American attitudes on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

A PUBLIC OPINION POLL BY SHIBLEY TELHAMI
A survey sponsored by the

University of Maryland

Critical Issues Poll*

fielded by

Nielsen Scarborough

Valuable assistance was provided by Neil Schwartz, Scott Willoth, and Jordan Evangelista from Nielsen Scarborough. Brittany Kyser, Rachel Slattery, and Anne Peckham were particularly helpful.

*The University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll probes domestic and international issues that are central to our policy discourse and is led by Professors Shibley Telhami and Stella Rouse.
The survey was conducted October 5-14, 2016 with a panel consisting of a probability-based representative sample. The panel was recruited by Nielsen Scarborough from its larger probability-based national panel, which was recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of households provided by Survey Sampling International. A national sample of 1528 panelists completed the survey. Responses were weighted by age, gender, income, education, race, and geographic region using benchmarks from the U.S. Census. The survey was also weighted by partisan identification. The margin of error is 2.5%
The survey was conducted November 18-23, 2016 with a panel consisting of a probability-based representative sample. The panel was recruited by Nielsen Scarborough from its larger probability-based national panel, which was recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of households provided by Survey Sampling International. A national sample of 1042 panelists completed the survey. Responses were weighted by age, gender, income, education, race, and geographic region using benchmarks from the U.S. Census. The survey was also weighted by partisan identification. The margin of error is 3.04%
Which of the following should be America’s top global priorities? (Please Select Two)
Which of the following issues should be America’s top global priorities? (Please Select Two)

- The War on ISIS: 53
- U.S. Immigration Policy: 38
- Trade Deficit: 22
- North Korea: 15
- The Assertiveness of Russia: 14
- The Rise of China: 11
- The War on al-Qaeda: 6
- Iran: 4
- The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: 4
- U.S. Relations with Egypt and Saudi Arabia: 2
- The Civil War in Libya: 1
- The Civil War in Yemen: <1
- Other: 18

American Attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
Thinking about U.S. interests, how important of an issue is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
Thinking about U.S. interests, how important of an issue is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

The single most important issue for the U.S.

- Republican: 5
- Democrat: 1
- Independent: 1
- Total: 3

Among the top three issues

- Republican: 23
- Democrat: 16
- Independent: 12
- Total: 18

Among the top five issues

- Republican: 44
- Democrat: 41
- Independent: 44
- Total: 41

Not among the top five issues

- Republican: 34
- Democrat: 38
- Independent: 39
- Total: 38

As you may know, there have been suggestions that the UN Security Council should endorse the establishment of a Palestinian state. This idea has received some support in Europe, but opposition in Israel. If the UN Security Council considers such a plan, what do you think the U.S. should do as a member of the UN Security Council?
What do you think the U.S. should do as a member of the UN Security Council?

- **Vote in favor of endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state**: 51 (Total)
  - Republican: 17
  - Democrat: 34
  - Independent: 22

- **Vote against endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state including using America's veto power to prevent such an endorsement**: 51 (Total)
  - Republican: 16
  - Democrat: 31
  - Independent: 17

- **Abstain from voting**: 59 (Total)
  - Republican: 29
  - Democrat: 32
  - Independent: 29

Nov. 2016
What do you think the U.S. should do as a member of the UN Security Council?

**Nov. 2015**

- **Vote in favor of endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state**: 18
- **Vote against endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state including using America's veto power to prevent such an endorsement**: 17
- **Abstain from voting**: 29

**Nov. 2016**

- **Vote in favor of endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state**: 43
- **Vote against endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state including using America's veto power to prevent such an endorsement**: 51
- **Abstain from voting**: 37
- **Total**
  - **REP**: 18
  - **DEM**: 15
  - **IND**: 13
  - **TOTAL**: 59
What do you think the U.S. should do as a member of the UN Security Council?

Vote in favor of endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state

Vote against endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state including using America's veto power to prevent such an endorsement

Abstain from voting

18-34  35-54  55+

Vote in favor of endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state:
- 18-34: 33
- 35-54: 30
- 55+: 37

Vote against endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state including using America's veto power to prevent such an endorsement:
- 18-34: 26
- 35-54: 34
- 55+: 32

Abstain from voting:
- 18-34: 39
- 35-54: 32
- 55+: 27

Nov. 2016
In general, what role do you want the new Trump administration to play in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Should the new Trump administration:
Should the new Trump administration:

- **Lean toward Israel**
  - Republican: 56
  - Democrat: 17
  - Independent: 29
  - Total: 35

- **Lean toward the Palestinians**
  - Republican: <1
  - Democrat: 11
  - Independent: 2
  - Total: 6

- **Lean toward neither side**
  - Republican: 42
  - Democrat: 57
  - Independent: 66
  - Total: 69

(*) Numbers are approximate and presented for illustrative purposes.
Should the new Trump administration:

Lean toward Israel:
- 18-34: 28
- 35-54: 33
- 55+: 43

Lean toward the Palestinians:
- 18-34: 6
- 35-54: 6
- 55+: 4

Lean toward neither side:
- 18-34: 63
- 35-54: 60
- 55+: 50

Nov. 2016
If the new Trump administration engages in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, what do you believe it will, in fact, do?
If the new Trump administration engages in mediating the Israeli Palestinian conflict, what do you believe it will, in fact, do?

- **Lean toward Israel**
  - Republican: 62
  - Democrat: 55
  - Independent: 46
  - Total: 57

- **Lean toward the Palestinians**
  - Republican: <1
  - Democrat: 14
  - Independent: 10
  - Total: 8

- **Lean toward neither side**
  - Republican: 35
  - Democrat: 27
  - Independent: 42
  - Total: 32

Nov. 2016
If the new Trump administration engages in mediating the Israeli Palestinian conflict, what do you believe it will, in fact, do?

- Lean toward Israel
  - 18-34: 47
  - 35-54: 56
  - 55+: 67

- Lean toward the Palestinians
  - 18-34: 5
  - 35-54: 8
  - 55+: 11

- Lean toward neither side
  - 18-34: 39
  - 35-54: 33
  - 55+: 25

Nov. 2016
One of the issues of tension between the United States and Israel has been its construction of Israeli settlements in the territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war. These settlements are considered illegal by most of the international community and have been opposed by every U.S. administration, both Republican and Democratic. The Israeli government has continued to build settlements arguing that they have the right to do so, or that these are not obstacles to peace.

How do you believe the U.S. should react to new settlements?
How do you believe the U.S. should react to new settlements?

- Do nothing/ Limit U.S. opposition to words
  - Republican: 31
  - Democrat: 37
  - Independent: 54
  - Total: 68

- Impose some economic sanctions/Take more serious action
  - Republican: 42
  - Democrat: 46
  - Independent: 42
  - Total: 60
How do you believe the U.S. should react to new settlements?

- Do nothing/ Limit U.S. opposition to words
  - Nov. 2014: 60
  - Nov. 2015: 58
  - Nov. 2016: 52

- Impose some economic sanctions/Take more serious action
  - Nov. 2014: 38
  - Nov. 2015: 37
  - Nov. 2016: 46
How do you believe the U.S. should react to new settlements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>REP</th>
<th>DEM</th>
<th>IND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do nothing/ Limit U.S. opposition to words</td>
<td>Nov. 2014: 66%</td>
<td>Nov. 2015: 68%</td>
<td>Nov. 2016: 68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impose some economic sanctions/Take more serious action</td>
<td>Nov. 2014: 32%</td>
<td>Nov. 2015: 26%</td>
<td>Nov. 2016: 31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do nothing/ Limit U.S. opposition to words</td>
<td>Nov. 2014: 46%</td>
<td>Nov. 2015: 51%</td>
<td>Nov. 2016: 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impose some economic sanctions/Take more serious action</td>
<td>Nov. 2014: 48%</td>
<td>Nov. 2015: 49%</td>
<td>Nov. 2016: 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do nothing/ Limit U.S. opposition to words</td>
<td>Nov. 2014: 31%</td>
<td>Nov. 2015: 30%</td>
<td>Nov. 2016: 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impose some economic sanctions/Take more serious action</td>
<td>Nov. 2014: 31%</td>
<td>Nov. 2015: 30%</td>
<td>Nov. 2016: 42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do you believe the U.S. should react to new settlements?

- Do nothing/Limit U.S. opposition to words
  - 18-34: 48%
  - 35-54: 51%
  - 55+: 56%

- Impose some economic sanctions/Take more serious action
  - 18-34: 51%
  - 35-54: 47%
  - 55+: 41%

Nov. 2016
The Obama administration is reportedly considering taking action on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in the hope that it would preserve the two-state solution that the U.S. supports as a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. Two options are reportedly being considered. One is a UN Resolution stating the parameters of a solution. The other is to take steps to limit the Israeli settlement buildup in the West Bank that both Republican and Democratic administrations have opposed. I would like to ask you the following questions related to these proposals.

Now tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following:

It’s wrong for Obama to act on such an important issue during the transition. The decision on this issue should be left to President Trump to deal with, regardless of the complexity of our political system. Besides, it’s not up to the United States and the international community to decide the final parameters of the political solution on this issue. This should be left first and foremost to the parties themselves. In addition, the Israeli government has opposed such steps and we must be mindful not to alienate them.
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Now tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following:

One reason the United States has been ineffective in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is that American Presidents face domestic political constraints in Congress, campaign contributions, and lobbies. Presidents have an opportunity to act effectively to advance the national interest during the Presidential transitions when they face fewer constraints. President Ronald Reagan did this before he left office in starting a dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization that may have helped bring the PLO and Israel together five years later. The US has a stake in this issue and it’s clear the parties have not been able to resolve it on their own. Obama should seize the opportunity.
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The U.S. has a stake in this issue and it’s clear the parties have not been able to resolve it on their own. Obama should seize the opportunity.
Now tell me how you feel about the following possibilities:

President Obama’s support or sponsorship for a United Nations resolution that outlines the parameters for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict before he leaves office.
President Obama’s support or sponsorship for a United Nations resolution that outlines the parameters for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict before he leaves office.

- Strongly/Somewhat Oppose: 50
  - Republican: 7
  - Democrat: 23
  - Independent: 27
  - Total: 50
- Neither Oppose nor Support: 38
  - Republican: 26
  - Democrat: 21
  - Independent: 38
  - Total: 70
- Strongly/Somewhat Support: 70
  - Republican: 22
  - Democrat: 37
  - Independent: 46
  - Total: 70

Nov. 2016
President Obama’s support or sponsorship for a United Nations resolution that outlines the parameters for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict before he leaves office.
Now tell me how you feel about the following possibilities:

President Obama’s support or sponsorship for a United Nations Resolution to end Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank before he leaves office.
President Obama’s support or sponsorship for a United Nations resolution to end Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank before he leaves office.

### Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly/Somewhat Oppose</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Oppose nor Support</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly/Somewhat Support</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>55</td>
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</tbody>
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**Nov. 2016**
President Obama’s support or sponsorship for a United Nations resolution to end Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank before he leaves office.

- **Strongly/Somewhat Oppose**: 23 (18-34), 34 (35-54), 41 (55+)
- **Neither Oppose nor Support**: 25 (18-34), 26 (35-54), 20 (55+)
- **Strongly/Somewhat Support**: 51 (18-34), 36 (35-54), 35 (55+)

Nov. 2016
Generally speaking, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements on the U.S.-Israeli relationship?

Israel is an important ally to the United States as it provides essential military and intelligence cooperation and plays a regional role that’s helpful to American interests.
Israel is an important ally to the United States as it provides essential military and intelligence cooperation and plays a regional role that’s helpful to American interests.
Israel is an important ally to the United States as it provides essential military and intelligence cooperation and plays a regional role that’s helpful to American interests.
Generally speaking, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements on the U.S.-Israeli relationship?

Israel is a burden to the U.S. as Israel’s actions in the region generate hostility toward the United States in Arab and Muslim-majority countries.
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<table>
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<th>18-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>55+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly/Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly/Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How much influence do you believe the Israeli government has on American politics and policies?
How much influence do you believe the Israeli government has on American politics and policies?

- Too little influence:
  - Republican: 22
  - Democrat: 15
  - Independent: 14
  - Total: 54

- Too much influence:
  - Republican: 22
  - Democrat: 39
  - Independent: 36
  - Total: 55

- About the right level of influence:
  - Republican: 44
  - Democrat: 44
  - Independent: 44
  - Total: 44

Survey conducted in November 2016.
How much influence do you believe the Israeli government has on American politics and policies?

**Nov. 2015**

**REP**
- Too little influence: 22
- Too much influence: 22
- About the right level of influence: 52

**DEM**
- Too little influence: 9
- Too much influence: 49
- About the right level of influence: 55

**IND**
- Too little influence: 14
- Too much influence: 35
- About the right level of influence: 42

**TOTAL**
- Too little influence: 15
- Too much influence: 37
- About the right level of influence: 44
How much influence do you believe the Israeli government has on American politics and policies?

- Too little influence:
  - 18-34: 15
  - 35-54: 16
  - 55+: 15

- Too much influence:
  - 18-34: 42
  - 35-54: 41
  - 55+: 35

- About the right level of influence:
  - 18-34: 41
  - 35-54: 41
  - 55+: 48

Nov. 2016
Please name a national or world leader you admire most
[Open-Ended Question]
Please name a national or world leader you admire most

- Ronald Reagan: 18
- Benjamin Netanyahu: 11
- Pope Francis: 5
- George W. Bush: 4
- Barack Obama: 50
- Angela Merkel: 5
- Justin Trudeau: 4
- Bernie Sanders: 3