



Debate convinces audience that the world can tolerate a nuclear Iran

[Toronto – November 26, 2012] It has been rightly characterized as the toughest foreign policy challenge in a generation: how should the world respond to Iran’s nuclear ambitions? For some, the case for a preemptive strike on Iran is ironclad. An Iranian bomb would flood the volatile Middle East with nuclear weapons and trap Israel in a state of perilous insecurity—along with much of the world’s oil supply. Others argue that a nuclear Iran could be the very stabilizing force that the region needs, as the threat of nuclear war makes conventional conflicts more risky. These same voices also ask: can the West and Israel afford to attack Iran when doing so could roll back the Arab Spring and re-entrench reactionary forces throughout the Middle East?

The tenth Munk Debate tackled these game-changing issues by moving the motion:

BE IT RESOLVED, the world cannot tolerate an Iran with nuclear weapons capability.

This question was put to the audience of the *Munk Debates on Europe* both before and after they listened to debate on the issue. Arguing in favour of the resolution was director of Tel Aviv University’s Institute for National Security Studies and former deputy commander of the Israeli Air Force, Major General (ret.) **Amos Yadlin**, and Pulitzer Prize winning *Washington Post* columnist **Charles Krauthammer**.

Arguing against the resolution was CNN host, *Time Magazine* editor-at-large, and *Washington Post* columnist **Fareed Zakaria**, and **Vali Nasr**, Dean of the Johns Hopkins University’s Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, senior fellow in Foreign Policy at Brookings Institution, and a member of the U.S. State Department’s Foreign Policy Advisory Board.

Can the world tolerate an Iran with nuclear weapons? Respondents in the Toronto audience initially believed it could not, and this belief held following the debate. Prior to the debate, 60% of the audience members agreed with the resolution and 24% disagreed, while 16% were undecided. Immediately following the debate, agreement with the resolution decreased slightly (to 58%), while disagreement with the resolution jumped 18 percentage points to 42%.

About This Study

This poll was conducted on Monday, November 26th, 2012 for the **Munk Debates** (www.munkdebates.com) by **Innovative Research Group**, Inc. (www.innovativeresearch.ca), a national public opinion research firm.

Prior to the start of the debate, members of the audience at the *Munk Debates on Iran's Nuclear Ambitions* were asked to fill out a ballot where they indicated whether they agreed, disagreed, or were undecided about the resolution. Ballots were collected and tabulated using a bar code system.

After the debate concluded, the audience was again asked to fill out a ballot where they indicated whether they agreed or disagreed with the resolution. In the post-debate ballot, the undecided option was not provided. Again, the ballots were collected and counted using a bar code system. See detailed findings below for the ballot question wording and results.

The results of this poll are based on ballots collected among spectators at the *Munk Debates on Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*.

The Munk Debates

The Munk Debates is an initiative of the Aurea Foundation, a charitable organization founded in 2006 by Peter and Melanie Munk to support Canadian Institutions involved in the study and development of public policy. The goal of the Munk Debates is to enliven and elevate public discussion of the major international issues shaping the course of world events and Canada's future.

Innovative Research Group

Innovative Research Group Inc. (INNOVATIVE) is a national public opinion research and strategy firm with offices in Toronto and Vancouver.

INNOVATIVE provides critical information needed to assess and overcome public affairs and corporate communications challenges, identify and evaluate potential solutions, and monitor outcomes.

-30-

For more information, or to schedule an interview, please contact:

Greg Lyle

Managing Director

Innovative Research Group, Inc.

glyle@innovativeresearch.ca

416-642-6429

Rudyard Griffiths

Co-Director

Salon Speakers Series

rudyard@salonspeakers.com

416-737-9626

DETAILED FINDINGS

Pre-Debate Ballot

QUESTION #1

Be it resolved, the world cannot tolerate an Iran with nuclear weapons capability.

AGREE - 60%

DISAGREE - 24%

UNDECIDED - 16%

QUESTION #2

Depending on what you hear during the debate, are you open to changing your vote?

YES - 82%

NO - 18%

Post-Debate Ballot

QUESTION #1

Be it resolved, the world cannot tolerate an Iran with nuclear weapons capability.

AGREE - 58%

DISAGREE - 42%