

**American Public Attitudes Toward The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

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**A survey Sponsored by the Sadat Chair for Peace and Development  
at the University of Maryland  
In Cooperation with the Program for Public Consultation**

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The Brookings Institution  
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**Steven Kull, Evan Lewis, Clay Ramsay, and Katayoun Kishi provided assistance. Peyton Craighill provided helpful comments.**

**This probabilistic Internet survey was fielded by GFK among a nationally representative sample of 1008 Americans, November 14-19, 2014.**

## **Survey Methodology**

The sample was drawn from a larger standing panel called the KnowledgePanel that is managed by the research company GfK. Though these surveys take place online, this panel is not derived from an “opt-in” by which any online user can volunteer a respondent. Instead, panelists are recruited through a scientific process of selection using two methods: a random selection of residential addresses using the United States Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or by mail to participate in GfK’s KnowledgePanel. Those who agree to participate but who do not have Internet access are provided a laptop computer and Internet service. A representative sample is then chosen for a specific survey. Once that sample completes a survey, the demographic breakdown of the sample is compared to the US census. Any variations from the census are adjusted by weighting.

The study was fielded over November 14-November 19, 2014 with a sample of 1008 American adults. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1%; with the design effect also taken into account, the margin of error is plus or minus 3.4%. Findings were weighted to census data.

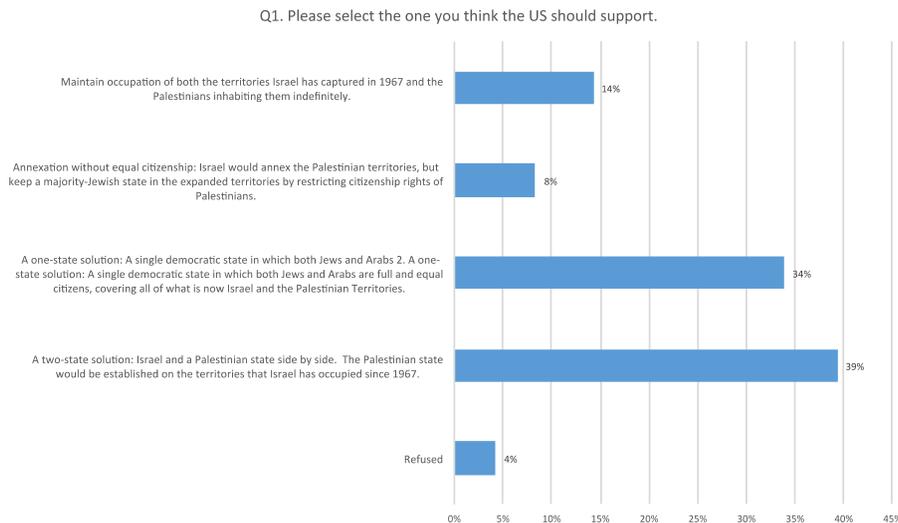
## Key Findings

**This report is divided into two sections: “Issues” and “Issue Importance.” The first section reviews some of the findings on key issues facing American foreign policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The second section identifies segments of the American public who care the most about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and probes their positions on key policy issues, with the assumption that issue-ranking matters most for policy-making; the more people care about an issue, the more their voices are heard by policy-makers.**

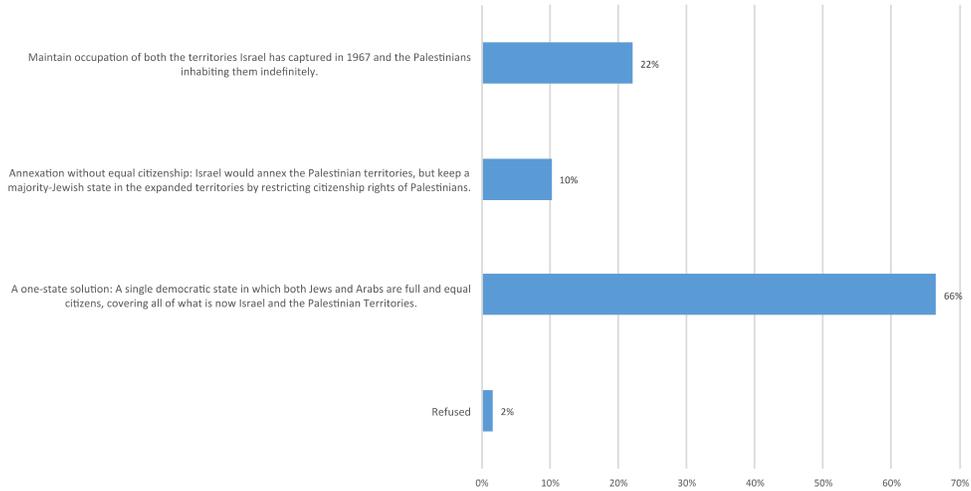
## Issues

### *Two states, One State, Annexation, Status Quo*

The percentage of Americans who want the US government to push for a two-state solution remains constant at 39% from last year; but the percentage of those who want the US to push for one state with equal citizenship has increased from 24% to 34%. Among those who support two states, two-thirds would support one state if two states are not possible.

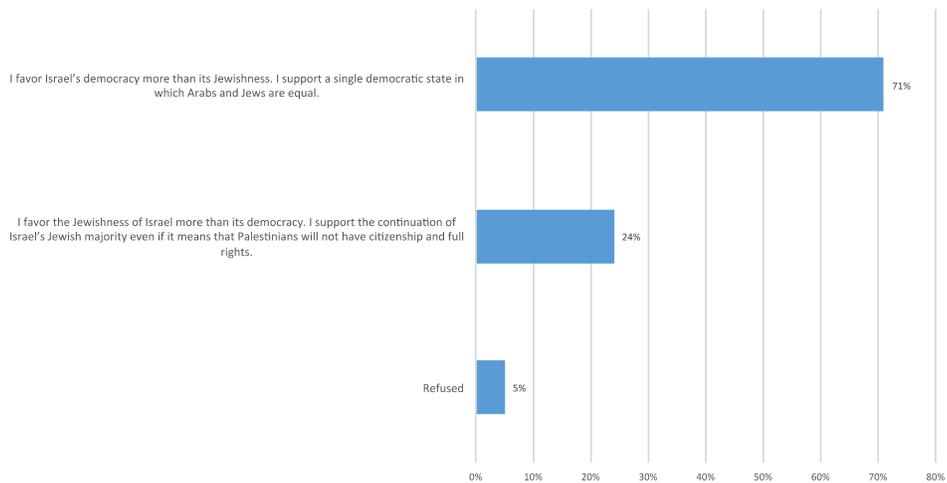


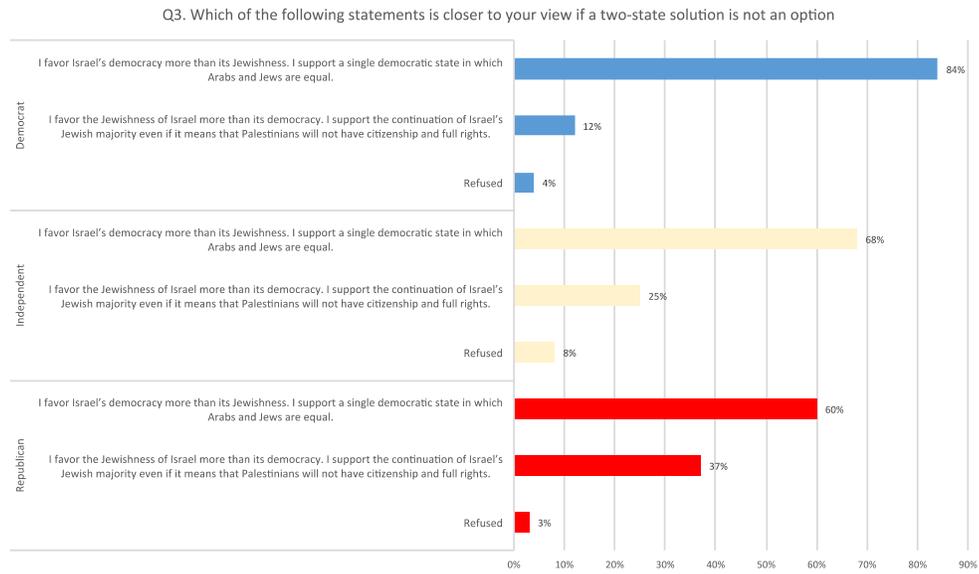
Q2. If the approach you selected turns out over time to be impossible, which of the remaining three would you prefer?



If a two-state solution is not possible, 71% of Americans (84% of Democrats, 60% of Republicans) favor a single democratic state with Arabs and Jews as equal over a one in which Israel's Jewish majority is sustained and Palestinians will not have equal citizenship.

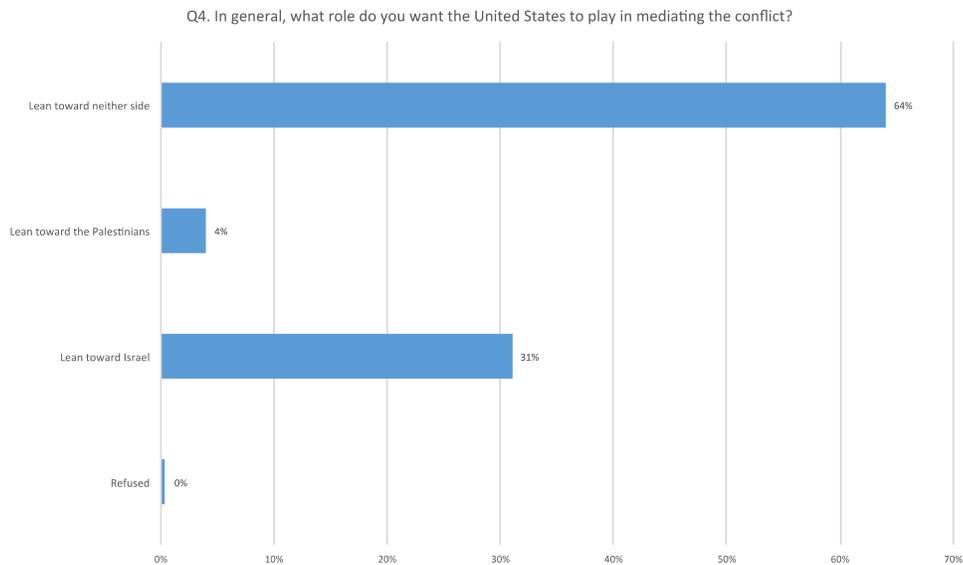
Q3. Which of the following statements is closer to your view if a two-state solution is not an option

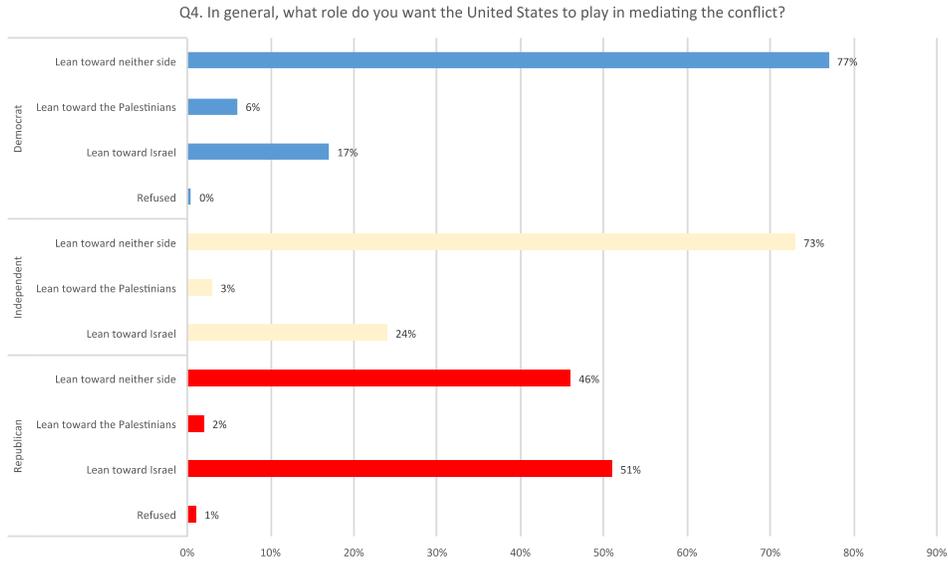




### *Should the US Lean Toward One Side?*

Sixty-four percent of Americans want the US to not lean toward Israel nor the Palestinians, 31% want it to lean toward Israel, and 4% toward Palestinians. But there is a dramatic difference between Republicans and Democrats: Among Democrats, 77% say neither side, 17% say Israel, and 6% say Palestinians; Among Republicans, 51% say Israel, 46% say neither, and 2% say Palestinians.

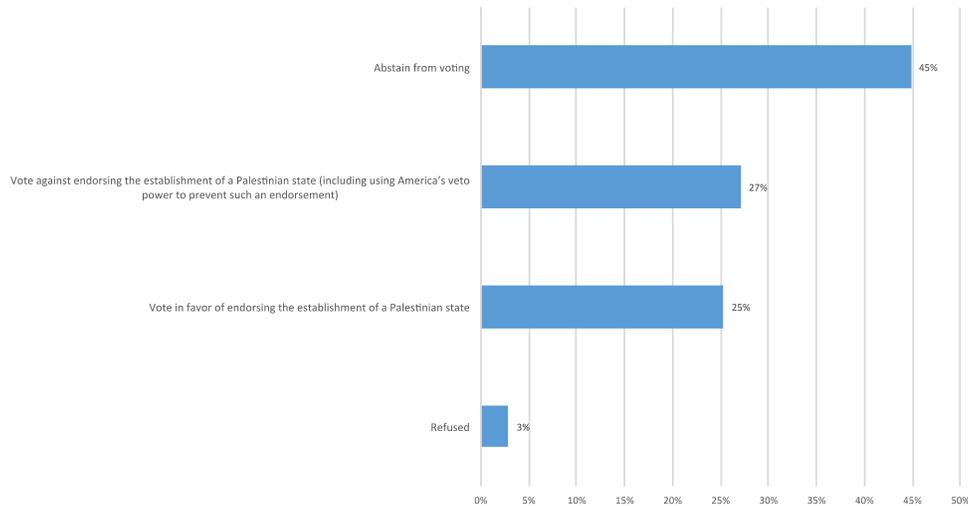




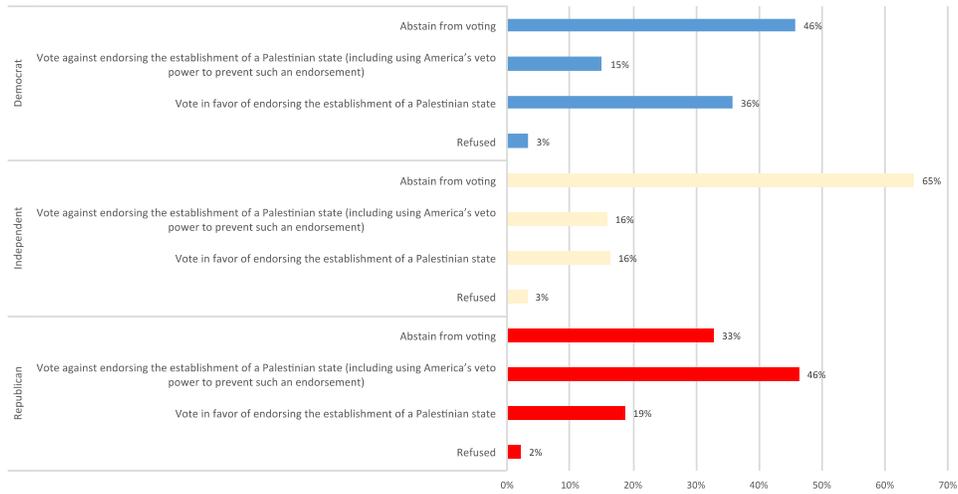
*Degree of Support for UN Resolution on Palestinian Statehood*

If Palestinians ask for UN endorsement of a Palestinian state, only 27% of Americans want the US to oppose it, 45% recommend abstaining, and 25% want the US to vote in favor. Only 15% of Democrats recommend opposing, 36% recommend supporting, and 46% recommend abstaining, while 46% of Republicans recommend opposing, 19% recommend supporting, and 33% recommend abstaining.

Q16. If the Palestinians proceed with their plan, what do you think the US should do as a member of the UN Security Council?



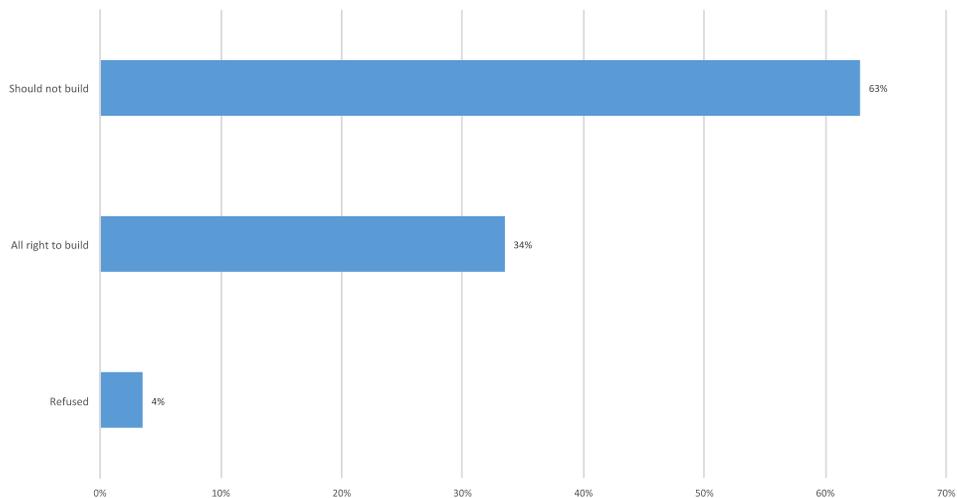
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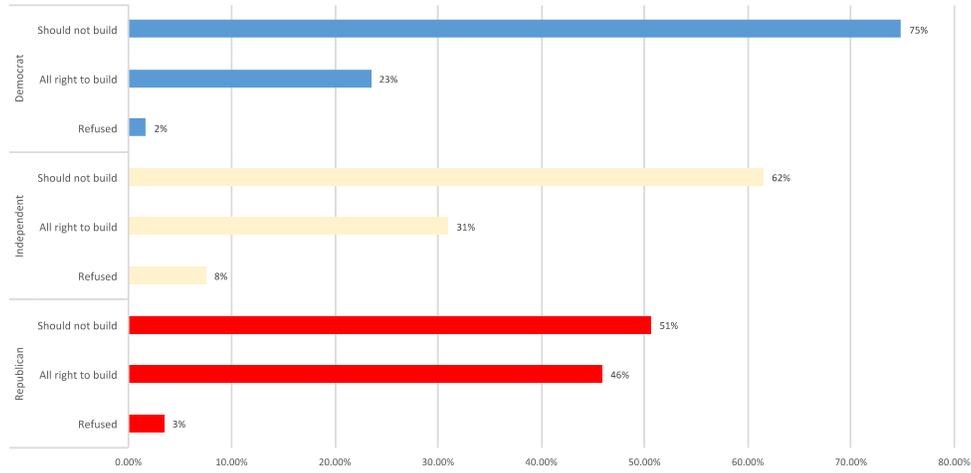
### *Israeli Settlements*

Sixty-three percent of Americans oppose Israeli settlement building, while 34% support it. However, there is a significant difference among Democrats, Republicans, and Independents: 75% of Democrats oppose, compared to 62% of Independents, and 51% of Republicans.

Q18. Do you think it is all right for Israel to build settlements in these territories, or do you think they should not?

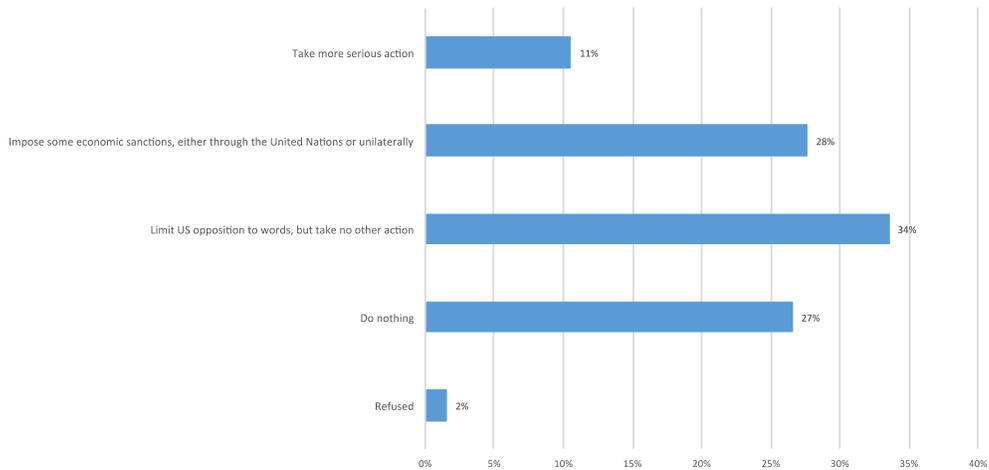


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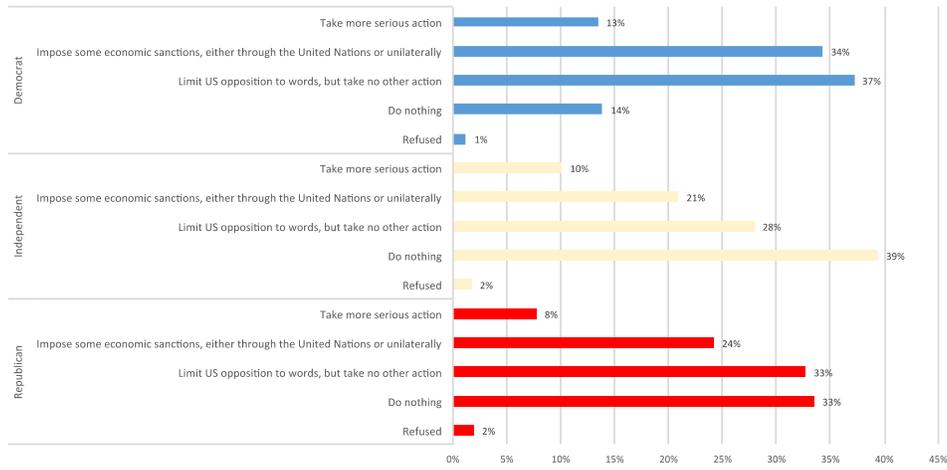


Despite American public opposition to settlements, most do not support imposing sanctions or doing something harsher than making statements. Overall, 61% say do nothing or limit opposition to statements, while 39% support imposing sanctions or other measures.

Q17. 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 US should react to new settlements?



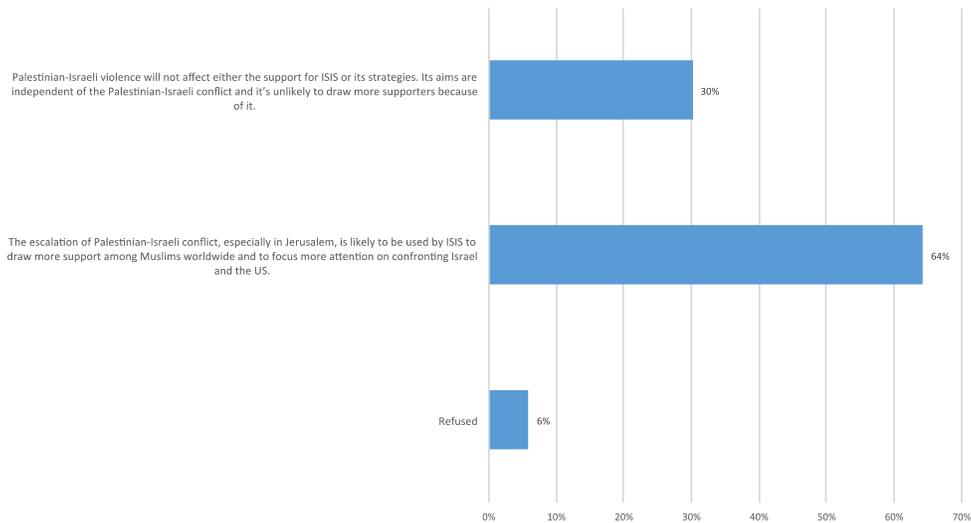
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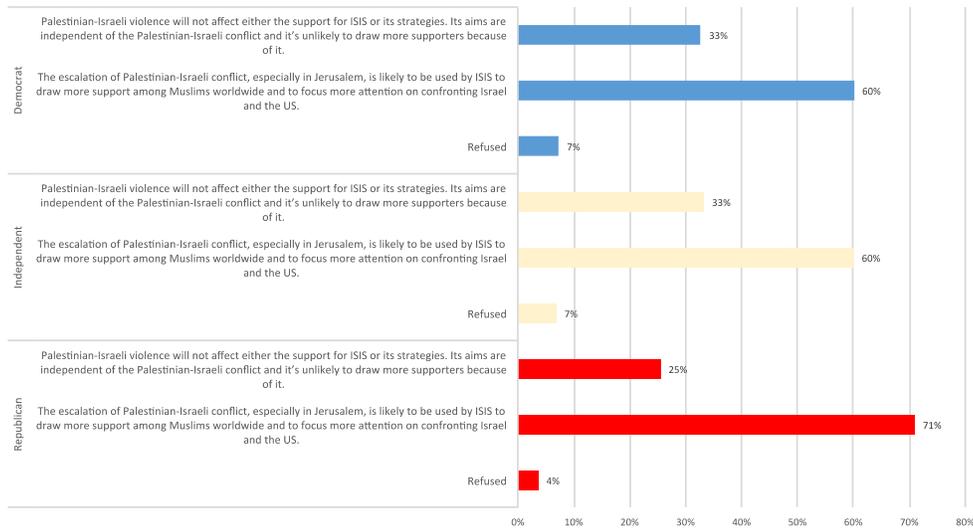
*Palestinian-Israeli Violence and Support for ISIS*

Sixty-four percent of Americans say violence in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict will likely increase support for ISIS and focus more attention toward confronting Israel and the US; 30% think it would make no difference.

Q19. Which one of the following statements is closest to your view?



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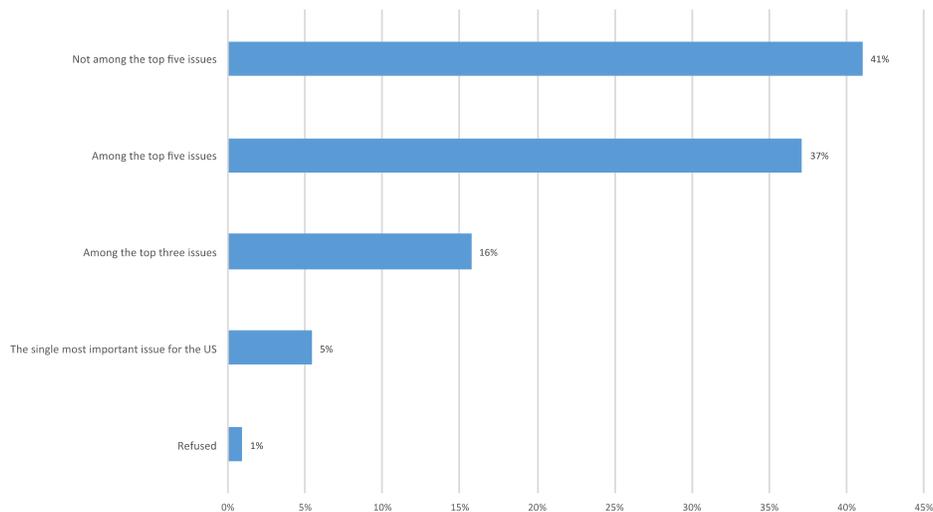


## Issue Importance

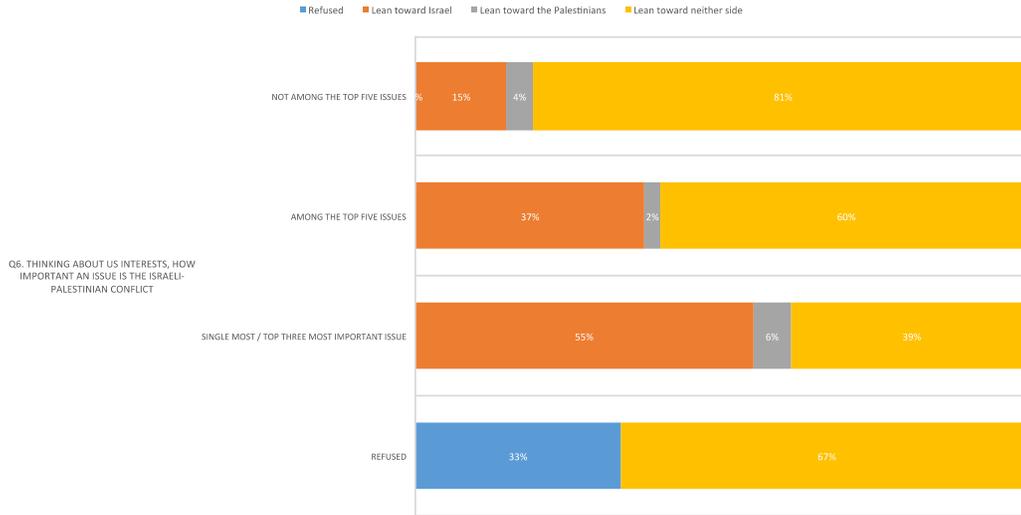
### *Priority of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*

Nearly six in ten Americans rank the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as one of the top five issues for US national interests, while one in five rate it as one of the top three issues or the top issue. Overall, Republicans rank Israeli-Palestinian conflict higher in their priorities than Democrats and Independents

Q6. Thinking about US interests, how important an issue is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict



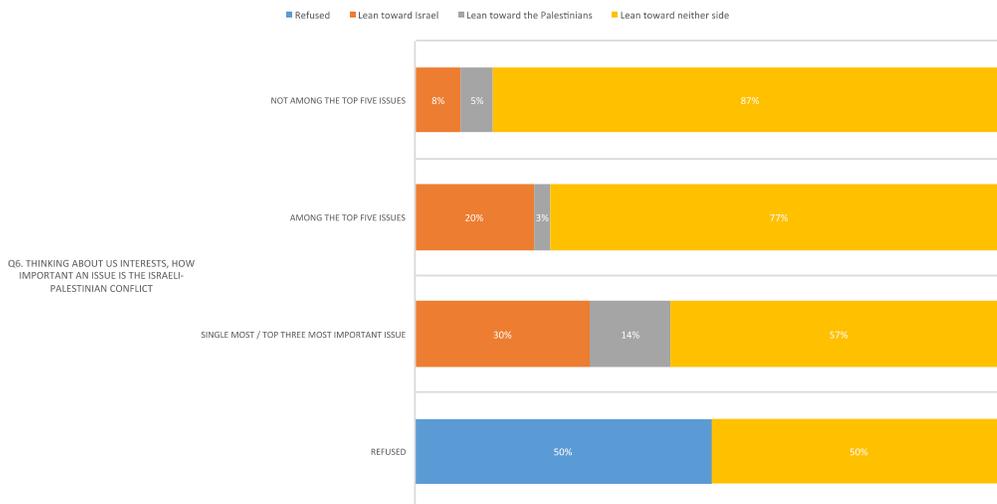
Q4. IN GENERAL, WHAT ROLE DO YOU WANT THE UNITED STATES TO PLAY IN MEDIATING THE CONFLICT?



Among those who rank this issue as being among the top three issues, a majority (55%) want the US to lean toward Israel—much more than among those who rank it among the top five issues (37%) or who don't rank it among the top five issues (15%). However, this varies dramatically by party. Among Democrats who rank the issue among the top three for the US, the majority (57%) want the US to lean toward neither side, while 30% favor leaning toward Israel, and 14% toward the Palestinians.

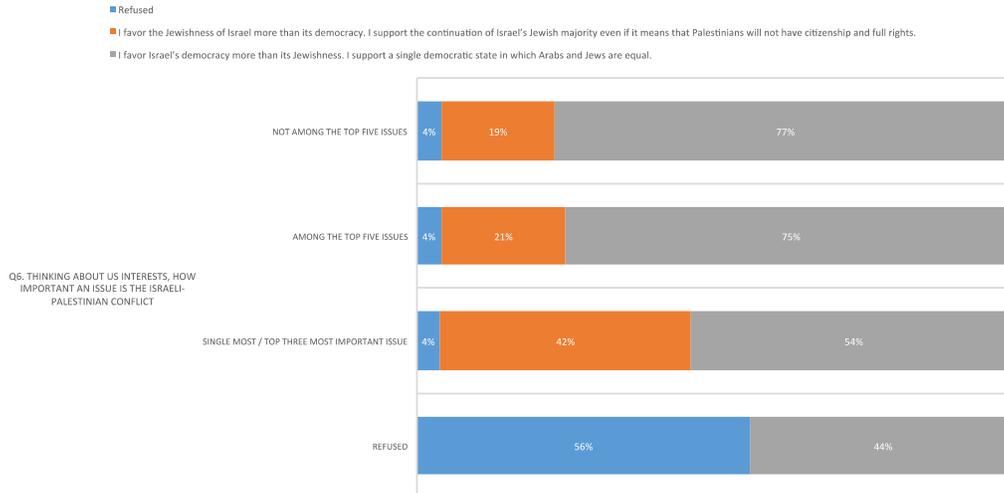
DEMOCRATS

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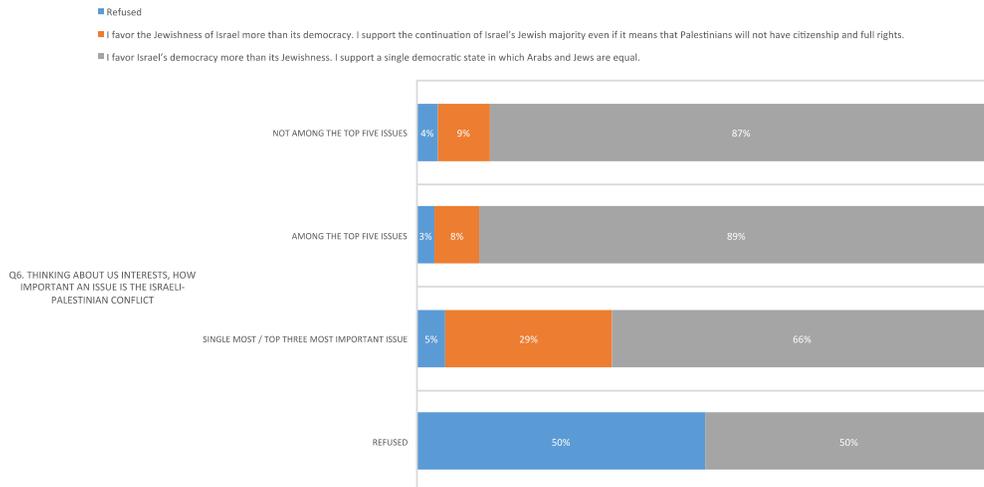
Those who rate the Israeli-Palestinian issue as their highest or one of their three most important issues still favor Israel's Democracy over Jewishness but by a smaller ratio of 54% to 42%. There is a significant party divide on this issue: Among Republicans who make the conflict such a high priority, 54% put more emphasis on Israel's Jewishness as compared to one in three Democrats.

**Q3. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS IS CLOSER TO YOUR VIEW IF A TWO-STATE SOLUTION IS NOT AN OPTION**

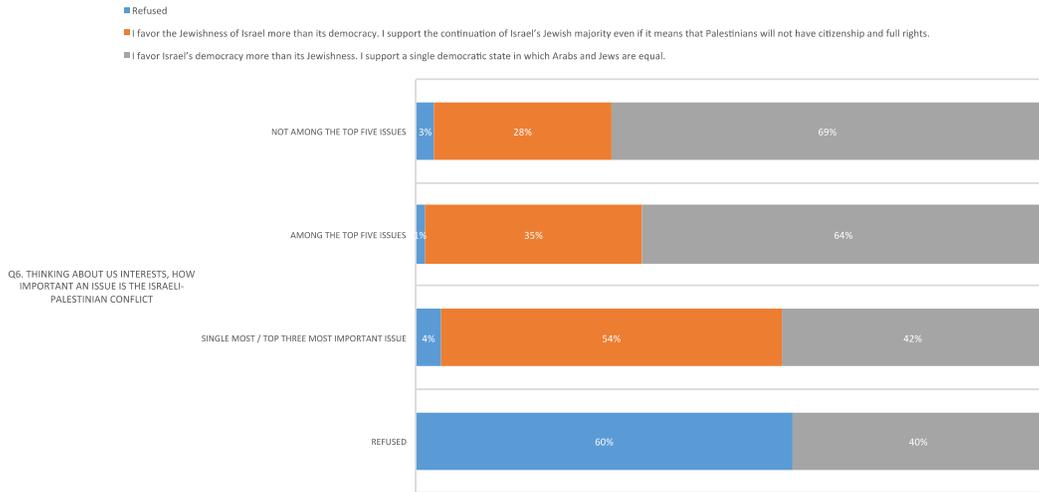


**DEMOCRATS**

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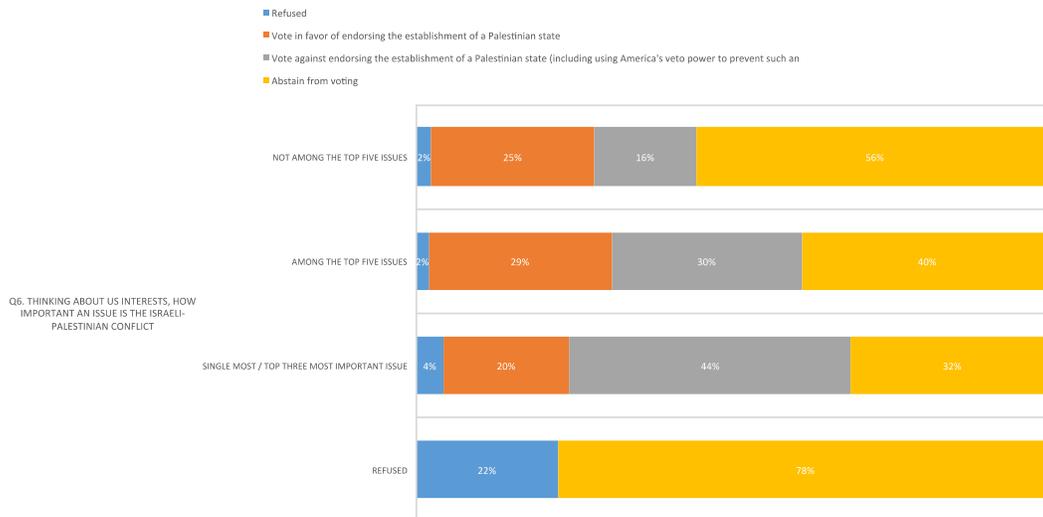


**REPUBLICANS**  
**Q3. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS IS CLOSER TO YOUR VIEW IF A TWO-STATE SOLUTION IS NOT AN OPTION**



Among those who prioritize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, support is higher for vetoing a UN resolution endorsing Palestinian statehood (44%), though a majority (52%) wants the US to either support such a resolution or to abstain. But party differences are significant.

**Q16. IF THE PALESTINIANS PROCEED WITH THEIR PLAN, WHAT DO YOU THINK THE US SHOULD DO AS A MEMBER OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL?**



**DEMOCRATS**

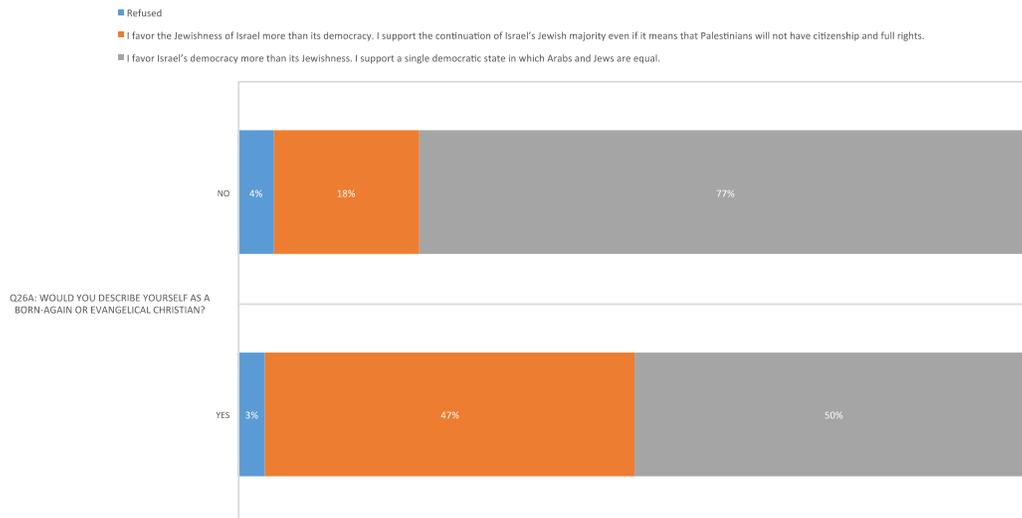
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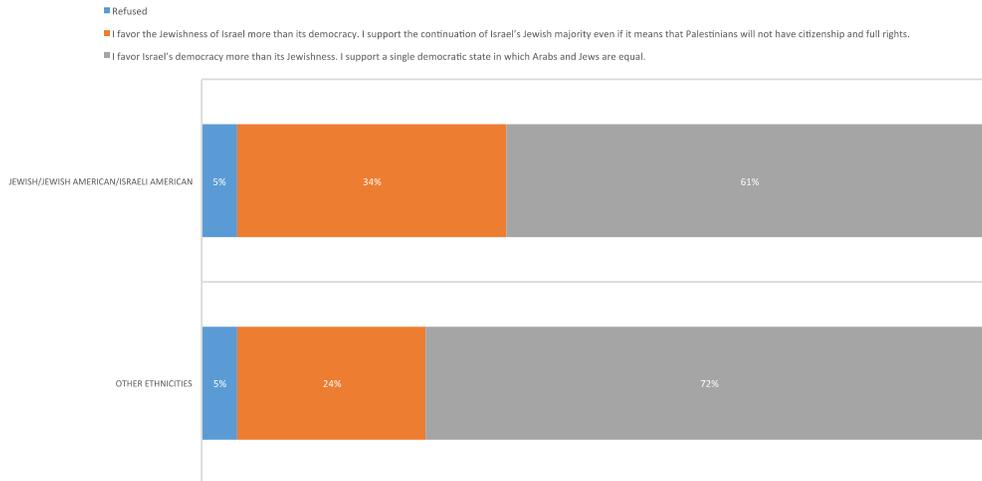
*Jewish Americans and Evangelicals/Born Again Christians*

While most Americans emphasize Israel’s democracy over its Jewishness, among Evangelicals views are divided. Among the limited sample of Jewish Americans (close to 5% of the total sample), a majority emphasizes Israel’s democracy over its Jewishness.

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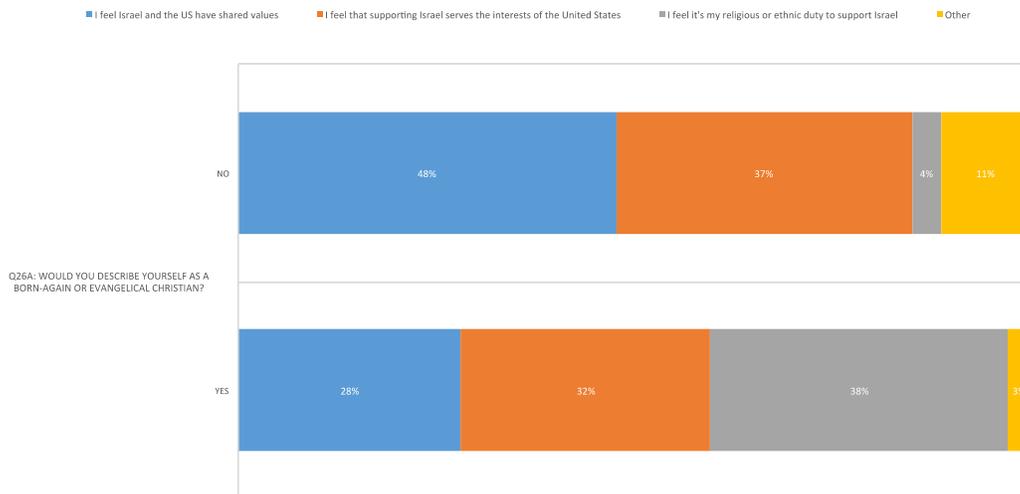


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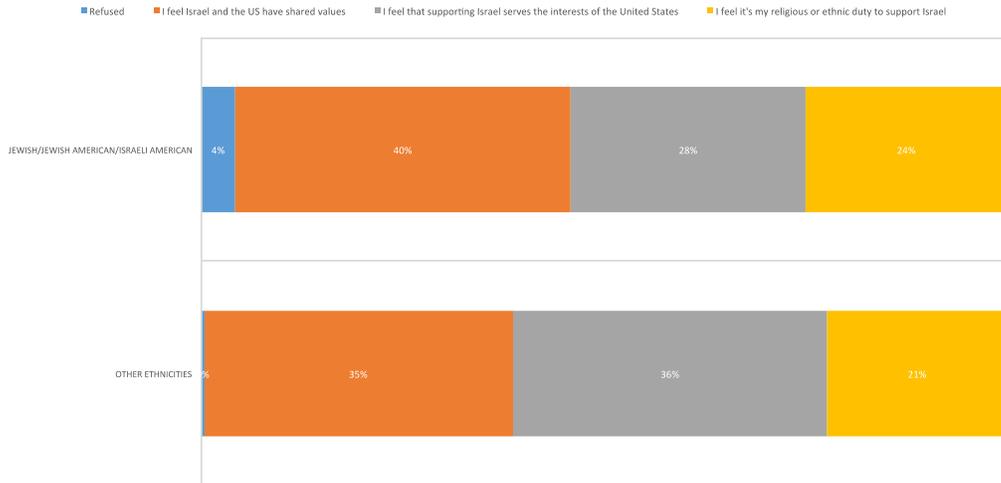


These differences may be explained by differing reasoning among those who want the US to lean toward Israel: 38% of Evangelicals who want the US to lean toward Israel say their reason is religious/ethnic duty (compared with 28% for shared values and 32% for serving US interests). Among Jewish Americans who want the US to lean toward Israel, only 24% say they feel ethnic/religious duty.

**Q5. WHEN YOU SAY YOU WANT THE US TO LEAN TOWARD ISRAEL, WHICH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS IS CLOSEST TO YOUR VIEW?**

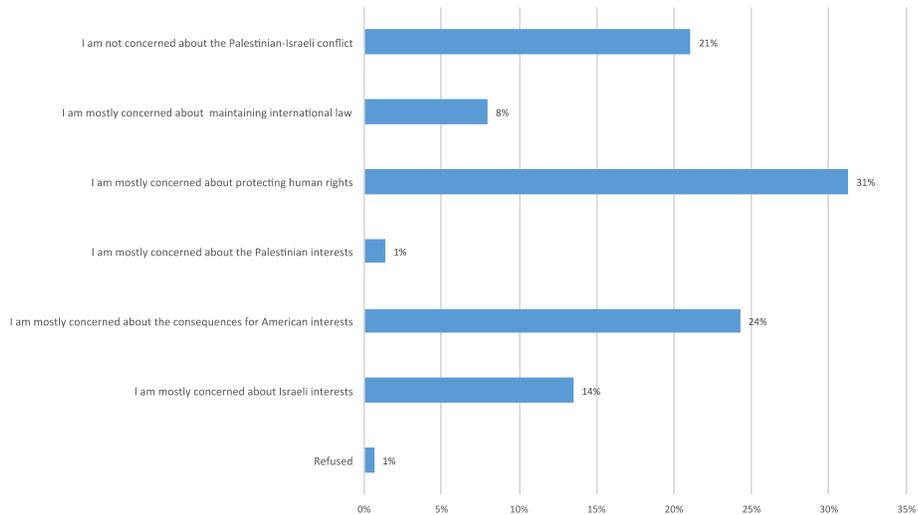


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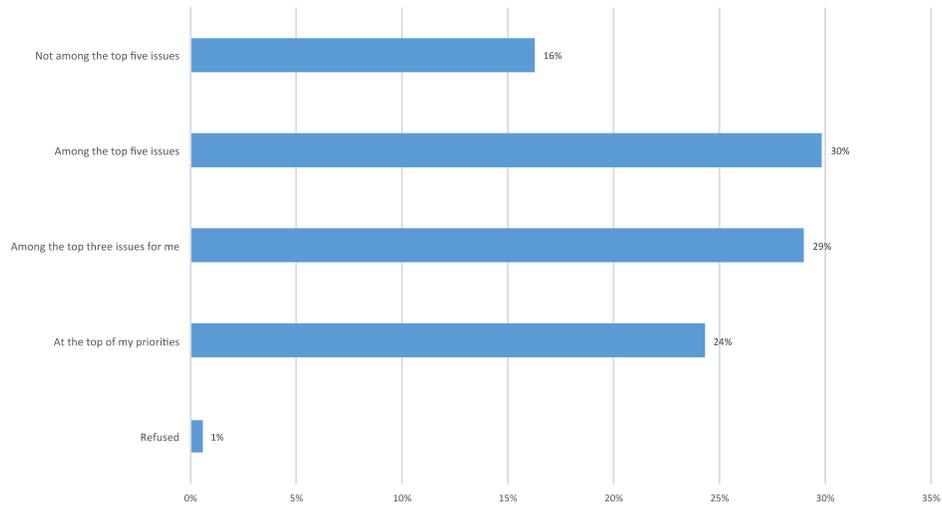
*Human Rights is the Most Common Prism Through Which Americans View Conflict*  
 Asked what their highest concern is in the Arab-Israeli issue the highest number, 31%, say human rights, while 24% say they are most concerned about US interests, while 14% say they are most concerned about Israeli interests.

**Q8. When it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would you say**

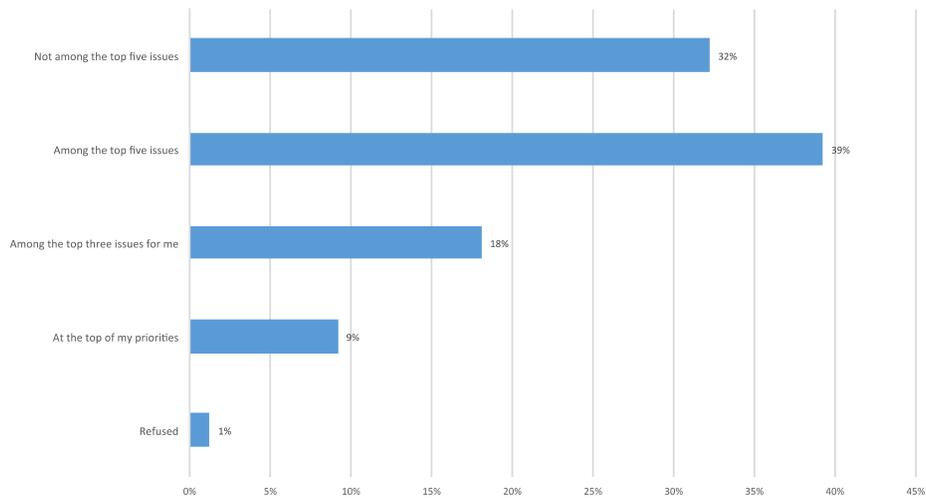


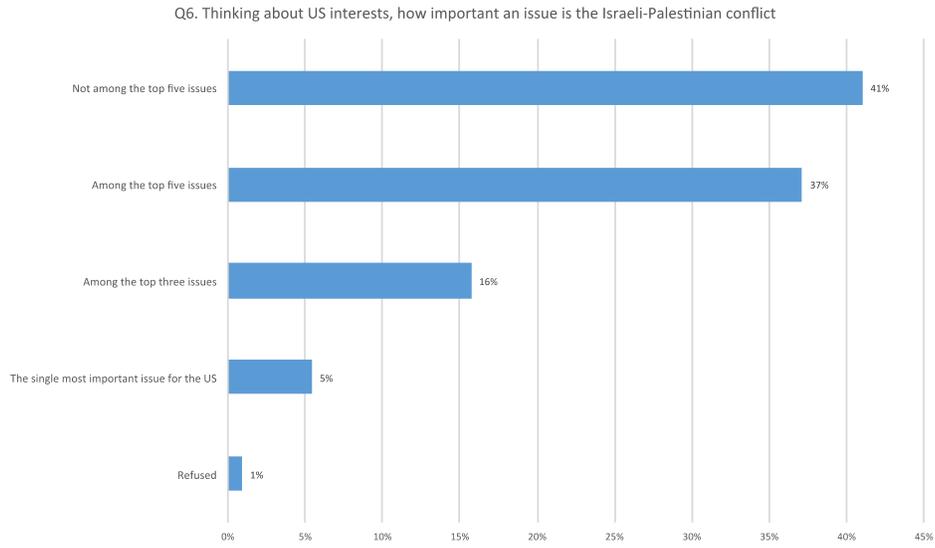
Americans rate human rights very high in terms of their priorities for US foreign policy. Fifty three percent say that human rights is the single most or one of the three most important issues as compared with 27% for international law and 21% for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Q9a. When you think about your priorities for American foreign policy, how important is protecting human rights?



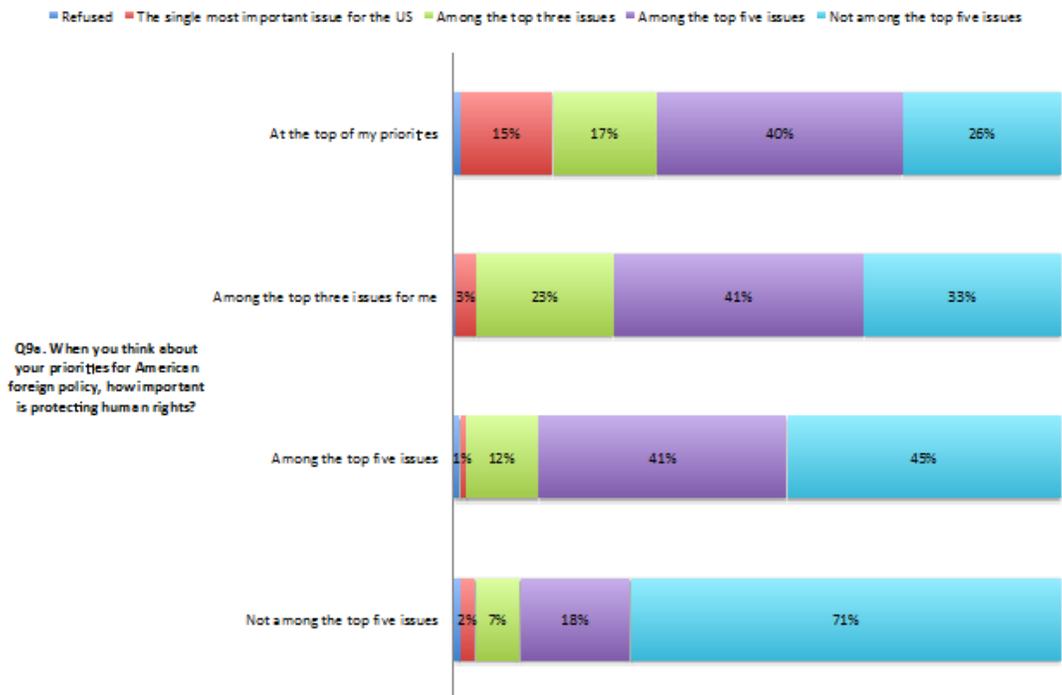
Q9. When you think about your priorities for American foreign policy, how important is maintaining international law?





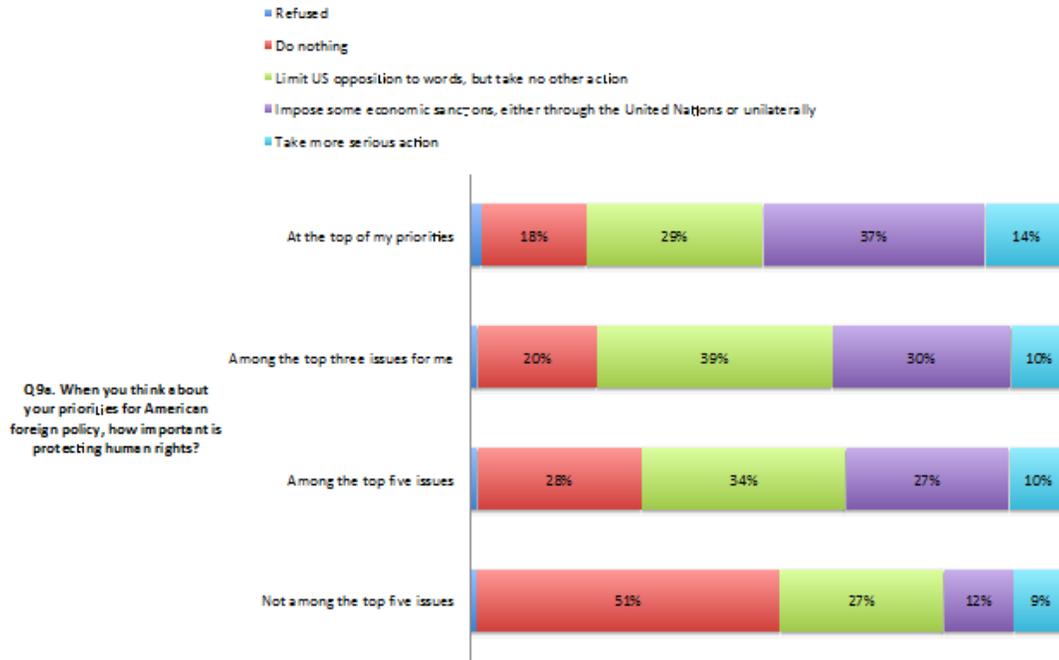
Those who rank human rights as a high priority tend to also rank the Palestinian-Israeli conflict higher in their priorities than those who do not prioritize human rights.

## Q6. Thinking about US interests, how important an issue is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict



Americans who rank human rights higher in their priorities tend to be more prepared to recommend sanctions or tougher action against Israeli settlements than the rest of the population and tend to be more favorable to the US voting in favor of a UN resolution endorsing a Palestinian state.

**Q17. 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 US should react to new settlements?**



They also tend to be more favorable toward a US vote supporting a UN resolution endorsing a Palestinian state.

**Q16. If the Palestinians proceed with their plan, what do you think the US should do as a member of the UN Security Council?**

- Refused
- 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

