shi'a	Sunni	Christian
Welcome	68	39	38
Reject	17	41	43
Do nothing	5	9	11

G. A majority of Arabs in Morocco, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE say the GCC should reject Iran's role in the region. In Egypt and in Lebanon, views are mixed.

8. In recent months the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has taken action to address several regional issues. In your view is this new GCC assertiveness a positive or negative development?

H.	Positive/Negative/ND
Morocco	50/11/37
Egypt	41/10/46
Lebanon	28/34/24
Jordan	35/13/51
KSA	66/12/22
UAE**	43/19/22

\*Positive/Negative/No Difference

**Lebanon only**

	Shi'a	Sunni	Christian
Positive	30	28	27
Negative	34	32	34
No difference	24	30	20

H. A plurality hold a positive view of the new and more assertive role of the GCC in addressing regional issues. Only in Lebanon and Jordan are views less supportive.

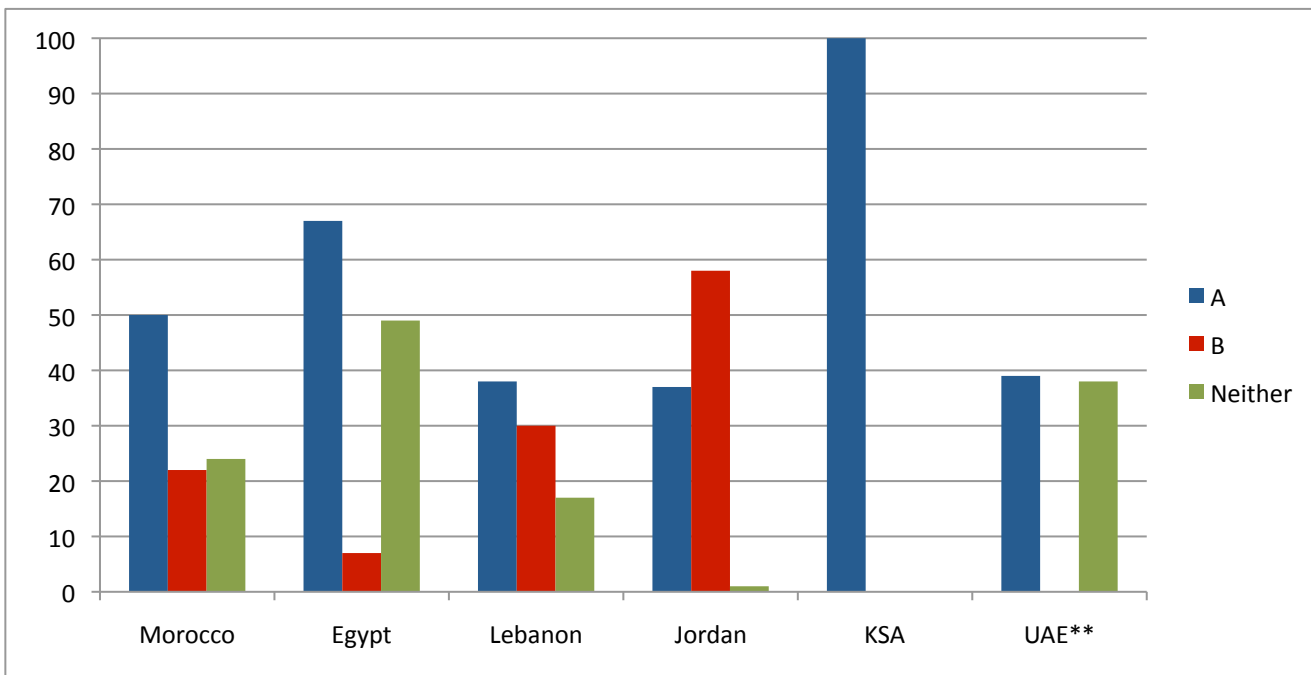
\*\* Survey includes **all** Arabs in UAE, not just nationals.

9. Which of the following statements best reflects your view – Statement A or Statement B?

**Statement A:** “When the GCC responded to Bahrain’s request and sent ‘Peninsula Shield Forces’ to the island, they were acting in line with their obligation to a member state.”

**Statement B:** “The entry of the GCC’s ‘Peninsula Shield Forces’ into Bahrain constitutes an invasion of ‘outside forces.’”

I.	A/B/Neither
Morocco	50/22/24
Egypt	67/7/49
Lebanon	38/30/17
Jordan	37/58/1
KSA	100/--/--
UAE**	39/--/38



**Lebanon only**

	Shi’a	Sunni	Christian
A: When the GCC responded to Bahrain’s request and sent “Peninsula Shield Forces” to the island, they were acting in line with their obligation to a member state	39	36	40
B: The entry of the GCC’s “Peninsula Shield Forces” into Bahrain constitutes an invasion of “outside forces”	30	30	29
Neither	15	19	17

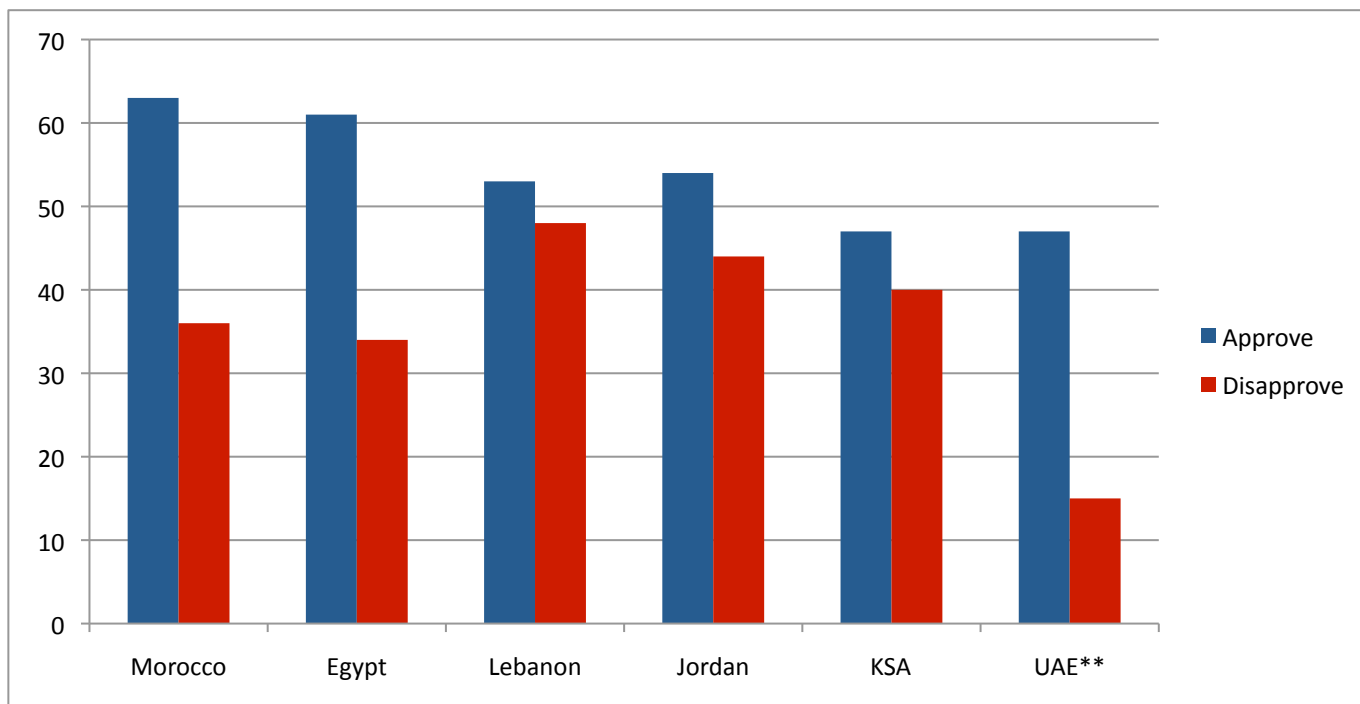
\*Improve/Worsen/No Impact

I. A majority in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Morocco, and a plurality of Arabs in the Emirates, supported the GCC’s decision to send forces into Bahrain.

\*\* Survey includes **all** Arabs in UAE, not just nationals.

10. GCC ministers negotiated a compromise between the Yemeni President Abdullah Ali Saleh and groups representing the Yemeni opposition that, if followed by all sides, would end the revolt and lead to a change in government. Do you approve or disapprove of this role played by the GCC in Yemen?

J.	Approve/Disapprove
Morocco	63/36
Egypt	61/34
Lebanon	53/48
Jordan	54/44
KSA	47/40
UAE**	47/15



**Lebanon only**

	Shi'a	Sunni	Christian
Approve	54	50	54
Disapprove	47	50	46

J. Either a majority or a plurality in every country supports the GCC's efforts to achieve a compromise solution to end the revolt and lead to a change in government in Yemen.

\*\* Survey includes **all** Arabs in UAE, not just nationals.