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***Al Jazeera America/
Monmouth University Poll***

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Released:
Tuesday, January 20, 2015

For information on polling methods, contact:
PATRICK MURRAY
732-979-6769 (cell); 732-263-5858 (office)
pdmurray@monmouth.edu

NATIONAL: PUBLIC CONCERNED ABOUT TERRORISM, DIVIDED ON POLICY

Americans dubious about overtures to Iran

A lame duck president faced with a hostile Congress may turn to foreign policy as one of the few areas where he can make his mark. The *Al Jazeera America/Monmouth University Poll* finds that most Americans are jittery about terrorism in the wake of the Paris attacks and are doubtful that ISIL can be stopped even if U.S. troops got involved. This dim public mood may translate to doubt about the wisdom of Pres. Obama's recent overtures in the Middle East, particularly with Iran.

As Barack Obama prepares to take the dais in the House of Representatives for his annual State of the Union address, he nurses a 43% approve to 48% disapprove job rating. Congress continues to do even worse, with just 18% of Americans approving of their job performance and 70% disapproving.

Recent world events have highlighted the importance of foreign policy for the president as he tries to cement his legacy during his last two years in office. One area of contention with the Republican-controlled Congress is ongoing talks with Iran to curb its nuclear program. Most Americans (59%) say they would not trust Iran at all to abide by the terms of any such agreement. Just 4% would have a lot of trust in Iran and 34% would trust Iran a little on this matter. Republicans (73%) are more likely than independents (59%) and Democrats (49%) to express no faith at all in Iran's intentions of abiding by any such agreement

"Some members of Congress are already clamoring for sanctions and the public seems to share their distrust of the Tehran government. These misgivings may be partly due to heightened concerns about security after the terrorist attacks in Paris," said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute, which conducted the *Al Jazeera America/Monmouth University Poll*.

Most Americans feel it is likely that a terrorist attack similar to the one in Paris will occur in the United States in the next few months. This includes 28% who say such an attack is very likely and 45%

who say it is somewhat likely. Only 1-in-4 Americans feel an imminent terrorist attack is either not too (15%) or not at all (8%) likely.

The public is split on whether the U.S. government is doing enough to prevent future attacks on American soil – 44% say it is while 49% say it is not doing enough. Most Democrats (57%) feel the government is doing enough to prevent an attack, but most Republicans (67%) say it is not. Younger adults age 18 to 34 (55%) are more likely than those age 35 to 54 (44%) and those age 55 and older (32%) to feel that Washington is on top of things when it comes to keeping the country safe from terrorism.

Fully 3-in-4 (75%) Americans believe that ISIL – the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – poses a major threat to U.S. security. Another 19% say the terrorist group poses a minor threat and just 3% feel it poses no threat.

A plurality (45%) of Americans feel that ISIL can only be stopped if U.S. combat troops are sent to the Middle East – even if they do not actually support such action. Only 17% feel that ISIL can be shut down without the need for U.S. troops on the ground. On the other hand, 32% of the public believes that ISIL could not be stopped even if the U.S. sent combat troops. Republicans (58%) are more likely than Democrats (40%) and independents (40%) to feel that only the U.S. military can stop ISIL. However, one-third of Republicans (31%), Democrats (34%) and independents (33%) alike are convinced that ISIL can't be shut down regardless.

The *Al Jazeera America/Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone from January 13 to 15, 2015 with 1,003 adults in the United States. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.1 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, N.J. and cosponsored by Al Jazeera America in New York, N.Y.

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Barack Obama is doing as president?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Approve	43%	43%	44%	10%	39%	81%	38%	48%	52%	41%	39%	33%	69%
Disapprove	48%	49%	45%	83%	51%	14%	53%	44%	37%	52%	56%	61%	23%
(VOL) No opinion	8%	8%	11%	7%	11%	5%	9%	7%	11%	8%	5%	7%	8%

TREND:	January 2015	December 2014	July 2013
Approve	43%	41%	42%
Disapprove	48%	49%	51%
(VOL) No opinion	8%	10%	6%
<i>Unwt'd N</i>	1,003	1,008	1,012

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the U.S. Congress is doing?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Approve	18%	16%	27%	14%	20%	20%	21%	16%	30%	14%	12%	12%	32%
Disapprove	70%	74%	52%	70%	70%	71%	70%	70%	56%	74%	80%	76%	59%
(VOL) No opinion	11%	9%	21%	16%	10%	10%	9%	14%	14%	12%	8%	12%	9%

TREND:	January 2015	December 2014	July 2013
Approve	18%	17%	14%
Disapprove	70%	73%	76%
(VOL) No opinion	11%	11%	10%
Unwtd N	1,003	1,008	1,012

3. The United States is currently negotiating an agreement with Iran to curb that country's nuclear program. How much would you trust Iran to abide by the terms of such an agreement – a lot, a little, or not at all?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
A lot	4%	4%	5%	2%	5%	6%	4%	5%	6%	4%	3%	3%	8%
A little	34%	33%	37%	24%	32%	43%	33%	35%	48%	30%	24%	31%	35%
Not at all	59%	61%	54%	73%	59%	49%	61%	58%	45%	63%	70%	64%	53%
(VOL) Don't know	2%	2%	5%	1%	4%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%	3%

4. Now, a question about the Islamic State terrorist group, known as ISIL or ISIS, which is active in the Middle East right now. Is ISIL a major threat, a minor threat, or not a threat to U.S. security?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Major threat	75%	76%	69%	86%	72%	70%	71%	79%	61%	80%	84%	80%	67%
Minor threat	19%	18%	24%	10%	21%	24%	22%	16%	29%	16%	12%	15%	26%
Not a threat	3%	3%	5%	2%	5%	3%	5%	2%	6%	2%	2%	2%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%

5. How likely is it that a terrorist attack like the one that happened in Paris last week will occur in the U.S. in the next few months – very, somewhat, not too, or not at all likely?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Very likely	28%	30%	18%	37%	26%	22%	26%	29%	16%	30%	38%	30%	23%
Somewhat likely	45%	45%	46%	48%	45%	45%	45%	46%	46%	47%	42%	47%	42%
Not too likely	15%	13%	24%	11%	16%	18%	15%	15%	24%	11%	12%	15%	15%
Not at all likely	8%	8%	8%	3%	10%	11%	10%	7%	11%	7%	7%	4%	16%
(VOL) Don't know	4%	3%	4%	1%	3%	5%	3%	4%	3%	5%	2%	3%	4%

6. Do you think the U.S. government is doing enough or not doing enough to prevent a future terrorist attack on American soil?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Doing enough	44%	44%	44%	28%	45%	57%	45%	42%	55%	44%	32%	38%	53%
Not doing enough	49%	50%	44%	67%	47%	35%	47%	51%	38%	49%	60%	54%	40%
(VOL) Doing too much	2%	1%	4%	0%	4%	0%	3%	1%	3%	3%	1%	1%	3%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	5%	7%	5%	5%	7%	5%	6%	4%	5%	8%	7%	4%

7. Regardless of whether you support or oppose having troops in the Middle East, do you think that the ISIL terrorist group can be stopped without having U.S. combat troops involved, can be stopped only if U.S. combat troops are involved, or cannot be stopped even if U.S. combat troops are involved?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Without US troops	17%	17%	18%	7%	21%	19%	19%	15%	23%	16%	12%	15%	18%
Only with US troops	45%	46%	42%	58%	40%	40%	51%	39%	44%	49%	42%	45%	49%
Cannot be stopped	32%	31%	36%	31%	33%	34%	26%	38%	29%	29%	39%	34%	28%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	6%	4%	4%	6%	7%	4%	7%	4%	6%	7%	6%	5%

The Al Jazeera America/Monmouth University Poll was sponsored by Al Jazeera America and the Monmouth University Polling Institute. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. The poll was conducted from January 13 to 15, 2015 with a national random sample of 1,003 adults age 18 and older. This includes 673 contacted by a live interviewer on a landline telephone and 330 contacted by a live interviewer on a cell phone, in English. Final sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information. Data collection support provided by Braun Research (field) and SSI (RDD sample). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points (unadjusted for sample design). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)			
26% Rep	49% Male	31% 18-34	65% White
44% Ind	51% Female	38% 35-54	12% Black
30% Dem		31% 55+	15% Hispanic
			8% Asian/Other

	TOTAL	MARGIN OF ERROR											
		REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			GENDER		AGE			RACE	
		Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	White	Black/Hispanic
Unweighted N	1,003	863	140	250	478	267	487	516	198	295	508	767	179
moe	3.1%	3.3%	8.3%	6.2%	4.5%	6.0%	4.5%	4.3%	7.0%	5.7%	4.4%	3.5%	7.3%

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