

American Opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Submitted to:



Submitted by:
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Methodology and Sample Characteristics

Methodology

Zogby International conducted an interactive survey of 2,471 American adults between March 17th and March 19th, 2010. A sampling of Zogby International's online panel, which is representative of the adult population of the US, was invited to participate. Slight weights were added to region, party, age, race, religion, gender, education to more accurately reflect the population. The margin of error is +/- 2.0 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

Sample Characteristics	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Sample size	2,471	100
18-29	490	20
30-49	980	40
50-64	563	23
65+	417	17
Catholic	641	27
Protestant	1259	53
Jewish	48	2
Other/None	428	18
Born Again – Yes	587	47
Born Again – No	650	53
Male	1197	49
Female	1245	51
Liberal	638	27
Moderate	608	26
Conservative	1133	48
Democrat	940	38
Republican	765	31
Independent	692	28

* Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100.

**2009 data is from a Zogby/Doha Debates interactive survey of 4,340 adult Americans conducted between April 1st and April 4th 2006. That survey carried a margin of error of +/- 1.5%.

Executive Summary

This survey of 2,471 adult Americans covers four topics—(1) the overall view of Israel and Palestine, (2) opinions on importance and impact of the conflict, (3) the issue of settlement construction in the West Bank and (4) the relationship between the U.S. and Israel.

- Despite some decline, Israel retains significantly greater support than the Palestinians in U.S. public opinion
- A substantial majority of American believe that the continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict negatively impacts U.S. interests in the Middle East
- A plurality of Americans oppose Israeli settlement construction, and say the U.S. should get tough to stop them because failure to do so makes the U.S. less respected in the world
- There is a deepening partisan divide on all questions related to the Middle East, with Democrats holding strong negative views toward Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and his policies

Attitudes Toward Israelis and Netanyahu

Opinion of . . .

	Israelis		Prime Minister Netanyahu	
	2010	2009	2010	2009
Favorable	65	71	49	53
Unfavorable	29	21	30	38
NF/NS	6	8	13	17

**Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding*

- Though experiencing a slight decline in the past year, Israelis retain a strong net favorable rating. For the first time, Democrats have an unfavorable rating of Israelis.

Opinion of . . .

2010	Israelis		Prime Minister Netanyahu	
	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP
Favorable	42	92	20	84
Unfavorable	49	7	63	9
NF/NS	9	2	17	7

- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu similarly has experienced a decline in his rating, but retains an overall net favorable score. By three to one, however, Democrats have an unfavorable view of the Prime Minister.

Attitudes Toward Palestinians and Abbas

Opinion of . . .

	Palestinians		President Abbas	
	2010	2009	2010	2009
Favorable	21	25	14	19
Unfavorable	73	66	67	59
NF/NS	7	9	20	22

- Both the Palestinians and their President also experienced a decline in favorable ratings and their overall ratings are extremely poor—evidence of their continuing failure to successfully make their case to the U.S. public.

Opinion of . . .

2010	Palestinians		President Abbas	
	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP
Favorable	35	6	19	8
Unfavorable	56	92	57	79
NF/NS	9	3	25	12

Attitudes Toward the Importance and Impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Importance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

2010	Overall	DEM	IND	GOP
Important	84	90	79	80
Not Important	13	7	16	18
Not Sure	3	3	2	2

- There is a strong belief that resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is important and that the continuation of the conflict has a negative impact on U.S. interests in the Middle East—with strong bi-partisan consensus on both.

Israeli-Palestinian conflict has a negative impact on U.S. interests

2010	Overall	DEM	IND	GOP
Agree	81	88	77	77
Disagree	15	8	20	19
Not Sure	4	5	3	4

Attitudes Toward Israeli Settlements and U.S. Opposition to Settlements

A plurality or slight majority believe:

- That Israel’s settlement construction in the Occupied Territories is wrong; and
- That it’s time for the U.S. to “get tough” with Israel “to stop building settlements”; and
- That the U.S.’ “inability to prevent Israel’s settlement expansion makes the U.S. less respected in the world.”

But, on these three questions there is a deep partisan divide.

Settlements: “The Israeli government and Israeli citizens have built settlements or outposts in the Palestinian West Bank.

Statement A: The settlements are necessary for the security of Israel and Israeli citizens have the right to build on land in the Palestinian West Bank.

Statement B: Israeli settlements are built on land confiscated from Palestinians and should be torn down and the land returned to Palestinian owners.”

2010	Overall	DEM	IND	GOP
Statement A	34	14	34	62
Statement B	40	63	41	13
Neither/Not Sure	26	24	26	25

U.S. Policy Toward Settlements

2010	Overall	DEM	IND	GOP
Get tough with Israel and attempt to stop expansion	40	63	40	13
Do nothing and allow the Settlements to continue to expand	26	11	27	46
None of the above	23	13	25	30
Not Sure	11	12	9	11

Inability to stop Israeli settlements makes the US:

2010	Overall	DEM	IND	GOP
More respected	5	3	5	7
Less respected	51	62	53	34
No Impact	29	20	28	41
Not Sure	15	15	14	17

The Deepening Partisan Divide

On every other question covered in this survey the public displays what appears to be ambivalent attitudes, but this masks a deepening partisan divide. For example:

Status of Jerusalem: “Currently the status of Jerusalem is disputed with both sides claiming the city as their capital. The city has strong religious significance for Christians, Jews and Muslims.

Statement A: The city of Jerusalem should be partitioned with one part of the city as the Israeli capital and one part as the Palestinian capital. Division should be based both on the local population and the location of and access to holy sites.

Statement B: The city of Jerusalem should remain under the control of the Israeli government with the Israeli government controlling access to the city. Palestinians currently living in the area of East Jerusalem would be allowed to remain in the city but their access to holy sites would be controlled by Israelis.”

2010	Overall	DEM	IND	GOP
Statement A	33	50	32	16
Statement B	35	13	34	61
Neither/Not Sure	25	25	34	15

2010	18-29	African-Americans	Conservatives	Born Again Christians
Statement A	45	33	14	20
Statement B	25	26	59	54
Neither/Not Sure	29	34	27	26

How Should Obama Conduct Middle East Peace

2010	Overall	DEM	IND	GOP
Lean toward Israel	38	11	39	71
Lean toward the Palestinians	6	9	8	1
Steer a middle course	50	73	50	24
Not Sure	6	7	4	4

How Should Obama Conduct Middle East Peace

2010	18-29	African-Americans	Conservatives	Born Again Christians
Lean toward Israel	28	24	68	59
Lean toward the Palestinians	7	13	1	2
Steer a middle course	58	58	26	33
Not Sure	7	5	5	7