What Americans (especially Evangelicals) Think About Israel and the Middle East

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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

fielded by Nielsen Scarborough

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This probabilistic online panel survey was fielded by Nielsen Scarborough among a nationally representative sample. 1738 panelists completed the survey including a national sample of 875 adults, plus an oversample of 863 self-identified Evangelical or Born-again Christians, making for a total sample of Evangelicals/Born-again Christians of 1074. November 4-10, 2015.
Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted November 4 to 10, 2015, 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 total of 1738 panelists completed the survey including a national sample of 875 adults, plus an oversample of 863 self-identified Evangelical or Born-again Christians, making for a total sample of Evangelicals/born-again Christians of 1074. 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 and Evangelical and Born-again Christians were down-weighted consistent with these groups’ incidence rate in Nielsen Scarborough sample, so that they represented 24 percent of the national sample for this study (211 of 875).

The margins of error (MoE) for the national sample and for each subgroup is:

• National – 875 respondents, MoE: 3.3 percent
• Evangelical – 586, MoE: 4 percent
• Born-Again – 1003, MoE: 3.1 percent (88 percent of Evangelicals also identified as Born-again)
• Born-again, but not Evangelical – 488, MoE: 4.4 percent
• Born Again or Evangelical – 1074, MoE: 3 percent
Attitudes Toward Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>Benjamin Netanyahu</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ronald Reagan</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pope Francis</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vladimir Putin</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bernie Sanders</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vladimir Putin</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benjamin Netanyahu</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bill Clinton</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pope Francis</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ronald Reagan</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benjamin Netanyahu</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ronald Reagan</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pope Francis</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Benjamin Netanyahu</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ronald Reagan</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pope Francis</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q10: Please name a national or world leader you admire most:
Q10: Please name a national or world leader you admire most [among Evangelicals]:

- Benjamin Netanyahu: 16%
- Ronald Reagan: 11%
- Barack Obama: 11%
- Pope Francis: 4%
- Vladimir Putin: 4%
Q11A: I would like you to give your opinion of the following three leaders on a scale 0-10 [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Republican</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither unfavorable nor favorable</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither unfavorable nor favorable</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Democrat</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither unfavorable nor favorable</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither unfavorable nor favorable</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q32: Do you believe the Israeli government has:

- Too little influence in American politics and policies
- Too much influence
- About the right level of influence
- Refused

For Republicans:
- Too little influence: 22%
- Too much influence: 25%
- About the right level of influence: 52%
- Refused: 1%

For Independents:
- Too little influence: 17%
- Too much influence: 35%
- About the right level of influence: 42%
- Refused: 6%

For Democrats:
- Too little influence: 14%
- Too much influence: 49%
- About the right level of influence: 36%
- Refused: 2%

Total:
- Too little influence: 18%
- Too much influence: 37%
- About the right level of influence: 44%
- Refused: 2%
Q36: How concerned are you about events in Israel and the Palestinian Territory?
Q36A: Are your concerns mostly related to:

- Israel's interest
- America's interest
- Palestinians' interests
- Human rights or international law
- Your religious beliefs
- Refused

**Republican**
- Israel's interest: 11%
- America's interest: 38%
- Palestinians' interests: 1%
- Human rights or international law: 33%
- Your religious beliefs: 17%
- Refused: 1%

**Independent**
- Israel's interest: 1%
- America's interest: 25%
- Palestinians' interests: 2%
- Human rights or international law: 56%
- Your religious beliefs: 14%
- Refused: 3%

**Democrat**
- Israel's interest: 6%
- America's interest: 28%
- Palestinians' interests: 1%
- Human rights or international law: 57%
- Your religious beliefs: 8%
- Refused: 0%

**Total**
- Israel's interest: 7%
- America's interest: 32%
- Palestinians' interests: 1%
- Human rights or international law: 47%
- Your religious beliefs: 13%
- Refused: 1%
Q47: Which one of these factors do you believe is most responsible for the current escalation in violence between Israelis and Palestinians?
Q37: As you may know, the United States has been acting as a mediator between the Israeli government... Here are four possible options that are frequently discussed. Please select the one you think the US should support.
Q38: If the approach you selected turns out over time to be impossible, which of the remaining three would you prefer? [Asked if responded with “two-state solution” in previous question]
Q39: Which of the following statements is closer to your view if a two-state solution is not an option:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I favor the Jewishness of Israel more than its democracy</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I favor Israel's democracy more than its Jewishness</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2014 vs 2015
Q40: In general, what role do you want the United States to play in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Should the United States:

- 

Republican

- Lean toward Israel: 45%
- Lean toward the Palestinians: 2%
- Lean toward neither side: 46%
- Refused: 1%

Independent

- Lean toward Israel: 24%
- Lean toward the Palestinians: 13%
- Lean toward neither side: 3%
- Refused: 4%

Democrat

- Lean toward Israel: 17%
- Lean toward the Palestinians: 4%
- Lean toward neither side: 6%
- Refused: 1%

Total

- Lean toward Israel: 31%
- Lean toward the Palestinians: 4%
- Lean toward neither side: 3%
- Refused: 1%
Q41: When you say you want the US to lean toward Israel, which one of the following is the most important reason? [asked only among those who want the US to learn toward Israel]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel Israel and the US have shared values</td>
<td>30% (2014)</td>
<td>33% (2014)</td>
<td>54% (2014)</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that supporting Israel serves the interests of the United States</td>
<td>38% (2015)</td>
<td>37% (2015)</td>
<td>53% (2015)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel it's my religious or ethnic duty to support Israel</td>
<td>27% (2014)</td>
<td>27% (2015)</td>
<td>35% (2015)</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5% (2014)</td>
<td>13% (2015)</td>
<td>9% (2015)</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The percentages are calculated based on the responses within each party category and then summed up for the total.
Q42: As you may know, there have been suggestions that the UN Security Council should endorse the... If the UN Security Council considers such a plan, what do you think the US should do as a member of the UN Security Council?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Vote in favor of endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state</th>
<th>Vote against endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state</th>
<th>Abstain from voting</th>
<th>Refused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The graph shows the percentage of votes for each option (in favor, against, abstain, refused) by party for the years 2014 and 2015.
Q43: 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... How do you believe the US should react to new settlements?
American Politics and the Middle East
Q2A: When you are deciding which candidate to vote for in Congress or for President, how much do you consider the candidate’s position on US policy toward Israel?
Q2A: When you are deciding which candidate to vote for in Congress or for President, how much do you consider the candidate’s position on US policy toward Israel?

Evangelicals
- A lot: 55%
- Some: 27%
- Just a little: 12%
- Not at all: 6%
- Refused: 0%

Non-Evangelical Christians
- A lot: 24%
- Some: 37%
- Just a little: 18%
- Not at all: 21%
- Refused: 0%
Q5: If elections were held today, for whom would you vote among current Presidential candidates?

**Republican**
- Donald Trump: 28%
- Ben Carson: 26%
- Marco Rubio: 14%
- Jeb Bush: 4%
- Ted Cruz: 4%
- Ben Carson: 10%
- Bernie Sanders: 12%
- Donald Trump: 12%
- Hillary Clinton: 8%
- Jeb Bush: 3%

**Independent**
- Ben Carson: 10%
- Bernie Sanders: 12%
- Donald Trump: 12%
- Hillary Clinton: 8%
- Jeb Bush: 3%

**Democrat**
- Hillary Clinton: 50%
- Bernie Sanders: 22%
- Donald Trump: 4%
- Ben Carson: 1%
- John Kasich: 1%

**Total**
- Hillary Clinton: 24%
- Bernie Sanders: 12%
- Donald Trump: 15%
- Ben Carson: 2%
- Marco Rubio: 6%
Q5: If elections were held today, for whom would you vote among current Presidential candidates?
[among respondents who said “a lot” when asked “how much do you consider the candidate’s position on US policy toward Israel” in Q2A]
Q5: If elections were held today, for whom would you vote among current Presidential candidates? [Among those who say US should lean toward Israel in Q40]
Q5: If elections were held today, for whom would you vote among current Presidential candidates? (Evangelical Christians)

- **Republican**
  - Ben Carson: 35%
  - Ted Cruz: 6%
  - Donald Trump: 27%
  - Marco Rubio: 5%
  - Hillary Clinton: 14%

- **Independent**
  - Marco Rubio: 14%
  - Donald Trump: 14%
  - None: 43%

- **Democrat**
  - Bernie Sanders: 10%
  - Ben Carson: 5%
  - None: 5%

- **Total**
  - Ben Carson: 28%
  - Hillary Clinton: 11%
  - Donald Trump: 21%
  - Ted Cruz: 5%
  - Marco Rubio: 5%

None: 25
Religion and the Middle East
The rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq
The instability in Libya
Iranian behavior in general
The violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
Refused

Q44: Of the challenges facing the United States in the Middle East, which of the following do you believe threatens American interests the most?
Q33C: What is your attitude about each of the following? (The Muslim People)

- **Favorable**
  - Republican: 41%
  - Independent: 43%
  - Democrat: 67%
  - Total: 53%

- **Unfavorable**
  - Republican: 58%
  - Independent: 53%
  - Democrat: 31%
  - Total: 46%

- **Refused**
  - Republican: 0%
  - Independent: 5%
  - Democrat: 2%
  - Total: 2%
Q33D: What is your attitude about each of the following? (The Muslim Religion)

- Favorable
- Unfavorable
- Refused

**Republican**
- Favorable: 26%
- Unfavorable: 73%
- Refused: 0%

**Independent**
- Favorable: 28%
- Unfavorable: 68%
- Refused: 5%

**Democrat**
- Favorable: 51%
- Unfavorable: 47%
- Refused: 2%

**Total**
- Unfavorable: 61%
- Refused: 2%
Q35: In your life how familiar are you with people who are Muslim?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don't know any</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know some but not very well</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know some very well</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q33C: What is your attitude about each of the following? (The Muslim People) [compared with Q35: In your life how familiar are you with people who are Muslim?]
Q33D: What is your attitude about each of the following? (The Muslim Religion) [compared with Q35: In your life how familiar are you with people who are Muslim?]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don't know any</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know some but not very well</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know some very well</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q33A: What is your attitude about each of the following? (The Jewish People)
Q33B: What is your attitude about each of the following? (The Jewish Religion)

Republican
- Favorable: 85%
- Unfavorable: 14%
- Refused: 1%

Independent
- Favorable: 62%
- Unfavorable: 33%
- Refused: 5%

Democrat
- Favorable: 83%
- Unfavorable: 15%
- Refused: 2%

Total
- Favorable: 81%
- Unfavorable: 17%
- Refused: 2%
Q34: In your life how familiar are you with people who are Jewish?
Islamic and Western religious and social traditions are incompatible with each other

Most people in the West and the Islamic world have similar needs and wants, so it is possible to find common ground

Refused

Republican

Independent

Democrat

Total

Q35A: Which position is closer to yours?
Islamic and Western religious and social traditions are incompatible with each other

Most people in the West and the Islamic world have similar needs and wants, so it is possible to find common ground

Refused

Q35A: Which position is closer to yours? [among Evangelicals]
Q35A: Which position is closer to yours? [compared with Q35: In your life how familiar are you with people who are Muslim?]

- Republican
  - I don't know any: 29% (64%)
  - I know some but not very well: 46% (52%)
  - I know some very well: 37% (63%)

- Independent
  - I don't know any: 34% (56%)
  - I know some but not very well: 33% (65%)
  - I know some very well: 28% (65%)

- Democrat
  - I don't know any: 33% (66%)
  - I know some but not very well: 30% (67%)
  - I know some very well: 13% (86%)

- Total
  - I don't know any: 46% (49%)
  - I know some but not very well: 37% (60%)
  - I know some very well: 33% (67%)
Evangelical Attitudes Toward Israel
Q14: Would you describe yourself as an Evangelical Christian? [asked of Christians only]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God Almighty must be feared and obeyed and those who don't obey him risk punishment in this life and in the afterlife</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God is compassionate and merciful and loves and forgives even the sinners</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q26: Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your views about the Bible: [asked of Christians only]
Q28: Biblical prophecies tell of the end times and the return of Christ. Do you believe that this: [asked of Christians only]
Q28: Biblical prophecies tell of the end times and the return of Christ. Do you believe that this: [among Evangelicals]

- Will happen in my lifetime: 12%
- Will happen before the end of this century: 6%
- Will happen, but I don't know if it will be tomorrow or in a thousand years: 81%
- Will probably not happen: 1%
- Will surely not happen: 0%
Q29: Some people say there are things that have to happen in Israel before Christ returns. Do you agree or disagree? [asked if respondent answered 1, 2, or 3 in Q28] [asked of Christians only]

- **Total**
  - Agree: 55%
  - Disagree: 42%
  - Refused: 3%

- **Republican**
  - Agree: 66%
  - Disagree: 32%
  - Refused: 2%

- **Independent**
  - Agree: 62%
  - Disagree: 32%
  - Refused: 6%

- **Democrat**
  - Agree: 48%
  - Disagree: 49%
  - Refused: 3%
Q29: Some people say there are things that have to happen in Israel before Christ returns. Do you agree or disagree? [asked if respondent answered 1, 2, or 3 in Q28] [among Evangelicals]

- **Agree**: 75%
- **Disagree**: 25%
Q45A: For the rapture or Second Coming to occur it is essential for current-day Israel to include all the land that was promised to Biblical Israel in Old Testament [asked if respondent answered 1, 2, or 3 in Q28] [asked of Christians only]
Q45A: For the rapture or Second Coming to occur it is essential for current-day Israel to include all the land that was promised to Biblical Israel in Old Testament [asked if respondent answered 1, 2, or 3 in Q28] [asked of Christians only]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Evangelicals</th>
<th>Non-Evangelical Christians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree strongly</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree somewhat</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree Somewhat</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree Strongly</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q45B: World events will turn against Israel the closer we get to the rapture or end-times. [asked if respondent answered 1, 2, or 3 in Q28] [asked of Christians only]

- **Republican**
  - Agree strongly: 24%
  - Agree somewhat: 21%
  - Disagree somewhat: 9%
  - Disagree strongly: 2%
  - Refused: 30%

- **Independent**
  - Agree strongly: 9%
  - Agree somewhat: 32%
  - Disagree somewhat: 17%
  - Disagree strongly: 12%
  - Refused: 6%

- **Democrat**
  - Agree strongly: 35%
  - Agree somewhat: 24%
  - Disagree somewhat: 21%
  - Disagree strongly: 15%
  - Refused: 6%

- **Total**
  - Agree strongly: 35%
  - Agree somewhat: 27%
  - Disagree somewhat: 27%
  - Disagree strongly: 14%
  - Refused: 5%
Q45B: World events will turn against Israel the closer we get to the rapture or end-times. [asked if respondent answered 1, 2, or 3 in Q28] [asked of Christians only]
Q45C: The unfolding violence across the Middle East region is a sign that the end of time is nearer [asked if respondent answered 1, 2, or 3 in Q28] [asked of Christians only]
Q45C: The unfolding violence across the Middle East region is a sign that the end of time is nearer [asked if respondent answered 1, 2, or 3 in Q28] [asked of Christians only]

- **Evangelicals**
  - Agree strongly: 29%
  - Agree somewhat: 50%
  - Disagree Somewhat: 14%
  - Disagree Strongly: 6%
  - Refused: 1%

- **Non-Evangelical Christians**
  - Agree strongly: 12%
  - Agree somewhat: 31%
  - Disagree Somewhat: 31%
  - Disagree Strongly: 21%
  - Refused: 5%